

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

# Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue

**A Report to the Archdiocese of Melbourne**

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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

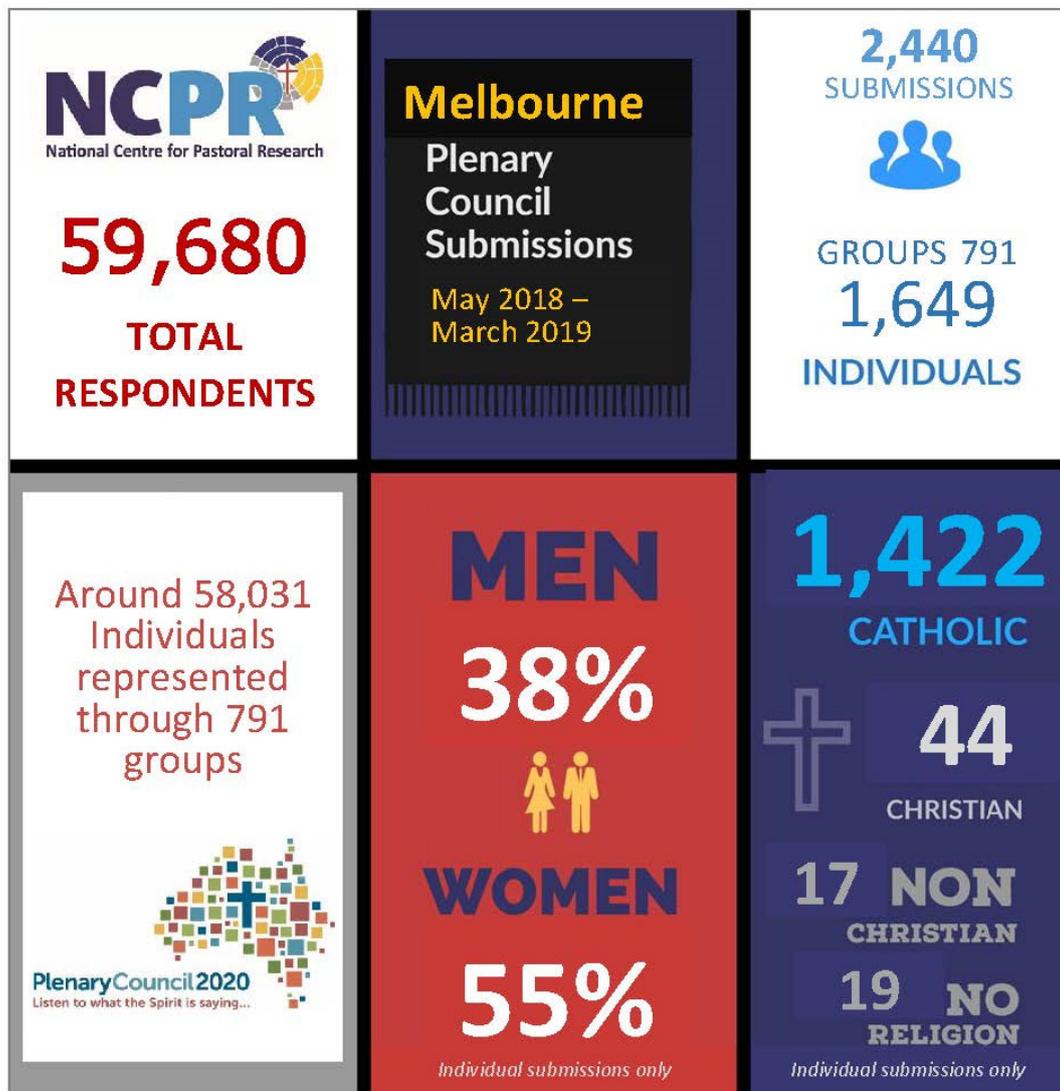
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## Diocesan Submissions Summary Snapshot: May 2018—March 2019



## 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 - Melbourne

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

From the Archdiocese of Melbourne, we received a total of 2,440 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 1,513 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 224 were unsure if they had. About 684 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 2,440 submissions, 791 submissions were from groups or organisations and 1,649 submissions were from individuals. There were 58,031 people represented through the 791 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 59,680.

<b>Table 1: Number of Submissions</b>	
<b>Total number of submissions received</b>	<b>2,440</b>
<b><i>Participated in Listening &amp; Dialogue Encounter?</i></b>	
Yes	1,513
No	684
Not sure	224
Not stated	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,440</b>
Submissions received from groups or organisations	791
Submissions received from individuals	1,649
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,440</b>

## INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 1,649 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 Melbourne. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 55 per cent (903) were received from those aged 50 and over. The most number of submissions within this age range were received from the 65-69 years age group (180 responses).

At the close of submissions, there were 239 individual submissions received from those aged under 25.

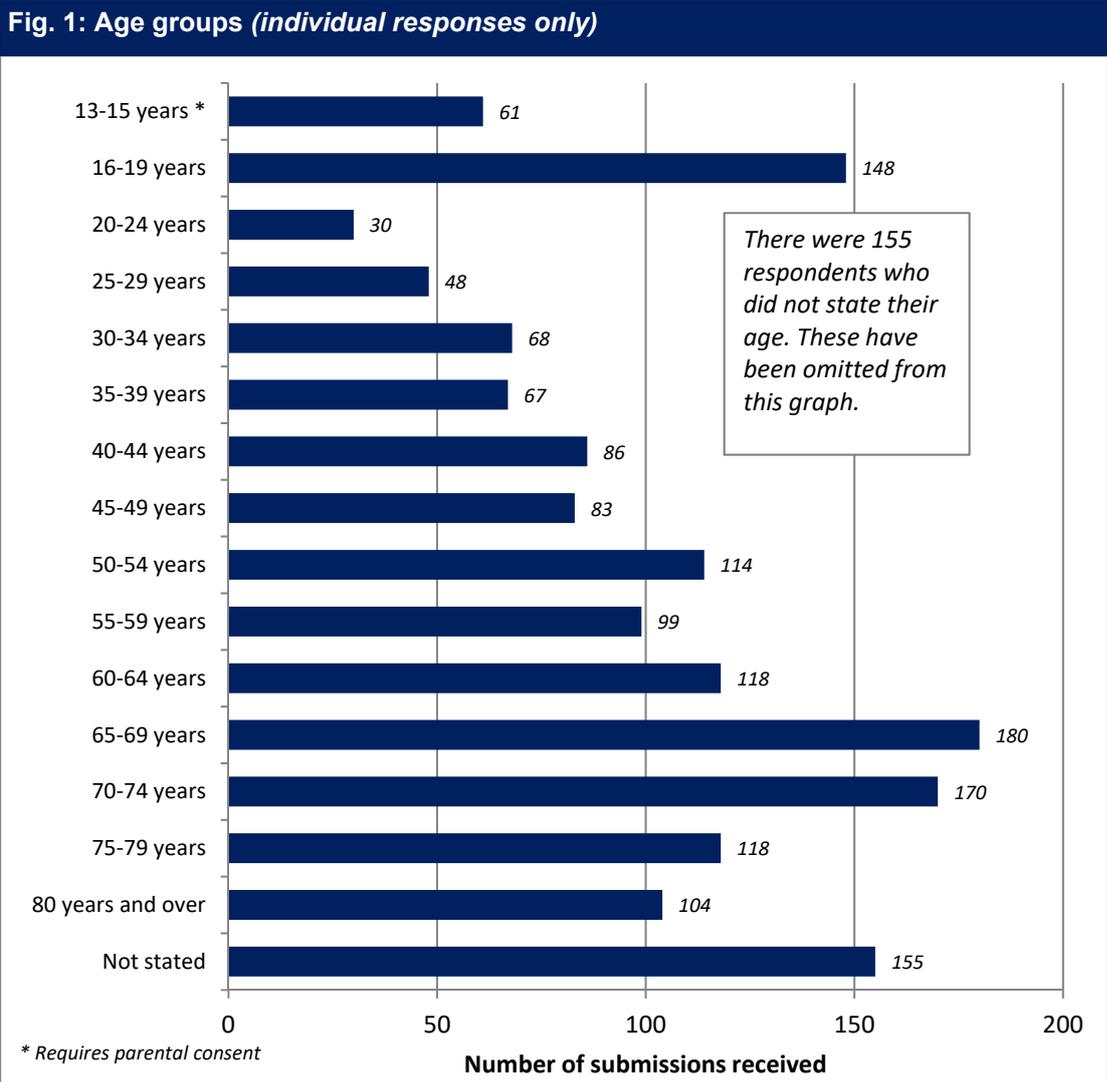
Participants aged 16-17 were encouraged to discuss the questionnaire with their parent or guardian. Many of these responses came from schools that sent in their responses through the online survey. As Table 2 shows, there were 148 individual submissions made from the 16-19 years age group in your diocese.

Participants aged 13-15 years were prompted to provide their parent or guardian's email address. An email was then automatically sent to seek consent for their child to participate in the study. There were 61 individual submissions made from this age group in your diocese.

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

13-15 years *	61
16-19 years	148
20-24 years	30
25-29 years	48
30-34 years	68
35-39 years	67
40-44 years	86
45-49 years	83
50-54 years	114
55-59 years	99
60-64 years	118
65-69 years	180
70-74 years	170
75-79 years	118
80 years and over	104
Not stated	155
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>

\* Requires parental consent



## Sex of Respondents

A little over half the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were female (55%), while a further 38 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 619 men and 898 women who made submissions. Twenty-four respondents preferred not to state their sex, while 108 respondents did not answer this question.

<b>Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)</b>	
Female	898
Male	619
Prefer not to say	24
Not stated	108
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>

## Countries of Birth

Table 4a shows the country of birth of individual respondents from your diocese. As expected, a large number of respondents (70%) were born in Australia. Just under 20 per cent came from other countries, while around 10 per cent did not state their birthplace. See *Appendix 1* for the full list of countries of birth. Table 4b provides a summary of the countries of birth by English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries\*, while Tables 4c and 4d indicate the countries of birth of the respondent's mother and father respectively.

<b>Table 4a: Countries of birth (individual responses only)</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Australia	1,156	70.1
Germany	11	0.7
India	40	2.4
Indonesia	7	0.4
Iraq	12	0.7
Ireland	11	0.7
Italy	15	0.9
Malaysia	12	0.7
Malta	12	0.7
Mauritius	11	0.7
Netherlands	17	1.0
New Zealand	17	1.0
Philippines	23	1.4
Poland	7	0.4
South Africa	6	0.4
Sri Lanka	13	0.8
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	44	2.7
United States of America	7	0.4
Other Countries	62	3.8
Not stated	166	10.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary (individual responses only)</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Australia	1,156	70.1
Other English-speaking country	88	5.3
Non-English-speaking country	239	14.5
Not stated	166	10.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

<b>Table 4c: Mother's country of birth (individual responses only)</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Australia	884	53.6
Other English-speaking country	112	6.8
Non-English-speaking country	406	24.6
Not stated	247	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Table 4d: Father's country of birth (individual responses only)</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Australia	854	51.8
Other English-speaking country	121	7.3
Non-English-speaking country	425	25.8
Not stated	249	15.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Table 5 shows the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from your diocese who made submissions. At the close of submissions there were 12 individuals who identified themselves in this way, representing just under one per cent of all individual respondents.

<b>Table 5: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (individual responses only)</b>	
Yes	12
No	1,461
Not stated	176
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>

## Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 1,649 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 1,422 respondents (86%) were Catholic. Forty-four respondents were from other Christian denominations while there were 17 from non-Christian religions. A further 147 respondents did not state their religion and 19 respondents chose the 'no religion' response.

<b>Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Catholic	1,422	86.2
<b>Other Christian:</b>		
Anglican	11	0.7
Baptist	6	0.4
Churches of Christ	1	0.1
Lutheran	1	0.1
Orthodox	10	0.6
Pentecostal	3	0.2
Presbyterian and Reformed	0	0.0
Salvation Army	1	0.1
Uniting Church	2	0.1
Other Christian	9	0.5
<b>Non Christian:</b>		
Buddhism	1	0.1
Hinduism	3	0.2
Islam	3	0.2
Sikhism	3	0.2
Other religion	7	0.4
No religion	19	1.2
Not stated	147	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>100</b>

For those who indicated that they were Catholic, a further question asked them to describe their participation in church activities. Their responses are shown in Table 7 on the following page. A total of 1,062 respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were 184 respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while 86 respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further 90 respondents described themselves in another way or did not answer the question.

<b>Table 7: Religious description</b> <i>(for those who answered 'Catholic' to previous question)</i>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Not stated</b>	<b>Total</b>
I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other church activities	583	463	16	1,062
I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes	125	56	3	184
I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything	25	13	1	39
I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith	35	11	1	47
Other	51	25	2	78
Not stated	6	4	2	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1,422</b>

## GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 791 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 58,031 individuals were represented through these groups. However, 60 groups did not report their number of participating members, indicating that the total number of people represented through the group submissions may be considerably higher.

While 610 group submissions provided a group name, 181 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 Catholic Social Services Victoria with around 17,000 members. There were also a number of other groups such as the The Parish of St Martin De Porres Avondale Heights with 5,700 participants and The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum with 5,000 members. There were 14 other groups with 500 members or more.

<b>Table 8 : Group submissions from the diocese</b>	
<b>Name of group</b>	<b>Group size</b>
Catholic Social Services Victoria	17,000
The Parish of St Martin De Porres Avondale Heights	5,700
The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum	5,000
St John Bosco's Parish Niddrie	2,000
Concerned Catholics of Australia	1,820
Parish of St Gerard	1,500
Legion of Mary, Senatus of Melbourne Inc	1,450
Holy Saviour Parish	1,200
Knights of the Southern Cross (Victoria) In.	1,000
Thomas Carr College Students	1,000
Spanish Chaplaincy Melbourne	800
Spanish Chaplaincy	700
St Agatha's Church	648
Holy Trinity Parish	510
Catholic Secondary Principals Australia [CaSPA]	500
Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy	500
St Agatha's Parish	500
Ave Maria, St Bernard's and St Columba's College	450
Holy Spirit and St Anthony's Parish	400
St Mary Star of the Sea, West Melbourne	400

## Age and Sex of Group Members

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

The 50-69 years age group was the largest group represented with 13,268 members. This was followed by the group aged 30-49 years with 9,316 members. There was no age provided for around 13,793 group members.

<b>Table 9: Estimates of ages of people in group submissions</b> <i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Under 20 years	6,736
20 - 29 years	6,645
30 - 49 years	9,316
50 - 69 years	13,268
70 and over	7,775
Unknown	13,793
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,533</b>

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

Of the total 56,353 group members whose sex was reported, 54 per cent (30,617) were female and 46 per cent (25,736) were male.

<b>Table 10: Estimates of sex of people in group submissions</b> <i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Female	30,617
Male	25,736
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,353</b>

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



**RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1**

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

## THEMES DISCUSSED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 1

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

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

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

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

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

- Love God, Love Neighbour (Chapter 4)
  - *Care for neighbour* (p. 36)
  - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching* (p. 32)
  - *Greater trust, faith and hope in God* (p. 29)
  - *Greater focus on Jesus Christ* (p. 30)
  - *Better faith formation* (p. 38)
  - *Being a witness in society* (p. 34)
  - *Greater focus on the Word of God* (p. 31)
  - *Renewed call to holiness* (p. 35)
- Leadership and Church Governance (Chapter 7)
  - *Greater role for women* (p. 83)
  - *Greater involvement of the laity* (p. 84)
  - *Ending clericalism* (p. 80)
  - *New model of Church, diocese, parish* (p. 93)
  - *Greater leadership from bishops* (p. 87)
  - *Greater leadership from priests* (p. 88)
  - *New leadership and governance model* (p. 91)
- Social Justice and the Environment (Chapter 9)
  - *Greater inclusion of all* (p. 108)
  - *Fighting for human rights issues* (p. 110)
  - *Ending discrimination of LGBTI* (p. 110)
  - *Care for the environment* (p. 112)
  - *Putting Gospel values in action* (p. 115)

- 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)*

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

- *Outreach to youth (p. 124)*
- *More transparency and accountability regarding clergy sexual abuse (p. 102)*
- *Teaching authentic Catholic faith (p.151)*
- *Sharing the faith with others (p. 128)*
- *Stronger parish communities (p. 156)*
- *Greater concern for victims and survivors (p. 101)*
- *Focus on mission, being missionary disciples (p. 130)*
- *Modernise Church teachings (p. 169)*
- *More welcoming parishes (p. 161)*
- *Better teachers in Catholic schools (p. 148)*
- *Greater connection with and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (p. 120)*
- *Listen to one another more (p. 136)*

## 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 33 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.

Think about the Catholic Church in Australia and how we could improve it.
God is asking us to look at the crisis in our Church and courageously struggle with the big questions like falling Church attendances, women's roles, lay people participation.
I think God is asking us to be responsible adults in a more open Church
I am a committed Catholic woman of the Church and very much involved in my parish community and other Catholic Activities. I am sorry to say I still feel this is another talkfest. No matter what I say or the collective body of women or laymen, I do not believe that Church leaders who have voting rights have the intention or the capacity to listen and act on the voice of the people (Sensus fidelium). I am open to be convinced otherwise as I am filling this form in. Please convince me that the men of the Church (those with the power) can listen.
I am awaiting a response to what I have already submitted.
That women have a role in governance
I believe that God is asking us to be faithful to the truth and to be in the world but not of the world. God wants us to put his will first always and to be guided by tradition. There is nothing new we need to please God and get to heaven. God wants less human respect and more fear of offending him that offending each other by following His instruction. Religious leaders need to trust Him more and have less fear of what people think. There is very little talk of sin or hell but

Our Lord mentioned these many times. We need to imitate the saints who have shown us what we need to be.

At this time, I believe that God is asking Australia for a new wave of evangelisation, something that I believe has never been a part of our country's history. We are traditionally very private people when it comes to matters of religion; however, the Gospel calls us to spread the good news. I believe that if we as Catholics do not take this call to evangelisation seriously, the rates of religiosity, Church attendance, and Christian living will continue to fall and parishes will continue to merge and close due to lack of attendance and priests. I believe that a renewed interest in prayer, the sacraments, Mass and Eucharistic Adoration will be a key component in this renewal of faith. Another key issue in Australia is a lack of religious formation and education, both in the home and in schools. This needs to be addressed by a return to Catholic teaching that follows the Magisterium of the Church.

I want a renewed Church that follows Christ more closely in every way. We seek an open transparent and accountable Church, which respects due process, rejects every form of discrimination, listens to its people, promotes co-responsibility in every facet of its mission and ministry and is compassionate to the core. I want an outward facing Church totally committed to justice, peace, ecumenism and dialogue with other faiths and which advocates unequivocally for the rights of the oppressed and disadvantaged while tending practically to their needs. I need and want a Church where we are "all one in Christ with no more distinctions between male and female" (Galatians 3:28) and whose leaders recognize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel.

Be faithful to the Church, Her Magisterium and traditions. God has shown us through the failed post Vatican II enlightenment how straying from the Truths held by the Church leads to a rudderless ship that wanders aimlessly toward the abyss.

I think that God would be asking us to consider the fact that Australia is a democratic nation that any person, no matter what gender or race, can lead and govern if that is what they feel is their charism. The Church then has a responsibility to nurture that gift. In the Church at this time, baptized women have no say in governance: that this is entirely the provenance of men. The Church needs to look at how this differs from what Jesus taught was the mission for all the baptized. The Church has a duty of love, care and service to those who are vulnerable (children, women, the elderly, those yet to be born, the disabled, the homeless, etc.). It must be seen by the world as a model of justice, of humility and service. The Australian people have matured from a colonial outpost to a modern independent nation. It has to find its own way to preserve faith. The people of God in Australia have to work together in maturity and love, just like our forebears who kept the sacrament of Jesus in a home for all to worship. I think God is asking us to take more responsibility for our worship: lay people giving homilies, more joyful singing, more leadership in prayer during the Mass, communal reconciliation liturgies, 'Sunday school' for children, ways to organise people in different activities that culminate in the Mass on Sundays on a regular basis, more in-depth training of catechists and volunteers. Professional lay leadership to be employed in parishes under the auspices of the local bishop.

To have a more inclusive Church. In Australia, we still have a big divide between Indigenous brothers and the rest of us. The Church needs to take a leading role in building reconciliation by adopting positive gestures that enhance and challenge this overdue reconciliation.

1: to find a language, symbol to connect and re-connect with the Australian women and men of the 21st Century.

2: to find a common approach to respectfully and truthfully look after convicted paedophile priests.

Reflection on care and accountability, and about divorced and remarried.

I believe that God is calling the Australian Church to be a poor, humble and simple Church ready to preach the Good News 'unencumbered by baggage.'

It is time that the role of women within the Church is taken far more seriously. Women do the bulk of the work within parishes and are in a very real sense the glue that holds the faith of the community together. But the voices of women are silenced when it comes to meaningful participation within the decision-making processes. As part of this process, it is necessary to change some of the liturgical language so that it is inclusive. At the parish level, clericalism is rife. Why is it that the diaconate has been opened to the laity, for example, and yet excludes women? Denying women the opportunity for ordination means that we are effectively locked out of the power structures and decision-making processes. This has to change. If women are not going to be ordained then other ways of meaningful inclusion in decision-making have to be developed. I see that there are a number of women on the executive committee but it seems to me that ultimately the decisions will be made by the bishops.

1 - ONE CHURCH getting together with other congregations appears to be a difficult issue with the Catholic Church when in fact it should be explored. Agree to disagree but have a united front when it comes to debate major issues like same sex marriage, euthanasia, religious teaching in schools and resources poured accordingly. There is plenty of money to accomplish this.

2 - FREEDOM OF RELIGION The creeping encroachment from the state on religious belief was a key issue, given new conflicts in the areas of euthanasia, same-sex marriage and the sanctity of the confessional. The main threat to religious freedom as the growing influence of empowered minorities that used political correctness as a weapon against traditional beliefs and customs. Australia has reached an unusual point where the tools of oppression—sowing the seeds of division, conquest, manipulation and cultural division—are being wielded by the minority against the majority. We have not realised Martin Luther King's dream of a society where you are judged by the content of your character, not the colour of your skin. Instead, we have woken up to a nightmare where the value of your contribution to a debate depends on what you claim to be a victim of. In a liberal democracy, people must have the freedom to air unpopular views, including those informed by their faith, and those views must be open to challenge.

3 - MARRIED PRIESTS Some Christian congregations have adopted this system and it appears to work. There are still a few married Catholic priests: Episcopal and Lutheran priests who were married and then converted to Roman Catholicism can be ordained, and men in the Eastern Rites, such as the Ukrainian Church, can marry before becoming ordained. There is no reason to retain a man-made rule that was established in the 1100's. Saint Peter was married according to Mark's Gospel. Besides, in 20 years, there will be a substantial number of retired priests and few replacements. The rate of depletion will be more than the rate of people joining ministry. What

then? There are many parishes currently without priests. No point looking with a rear-view mirror—one should have vision which is currently lacking. Priestly celibacy is rooted in tradition, not Catholic dogma, so the Pope could change it overnight. Those who are happy with the current rules say priestly celibacy allows priests time and energy to focus completely on their flock and to emulate Jesus, who was unmarried, more faithfully. But those who would like to see married priesthood argue celibacy is so difficult for many men that it dissuades people from the priesthood and can lead to sexually immature people pastoring their flocks. The Royal Commission into clerical abuse shone the light on the misfits and perverts who abused children. The systemic fault was condoned by the Church while it should have given rise to instant dismissal and prosecution in a court of law.

One Church voice to be able to respond to challenges of 2020 and beyond. Recently there were issues debated in the public arena where it seems to me the voice of the Catholic Church was not as loud as it possibly could—for example the "same sex marriage issue". I understand there was a letter sent to the Archdiocese jointly signed by the parish priest and the chairman of the parish council. By one Church, I mean that there must be greater cooperation between the other Christian congregations. The Anglican Church in Sydney made one million dollars available for advertising. If any advertising effort by the Catholic Church was made it seems to me that it was lost in our busy world. Another instance where there must be greater opening is the whole question of married priests. One cannot have a Church without priests. The Anglicans who joined the Catholic Church have their wife and kids as part of the living world. They should have been welcome—the Church does not belong to the Monsignors and other clerics. The Church belongs to all of us. At this rate of attrition, the hostels for retired priests will fill up faster than the replenishment at the other end. Any planner with brains will conclude that it is currently unsustainable. The world consists of approximately 50% men and 50% women. While other congregations have women priests, the Catholic Church sticks to a situation where women are not accepted to priesthood. I have the belief that the Church hierarchy is looking in a rear-view mirror. We need vision and that is opaque if not missing altogether. How to bring the youths to Church / or back to Church. There are too many distractions out there and the Church needs to be relevant to today's youths. I concede that all these thee and thou are just about boring and do nothing to thinking youths. How come Hillsong has full house and attracts the whole family and youngsters? Welcoming to strangers! "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Seemingly friendly congregations are in fact only friendly among themselves.

God is asking us to clean the Church and get together with other denominations in order to have ONE Church to cope with changing mores, menace of abortion and euthanasia.

Basically, I think God is asking us to rebuild His Church. I will add my submission as an attachment at the end. So much has happened and we are now faced with a secular society who doesn't always agree with us and some very anti-Christian sentiment. We also have a broken Church due to the sex abuse scandal and even more, I think because of Catholics drifting away—they don't see the Church as central to their lives and have left to such an extent that they don't even subscribe to some basic beliefs. Personally, I feel that God is calling us to heal the Church and also to rebuild it with strong faithful followers. We can only do this with proper education. I'm not

saying we don't do all the social services and outreach but we need to be rebuilding beneath these services so that we become strong again and have a voice in our community and spread the Gospel in our land.

To be inclusive and accepting of all within our community, and that community is not only Catholics who share our visions but all of the people who exist on this Earth with us. God wants us to do good and use our voices to advocate for goodness.

To be transformed to become totally focused on the mission of Jesus, to be deeply developed and formed in the understanding and knowledge of our faith and to be truly inclusive of all—In our living experience of life in society as well as creating a balanced leadership within our Church.

What does God want from us as Catholics? By [ - ], [ - ] Catholic Community, [ - ] This bold question is a challenge to each Catholic as we progress towards the 2020 Plenary. If we ignore the challenge, do nothing, there too is failure. God wants us to 'do the right thing'! Currently the Catholic Church in Australia is largely rudderless and leaderless. The institution has lost its way. The inadequate and disappointing response of the hierarchy to the findings of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse Spare reflects this. The hierarchy has failed Catholics at large as shepherds, leaders, rulers, managers and sources of inspiration for example, Pope Francis insists that pastoral care is the primary role of those ordained to the hierarchy. As such, a primary role of all ordained persons is preaching the message of Jesus, and facilitating ways in which we as Church will pursue justice, show mercy, act compassionately and be forgiving. These are the 'right' things to do! But, in the spirit of the Trinitarian theology that we espouse, Catholics are called to do the right thing in relationship with one another, in relationship with the institution and in relationship with other religious traditions and the secular world. Australia's Catholic bishops have failed to provide leadership in discerning and advising how these relationships ought to be nurtured. Our ability to sway people will reflect the integrity that we are seen to have earned. Top down, clericalist, governance does not serve the silent majority, or the marginalized, or those in minority groups. Clericalism is self-serving; it is not 'doing the right thing'. Consequently, the Catholic Church is seen as 'divided' on core social issues such as same-sex marriage, death with dignity, child sexual abuse, abortion, birth control, women priests, divorce and Catholic education. The 2020 Plenary Conference is an opportunity to bring once fervent Catholics back into the fold but addressing the things that divide us in the context of 'doing the right thing'. Common sense will identify the ways in which this can be achieved, but this will be impossible if current hierarchical commitments to top-down, unaccountable and exclusivist practices are allowed to persist. A good start would be for all bishops to insist that their priests are freed to be priests by establishing in every parish an accountable and inclusive Pastoral Council with authority to govern from the bottom up. So doing will give full voice to the Church from the bottom up.

To address issues which I and I believe others including members of my religious congregation and community see as urgent. Some being: the sexual abuse, clericalism, disaffected Catholics, sexual matters and orientation, divorce, birth control, respect for women and an acknowledgment of the real and practical struggles of the members of families today. But that these not be allowed to get out of proportion in that there are other important, simpler and basic areas that need addressing too, about living a Christian life found in the Gospels. This is not new but needs new emphasis. All of these matters need to be treated with respect, humility, a non-judgmental way, compassion, and forgiveness.

To be as synodal as possible. The technical structures of this Plenary Council restrict this to a big degree. Fr. [ - ] is urging all bishops to put themselves in positions where they will have understood what their people are saying. There is a document, 'Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church' published 2/3/2018 by an international theological commission—names listed. To me, much of the language is 'Church officialdom language' including Latin wherein many laity would, I believe find it off putting and in parts impossible to understand. I am pleased that little of the language of the P.C. is this. In the stated document, I found much of it relating to the hierarchy—especially the first half. I offer that par. 114 and 119 are highly relevant and could be suitable for dissemination. It relates to 'what is God asking of us in the Church in Australia today?' It is positive and hopeful. I am confident that all areas of life will be forwarded to you. This is not the main issue, that being the processes that are to follow and the concluding laws??/ better - encouragements. Much thanks to all you in the preparations and keep journeying in this onerous and privileged ministry. Br. [ - ]. [ - ].

I wonder if God is calling us to LOVE! To keep searching for new expressions of love. But personally, I am disillusioned with the lack of leadership when it comes to the ordination of Women, the abuse of power through clericalism and the need for servant leadership and the need to go back to the Gospel Values—what does “living” the Gospel mean? How is that demonstrated in the leadership within our Church? - The implementation of the Plenary Council whose membership favours bishops and selected “delegates” - The “waiting” for what will be a Pastoral approach from the Church to the recommendations of the Royal Commission! - Is there a new way of understanding Eucharistic Theology?

ORDINATION OF WOMEN. The full participation of women in an ecclesial sense. Where does it say that the ontological reality of those called must be men?

The biggest problem in the Catholic Church today is the high number of children who fail to make the transition to the mission and witness of the Church as adults. In other words, who abandon the practice of the faith or even the faith itself. And fewer and fewer are returning to get married in Church or have their children baptized. We must respond to this as a matter of singular urgency. First, we must acknowledge the seriousness of the problem. Triumphant, trite, reminders of Our Lord's promise that the Gates of Hell would never prevail, or sidestepping the question with irrelevant observations about the growth of Catholicism in the Third World both dismiss the seriousness of the problem. Secondly, we must not think that the solution is easy. It's not. Rather it is multifaceted and complex. Third, we must find the answer as to how to keep children and youths in Church. How should we do this? I believe by Commissioning research studies. It will be money well spent. Don't set the parameters overly narrow. Be open to the God of surprises. Survey the young Catholic adults who still come to Mass and ask them why they are here. Find families who have many children who grow up as faithful Catholics and find the similarities between them. Find families of children who defected to other religions or to none. What did they do wrong? What religions are defectors joining? What is their level of engagement with those religions? Ask as many questions as possible. Let's build a picture using facts, not opinions, so that we can start doing what we currently not doing and stop doing what the facts say is counterproductive. What can we do as individuals, as families, as parishes, as movements within dioceses, in schooling, in youths programs, in mentoring, in catechesis, in cultural

education, etc. to ensure that as many children as possible come through adolescence and into adulthood as practising Catholics? Time is running out.

Jesus said remain in My Love. Jesus said if you love Me, keep my commandments. In this day and age, all the commandments get broken constantly. I could list them and give examples of how they are being ignored but I would hope this is not necessary. Anyone can go through them one by one and have a think of how they are being ignored (broken). Keep it simple, [ - ]. We need to go back to the basics.

Go back to teaching the fundamentals of the faith, particularly, the commandments, sin and eternal salvation.

After praying about this question for a while now, I feel like at this time for Australia, God is asking that we continue to love him and each other around us. To treat everyone with the most upright respect and know that they are loved so much. With a lot going on in the world in general, we need to continue to fight for the relationships around us.

I think God is asking the Church i.e. the People of God to recognise that we need to be humble, listen and seeking healing for the damage done in the name of Christ to brothers and sisters. We need to go back to the Gospel message and clericalism needs to be challenged, particularly among the younger clergy, some of whom seem to want to take the Church back to a pre-Vatican Church. I would suggest that the bishops and clergy get out of their comfort zones and walk in the shoes of those in the pews and also in the shoes of those who no longer grace the pews with their presence because they have been so hurt and scandalised by their experience of the Church. God is surely weeping about how the Gospel has been exploited to control and diminish people by the misuse of power. For many people, the Church has lost all credibility. Pope Francis is radical in his vision of a Vat II Church which recognises that we are a pilgrim people and mercy and compassion must be the qualities we bring to our world.

God is asking us to engage in Gospel-focused decision-making in our private life, our work life and in our Church life. Very few, if any, decisions we make have no moral dimension. Sometimes, a fair bit of digging is needed to find and understand these moral dimensions. Three simple questions will help: (a) what does Jesus' teaching have to say about what I am proposing to do, (b) what effect will my proposed course of action have on me, and (c) what effect will it have on other people (and may it cause scandal).

Imperatives of the Royal Commission aside, we are in an interesting Church time from 2 perspectives: there are more theologically educated lay people than ever and the numbers of ordinations are at an all-time low and as priest numbers reduce through attrition, they are accepting more and more punishing and inhumane workloads. This provides an opportunity to think seriously about the power and control that underlies a worldview with male priesthood at its centre. How can we start a serious conversation about sharing the power base that prevents good priests from sharing their work with willing lay people? What parts of their role really need a priest? Lay people are equally shying away from their responsibilities and roles, in their general passivity to continue letting Father do it all.

A major change in the structure and hierarchy of the Church, which includes mechanisms where individuals within a parish can have a say regarding all aspects of the Church and be heard.

God is asking us to be honest and truthful which has not occurred in the Catholic Church for at least the last 50 years. God also wants us to be humble and responsible to the well-being of all and to promote good morals and family values. The Church has seriously failed in all these areas as it has actively lied and been deceitful in the pursuit of covering up the most horrendous crimes of sexual abuse of our children by its clergy over many years. This has undermined the aim of Christian values in the lives of all people.

To listen to each other and the opinions and views of others. To try and be a tolerant and empathetic community. To value the opinions of the youths and take action in regards their thoughts and beliefs. To accept diversity. To value and celebrate the differences that people bring to the Church. There are so many fantastic community groups that help others, we need to celebrate their work and achievements and the impact about what they bring to others. Create more awareness to celebrate their achievements.

To notice the 'furniture has moved'! Church has moved out of traditional parish structure, an active Church is alive and well. Gospel action is all around us: household gatherings are numerous, libraries are the current meeting places, social service circles provide platforms for Gospel action and schools provide ongoing education and faith formation for adults as well as students. In each of these and many more women are equally in leadership. Laudato Si spoke to this Church.

That we take seriously the spiritual and catechetical needs of the close to 50% of Catholic students NOT in Catholic schools. Progressively over the last 10 years, dioceses have failed to replace staff who have supported this ministry. Even in Melbourne, the real support for parishes has stopped. It seems we no longer care for these children unless they are in Catholic schools. We will have no youths if we fail these children of primary age.

God is asking us to clarify how we—the laity, clergy, and lapsed Catholics—go about rebuilding the Church in the 21st century, in the wake of the abuse scandals of the twentieth century. God is also asking us to consider how we revive Catholic education to properly form and catechise young Catholics in the truth of the beliefs we all share, and how best to live out these beliefs in a mainstream culture that is increasingly hostile to Christianity.

Build Connections, be welcoming/enticing, be ecumenical, be a people who enable older people to regain/retain their connection to faith, inviting others, be a focus for meeting, provide an experience of Jesus that helps people with faith to have a faith base, providing ways for spiritual ownership of God's Church by children. These are the characteristics our group gave that described what God is asking of us, now.

To respond more positively and with academic research to support the ACBC/CRA response to the Royal Commission recommendations. Referring to Rome without context, scholarly support, or opinion is irresponsible and continues the sense of a lack of credibility in the Church's determination to repair itself and address clericalism and lack of respect for the place of women.

1. Can we have truly representative people at the Plenary? I.e. lay people and women in proportional number to bishops? 2. If not, at consultative and preliminary events? 3. Perhaps those with active voice—i.e. with a vote truly consult and ask lay people and especially women, prior to the Plenary? 4. If not, why not? 5. The Plenary must know that it will be dismissed as closed, ineffective, and cynical if not.

<p>God wants us to ask the right question.</p>
<p>To be a good Catholic. To listen to the inner voice and be guided by Jesus Christ who gave His life for us on the cross.</p>
<p>In Australia today, God is asking us to be inclusive, to respect others and to be prepared to listen to others opinions. We must appreciate Australian mores and customs. To promote Christian marriage and family life. To encourage and support youths in this age of social media saturation, confusing morality with celebrity influences. Accept and appreciate our family, friends and workmates hoping that we are Christian role models for them. Acknowledge and protect our environment.</p>
<p>I think that God through Christ wants people of Australia to grow closer to Him, to trust in His mercy and love; a call to holiness. A means to promote unity between our bishops and laity is to take to heart the blueprint that Vatican II Ecumenical Council put before us. This Council pointed out that the Mass is the summit and source of our unity. bishops, priests, deacons and laity, all participating in giving perfect praise to The Father through the power of the Holy Spirit, all according to their respective roles and calling. By this, we in Australia will be giving perfect praise to God through, with, and in Christ's priesthood and making the people of God (The Church) holy. Pope Francis has identified one of the errors of our times (when he was addressing child abuse) is Clericalism. I believe an antidote to clericalism and also the friction we sometimes in Australia experience between the lay state and the ordained ministry is by focusing on Christ and specifically on Christ, The Eternal High priest and Victim. St. John Eudes believed that by establishing a feast day honouring the highest function and role (the others being prophet and king) of Christ, would be a great boon for the Church. It was celebrated as a feast in the Church of France, but this feast became a causality in the revision of the liturgical revamp of St. Pius X. It was celebrated on Holy Thursday. The Church in Spain celebrates the Solemnity of Christ, The Eternal priest and Victim and Rome designated that this feast is celebrated on the Thursday after Pentecost Sunday. But Australia has also a claim on this historical liturgical revival of putting and focusing Christ's priesthood into the liturgical life of the Church. The Diocese of Wagga Wagga in the past ten years or so, celebrates this feast each year again on The Thursday after Pentecost Sunday. The Confraternity of Christ the priest which is based in this town has promoted this devotion of Christ's priesthood since Fr. John Whiting founded this religious order in 1954. I close my submission with my observation on why the priesthood of Christ and devotion to Him is so necessary in the Australian Church. I have read recently an article printed in the Ballarat Diocese Newsletter in which was expressed division instead of unity in regards to the coming Plenary Council "listening and sharing" meetings they had up there. They bring up ideas of dismantling or watering down the divisions of the ordained ministry or extending it. I also read St. Patrick's Cathedral bulletin written by a Don Kelly. In it, this man wants females to be ordained to the priesthood. By promoting a feast to honour Christ's priesthood, this will help the Church in Australia to focus on their role, as Vatican II stated, as all sharers of this one priesthood, the ministerial and the ordinary or "common" priesthood of Christ's faithful. This feast and the devotion would remind everyone, not to focus on the sins of the ordained priests, but on Christ who is always holy and spotless.</p>
<p>The youths are the future of the Church and I think some careful planning and action should be taken to actively engage with the youths of our community, regardless if they are religious or not.</p>

To be true Pilgrims and to use our gifts to help make the Church in Australia more inclusive, responsible and prepared to acknowledge our failures to vulnerable people.

1. Urgent action to raise the level of biblical education across the entire Church. As a biblical scholar, writer and teacher I offer talks on the Scriptures across Australia—to parishes, schools, deaneries, religious congregations, spiritual directors, priests' conventions and retreats. This work reveals enormous ignorance about the Catholic interpretation of the Scriptures. This experience also shows that a knowledge of scripture can open up vitality in liturgy, new understandings of theology, a richer more adult spirituality and 'set hearts on fire' for belonging within and service of the Church community. All the reforms of Vatican II depend upon sound biblical understanding and yet this has been carried out in a most haphazard way or neglected—Broken Bay is an exception! Along with general biblical education, there is also a great need for a new generation of biblical theologians—not just those with biblical skills but skills built on a foundation in theology. Gone are the days when the religious congregations provided the finance and support for the long-haul study needed to acquire a theological and biblical education. The Church, in its diocesan structures, needs to address this need in a systematic way such as scholarships and then financial support backing theological colleges and seminaries. Within Victoria, the year 11 and 12 Text and Traditions course is one excellent form of biblical education. From my experience with schools, students, and teachers, all find this a fascinating study, and one means of improving biblical literacy. For this to continue there needs to be teachers who have biblical studies—at least a diploma in biblical studies to provide them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to teach these units. Diocese need to offer financial support to allow teachers to do this necessary study of the scriptures.

2. Restore the ancient rite and function of the diaconate for women—evident in the Church for the first 600 years. There is evidence that in the first six centuries women were being ordained as deacons and some to serve as priests. While this evidence is unknown due to poor historical education and bias, it cannot be ignored. The concerns and recommendations from the Royal Commission plea for greater involvement of women in seminary formation, in parish and diocesan governance, and in deed in all aspects of Church life. Since Vatican II, the role of the lay pastoral minister has opened up and this position is usually filled by women. This ministry deserves the formal recognition of its value in the community. It is a ministry where women have made great personal, family and financial sacrifices in order to be of service. Some of these women may be responding to a genuine vocational call to the diaconate. If our vision is narrowed to only consider male and celibate vocations then we may well be ignoring the activity of the Spirit in this land—where many women and men give of themselves.

To be open and understanding to everyone. Accept others as they are but stay true to our values and beliefs. Being aware that there are some people who are very kind and doing amazing work that have nothing to do with religion and there are others doing amazing work that are aligned to a religious group - both are doing good for others. I think we need to move forward in a positive way and recognise the good from the past and not let good works be overshadowed by the wrongs that have tainted people's perceptions of the Church. It is easy for media and society to only focus on the wrongs that were done and forget all the good that had been done over so many years. Accept the whole past and look to the future.

I don't know and don't think anyone else in truth does. The Plenary Council's Agenda seems already to be shaped by some assumptions based on dogma. I think it is important to be clear about the starting point for any deliberations. What are we trying to fix and why? Not many people of Catholic background would argue with the underlying values that 'pervade' most major religions i.e., love, goodwill towards our fellow beings etc., What always gets in the way is man-made dogma. I even recall that the Catholic Church held itself out to be the ONLY ONE TRUE CHURCH! Its obsession with rituals, highly questionable dogma and an unhealthy attitude to sex have led it down the wrong path, as evidenced by the way it has lost its way in our society and with the generations of children that follow us.

Listen to those who seem to have a voice in the Church.

Simply, "love one another as I have loved you". Reach out; look after your fellow man with love and compassion. At a local level, be aware of your neighbours, your fellow parishioners and your local community. Participate and be a light in people's lives so that your time with them leaves them feeling better about themselves and the world around them.

For hierarchy, who over centuries have made decisions about doctrine, ritual and morality join with the increasingly well-informed laity to work together on how best to promote the Kingdom. Listen, respect, trust!

To be "Catholic", not just Christian but Catholic—our Churches, schools, organisations, etc. obviously and proudly Catholic

I think we are being asked to be 'Catholic' rather than Christian, etc. To express our Catholic values and ideas; to show that our organisations and institutions are Catholic - part of the Roman Catholic Church.

A call to CONVERSION. A call to a deeper awareness of our IDENTITY and MISSION. To respond to this call through renewed catechesis and faithful living out of the Church's teaching. To be proudly CATHOLIC, proclaiming the Good News without watering it down. To live out our faith sincerely. A call to AUTHENTICITY.

It is time to move towards the prophecy of Karl Rahner and turn to a Contemplative Church. To make room for the Holy Spirit to enter into decision-making. For the Synod advisors to KNOW Jesus at an intimate level. For women to be given a voice at this Synod, to be given a role that they deserve in the Church.

I think God is asking for a more inclusive Church, a Church that included and embraces people from all sexual orientations, all gender types, all cultures and races. Also, it is time we allow the ordination of women in the Church and allow equality to be present in all forms. Finally, we really need to give the authority back to the lay community instead of one performer. Furthermore, as a secondary school teacher and devout Catholic myself, I find that young people are more and more disconnected from the Church and it is time that our liturgy is altered in a way that it speaks to young people. Using language like, "lord I'm not worthy" creates a divide between us and God. Of course, we are worthy, we are God's children, we are created in his image and likeness, how can we be both worthy? Homilies need to be done by young people sometimes, instead of a priest who may be disconnected from the real world. Language like "sin" only makes faithfuls feel small

and it's not life-giving at all. Let's listen to how God would actually talk to us instead of assuming that our Mass language is God's language.

God is asking us to do something about the environment, to make the environment and building a new economy the central focus of the Catholic Church, as articulated by Pope Francis.

I firmly believe that God, driven by the Holy Spirit is asking us in Australia to commit to a Church of more gender equality. There are many gifted and talented women in our Church who are being denied the opportunity to take a more active role in the Church of Australia. I am not seeking for women to be ordained as priests, but I do think in 21st century Australia, we are in need of the wider episcopal role of women. It would be a fervent step towards more equality for women to be given roles in religious ceremonies, e.g. reading the Gospel during Mass, giving the sermon at Mass, weekdays and weekends. The dedicated religious sisters/nuns have been the backbone of the religious education of millions of Australia's children, helped care for families in need, cared for the sick, aged and dying for over two centuries. It is time we recognise them and also acknowledge that they and other women are capable of these roles and many others in the Church. Women have been educated and are apparent in every viable industry and business in Australian finances, political arena and medicine, teachers, scientists, as well as roles as mothers and family carers and wives. We are truly blessed with a wonderful Church and would be enriched by the participation of more women in roles, such as committees reporting to the bishops, not as token gestures of representation, but as true participants of an active, vibrant and modern Church in Australia.

To address the 'big questions', including the many 'elephants in the room': sexual abuse, married priests, women priests, social justice, etc. and not be afraid to be radical in finding solutions. Building and supporting our Church communities is also something of huge importance in our increasingly fractured world. Support needs to be real and meaningful, and not just lip service. I also believe God wants us to strive for gender equality, as everyone was created equal, in his image. Discrimination and prejudice need to be weeded out and stamped upon.

I believe God is asking us to live the Gospels. We do this by the way we present ourselves to others. For too long the institution of the Catholic Church has been seen as removed from the realities of life. We need to come out from inside the buildings we occupy and show the love that Jesus showed us. WE need to FULLY acknowledge our failings and not hide behind or have the legal system protect us. The Church has become too preoccupied in its appearance. Let's become relevant ...let's be fully accepting of those marginalised within our society. I do not recall Christ ever turning anyone away. Our leaders need to show service, charity, love devotion ...there is no place for ego, power or corruption.

I think God is asking all of us to review every aspect of Church life in light of the obvious errors highlighted by the Royal Commission and the obvious exit of so many previously practicing laity. The Church has failed to accept and acknowledge its failures or keep pace with the rapidly changing world. Old world teachings are outdated and no longer accepted in this world of science and technology. Now is our time to reflect on the Church's current relevance to families and stop clinging to what is no longer practiced in reality by children, parents and grandparents. We need to explore ways in which changes can be made in which to bring it up to date in the 21st century by not only listening, especially to the youths, but by action. Words without action will be meaningless. I think God is looking at Australia to take the lead in re-establishing the basis of the

<p>Church with Faith, Hope and Charity instead of being driven by power, secrecy and inequality at all levels of the establishment from local parishes to the Vatican. The key points are to LISTEN and ACT.</p>
<p>Community, Acceptance, Acknowledging abuse and by paying out victims without resistance. Trying to make faith more acceptable to younger people Making sure clergy are living in real world, a lot of young priest are fantastic but some older ones and bishops seem to want to hang on to old and unnecessary ideas. Inclusion of women ministers, homilies by women, etc. would be of value. Better training in speech (English) and writing homilies relevant to today, not 2000 years ago, input from congregation.</p>
<p>Be proactive in our religion. Attempt to engage more teens after they leave secondary school. Let lay people have a say in decision-making within the Church. Allow female religious to have greater input into the hierarchy within the Church. Have greater input into the refugee situation.</p>
<p>To carry our faith into our everyday life. In the words of the hymn: "to live what you proclaim". For example, it is not enough to feel compassion for refugees - we must take whatever action we can in the wider community to right this injustice (attending demonstrations, writing to politicians, etc.). Equally, to carry our faith into everyday life means treating the vulnerable (such as children, gay people, disabled people, etc.) properly. The next thing we are called to do as Australians is to become less attached to our material wealth. We live in a 1st world country and we need to recognise fully the needs of those who live in 3rd world countries.</p>
<p>For the Church to bring God's reign on earth following Jesus' plan for universal Eucharistic communities instead of being an institution of power, privilege and wealth.</p>
<p>1. It is vital for the future of the Church to enlist young people into its mission by reaching out to them while they are still in school, through young people themselves, as, for example, is done by the Missionaries of God's Love through their Youth Mission Teams, who have achieved much success in this regard. 2. Make sound scripture education available to all, especially young people so as to instil in them a greater love and understanding of the Word of God. 3. Ensure the laity are adequately included in the decision-making process of the Church. 4. Make women full participating members of the Church in its decision-making processes and liturgy, acknowledging that they have been recognised in Scripture as having been apostles (Rom 16:7). 5. Do more to make the Church, especially the laity, a Church of the poor, including the mentally ill, the victims of abuse and family violence, the underprivileged, the unborn, refugees and asylum seekers, those living on depressed areas, gay people, the homeless, and the marginalised. 6. Work to instil in the faithful a stronger sense of the Church's mission so that they are more prepared to share their faith and love. 7. Ensure that the Church's places of worship are designed or altered to encourage more complete participation of the laity in Eucharistic an</p>
<p>For our Church leaders to face the reality of the appalling abuse and to sincerely make amends.</p>
<p>To stand firm on the truth of His Word and against the move away from Christian values in society.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to listen to Him. I think God has been trying to talk to us; however, we have gotten distracted (or deceived) by other things that are not spiritually important in our lives. I think God is asking us to go back to basics. Back to the beginning. I believe God is giving us a</p>

<p>choice as He has always done. He is not telling us what to do ...He is always asking us to do it. We don't need to complicate it. We don't need to make a thousand rules and rituals. We just need to keep it basic and do exactly what Jesus asked us to do. Yes, Jesus and God are the same in one. He asked us to do it thousands of years ago and is still asking us the same question every day if we will listen. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Mark 12: 30-32 This is what I think God is still asking of us in Australia at this time.</p>
<p>I think it's time to start doing what Jesus would do, he accepted people for all their faults and I don't think He would want the richest business in the world (the Catholic Church) to keep getting richer while people starve.</p>
<p>To be a Church of real engagement and commitment through increased ongoing formation of priests and laity—our response to the Spirit</p>
<p>In my own prayers, God seems to be asking us to focus on the message of love, rather than 'religious laws,' and to engage young people by teaching them about love and mercy. It saddens me when I see Catholic publications and newsletters that are filled with advertisements for aged care and funeral homes. It's possible that young people are not active in the Church because they feel that Catholics can be judgmental and ostracize those who are 'sinners' and outcasts of society. I was once inactive and turned my back from the Church because it was always saying negative things about same sex attraction, premarital sex, and contraception. While these may be because of the 'law' and the 'truth,' these could be very discouraging for people - especially the youths - who do these acts since they will bear the label, 'sinners.' Yes, these acts could be considered sin and people are sinners, but we should also tell the world that 'sinners are welcome in the Church.' Jesus came for the sinners and the lost; not those who are perfect. We need to embrace everyone who is looking for an accepting, loving and forgiving family even if they may be sinners. We need to adapt to the times, as well, and go where the people are. As evangelists, we don't expect people to come to us and our Churches, or to read our newsletters. We need to adapt and use new communication strategies to reach out ...</p>
<p>It's still the same, to love one another as He has loved us.</p>
<p>God is crying out for the Church to preach the only message Jesus preached, which is the Kingdom of God—Repent for the kingdom of heaven has arrived. This was the first statement Jesus spoke to a public group. Repent means to change your MIND, we lost the Kingdom in Genus in the Fall. Jesus has come to restore Man back to the Kingdom of Heaven.</p>
<p>Renew the Church at the grassroots level. Encourage people to read the word of God, reflect on it, and let God speak to them directly. In my parish at [ - ] in [ - ], we had a reflection day, praying with Scripture using Lectio Divina and Ignatian contemplation. It was a great success and we now have a Scripture reflection group. I would like to see this happen in other parishes. Also, to introduce people to Christian meditation. There are over 90 groups in Victoria and Australian. Christian Meditation Community is available to introduce it to parishes and schools. But there are no groups as far as I know who will introduce Scripture reflection to parishes. I am happy to do this but need support. I have done a course in spiritual direction at Jesuit College of Spirituality to help me towards this aim. I am a medical practitioner, and firmly believe in healing through Scripture and meditation. These practices will help people grow closer to God.</p>

To be welcoming, sharing, respectful of old values and traditions but aware that we are now in the 21st century and must change to accommodate the modern world.

Listen with humility. I work in Catholic Education and I am familiar with the re-contextualization of faith education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. We have so much to offer the world, but we have to deal with the scandals that we currently experience. As much as people focus on sexual abuse I think we are missing something more important. Society has a sexual abuse issue and as part of society so do we as a Church. Our Church has some institutional factors to consider but our attachment to wealth and power is more an issue. We confuse influence and power. Think Jesus and influence. Think Herod and power. Who has influence today?

I believe God would be asking us to be kinder and more considerate of our fellow human beings at this time. Our border security policies are horrendous and our treatment of those less fortunate is immensely lacking. The essence of God and the Christian message, for me, has always been about inclusion. The challenge for the Church is to stay ahead of the game in this space in the future. Jesus brought all people together, regardless of who they were. God's place in Australia, and in the world, must be to convey this message above all others. The moment the Church fails to welcome all people is the moment the Church will become obsolete, and I think its stance on issues such as marriage equality and the roles of women in the clergy has threatened this already. Young spiritual people, in particular, are craving a Church which speaks to the progressive values they hold. The Church must embrace a progressive society and, more than that, it must lead it. This, after all, is the fundamental premise of God in our world.

To bridge the gap between the "establishment" and the laity. To encourage each other in pursuit of improvement in ourselves and our practices. to open our hearts to the prompting of the Holy Spirit

I believe God is asking us, in Australia as in all the world, to be kinder, more loving and accepting of our fellow humans. Modern societies seem to be so self-absorbed, all about 'me' as Number 1. This is evidenced in many ways such as the way unemployed and /or homeless people are quite invisible to most of us or are blamed for their impoverished situation. The politicians of the day encourage this attitude. Another example is the awful treatment of asylum seekers/refugees - so many people, even well-educated people who should know better, take every opportunity to demonise these people. There are not enough of us speaking up for the refugees or giving some sort of practical assistance. Another group in dire need of acceptance, inclusion, love is the LGBTQI community. I personally know some in this group and believe me, they do not find many friends in society at large. I don't believe our God would want people excluded due to their genetic makeup, which is out of their control. A more caring, loving country (and Church) would also stand up to support those amongst us who have suffered physical and/or emotional abuse at the hands of those who were supposed to care for them, including clergy, teachers and family members. Those who suffered should be listened to, believed and compensated. Their abusers should be punished. In case of clergy, the Church should not help abusers to hide, to evade punishment. The Church has assets—maybe some need to be sold to help pay medical and psychology costs and to offer some tangible recompense for the cruel abuse they suffered. I have been shocked to realise that, in this day and age, divorced people are still treated as outcasts, unable to receive communion or to remarry in the Church. I think this is vindictive and obsolete. If

<p>people want to be accepted as equal, valued and loved members of our society and our Church community, shouldn't we be doing all we can to welcome them?</p>
<p>To be a part of our local Church community and do our utmost to make it a living and relevant space from which to praise God and care for the welfare and perpetuation of the community. The cornerstones of our community should be the Eucharist, reconciliation, family, formation, devotion, inclusiveness and unity of purpose. To care for the development of our youths, who are the future of the Church.</p>
<p>God would be asking us not to be afraid to speak of and about him. We must include HELL in priests' sermons as no one mentions hell anymore, and yet the Church recognizes Fatima and the children were shown a vision of hell as was John Bosco. Priests talk about God's love only but what about his justice? What about being accountable for our sins? We look after our health, finances, home, etc., but what about our souls which are eternal? The Holy days of obligation are almost down to none. We're not reminded if we don't attend Mass, it's a sin. What religious instructions are taught in Catholic schools? I'm sure God wants us to go back to basics, teach us from the pulpit the sanctity of marriage and remind us that HELL is real. Priests are responsible for their flock and it's their duty to care for our souls and to guide us on the right path. God is asking us not to be afraid and we must evangelize and love, love, love. Do not judge but hate the sin, not the sinner.</p>
<p>To know more about Christ's teachings and not to veer from or change them - understand them more deeply and follow Christ - not the ways of the world. We are to be in the world and not of the world.</p>
<p>We should love God and our neighbours.</p>
<p>Plenary Council Response – [ - ] the Great parish Final Summary - [ - ] Question 1—What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Main Points after Prayer, Reflection, Listening and Sharing on [ - ] and further refinement What would Jesus ask us to do if he were sitting here now? WHAT • Led by the Spirit, to be people of Hope and Joy, bringing the message of Christ's Love to all. • Be joyful, welcoming and relevant inviting everyone to belong as we all take responsibility for the challenges facing us in Australia at this present time. HOW • How can we, as the people of God, work together to bring everyone to Him? • 'How can we be people of Faith, Hope, Love and Service, who are led by the Spirit?' ACTIONS • Listen and encourage others to listen to the Spirit. • Deepen our relationship with God, so that we can be "Christ to others" • Accept our responsibility, as laity, to take a prominent role in building the "Kingdom of God" • Proclaim the joyful message of the Beatitudes • Be accepting, open, generous in spirit, forgiving, merciful. • Tackle real challenges boldly and courageously- (migration-poverty- breakdown of trust, relevance, gender issues)</p>
<p>Accepting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders contribution to our Church. Inclusion of our youths who are missing. Also, those missing from the community who feel excluded. To right the wrongs of the abuse. liturgy that is relevant. Parishes belong to the parishioners. More pastoral care by clerics leaving more administration to the laity. A new priest in a parish should not be able to overturn what has previously been happening. There have been many instances where good works were being performed, and had been for some considerable time, but because they did not meet the new priest's personal approval, they were discontinued.</p>

To get back to traditional Church teaching on the commandments, sacraments, mortal sin and the 4 last things. To be radical and not to dilute authentic Catholic teaching with modernism and relativism. The Catholic Church has the only truth that everyone needs to be informed of to get to Heaven. God asks us to stop tampering with His truth and to remain a stand-alone religion with NO comparison to other beliefs!

What is God asking of us (the Church) in Australia at this time? I think God would want His Church in Australia—to have a higher profile, and to engage more in public discussion of its values via all available media, both old and new, and to allocate a significant budget for this purpose. To provide its members (and the community at large) with a better, simpler understanding of what it means to be Christian or Catholic in today’s world, requiring a review of the Christian doctrine/religious education given to our young people in our Catholic schools (both primary and secondary), at our Catholic universities, and in our Churches on Sundays. Focusing on the tenets of the Church directed at ‘loving God’ as much as on ‘loving our neighbour’, and thereby to give members of the Church the confidence of belonging to an organisation that is clear in its aims, objectives and beliefs. Speaks with one voice, and to conduct a high-profile on-going recruitment drive to attract applicants to the priesthood, [at the same time] establishing new, modern criteria and a shorter, less daunting qualifying period [for the priesthood]. To better utilise the goodwill, knowledge and expertise of Catholic laity by developing a visible, strong and respected high-level group of men and women, married and unmarried, including religious, to support the bishops in these review and education tasks and to emphasise and support the authority of the Archbishop in this area and in due course. To encourage members of this group (men and women with appropriate skills) to seek accreditation as ‘roving scholars’ to speak at parishes, including at week-end ‘communion’ services where a priest is not available, but also with increasing frequency to keep parishioners up to date on the Church’s position on matters of doctrine and issues of current interest. To accept that there are splinter groups within the Church focussed on ‘non-dogmatic’ matters and to treat them with respect, and to encourage ecumenism by developing, in conjunction with other willing Christian Churches, a list of shared beliefs that can be promulgated with confidence to the whole community.

A united Church NOT top heavy as it is now.

To recognise that a Church in which women have no real influence is destined to become irrelevant

Primarily I think the Catholic Church needs to learn from the mistakes it has made in the past, to embrace the insights of psychology, to be more inclusive of women throughout its hierarchy and for the Church in Australia to have a degree of autonomy in asserting its identity within the larger Catholic family.

I think God is telling us something like this: I created human beings, male and female. I created them, and you've decided that female of the species aren't worth as much as the male. You've not included them in my Church, you treat them as servants and have made men the masters, you even make women invisible by calling them men— brothers, sons, he, him, his. And what's worse, you blame me for it! You tell them it's my idea—that somehow, I live in men in some fuller way than I do in women who supposedly have no capacity to image me to my people. Stop it! And stop

<p>making me in your male image. Heal the Church. And heal the world which has sadly taken your lead.</p>
<p>That the Church be more inclusive of women in enabling women to have more say in the Church decision making. To become more proactive in looking after asylum seekers and refugees. Finding ways to involve families and teenagers to become more active members of the Church.</p>
<p>God is asking us to love Him, love his creation of which we are part, and especially love everyone no matter who they are and where they are, as He loves us.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be allowed to be more inclusive, to be allowed to participate in parish life more fully (in particular, women) thus allowing ordained priests to relinquish some of the administrative duties, and give them time to minister to the faithful.</p>
<p>I think God is saying that his representatives on earth, Church leaders and priests should start treating women with the dignity God intended, that is as equals. There is absolutely no justification for the men deciding that women can't be symbolic of Jesus. He was incarnated as a human being like all of us, wasn't he? If Jesus is primarily a gendered male rather than a human person, then half of humanity—the non-males aren't saved. And calling them men, sons and brothers doesn't get them saved if they are not included in Jesus humanity. I have not heard anyone preach on this from a pulpit ever. I suspect there is as much incredulity about this in the hierarchy as in the laity.</p>
<p>I think that God is asking us to return to the basics of the early Church, meeting for the Eucharist, really serving the poor and marginalised in our community and overseas, accepting women as equal in all roles and authority including ordination. Creation of funds for these works by selling assets, becoming a Church of the poor. Devolve centralised Roman authority and make each diocese responsible for its own operation.</p>
<p>Humility—bishops, priests and laity. Reliance on God for guidance. Church needs to more Christ like. How can the Church help build personal faith of its members? - The Church needs to be aware of community standards/expectations— For those of us who are still committed to our faith to be the shining lights for the Church. To be the best person that I can be in the place and time where I am. To provide a vehicle for teenagers to make a connection to the Church</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to seek for and live the Kingdom/Reign of God in a new way that speaks to our time and our people. To help the parishes by faith-education and development and understanding of our place in the evolving universe. To make our Church truly loving and compassionate, involving the laity in much of the decision-making and reaching out to those beyond our parish Church. To form priests who are compassionate to people, who learn to understand the complexities of life beyond the rules. To be inspired by our liturgies and homilies. To involve women in real positions of power and in the future to be ordained to an evolved form of priesthood. In the meantime, to ordain married men and especially those who have left priesthood to be married, and to allow men priests to marry lest the people be more and more deprived of the Eucharist which is happening now. And importing priests from other countries is not the answer when they are difficult to understand and do not understand or sympathise with the Australian culture. A Church without clericalism, as clericalism allows a newly-appointed priest (without any consultation with the parishioners) to come into a parish and change anything he so desires in the parish and the people who have been living there for decades may have no say</p>

about it. The parish is the people plus the priest, not the other way around. A Church where it is recognised that life is about learning, and that our faith needs to be continually learned about and deepened throughout our life. Year 12 level is not enough!

As an active, practicing loyal Catholic who belongs to a great parish with a welcoming parish priest and an inclusive community, I'd like to see:

\* An improved translation of the Mass. This one is clunky and not in good English. Reversion to the 1998 version is preferred.

\* Encouragement to young Catholics to become more involved. This could include subsidized education in their Faith, meetings for them to meet with other young Catholics across several parishes to share experiences, opportunities for them to share their faith with fellow parishioners younger than themselves. Employment for youth leaders in parishes.

\* Pope Francis is encouraging a move away from clericalism. In Melbourne, this would be helped if seminarians lived and worked in the community while they were undergoing their studies, and not in an enclosed seminary.

\* A greater role for women in decision-making and advisory roles in the Church, especially in seminaries.

\* Regular (annual at least) reflection days in parishes.

\* Opportunities for adult education in the Catholic Faith, perhaps short courses, not too academic, where adults can develop their understanding of the Scriptures, of Church History, of Vatican II.

\* Ordination of women and married men to the priesthood. \* Lay people to have a role in the selection of bishops within the diocese.

Stay away from materialistic world ... Follow JESUS' teachings ...

God is asking us to do no harm to the ocean, the earth, each other, children and to value the planet this earth, animals, Indigenous cultures, women, transgender, bishops, priests, children, differently abled as equal. Equally holy, equally able to participate in this earth and add unique value to each other.

A humble, simple Church close to the poor. Less hierarchical and less clerical in structure, power, decision making. More synodal with regular diocesan and parish councils with 50% women in decision-making positions. To facilitate a model of Church close to the people, abolish clerical dress especially soutanes and ancient models of habits. Less money spent on grand liturgies, Church spires and other "grand gestures" and more on outreach to the poor, homeless, those with mental illness, palliative, disability and aged care. Formation of priests in parishes not seminaries that perpetuate an elitist lifestyle not of service and life among the people. A new model of servant priesthood focused and the priesthood of the baptised. Let us face the failures of the past, the loss of youths, loss of Australian born Catholics, the abuse crisis and an increasingly irrelevant Church.

To stand up for our Christian beliefs as our society's values are slipping. We're living our Christian beliefs but we need to broadcast them more fully by using the media in a variety of ways. We need to take the Church to the community. God is asking us to be more welcoming, inclusive and

to reach out to those who no longer feel that they belong. He is also asking us to seriously consider the role of women in the Church today.

We discussed mainly two points - Leadership and Fellowship. We believe there needs to be a Clerical and Lay renewal. The Leadership of the Church must be seen from the top down. The Hierarchy must be in the forefront of the fight although they cannot do it alone. There must be a program, which can assist in the formation of the Laity in relation to its leadership. We must be seen as a united Church and must overcome the past and look forward to the future with a strong Leadership both Clerical and Laity. The another main point was Fellowship. This is the time to increase our social fellowship. We need to strengthen our corporate identity as the Body of Christ. We need to bring in as many people as possible. We need to show that the Catholic Church is both loving and caring. We need to develop Lay based groups who can assist in the formation of our faith. We must encourage more prayer - both private and community based - and have more contact with each other outside Sunday Mass. There seems to be a lack of social contact we one another. The Catholic Church has a rich history in caring and loving one another. We must start to reignite that in the Church.

He wants us to eliminate clericalism, empower laity and repair the governance failures of the Church.

To love and show love without judgement and discrimination. Numerous traditional laws of the Catholic Church has lost the depth and actual meaning of what we are asked by Jesus to do and how He lives His life here on earth. The simplest interpretation of His commandments to love is often confused by the self-righteous in the community. God is asking us to return to our core and fundamental beliefs and live our lives to show love, not condemnation. And to use love as a guiding principal in determining future of Church laws. Be open to changes which are needed even if impacts are significant and have courage to engage in robust discussions with various levels of the community.

Openness and accountability, inclusivity, commitment to social teaching and social justice...

I cannot even try to imagine what God is saying. But I know what Jesus said and is still saying. Welcome the stranger; do good to the poor, visit those in prison. Show compassion, be active and persevere. Be courageous. "I have come to light a fire on the earth and how I wish it were blazing already."

To praise and thank Him. Go back to basics: renew our hearts and mind daily; allow the Holy Spirit to move through our hearts in prayer and worship; respond with great gratitude and thanksgiving; to show compassion to the marginalized; and to open our hearts and not judge. God calls us to LOVE!! To be open in accepting other Church denominations. To be openhearted to help outsiders such as people who are marginalized in our society, to experience the love of Christ. Since the time of Christ, the Church has taught that we are living in the end times. This is true now more than ever; because we are now living at the end of the end times. God's words to us are stated in the words to the seven Churches in Revelation 3 (1-6, 14-22): "you have the reputation of being alive, even though you are dead! So wake up, and strengthen what you have before it dies completely. Remember what you were taught ... obey it and turn from your sins ... you are neither hot nor cold ... you do not know how miserable and pitiful you are ... buy gold from me ..." In this way, Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit are asking of us that we return to the faith and action of the

early Church, when believers were recognized for their love, their fearlessness in sharing the wondrous news of God's love for us, and their concern for people in need (rather than concern for their own comfort). In those days, abstinence and fasting (from life's pleasure including food, entertainment, and 'me' time) were done out of love and a desire to deepen relationship with God and to set aside wealth, comfort, and time, to be able to share with others. The Church is not leading us in these things when the focus is just on Mass and sacraments; these are dead and cold events in parishes that are not alive and actively encouraging and providing leadership in caring for people in need. If parishes are not organising most or all parishioners into missionary activity, the parish is dead; if parishioners are merely encouraged to ponder God's call in their own lives, the parish is without Godly leadership. If parishioners think they will get to heaven simply through attending sacraments without being living sacraments, they will be met by Jesus saying "Get away from me; I do not know you." There are some commentators who say we are in the last ten years of the end times; whether true or not for the world, it is always true for many individuals; so now is the time to arise from our couches, switch off our TVs, pray for and trust in God's providence and serve others in need. To praise and thank Him. Go back to basics: renew our hearts and mind daily; allow the Holy Spirit to move through our hearts in prayer and worship; respond with great gratitude and thanksgiving; to show compassion to the marginalized; and to open our hearts and not judge. God calls us to LOVE!! To be open in accepting other Church denominations. To be open-hearted to help outsiders such as people who are marginalized in our...

Answer:

- To stem the tide of people leaving the Catholic Church by moving from being an INWARD-looking Church based on dogma and rules to one with an OUTWARD focus which values people and draws them in.
- To develop a Jesus-centred theology which encompasses a 21st century world view of who we are as human beings, i.e. less focus on the Old Testament and more on a cosmic centred Christology.
- To recognise that all members of the Church are baptized as 'priest, prophet and king' in the Body of Christ. The clergy need to be more oriented towards the 'servant' approach (much less clericalism) and more responsibility should be adopted by the laity to promote the Church's mission.

I believe God is asking us to be credible witnesses to Jesus Christ, to live by his guidance, and to depend on the Holy Spirit. We need to learn how to discern what we need to do. This is achieved by being members of a group of believers who worship together, and also to spend personal time in prayer and growing in faith by reading and reflecting on the scriptures.

Firstly, I think the outcomes of Vatican II need to be revisited, and reawakened. The major milestones included in key documents seem to be poorly understood by many Catholics including clergy. So there needs to be some emphasis on implementation including teaching and practical action plans. If there are no practical action plans to implement changes, Vatican II (and Plenary 2020) will not have optimal outcomes for the future. The big issue for me is that the Christian family needs to be reunited. There are multiple denominations in close proximity in many areas of Australia, with little communication or co-operation between various congregations. The collective Christian Church in Australia would appear to be over-capitalised, at the same time as

under-achieving in caring for the poor and marginalised. My hope would be that the Catholic Church could provide a leadership role to reunite all Christians as a single family. The approach needs to be more than "dialogue". It needs to be focused on actions that lead Christians to work together. I note that there are some physical Churches (e.g. Aireys Inlet in Victoria) which are shared by several denominations. My thought is that the idea of local denominations sharing a Church could help to bring Christians physically together at the same time as freeing assets and resources that could be used for practical Christian projects (e.g. housing for the homeless or refugees. The approach to change could be phased to start with one or few case studies, with early learnings applied to later projects. And along the way, I believe that some effort needs to be directed towards development of liturgical opportunities for Christians of different denominations to worship together on a level playing field. Is it possible that Catholics and other denominations can "keep the Sabbath day holy" by worshiping together at a mutually agreed service. As was envisaged by Jesus when he said "Do this in remembrance of me". Jesus did not ask for debates about sacraments, apostolic succession, the lunar cycles which determine Easter or any other of the myriad divisive issues which seem to divide Christians. If it is possible for Christians to overcome their differences, then there is hope for the separated brothers and sisters in other Religions to also contemplate live and work together for peace and harmony. Can Christians become good Samaritans to each other first? And then onward as good shepherds to the rest of humanity. If Jesus lived in Australia today, how would he use his local Church? How would he get on with diverse believers? How would he get on with diverse unbelievers? Would he be happy to see multiple wealthy Churches, with tribal congregations content to ignore the homeless, the mentally ill, the addicted and other marginalised? Or would Jesus call for action, for change, for great reversal of the status quo. My hope is that the Plenary will open the doors to winds of change. And Christian Unity.

CHANGE! Above all change. The recent Royal Commission into institutional child sexual abuse has been unequivocal in its condemnation of the Church in Australia. The Holy Spirit is at work in the secular—bringing the sacred to account. Until the Church effects major change, it has no credible voice across Australia. The Mass resignation offer of the Chilean bishops is instructive in this regard. The clear outcome of the Royal Commission is the absolute failure of the governance of our Church. The contemporary notion of a bishop as shepherd protecting the smallest of the flock is preposterous. The scandal of the way our Church interfaces with women (the numerical majority of the faithful) constitutes the first governance detail to be addressed. This needs to be done expeditiously. *Almae In Fide Parentis*—in the care of a loving mother. The very notion that women have been excluded for centuries from Church governance in the vital matter of the care of the most vulnerable (our children) is ridiculous and self-contradictory. If we address governance, the rest will follow. Above all—we need a Gospel Church. Jesus eschewed authority, institutions, rules and regulations. His approach was to love. We need to shift the Church accordingly. I believe that is what God wishes for us here in Australia.

To decide how we want our Church to be. To determine why so many Catholics do not value being part of a parish community. To ensure the Church follows the cross with vertical approaches praising God and with horizontal approaches reaching out to the community. To inspire hope. To avoid becoming merely an insipid social justice and political conduit. To remember that whilst

including all people, the Church needs to support those who have been in the Church all along as well. No preferences.
Eliminate clericalism.
I believe God expects us to be a caring faith-based people. Open our eyes to the challenges that face us re our faith and be very aware of the lack of inspiration our younger family members have.
To guide the Church to a more pastoral approach in guiding the faithful through their journey of life.
The governance within the parish has to change. WE cannot expect the parish priest to have all the answers regarding staff, finance, and should be left to concentrate on the spirituality side of the parish and have those with the skills to look after the day-to-day running of the parish. We are all part of the Church and called to be missionary and going out to others. It is when people feel they belong is when they will feel part of the Kingdom of God.
1) To return to the language of the Gospel rather than that of dogma and law; to recover the spirituality of the Gospel and affirm inclusiveness and equality (vs masculine language and structures); to be a simpler and humbler Church 2) To engage lay people, especially women, at every level of the Church's life, mission and decision-making; to reform the model of priesthood and priestly training so as to emphasise pastoral and personal skills; to reform canon law so as to allow married priests and women deacons (even priests), to redefine the role of bishops, and to discontinue priests as employers of school staff; to open up vocational pathways 3) To be a Church of mercy and justice that speaks up for the poor and for the environment and engages ecumenically with other Christian and faith traditions; to be welcoming parish communities that encourage families, practise faith-sharing and are open to diverse cultural traditions; to connect with young people and their passion for justice 4) To restore the practice of the Third Rite of Reconciliation; adopt the 1998 translation of the Roman Missal
God is asking Catholics, to raise the attendance at Sunday Mass. This will require making the presentation of the Mass more interesting, more attractive. Years ago, we all came to Mass because we were terrified we would go to hell if we did not. Now we have got over that, we need to have a reason to go, at least not a reason not to go. The readings need to be easily discernible as to have a meaning for us, a message and one that is relevant. Many times, we have something quite irrelevant, such as Genesis 1, which is a ridiculous statement, in this day and age. Then we have Revelation, which is in a form of code, yet read out on many Sundays, as if it is truth; even if you can work out what the 7 Candlesticks are referring to, or the various animals with various horns on their heads, let alone the dragon's tail dragging one third of the stars from the sky, who wants to work it out on Sunday morning and really, who cares? Then there is the start of Mathew's Gospel, "The Genealogy of Jesus Christ." The history, with all the generations, is that of Joseph, so it is not relevant to Jesus, so is incorrect. Now we do not expect the Church to change the Bible but surely, we do not have to listen to the same stuff repeated time and again. It is not relevant, it is not interesting. Why would I/we want to come back every Sunday to listen to this? Then we get St. Paul telling us that "now we are in the last days" and "husbands should act as though they are not husbands" (and I do not expect he is suggesting that we should spend our evenings in the pub). And frequently, when we do get a reading that is interesting and could do with expansion, instead of explaining it, the priest will direct his sermon to another topic

altogether, maybe an appeal or a Saint's Feast. It would also make sense if the three readings were all centred on the same subject and clearly so, which would make more sense of the readings; at least we can then understand why and where they are coming from. If we were just sitting there in "a cloud of not knowing", why would we want to come back? The Sunday morning business show is much more relevant, important ... and the Sports show is much more interesting. The Church is now in the competition of marketing the Sunday Mass. If the authorities do not see it this way, then men (and naturally, their wives and families, at least after a while), will not come either. Ideally there would be a single message we could be given from the readings, brought together and explained, expanded upon by the sermon. Something meaningful, not critical or virtually impossible for "the average Joe." The Mass should not be too long; really for Sunday Mass, I personally dislike the "High Mass" style chanting, sung Mass, which some Churches are introducing. O.K. for 11am, or Noon Mass, for the "oldies", (of which I am one!), but not for the earlier Masses. It would be interesting to introduce one "normal week day" style (half hour) Mass each Sunday, or one per month and see how many come.

This is a hellishly difficult question to answer. Could you give me some examples of what is considered a "suitable" spiritual answer? The fundamental message of Jesus Christ is "Love one another as I have loved you" still stands today. This means social justice for all and care for our environment. Love our fellow man and love our world. Any rules or laws must hold this as its central core for all decision making. It seems that if I answer this question from my heart, asking for change in our Church in practical ways that this is not considered spiritual enough!!

Obey His commands "Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ." Mat 23:10 "Teach them to observe all the commands I gave you." Mat 28:20 Reform to • a more human Church • a humbler Church • a less clerical Church • a more inclusive Church (and therefore more truly Catholic) • a more open Church • a Church which finds unity in diversity • a Church which discovers its whole tradition • a Church which truly reflects the person and values of Jesus. The reform needed by the Church today will involve much more than just "tinkering around the edges". Issues such as the authoritarian nature of the Church, compulsory celibacy for the clergy, the participation of women in the Church, the teaching on sexuality in all aspects cannot be brushed aside. Listening must be a key component of reform and at times that will involve listening to unpalatable truths. It needs to be recognised that all wisdom does not reside exclusively in the present all male leadership of the Church and that the voices of the faithful must be heard. At Easter, I pointed out that it was largely Jesus' female disciples who stood by him dying on Calvary, that Mary Magdalene was the first witness to the resurrection and that she could legitimately be called an apostle in that she was sent to bring the good news to the other followers of Jesus. I wondered aloud if the Church would be in its present state of crisis if women had been part of the decision-making in the life of the Church. 1) Bishop [ - ], [ - ]

A Church finding its home with the poor—open to the weak and aware of its own vulnerability, which is transparent, inclusive and lives and proclaims the Gospel, linking liturgy with the life of its people. Consequences of this posture include strengthened structures of lay governance, including parish councils and schools and a greater role for women at all levels - both in exercising governance and, ideally, in ordination at all levels. Proper formation of all clergy in line with this should be a priority and married priests should be considered. In line with the ideals of transparency and responsiveness, those exercising governance (whether clerical or lay) should be

<p>accountable to the members of the Church. We also recognise that the Church, like Australian society as a whole, is a many-splendored phenomenon with people of many ethnic, social and other backgrounds, including people with disability and diverse sexual orientation. The Church needs to be open to these experiences as well as to other Christian communities and those of other religions. liturgy, too, needs to reflect this, with liturgical language, which reflects the life of the people (rather than simply attempting direct translations from Latin).</p>
<p>More spiritual activities in our Church like Novenas, praise and worship, Mass on All Souls Days, etc. People meeting and greeting each other after Mass. By meeting people, you make friends and come to know them. Helping each other whenever we can. In groups of 2-3, visit the sick. Fellowship. Making money for the Church by having canteens, raffles, etc. Youth Groups.</p>
<p>Role of women in the Church, Welcoming Church to all rather than a Church defined by doctrines and rules.</p>
<p>We think God is asking us to: - Treat others the way you would want to be treated - Attend Mass - Love one another - To be fruitful and reproduce between man and woman - Follow 10 Commandments - Preach the word of God - Do what Jesus would do - Live our lives freely</p>
<p>To respect others, treat others equally and fairly, help others in need and work together as a community.</p>
<p>To Make the Catholic Church more relevant and inclusive of the contemporary Australian society. The rigidity of the laws of the Church need to be changed to include people who are divorced, transgender, homosexual, those who have had an abortion, used contraception and not judge others for their appearance. Allow local musicians to play and create a welcoming environment. The hymns need to be relevant and updated so young people can feel like they can sing along to the tunes that mean something to them. For parish members who are new to feel at ease as music brings our society together.</p>
<p>We think God is asking us to be more loving, equal, and inclusive of all, regardless of any differences we might have, and how we can regularly think about, listen to, and act with people in the minority.</p>
<p>Treat everyone equally and live in harmony no matter your race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, sexual identity.</p>
<p>In our discussion, there were several key ideas that we felt to be most important. There is a dire need for change in the ways that the Church operates. It is currently a clerical structure in which ordained men hold all the power, make all the decisions and control how the Church responds to the needs of people in today's world. We feel very strongly that the voices of women are all but invisible in real decision-making. There needs to be a change so that the roles of priests are clear and restricted to being pastors and presiders. Their role is separate to that of the laity but needs to work alongside in partnership. Parish councils should run parishes with priests being there to support them rather than to dominate and direct. There are some wonderful priests out there and we are grateful to them but as it stands, how a parish functions is entirely dependent on who the priest is. A new priest comes in and brings changes without consultation. At present, our Church is simply a clerical structure rather than an organisation run by and for the people of God. We need to address the shortage of priests in a realistic and sensible way. The obvious solution is to enable</p>

priests to be married. It seems like such a nonsense at present that a married priest can come to us from the Anglican Church and our own priests leave us in order to marry (and often become Anglican priests!) Bringing men from third world countries, who sometimes struggle with the cultural differences, and who are needed in their own countries is not a solution. The maintenance of a male celibate priesthood has taken priority over the needs of the provision of the Eucharist to Catholics. We also wondered about the type of training that men are receiving in the seminaries and how well this prepares them to be in partnership with people in local parishes. All too often they seem to be more comfortable with the type of elitist clericalism that separates rather than works alongside others. It is of concern to us that the voices of lay people, especially those of women and young people are not heard. Although women's ordination appears to be a long way off, this should not mean that women don't have an active role in decision making. Why can't it be that the Church's governance structures include women? Lay people? Young people? The sexual abuse crisis has devastated the lives of so many people. It is not restricted to the Catholic Church but what many faithful Catholics have found most difficult is the Church response of protection of the perpetrators and refusal to do what is necessary to support survivors. The extent of the abuse demands a change to our clerical structures, lack of transparency, decision-making process and the exclusion of women from meaningful engagement in decision making. We feel that the Church has been stuck in an immature stage of faith in which lay people are infantilized, and rules and regulations take precedence over compassion, inclusion and forgiveness.

Group 1 • Break down the barriers / go outside and embrace the lepers • Not be exclusive • Deeds speak louder than words = community service • Sell the positive message of what the Church already does in the community • We need a different model of Church—more community and less authoritarian • priests need to be spiritual leader but not running a business such as a parish o Let clergy focus on the spiritual aspects • Change Canon law to empower parishioners to live their vocation—embraced the reforms of Vatican II • Share the good news of faith and empower people as communities, not as individuals o All are called in different ways and have different talents • Seek to heal the broken people in society • Tap into the (need for) a sense of peace and community Group 2 • How can we better live out our faith in a secular society? • What steps can we take to connect with the wider community especially in the area of spirituality and prayer? Group 3 • God asks us to help the marginalised o Be active o Reach out o Service o Participate o Be accepting o Enjoy life o Find positivity o Finding goodness in all things and all people Group 4 • To put the emphasis on relationships rather and buildings and rules • To be more inclusive in every sense • To be more innovative—put plans in place to implement the desired changes • Pride in being part of the Catholic community whilst acknowledging our mistakes and failures • More emphasis on Youth involvement through youths groups sporting clubs, etc. • Church connecting more with our local community—in this case, Greythorn • Is there a real desire on the part of the hierarchy for the laity to have a meaningful involvement? o What limitations have been placed on involvement o Is this just a window dressing exercise? God would appear to be calling for this not to be the case!

We believe that what God is asking of us is to have the bravery and strength of purpose to speak our true minds and express our inner thoughts on where we want the Church in Australia to be heading from here on.

I think to follow Jesus' example. Although he was without sin and everyone else may be flawed; individuals to do the best we can to follow Jesus' example and live the way he did.
To return to Catholic traditions, real truths in the homilies (not wishy-washy rehash of the Gospel reading), real Catholic teaching in the schools and in the homilies i.e. mortal sins against fertility, chastity and indissolubility of marriage, the extreme importance of the sacraments, regular confession and salvation only through the Catholic Church.
He would like us to love each other and treat everyone with respect.
Asking us to be kind to one another and be a massive neutral force in time of conflict.
Married priests and woman priests. Transparency of the Plenary process. Greater role of the laity. Modify the Mass to attract younger people and young marrieds. To update the Church Doctrine and rules to reflect the 21st century expectations of people. Church Hierarchy to accept that most doctrine and Church rules are man-made and not derivatives of Gospels.
God is asking us to be Christians in action through leading by example.
Today we focused on connecting and making people feel included and engaged with liturgy—many of the rituals associated with the Mass and clerical vestments have developed over time and, indeed were originally based on the garments of Roman Pagan priests. The garb of bishops separates them from the people. They should take note of the example of Pope Francis with the way he dresses. The Mass, re-look at its structure—rewrite the prayers in straight forward language without all the Churchy ... [flowery] ... language. This includes collect, prayer over the gifts, preface, Eucharistic prayers, prayer after communion.—Readings, re-look at these; offer more alternatives and some more shorter forms. Also include an opportunity for additional (optional) modern readings from people like Cardinal Newman, etc.--relax the restrictions on music in liturgy, including funerals. Train priests to give better and more relevant homilies. Perhaps have opportunities for priests to get feedback from neutrals, their congregations. Make sure all are welcome. Remove the rules on who can receive communion—leave that to God.
God is asking of us to bring about the removal of poverty, as the poverty rates in Australia are currently too high and there are hundreds of thousands struggling Australians at the moment.
To be patient and kind to everyone you see.
God is asking us to care for one another and spread the word of his teachings.
I think God is asking people of Australia to not forget about the poor and disadvantaged of the world, to provide them with support and assistance and to come together to support those in need.
I reckon God is asking us to reform the Church to better suit His people's needs. Such as allowing female authorities to have a say in making important decisions that would affect the Church.
We believe that the heart of the Christian life is growing ever deeper into union with the Trinity. The Catholic Church must therefore firstly promote this, and then from this all else, such as how one lives, ministers, prays, treats others, and how the Church governs itself, will flow. The Catholic Church is not an end in itself, as the Institutional Church can sometime appear to be, but rather should facilitate people seeing what the "end" is, and how to walk ever more deeply into knowing and living that. Catholics have a rich spiritual heritage, but unfortunately many or most people in

the pews think the Mass is the only form of Catholic liturgy, and many experience the Mass as "boring" and feel uninvolved and feel they are simply onlookers. While the Mass is supposed to be, and should be, the "source and summit" of Catholic faith, for many Churchgoers it is something to "tick off" on Sundays, and therefore fails in its purpose (simply saying something is source and summit does not make it so). For many people, it also does not promote a relationship with God. While devotional prayer has its place, it can also sometimes fail to facilitate one's coming to know God in a deeper way. Therefore we need to (1) review the format of the Mass, looking at how it can be made more participative, engaging and communal, and the prayers more accessible (while keeping the sacramental nature and without it becoming simply "liturgical entertainment"); (2) promote alternate forms of liturgy (communion services do not count as alternate forms of liturgy) that tap into our rich spiritual tradition, and into the Scriptures (we need to be careful not to venture into "shallow" prayer formats though); (3) promote forms of prayers that build a genuine relationship with the Divine, e.g. Lectio Divina and other Scriptural-based prayer formats, and Christian meditation.

Plenary Council Response—SRO –CEM Nov 26th 2018 Question 1—What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Main Points after prayer, reflection, listening and sharing. Led by the Spirit, God is asking us to: • be people of hope and joy, bringing the message of Christ's love to all • be joyful, welcoming and relevant inviting everyone to belong as we all take responsibility for the challenges facing us in Australia at this present time • cherish the gift of Creation • be relevant, renewed and re-imagined as we respond to others, remembering the command of Jesus - "Love one another as I have loved you."

God is asking the Church to return to the New Testament, the message of the Gospels, as its fundamental guide, touchstone, defining characteristic. God is asking how could the Church, founded on these principles, depart so far from them? God is asking the members of the Church (ordained and lay) to identify how and why the formal organisation of the Church could have knowingly allowed the sexual abuse of thousands of innocent children to occur over many years; not just in Australia but worldwide, and not just at the level of the individual "bad apple" priest, but at the very top, at Diocesan and Vatican level. God is asking why, in an organisation pledged to do His Will, to protect the weak, to tell the truth, that it took an external secular authority, the Royal Commission, to elicit the truth. God is asking us to identify the systemic/fundamental causes within the structure and operation of the Church which led to this behaviour that is totally at odds with His will and thus the mission of the Church. God is asking us to be brave and to face difficult questions; to take this opportunity to reform the structure and operation of the Church to ensure it follows God's "rule book", the Gospels, not the rules made by man in the interests of man, the Canon Law. God is asking why, when Paul established so clearly that there was no distinction between Jews and Gentiles (the One God serves all nations), the Church today continues to discriminate between males and females? God is asking why, when Jesus is the light of the world and Jesus taught so clearly that evil flourishes in the dark, and good in the light, that the Church keeps so many secrets and refuses to release documents to secular legal authorities investigating sexual abuse cases. God is asking why, when Jesus taught that the first shall be last and last first, and that weakness in worldly terms is strength in God's terms, that the Church is so concerned with power and authority. Fundamentally, God is asking us whether the Church is behaving as Jesus would behave were he here. The answer is a resounding and deafening "NO". God is asking the Church leaders to understand and accept this conclusion, to abandon the power

model of Church and become weak so that they and the entire Church may become strong, and thus be able to fulfil its missionary role.

1. Servant Leadership: we believe God is calling us to be a humble Church with a leadership structure that is truly one of servant leadership, without any sign of clericalism. We believe Church leadership must embrace the equality of both men and women—with an openness to the ordination of married men to the priesthood and women (at least) to the diaconate. 2. The language of liturgy and sacraments We believe that God’s call to humility must be reflected in the language we use in our worship. Our strong recommendation is that the Australian Church adopts the 1998 translation of the Roman Missal, because the language of the 2011 translation seems pompous and convoluted. Also that we adopt the Revised New Jerusalem Bible for a new Australian lectionary. Regarding the sacraments, we recommend that the Third Rite of Reconciliation be re-introduced. 3. Open the Windows to the World We believe God is calling us to look outward to the modern world with the face of Mercy. As a servant Church, this is seen by our spirit of justice for the poor, for asylum seekers and refugees, and for the earth itself. If we take Laudato Si seriously, we will adopt practical measures to protect our earth because it is always the poor who are most affected by climate change. 4. Broad Representation: We believe the Australian Church would be better served by the Plenary Council’s decision-making body being open to a greater number of non-clerical members.

In Australia at this time, God is asking of us to return to the essence of our faith. We are all called to be people who are authentic, inclusive, loving, caring, listening and forgiving in our actions. This means being a Church that is inclusive of all people, whatever their situation or experience. To achieve this we will need radical change of the whole Church structure. We are being called to turn things upside-down to rediscover Christ’s message.

to commit to the reform agenda of Vatican II to de-institutionalise the Church to take a far more robust stand against secularism to promote social justice in much more practical ways

We are a Gospel and Life group who gather to pray, read Scripture, and to discuss our lives and support each other in this context. We have two key areas which we think that we, as parish, are called to by the Holy Spirit. The first is to love each other. This cannot be a narrow calling because our loving actions ripple out in bigger and bigger waves, often in ways we don’t see. The second is to pray. We are called to pray together and in our parish we do this very well. We have many small groups that pray and work together, and we are blessed with wonderful leaders (priest, deacon, pastoral associate) who are very prayerful and loving. However, we feel that our personal lives would be enriched if we could all pay more attention to Jesus during the day. We know that our whole parish, community and town would be even more blessed and attractive to others if we could commit ourselves to prayer. Love and prayer are our gifts from God and we thank God for each other.

Listen to all ages and the different faiths.

How can we help to keep the Church in Australia alive and active? People need to allow time for God and things of the Spirit in their lives in a very busy materialistic world. But also what needs to change within the structure of the Church itself to encourage and nurture this? Starting at the top—The Vatican needs to allow for optional celibacy within the Catholic Church. While some issues could be—how would the priest financially support a family? Or how would people feel

they could confide in a priest who has a spouse? These issues are managed within other Christian Churches now in the 21st century. Other caring professions such as doctors, psychologists have an understanding with their spouse that issues shared or debriefed within the marriage stays within that couple. Celibacy was only made compulsory a thousand years ago. Having a spouse would give priests support and companionship and alleviate loneliness. As in other professions, having a combination of both male and female usually leads to a more balanced view of the world—much as in political, educational, health and other spheres of life today. Priests need more support, both personal and professional, including ongoing professional development and compulsory supervision. bishops need more ability to make local/cultural decisions rather than having to refer to the Vatican. Laity: both men and women need to be able to take on more roles within the Church. This would support the priests especially allowing him to focus on key sacramental and pastoral roles. There is a big need to support the youths, sick, lonely and disadvantaged of our parishes and community. Young people need a Church with priests and laity able to relate to their needs, not just within the Mass but also within their lives and activities. Young marrieds have very busy lives, juggling work, family, finances, educational and sporting needs of their families. Their needs to be creative ways to reach out and connect them to parishes. Their stated focus is usually family, friends, work, and technology—with little time left for Church matters. Reconciliation: the hierarchy needs to really listen to the people and learn how to build trust again after the scandals of clerical abuse—the lives ruined both physically and psychologically. There is a need for real accountability and openness within Church management. bishops need to listen with compassion and empathy. Not just, say 'sorry' but 'do' sorry.

On a diocesan level each parish, the ideal model into the future would be a caring, welcoming community (as a group) where people are kind and loving to each other in deep respect of their common shared Catholic faith. A helpful outreaching fellowship in which some of our separated brethren witness. A parish that has an ecumenical engagement with other Christian local churches, reaching out to our non-believers in our neighbourhood. A parish where children learn about their Catholic faith, if need be outside school hours, similar to say a St. George Preca style, which he started in Malta. A strong unanimous consensus was that the Church should only employ committed and practicing Catholics in Catholic schools! For Adults a continued and ongoing Catholic formation and the implications on social and moral aspects, such as IVF, Surrogacy, transgender fluidity ideology, etc. A means for the Church to encourage the proper use of social media (for spreading the faith and its Christian values) as well as the education of parents (for a good example) to help their children who often are addicted to games and engagement to an obsessive level. A Church that is seen to mirror a love of the poor, helping refugees and making them feel welcome on a parish level. Engage the youths in a parish as they are potentially the future of our Church and to make them a priory. A plea was made that our elderly parishioners should be heard because they have had a life lived experience in Catholic living and wisdom in life and parish skills.

God is "Truth"! His truth can never change. There are things, which should never change or should never have changed. We, as people of God, need to go back to the real thing our Lord Jesus Christ has started. The Holy Catholic Church and its people need to stop being lukewarm and should follow our Lord's footsteps. He told us 100% how we ought to live our lives. The holy Catholic Church needs to go back to its roots. The Latin Rite Mass should be reinstated in every parish. The Novus Ordo Mass has no future, as we can see in the empty pews of most Churches. Our children

and young people need and want strong leaders, namely holy priests, who can lead all of us on this narrow path of truth to Heaven. As you know, God's path is a narrow one where as the Devil's path is like a highway. May the Holy Spirit guide us into the right direction. God bless!

To connect and engage with all Australians through Catholic Media and through "Catholic Social" e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Change and Reform of the Church and its practices in Australia.

That we focus on why we follow the Lord, as extraneous matters often take preference in a parish, rather than our devotional practices. Insist that priests are accountable for their actions—to the law, to fellow clergy and to their congregations. Consider ordination of women and married clergy. Parish priest's role should be as pastor to his people, with administration, fundraising, maintenance, etc. to be managed by a Committee of parishioners. 3rd rite of reconciliation to be offered regularly, with 'mortal' sins to be confessed in the sacrament of Reconciliation. Catholics who have been considered marginalized are to be free to choose whether they receive Eucharist and participate in Catholic Ceremonies and parish life. Strive towards greater unity of all Christian faiths, Ecumenism. We are becoming marginalized in the generally community and need to stand together to move forward and show the world why we are Christian.

In Australia, at this time, we believe the Catholic Church's understanding of sexuality needs to move from a principle based to a relationship based teaching. • In the light of the sexual abuse crisis, it is an appropriate time for our Church teaching on sexual morality to have a complete overhaul. It seems that much of the teaching is based on dualism and couched in absolutes. There is no room for shades of grey. The insights of our secular society on sexuality suggest that it is much more complex than was previously thought. • The statements in the Catholic Catechism (articles 2357, 2359) on homosexuality show how far the Church is out of touch with the real experience of homosexual persons. They do not experience themselves as disordered and demanding that they be chaste when expressing love for a partner is naive. • That a number of countries have legislated for same sex marriage shows that the understanding of many people, the *sensus fidei*, has changed in the light of current knowledge of the human person. • Church teaching on birth control is largely ignored by the current generation of married or partnered Catholics. The procreation of children is no longer seen as the primary purpose of marriage. To have children is a decision that parents make. • That people want to change their gender has become quite newsworthy in recent times. Does this imply that gender may be associated with genes rather than physical organs? As Church, we need to be cautious and hesitant in pronouncing on such matters. We don't want another Galileo affair. • There is a disjunction between what we teach on sexuality and human experience and practice. Various fields of science are shedding new light and understanding on the human person. Thus the social norms of years ago which have been built into our sexual morality need to be abandoned. Furthermore, basing teaching on Scripture needs to be done with care. We ought to be certain that the teaching is not time and culturally conditioned. • Given that much of Church teaching on sexuality is not observed, it needs to move from a principle based to a relationship based teaching with an emphasis on promoting the health and wellbeing of relationships: between husband and wife, between family members, between neighbours, between people in all sorts of situations and contexts. This is where the pastoral energy of our Church needs to be directed as stated in paragraph 52 of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.

In Australia, at this time, we believe the Catholic Church's understanding of priestly ministry needs radical reform • The number of ordained priests in Australia is declining and this trend shows no sign of reversing. The sexual abuse crisis will probably accentuate this decline. It has led to: o The stop gap measure of combining parishes under one priest o Importing priests from foreign cultures with the consequent pastoral problems • The current practice expects the priest to be: o The leader of the parish community o A compassionate and understanding pastor who is able to relate effectively to people o A dispenser of the sacraments especially leading the Eucharistic celebration o A clear and lucid exponent of homilies—the teaching function o A capable administrator • Pope Francis has reminded us that the fundamental Christian sacrament is not ordination but baptism and the Church is not the Church of the ordained but of all the baptised. • Since very few priests/people are able to exercise all of these functions with sufficient expertise it is time to consider how best these functions might be carried out and which function if any requires ordination. o The leadership of the community would be best carried out by a team: it would coordinate the liturgical, sacramental and pastoral activities of the parish community. o The administrator would be a full time employee of the parish and would be a member of the leadership team with good interpersonal skills. o Some parishioners who are regular Mass goers and have leadership qualities could lead the Eucharistic celebration with a little training. There could be a group of such people in the parish, at least sufficient in number so that each of the Sunday Eucharist could be led by a different leader. o The person who preaches the homily requires more specialised training in the scriptures and expertise in elucidating them. While not necessary the leader of the Eucharistic celebration could also be the homilist. o The parish community needs a focus. This will be a person with leadership and interpersonal skills, a person who can inspire others and encourage them to participate in various aspects of parish life. This person could most appropriately be the ordained minister and would be a member of the leadership team. His appointment would be discerned and chosen by the parish community/administrative team/representatives of the parish community. • None of these functions needs to be a lifetime commitment, none of them requires a commitment to celibacy, none of them is gender specific. • This model prevents the cancer of clericalism occurring and destroys the silly notion of ordination conferring an ontological difference. • What is not considered in this model is the management of Church resources by the People of God. This issue was not examined at the second Vatican Council and is still understood to be a privilege reserved for the ordained.

Called to be—welcoming in all aspects transformed and changed inclusive of all communicative in relevant/everyday language outward reaching, in particular, aspects of social justice. The topic we chose to explore further was that of 'welcome'. People shared their experiences of times when they experienced, or didn't experience, welcome within our Church. The sign of peace given to newcomers during Mass, but no-one stops to speak to them afterwards. The parishioner who says 'Hello. Are you new?' to receive the answer 'No, I've been here in the parish seven years'. The parents with young children at Mass—how do other parishioners make them feel welcome when they are fearful the littlies will be too noisy, etc.? As a newcomer to our parish, people are welcomed at the welcome table, but not followed up, e.g. no suggestion that a newcomer would welcome the opportunity to 'sign up' as a registered parishioner. As a newcomer to our schools, families are welcomed and invited to morning coffee and friendship grows. Poor communication often hampers a welcoming attitude—school family did not stay for Mass when parishioner

insisted on their rostered duty of lector, rather than stepping back and welcoming the other. The parents who struggle to get youths to Mass, but that Mass is celebrated as though everyone there is the same—what can change in our worship to be more inviting and welcoming to younger people? Welcome experienced by the non-Catholic partner—the whole atmosphere of the Catholic school offers a warm welcome. Reflection: welcoming is not simply us, welcoming everyone else, doing our utmost to invite others into relationship with us. Welcoming cannot stop at the invitation. That is only one aspect of a welcoming attitude. True welcoming is ongoing and constant, needing to be fostered with relentless outreach to the other. Welcoming has a second aspect—those being welcomed need to want to be welcomed. They need to see something that attracts them into wanting a sense of belonging and relationship with us. As a Church, we are being called to have a good look at ourselves, to see ourselves as others see us, to see ourselves as the world sees us, and to reassess what might need to change or be transformed in order that we, as the Australian Church, might be as at welcoming as Jesus Himself was.

Called To be: empathetic nurturing in all our relationships inclusive of all intentional in living our faith understanding our faith is one of service. We chose to explore the topic of inclusivity. Sharing our stories, we heard of broken marriages, and how people move through their brokenness to acceptance and renewed life. [We heard] of children who are different, and how parents, teachers, siblings come to view differences as being grace-filled. [We heard] young adults, who struggle with various challenges and finally make good. [We heard] of how families face and accept homosexual members with love, respect and dignity. [We heard] of different ways in which people are brought into the Catholic community and the Church. Sharing and Reflecting on these stories, we came to a deeper appreciation that to be totally inclusive is not simply about not including people from all spheres of life and circumstance. Rather, it involves, welcoming others with joy and respect for the face of God to be found in the other; being empathetic to the needs and circumstances of others; nurturing relationships with Jesus into existence; and to support those relationships with love, compassion and understanding. There was a strong sense that what God is calling us to at this time, is to become a people for whom faith is an intention—we, as people of the Church, are being called to have the intention of living our beliefs with strength and determination, and choosing to do so on a daily basis.

To follow Jesus and His commandments—such as love God above all and your neighbour as yourself. Your neighbour is all other people in this world. We have a duty to take care of and protect all of God's creation.

God is asking us to repent and to recognise that sin is real. He is asking us to show greater reverence for the Eucharist. He wants us to affirm that marriage is the permanent union of one man and one woman. He wants us to honour Him through greater beauty in the liturgy. He wants us to teach our children the full truth of the Catholic faith so that they know what the teachings of the Church are. He wants us to affirm the importance of fatherhood in the life of the family and the Church. He wants our bishops to have clarity in teaching, not the ambiguity that has characterised the last several years. He wants cardinals and bishops who are morally and doctrinally sound, certainly not men who are pederasts and gangsters. He wants Catholics to reject immoral secular fashions and preoccupations and turn back to Him.

To receive the Eucharist on our knees. To fast at least 4 hours before receiving the Eucharist. To appoint bishops who are doctrinally orthodox. To abstain from meat on all Fridays and all major

feasts. To reflect on our death and on the last judgement and on the consequences of sin. God wants our bishops to be honest about sexual and other sin that is corrupting our Church at the highest levels. God wants us to forget about climate change activism and concern ourselves with the salvation of souls.

To strengthen our own faith through: prayer, meditation and devotion to the sacraments. We must be holy. To return to the core values of the Gospels: humility, kindness and care for the poor and the sick. Care for the stranger. Care for our children. To support our parish, our parish priest and administrators in all parish facets: mass and the sacraments. Promotion of peace and justice. Good works. Devotional initiatives. Financial help To promote the role of women in the Church: by changing the masculine language of the New Testament where possible and in line with Church teaching. By giving women real responsibilities and power within the Church structures. Making the Church more palatable to young women—unless they feel welcome and are allowed the power to participate, they will not encourage their children to become part of the Church. To encourage all young people to participate in the Church—therein lies the future of the Church. To be active in Australian life outside of the parish, bringing a Catholic point-of-view to problems and issues of our times. The “death” culture of our time—abortion and euthanasia. Fear mongering concerning refugees. Misogyny. Unbridled technology and online information sources. To care for the earth, our common home—by acknowledging God as creator of all. We have a Catholic duty to promote care for the environment.

God is asking us to immediately reassess how we treat one another, especially in response to how our religious have treated the community, and have covered up their activities. This has shamed the Catholic community and the Church worldwide.

1 The Church needs to return to the basic commands of Jesus: To love God and to love one’s neighbour as one’s self. He showed us what he meant by eating with tax collectors and sinners as well as with his disciples. So the Church must build an inclusive culture into its community. Especially in the laity, one which ensures we welcome gay people and divorcees into full participation in the Eucharist. Reach out to the poor of our time, including the victims of clerical and other abuse, the victims of family violence, the unborn, the underprivileged, refugees and asylum seekers, those living in depressed areas, the homeless and the marginalised, the spiritually and physically hungry. 2. We need to commit to valuing our young people more, since the future of the Church is largely in their hands. We must ensure that they know they have a vocation to participate in the Church’s mission of evangelising their world. To ensure they are not lost to the Church they must be evangelised themselves when they are starting to look at careers and lives beyond school in Years 11 and 12. Preferably by young people to whom they can relate and who engage with them on several levels, as is done, for example, by the Missionaries of God’s Love through their Youth Mission Teams. These are composed of young volunteers a year or two out of school who volunteer to work in a team for a year, formed by the MGLs, and then sent out to designated secondary schools around the State. They have achieved success but need more support. 3. The priesthood: make women full participating member of the Church in its decision-making processes and liturgy, acknowledging that they have been recognised in Scripture as having been apostles (Rom 16:7) Allow married people to be ordained as priests, recognising that they too may have vocations to the priesthood and bring valuable life experience to their vocation. Ensure both male and female lay people are involved in the decision-making processes

<p>of the Church. 4. Spirituality: encourage the formation of local small prayer groups where members are encouraged to be open to the Spirit and give time to prayer and reflection through the setting up of locally presented courses like the First Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola. Make sound scripture education available to all to instil in participators a greater love and understanding of God's Word.</p>
<p>Welcome regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and marriage status.</p>
<p>God is asking us to strengthen our parishes. We can do this by welcoming sisters to lead parishes. God is asking us to live out stewardship in Australia. We can do this by stopping live exports.</p>
<p>Accept and embrace change and the choices people make. Specifically, it is important to accept people for the choices and decisions they make in regards to commitment (gay marriage, baby out of wedlock, moving in before marriage, IVF and divorce).</p>
<p>To recognise and embrace the value of each individual (regardless of gender, race, age, sexuality, marital status, economic and social status) and their responsibilities to themselves and others.</p>
<p>God is asking us to live the Gospel daily and remain within the Catholic Church and participate and pray that through the transparent work and outcomes of the Plenary Council the Catholic Church in Australia will be:- *A united Church with married priests and Women priests *Reflecting equal representation of men and women in the hierarchy of the Church * Accepting of others e.g. refugees and other disadvantaged persons * Inclusive and non-judgmental * Reviewing the celibacy of priests * Showing greater transparency and accountability of sexual abuse of children * Financially transparent * Where parents are more involved in the religious education of their children * Where families with school aged children will be active in the parishes * Where Church leaders will have more of a role in environmental and resource issues especially climate change.</p>
<p>Be accepting and welcoming of those who live in alternate lifestyles. Welcome all with no discrimination. In each diocese, a diocesan council which includes women. Definition of clergy is not male, single and celibate. Need married clergy and women priests. Greater involvement in social justice Change moves things forward. Church needs to be more accepting of change and the need to change. Recall men who have left the priesthood to marry. Create better connection between schools and parish. What is relevance of Church to younger people? The children of today's churchgoers don't attend Mass. How can we harness their goodness? Confidence in the Church's beliefs and commitment to support them in any circumstance. Be more overt as to what Church provides to society. Do not be afraid to share your faith. Church should reflect society. Greater participation by congregation at Mass.</p>
<p>- More opportunities to receive formation and catechesis - Taking up the call to reach out to everyone - To understand that everyone's spiritual journey is different</p>
<p>I think that God is asking us to recognise that all in the Catholic community are the Church. If this is enacted there would be full representation of the laity, including voting rights in decisions that impact on us all. The LGBT community, and those who are divorced, need to experience full acceptance as legitimate members of the Church. I think that God would be recognising the times and the necessity to welcome married priests and to accept women within the ministry. He/she has already noted the large number of women who have theology degrees and who are perfectly able to take on the priesthood. In a world of growing population, which our environment cannot</p>

<p>sustain into the future, birth control needs to be formally accepted as a moral imperative for the developing world in particular.</p>
<p>1. To strengthen our own faith, to support our parish, share the true meaning of Jesus and trust in God. To be kind, loving, empathetic, welcoming and speak out about injustice. 2. To engage the laity more in the running of the parish, in the appointment of the parish priest, the finances and be more proactive with youth activities. To share our wealth, be educated on social issues and provide an antidote to negativity and social issues in the world. 3. To treasure our traditions. To reform the model of priesthood, the role of bishops, training in seminaries and the ongoing development of priests, especially with pastoral and personal skills. Revisit married clergy and women priests. Remove priests from the running of the parish primary school. Revisit the beautiful reforms of Vatican II that have failed to materialize.</p>
<p>To be a strong voice for justice in Australia and the world. Not to be afraid. To be humble and welcoming. We cannot go to the past. We must move forward in a humble and loving way.</p>
<p>As a Catholic gathering organised by our parish council, we strongly believe it is time now to bring back 3rd Rite Reconciliation for Christmas and Easter in particular. When 3rd Rite occurred in Melbourne Catholic parishes especially in the late 1970's and 1980's, the Church was always packed and parishioners went away very happy. It was fully enriching for the people and it allowed full participation in the liturgy as is the intended ideal. It was an incredible community builder, there was not only a sense of peace but there was great interconnection with each other.</p>
<p>To build a compassionate, welcoming, inclusive and courageous community where we come together to better understand Gospel values, how to live them and put them into practise strengthened by ritual prayer so as to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit</p>
<p>To be an authentic and liberating voice of Christ amongst the many other voices in our pluralistic society as it lives and speaks the Gospel in a way that resonates with the hearts of people. We are asked to be a people of faith in God expressing the compassion of Christ in a world that desperately needs to know a life-giving, liberating love.</p>
<p>Gather your community and pray. Spend a day of prayer with Supplication from everyone. This is God's Church and He will make us overcome the trials and tribulations the people of God going through. Remain in prayer in front of the Blessed sacrament praising God and thanking Him for the gift of life He has given to us and asking for Holy spirit to guide us.</p>
<p>The Second Vatican Council said that priests/bishops should address the issues of the day. What are the issues of the day that are in opposition to the Gospel? They are the issues that divide and distance us from God and one another. 1. Divorce: the destruction of the family causes untold pain but the clergy rarely touch upon the causes of it. Contraception a materialistic mentality that places comfort above trust and obedience to Gods word, priests don't have the courage to preach it. Young people are not stupid; they like to be challenged with the truth. Christ is the truth, it's about time the clergy stopped watering it down! People are made of both body and spirit not just body. Our Lord said "Do not fear those who can kill the body but fear him who can cast both body and soul into hell" The spirit will live on forever in heaven or hell, our Lord makes it plain and clear what our main focus should be. It's a shame the clergy have lost sight of this. People have a God-given curiosity about the spiritual realm which is not being addressed by the clergy, there is nothing more important than our eternal salvation and nothing more false than the lies that all</p>

people die and go to heaven regardless of their behaviour and their living a life in wilful ignorance of God. Children who grow up in a God-centred family with a mother and father generally don't get involved with drugs, alcoholism, abortion, etc. What are the clergy doing to warn our children about such things? Why are children in Catholic schools taught that it is not necessary that they attend Mass and frequent the sacraments? Why are they not encouraged to pray and read the scriptures and that the scriptures are the infallible word of God that were written that we might come to know, love and serve God better? To protect them from the pitfalls of life, you so called leaders of the Church will have to answer to God for this. I hope and pray that you will take this very seriously.

Yes God is asking for healing in the Church. The Holy Spirit is calling for healing and the proper redress for all the victims of the Catholic Church. And to stop monsterring victims by using legal means of the law as a weapon. Also we suggest that children under 18 should not be serving on the altar in the Church unless they're over 18 years old. We would like the Church to bring back special Masses for baptism, first holy communion and confirmations like it was in the old days. Having these sacraments celebrated during normal Mass greatly diminishes the importance of the sacraments.

Discussion led to participants thinking the Church needs to re-evaluate itself—particularly with regard to lines of authority, its organisation, liturgy, and focus on the organisation rather than pastoral care.

The media influences all aspects of life. The media attacks all that is Christian. What is the Church's rebuttal on OUR WORLDVIEW, FAMILY, AND SCHOOL SYSTEM?

To be holy. This means to pray, to evangelize and to live a life of virtue. To foster this, community is absolutely necessary. In my reading of Church history, God always works through friendship and small communities to form saints, e.g. John of the cross and Therese of Avila. St Francis and Saint Clare. It seems to me that God wants to create little communities of saints and through them foster personal holiness and this change the Church and the world. At high school, I got to see the work of a certain teacher who mentored me and my friends, thanks to him we are all devout Catholics wilfully pursuing Jesus. We don't need money, we don't need new programs, we need new people (in the Pauline sense). When I do not pray, I sin, and often gravely. Sin is selfish opposition to God, if we want to know what God wants we need to listen to Him, and the only way I know how is prayer. Throughout scripture, God says that he will form a holy nation, a nation that is pleasing to Him. I think he wants this for us. The only way to have a holy nation to have holy people, a perfect structure made of bad materials isn't going to be strong; likewise a nation cannot be holy if individuals are not. Hence we must be holy. There is nothing more and nothing less on life than this and this for us is a call to perfection not in a Puritan or prudish sense but in the sense of the Gospel, a life of overflowing joy and love!

Stronger presence and stronger voice of the Church in social issues. And be honest and transparent when facing the public. We have a responsibility to speak the truth. Form a greater sense of community among the Church, both within and with other parishes.

1. Address significant moral issues like abortion and euthanasia 2. Apologetics 3. Continue to support the priesthood and increase numbers.

To remember and respond to world issues exactly as Jesus and the disciples did then. Do not reinterpret His messages—love God first, then others and ourselves. Act respectfully to all 3.
To return to the values of Christianity and common decency from all levels of governments and their citizens. Not only in Australia but worldwide...
Our group thinks God is asking us to unite as a community and process society and religion together in order to create a better world where people are accepted and have the ability to live in equality and peace.
God is asking us to be role models. This is performed through being proactive within the community, passionate, ambitious, inclusive, accepting and caring towards others.
God is asking us to explore our own interpretations of the faith. We should not be afraid to go against the norms and go with our heart. God will always guide us.
Work together to work through issue facing Australia in outing differences aside. Being proud of your religion, Catholic or other. Church needs to progress and keep to the times. Focus on community and applying that to life, living out messages. Open our minds to other religions. Living out the Catholic social teachings ...
Endeavour to be humble, loving and compassionate towards ALL to create a peaceful, united and an egalitarian Australia.
Our group thinks God is asking us to progress as a Church by becoming more accepting. This includes the public acknowledgment of past wrongs (abuse, discrimination, etc.) that have happened in the Catholic Church over recent years. As well as this, providing support to victims.
God is asking us to remain faithful despite adversity and help those who need God's presence in their lives. To spread God's message to love and treat others with dignity and respect regardless of their origins or individual differences.
As often pointed out in the Biblical Scriptures, we think that God is asking of us in Australia to help others and to support them with their various needs; to put the needs of others before our own. Examples of this would be more clear and concerned in relation to the issues of clerical instances of sexual abuse cases, refugees, the poor, those who are dealing with mental illness, and those who are marginalised in our Australian society.
To actively practice our faith and stand as an example to all in our country. To follow Jesus' way faithfully and restore trust in the Church after the shocking revelations of child abuse and its cover up. To face up to our failings, accept responsibility and be honest in admitting to them and transparent in our efforts to overcome them.
To be more active in our faith; to talk and work with others for a just community and a just world; and to 'live as Jesus lived'.
Pray, repent, evangelise, heal.
Career—through the lens of Vocation (secondary school) give better direction to young people. Looking at all careers and futures through faith. Need young people to be trained about how to speak about/engage in dialogue—actual presentation of the faith—don't know what to say. Authenticity—ability to be in dialogue—opportunity to discern. Forum process in Sunday Mass.

Acknowledge issues—important for the Church to have the conversation Youth Group event—the first step is important. Parish to do more getting families together—those who want people to see the bigger picture of community identity of the Church: give direction to life. Young people may not know how to make decisions. Hold a great event—first impressions. Approach people. Personal contact. More conferences. Schools to focus on need for God.

To be courageous and trust in God's guiding Spirit and His wisdom to bring about a dramatic new image of what it means to be a follower of The Way, a proclaimer of the Good News of Jesus Christ who loves and welcomes all, without judgement or prejudice. At this time, in the world of today, we are called to be as Jesus revealed when he walked the earth - calling others to follow, He did not question them of their transgressions, and He brought forgiveness, love and acceptance in the name of our Loving Father for all. COURAGE - ACCEPTANCE-TRUST!!! Let us ANSWER in actions of Christ!!!

He is calling us back to be reconciled to Him and to spend time in loving and adoring him in adoration of the most blessed sacrament. To live as he calls us to. He is calling us back to our roots, where our foundations lie. In prayer, penance and reparation and most definitely in reconciliation. The importance and emphasis of receiving our Lord in a state of grace appears to be lost right now and I can only imagine this is why the Church is going through its battle to stay alive. It is time to return to what God call us to and not what the world thinks we should be doing!

I think that God is asking us to be more open to the use of natural family planning, e.g. the Billings Ovulation Method. I am a teacher of this Method and I continually here this comment: "Why haven't I heard of this before?" I believe the clergy should try and update their knowledge about the safe, scientific and effective methods of natural family planning. They would then have the knowledge and confidence to give pastoral care and sound advice to Catholics who come to them about this issue. A recent documentary film called, "The Sexual Revolution—50 Years Since Humanae Vitae" has been shown in many parishes around Australia (and in other countries as well) in the past few weeks. Many experts in marriage and family, population issues, divorce, abortion, single parent families, etc. are interviewed in this movie and the overwhelming evidence they bring to this documentary proves how right St Paul VI was about the detrimental effects that contraception would have on people and families. God's plan for life and love is being constantly attacked at the present time in Australia and I believe we are not giving people the 'ammunition' to stand up and proudly say the natural family planning not only works very well, but also helps the relationship of the couple using it and as a result it is a far better option than contraception. The clergy, in many instances does not promote or support the use of natural family planning. This seems to me to be a tacit compliance with those who want to change the Church's teaching on love marriage and sexuality morality. I strongly recommend that the documentary film, "The Sexual Revolution—50 Years Since Humanae Vitae", be shown in all parishes/diocese in Australia, so that Australian Catholics (and others) can see how wise are the teachings of the Catholic Church on this issue.

My prayers on this question tell me that God is asking the Clergy to honestly tell the laity whether they individually believe in (and follow) the dogmas and doctrines of the Catholic Church. And if not—to identify which dogma's and doctrines they believe are optional and why.

In Australia, at this time, we believe that the Catholic Church needs to be life giving for contemporary Australians. Q 1: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? •

<p>That priority be given in every Diocese to establishing liturgy commissions that will oversee the implementation of Vatican II’s mandate for liturgical reform—with members drawn from liturgists, theologians, priests, and the faithful. • That liturgy reform priority be the ‘full, conscious and active participation of all the Faithful’. • That the formation of all the faithful, and especially our presider priests, in the importance of the Eucharist as our ‘source and summit’ be of the highest priority. • That the aim of every diocese and parish be for celebrations that are strong, joyful, carefully prepared and well celebrated. And that liturgical preparation take into account what must be celebrated, and how, as well as where there can and must be adaptability. • That all our liturgies be places of hospitality and welcome, for all people, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and especially for those traditionally marginalized—those divorced and remarried, and LGBTQI members. • That efforts be made to share what we can, when and how we can, in worship with congregations of other faith traditions, whether ecumenically or in inter-faith services. • That the formation of all ministers, including presiders be a priority. • That ministers of the Eucharist be referred to as such, not ‘Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist’. • That the symbols of the liturgy—the bread and wine, the use of water and oils, the liturgical furniture and vessels—the liturgical actions such as breaking, blessing, praying and proclaiming be strong, appropriate and simple. • That bread and wine be used at every celebration of the Eucharist, as Jesus commanded: “Take and Eat, Take and Drink”, and as the GIRM states ‘Holy Communion is a more appropriate sign when it is received under both kinds.’ • Music—money given to train musicians, cantors and all the faithful in the importance and priority given to music: ‘those who sing pray twice’. • Symbolic action be emphasized—one bread, one cup, the ‘breaking of the bread’ at the appropriate time, during the Fraction Rite, not the words of institution. Bread that has the appearance of bread (GIRM #283), rather than a small 7cm wafer. The cup offered at every celebration of the Eucharist (GIRM #240). Baptism by immersion, rather than a few drops of water poured over the forehead. The anointing of oil for the sick, or at baptism and confirmation, to be generous and long-lasting. • Reconciliation—that the third rite be re-established as a legitimate option for communities of faith. More uploaded at the end.</p>
<p>Strengthening religious education in parishes (not just schools) and also helping parents with materials for religious education for families. Also ongoing youth development by breaking down the Catechism of the Catholic Church s understand the pillars on which the Church stands.</p>
<p>Our group think God is asking us to be more tolerant and inclusive of diversity (racial, gender, LGBTQI+ and class-based).</p>
<p>To recreate our commitment to act out the Gospel values, to show compassion, care, tolerance and respect of all.</p>
<p>Work together to right the wrongs of the past.</p>
<p>To challenge the Institution to put the community first, e.g. admit that those in power sinned, not the laity.</p>
<p>We need to be more accepting of the differences we bring, so we can find common ground and effect real change.</p>
<p>To be inclusive, not exclusive.</p>

<p>Our group thinks God is asking us to be more accepting e.g. for Churches to allow stronger roles for women, to have more flexibility, to let congregation be part of the Church for what they can (otherwise they will leave) and for priests and nuns to speak in languages that are more accessible.</p>
<p>For us to rise in faith and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For us to advocate for religious freedom. 'To rend our hearts, not our garments' (Joel 2:13) ... It is not about the outward show of rituals, it is what our genuine faith is. For us to be genuine to the beliefs and values of the true Catholic Church. Let us get back to the scripture!</p>
<p>God is calling on Australia to become connected with its people be more inclusive and be linked to the world overall in a loving and caring way.</p>
<p>To be the face of Jesus, share the Churches values and the word of God in ways which are relevant to modern Australian society. Examples • social justice as a priority • build relationships between different faiths, interrelationships between religions • Healing after royal commission • Making faith relevant to children • Bringing clergy into schools • schools are pivotal for Catholic education need to maximise opportunities in schools • Teaching by example to be gracious givers as well as gracious receivers • Overcome long term history of Catholic Church and hurt it has caused • Find more flexible ways to worship • Separate what we are as a totality from our current image.</p>
<p>To stop looking at our differences and accept us for ourselves with our differences. People must be treated as human beings with all their personal beliefs. Open your arms to all people without judgement. If you are compassionate, stop putting restrictions on what are the "right" people or what is the "right" belief. Allow all people to feel like they belong.</p>
<p>Equality of the value of all people in the Church, especially women.</p>
<p>We feel that God is asking us to build Catholic community/communities by becoming a more inclusive and pastoral Church—a Church that is involved as leaven in the world. To do this we believe we need to: enhance the sacramental practice of parish priests; but hand the much of the pastoral, management and community building roles over to the community. This means giving serious attention to the election of parishioners to the parish councils. It would also mean putting resources into training lay parish administrators in both theology and management skills. Community would be enhanced by allowing priests to marry. Communities should be shaped by Gospel values which would result in decision-making including all people equally ... so the authority of women needs to be examined. Our Church needs to recognise that young people are in the our communities and want to be active - so ministerial roles for young people need to be established.</p>
<p>-Protect people in the community in order to gain respect and faith -support hurt members of the community -is the Church a safe place for children and women? -compassion or the less fortunate -tolerance of other cultures and religions -understanding of people who are in need and struggling - participation in Church for all, include an 'open table' -time to attend Mass -how can women become senior members of the Church? - to support people in our community.</p>
<p>-stand for social justice -demonstrate our commitment to people -our vulnerable, our young, our traditional and non-traditional and acknowledge humanism and community.</p>

I think God may be asking 'us' to focus on His messages in the Gospel and to live by them. I think that liturgy could be enlivened by many musicians coming together to celebrate Mass. The focus must be on liturgy, not the musicians themselves. Change is required regarding the acceptance of gay people and their ability to practise the Catholic faith (If Jesus message is for all humans, how can gay people be excluded?). Acceptance of birth control: if priests are to continue in the life of the Church, there needs to be a deeper experience of family /socialisation/ what it's like to be marginalised/ life experience pre vow taking.

Submission from Team 33, of Teams-A Married Couples Movement, to the Plenary Council 2020. CLERICALISM - the appropriation of what is proper to the baptised by the clerical hierarchy. Get rid of the "us" and "them" tribalism across the faithful—clerics versus laity. Much of the discussion centred on aspects of the presentation by Bishop Vincent Long to the priests of Australia and New Zealand. "Yet it seems that the deeply-entrenched patriarchal and monarchical structures of the Church have failed to correspond with our lived experience. In fact, important as it is to consider the question of women ordained ministries in the Church (for which the Study Commission on Women's Diaconate was set up), it is far worse to persist with structures that fail to convey the message of the Gospel to the deep yearnings of men and women of today. Adding women into the archaic structures that need fundamental reforms may be likened to pouring new wine into old wineskins. For the Church to flourish, it is crucial that we come to terms with the flaws of clericalism and move beyond its patriarchal and monarchical matrix. The Pope famously said that we need a new theology of women. I would like to postulate that what we need even more is to find fresh ways of being Church and fresh ways of ministry and service for both men and women disciples. "The priest is not a lone and exalted figure exclusively chosen and gifted with something, which most people do not have. Rather, the priest is the presence in whom the implicit priesthood of the baptised is called to become explicit and active." "... [T]he priesthood of the ordained has assumed and usurped the rich and varied ministries of the baptised. It is time, therefore, that the notion of priesthood needs to break open anew so as to fully honour what Paul says, 'everyone is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.'" "If the priesthood has a better future, it has to be humanised; it has to find expression in better mutual support, collaboration and partnership. It has to free itself from the variant strains of clericalism such as sexism, narcissism and paternalism." We agreed with the sentiments expressed here by Bishop Vincent. Priesthood should not be regarded as being closer to God above the laity, because of the gift of ontology. All of the faithful, priesthood and laity, are equal under God. All of us are equal through baptism. Research the ministries needed by our Church and how they should be filled. Women and pastoral workers should have a better say in what goes on in the parish. Liturgies with Communion are often led by women who have lots of good ideas. Symbols of power must be removed, e.g. the bishops ring, mitre and crook. Symbols have a place but they should not reflect power and domination.

To care for each other more than ourselves. Our lives are abundant, most of the time. We and our families have everything we not only need, but want. But this abundance is making us selfish—we should share with those who have less than us (in every way, including materially but also in gifts like companionship and care). I think God is asking this of us and the Church can do more to create an environment for this to happen. Through more community gatherings around topics

that impact us today like adult loneliness, single parent adjustment, caring for loved ones with addiction, etc.

To be inclusive of all people, to seek out the marginalised and act as a strong voice for them. To accept people of all race, sexual orientation and social standing and make them welcome in our Church.

The pool of points that resulted from our brain-storming activity centred round two general areas: (i) The failure of Catholic schools to produce young Catholics who had a thorough knowledge of our faith, had a personal relationship with Jesus, had a sense of sin, received the sacraments regularly and prayed according to traditional Catholic devotions.

And,

(ii) the need for our Church to be truly “Catholic”—open to all, a Church focused on service not power. A Church in which lay men and women have a voice. We decided to combine these two general areas and take as our topic: leading our young people into faith and the Church. This led to a frank and open discussion that involved all the group in sharing and listening. Some of the main points people made were: In the past, the religious teaching given in Catholic schools (and parishes) was often based on fear, punishment and hell fire and not on the love and mercy of God. Catholic schools (and the Church ) in the past tended to be separated and protected but today young people are exposed to so much negative publicity about the Catholic Church in the media. Young people in Catholic schools are often inspired by the opportunities for forms of social service and justice that they are given. Some parents are worried that children in Catholic schools don’t have an experience of prayer and the supernatural. One suggestion as a way of getting young people involved in parish life and eventually participating in parish Sunday Mass was to hold “Praise and Worship” gatherings on Sunday evening in which young people could have some input into the songs, readings and activities. One Gospel image that relates to this topic of leading young people into faith and the Church is the parable of the yeast in the dough: “What shall I compare the Kingdom of God with? It is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through”(Luke 13: 20-21). If we are to spread the good news of the Gospel, we need to be involved with the world in which we live.

Our group presented a number of responses including the following: • Looking at justice issues in light of the Gospel and responding • Church governance: reduction in number of priests and is amalgamating parishes the answer • Dwindling attendance at Mass: how do we nurture faith in people in a way that they make a connection between faith in God and participation in a faith community? • Encourage further involvement of laity in parish life • Hear the voice of God in a range of ways • Continue to engage women in Church ministry • Welcome the stranger • Listen to God’s voice: how do we foster people’s relationship with God especially in an increasingly busy world? • Care for the poor—not just financially poor, but poor in mind, spirit or companionship • God is urgently calling us to be more engaged in the issues of our world today, especially issues of inequality and poverty • Our Christian lives have something to bring to our engagement with issues of earth and its deterioration by humanity, as well as issues or respect and care for one another versus war and lack of peace • Don’t be afraid to speak boldly on issues that matter This led us to the key topic to reflect on, namely “How do we as people of God engage in our world and its key issues?” Our stories of our experiences of faith and the Church raised the following: • Importance of walking the walk. • Working within community structures; we can’t engage with

issues as an individual, but need to work through and with existing policies and structures. • This means we need to connect with other Churches and organisations • Story of personal involvement with an organization called Sydney Alliance, which is a group of both Churched and unchurched. One of the key issues this organization focused on was “affordable housing”. The Alliance worked with Local, State and Federal governments to address this issue. Another issue was “climate change”. • The Church has enormous spiritual wealth to make the world a better place, yet there seems to be a disconnect between people going to Church to worship and then living separate lives outside of going to Mass • What processes do we have in place already within our parishes to encourage people not just to worship but to be involved with people’s needs? • To give life to the full (Matthew’s Gospel) • In the past Catholics were punished for marrying non-Catholics. For example, such couples had to get married in a box room off the side of the Church or in a registry office. Fortunately, the Church has progressed since then. • We want a Church where people come out of Mass smiling, not laden with guilt. • Can easily get overwhelmed at the mess of the world, climate and humanity. • The spirit moves through people even in their suffering. E.g. Becoming a widow(er), a refugee or a parent of a difficult child.

Church Structure and Governance: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? We believe that the Holy Spirit speaks through the *sensus fidelium* and is asking us to read and respond to the signs of our times. One clear sign is the concern of structure and governance in the Church. We believe our Church needs to be reformed, transformed and reimaged in terms of structure, office holders and culture in order to address its current crisis of dysfunction and destruction. We believe that in light of our baptism, we have the responsibility to hold the Church Leaders to account. We believe our shared baptism, in our shared Church means a shared responsibility in and for the Church We believe therefore that a review of clerical structures of governance is required urgently. Models already exist in some Catholic institutions that could assist here. We believe that the Holy Spirit is calling for strong, clear, shared and prophetic leadership: leadership that is radically inclusive, transparent, honest and accountable to all its members.

THE ROLE OF THE LAITY and THE PRE-EMINENCE OF BAPTISM: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? In the past, the Church taught that outside the Church there is no salvation and baptism was the “way into the Church.” Our understanding today, as too with Revelation, is that it continues to be enlightened and thus reflects what modern theological and social theory of our times... Today we believe that through baptism we are initiated into the life of Christ, celebrate the presence of the Spirit in the baptised, share in the priesthood of Christ and are welcomed into the Christian community. It is from our baptism then, that the life and role of the laity takes its meaning and rightful place in the Church. We believe that our baptism calls the laity into all levels of the Church’s life, not as a “needs must approach” due to lack of Ordained priests, but as our baptismal right. Many laity are well qualified to lead any and all ministries in taking up Jesus mission as given to his first disciples. We believe the “*Christi Fidelis*,” the Christian faithful; the “*sensus fidelium*”, the sense of the faithful; are integral to the authentic conversation and the life-giving journey which we all share as fellow pilgrims in the Catholic Church. We need to be a Church working together for authentic reform, thus it must be a shared responsibility in a shared mission. We believe therefore that each parish Church must have an active and effective parish council working together to ensure that the parish council manages and administers all aspects of parish life. We believe that the laity must be a strong voice in the selection of parish

Leaders including the appointment of their parish priest. In like manner, we believe that the Laity must form a representative part of the process that selects their bishop/archbishop. We believe that our Church needs to be in conversation always with its members and with the world. Conversation that may also see conflict and confusion but which remains open to conversion and discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Given that baptism is usually with infants we ask that a new rite be introduced to enable the baptised person affirm and claim their baptism at a time of their choosing as an adult. The current practice of Confirmation for primary age students does not meet this need as it stands. Ongoing education and formation for all will enrich the person's understanding of their baptism with its rights and responsibilities

To be more accepting of one another especially those who can't make it Mass every Sunday like mothers of young children elderly in nursing homes school children who are subjected to bullying if they go to Mass, those who are working overseas in a non-Christian country. Would love to allow these people to continue to have contact with their local Church via a webcam. It's done elsewhere in the world. Those who have been marginalised by the Church and society, prisoners, divorced, family violence victims, ex priests, gay people.

God is asking of us in Australia to be more connected spiritually with one another in fellowship. The connection commencing at the front line i.e. the local parish community between all parishioners and the Clergy Team. Forgiving and support for each other and rebuilding God's love

- God is asking of us in Australia to improve the connection between the Catholic Church and Catholic Christians. The Church Clergy (local priest and the team) and the laity (people in the local parish) need to be more engaging o Rediscovering the pathway that will improve the priest connection with community. Re-establishing the connection, trust and confidence in each other. God wants each of us to be the first to offer the hand of friendship and welcome.
- God is asking of us in Australia to give the local priest greater support in the delivery of the Christian message. In establishing a structured Team in each presbytery with a clergy team consisting of the priest and Pastoral Care workers and parish Office staff. In such a strategy, the message of Christ will be more out reaching and personal. We misplaced that personal connection. Formation focus of parish council to manage the running of the parish with the support of the parish office staff o priest and Pastoral Care Workers to service God's business in the community and Church o A Diocese funding program to finance the manpower resources required in the local parish.
- God is asking of us in Australia to nurture leadership from both priest and Laity in their roles in the Catholic Community. Proactive regeneration in parishioner gatherings and time-sharing in parish life.
- God is asking of us in Australia to address the Human (Mankind) Reformation in the Church o Clergy be allowed to enter the vows matrimony o Ordination of Women o In liturgy the endorsement of the Penitential third rite of communal contrition and forgiveness. Extending out the forgiving God.
- God is asking of us in Australia to view the rationalisation of the property infrastructure in Church ownership.
- Streamlining of Church buildings and religious houses that have poor numbers. Viewing the potential for properties to be reutilised for temporary shelters, learning centres to better service the poor and disadvantaged. Has God befriended you?

I see this question as what God is asking me to say about how I would like to see the Catholic Church operating in the future. I am 61 years old and became a Catholic at 18. I became a Catholic because of the example of two ladies I boarded with, and because I had been searching for where God really was. I had attended other Churches and was brought up a Presbyterian. Everywhere

else I looked, I knew there was something missing. When I went into the Catholic Church and attended a confirmation, I knew I had found God. Becoming a Catholic was not a decision it was a calling that could not be ignored. I was attracted to the Catholic Church also because I always used to look at nuns and wonder what they had, that they would give up everything to live as they did and wear their habits. I firmly believe that people will only be attracted to the Catholic Church if it is seen to stand for something and not to just go along with everything that is popular—like most other Churches do. Once I learned that the Catholic Church is the Church instigated by Our Lord, why would I look elsewhere? If being a Catholic is easy, no one will ever be attracted to it. If Our Lord had taken the easy way out with everything, would there be a Church at all? Jesus came to us as a completely helpless baby—born in a stable in very troubled times. If he had been born in normal place in a safe environment, would we still remember his birth? If our Lord had not died on the cross but had just had a heart attack (for example) would we have ever understood how much he loved us and what our own lives are about - picking up our crosses and doing God's will. Because of the above, unlike most others I imagine, the last thing that I would like to see the Church do is to downgrade in any way any of the sacraments including Confession/Reconciliation. Going to Confession is a hard thing for me (and others I suspect) to do but it is like everything else, the harder it is for us, the more beneficial. Being able to go to a priest for individual confession is without a doubt one of the best things about being a Catholic—even if I often wish before Confession that there was an easier way. After going to Confession, I am always just so grateful that, as a Catholic, I have direct access to God's mercy and the graces I need to live my life. Introducing the Third Rite of Reconciliation will make things "easier" for people but it would be depriving them of what they really need. I am of the opinion that there should be more parish mergers and people gathering in larger numbers—to address the priest shortage. People are happy to drive long distances for everything else, so why should travelling to Mass be any different. I do not have a problem with married priests but I do have a problem with overseas trained priests who struggle with the English language and also our culture. Whilst we go to Mass to primarily thank God, I also believe we need to be "learning".

Same as always, love him and your neighbour as yourself.

I think one of the things God is asking of us in Australia is to get rid of the "evil" of clericalism. This would involve bringing about Massive changes in mindsets for many of the baptized, both those ordained and those not ordained. The whole notion of someone being ontologically different by virtue of ordination must be abolished. The emphasis needs to be brought back to the equality and call to holiness of all the baptized. All have gifts to be put to service for the mission of Jesus, the apostle of the Father. Those who put priests on pedestals need to be led to an adult faith where questioning and doubts are not to be feared but are essential for them to be active, co-responsible members of Catholic communities. A lot of faulty formation needs to be rectified in areas such as Scripture and Christology. This may help lead to candidates for ordination who, from the beginning, have a non-clerical vision and who will serve communities who won't put them on a pedestal. Selection and Formation of candidates for Holy Orders are vital. Those who show signs of clericalism need to be weeded out or else helped to grow in maturity. They can be easily recognized by women students in theological colleges. Their formation needs to be as holistic and grounded as possible, immersed in the realities of daily life; not separated from them. Theological studies would be undertaken while earning a living or submerged in mission work, with the latter being as important as the former. Simultaneously, they must be given wise support and

mentoring. Candidates need to have the support of the rank and file members of the community from which they have come or in which they live. They must also have continuing healthy friendships with their peers in other styles of life. If they present as perfect, then something is wrong. If they learn from mistakes or struggle with some things and have ups and downs, they will be given support and encouragement. Once ordained they must be engaged in a range of ongoing formation. At the same time, the expectations placed on them by others and themselves should be humanly achievable. Their working environments will contain people of different genders and cultures sharing co-responsibility for the mission and involved in decision-making. Every Catholic community will have a pastoral planning team/parish council/or similar and a finance council. Their decisions or advice may not be rejected without good cause. Rejections could be appealed through a diocesan body. Dioceses should exemplify par excellence, anti-clericalist environments. Exclusive 'boys club' mentality fostered by bodies such as councils of priests needs to be eradicated from initial formation time on. In challenging this toxic notion of clericalism, the whole process of ordination must be opened up to married men and compulsory celibacy abandoned. The role of women must feature at the core of any discussion on ordination.

What I think God is asking of us in Australia? It is so simple. God asking us to be Holy. To live good Holy lives. God is asking us to be Saints. To obey His commandments. To turn away from sinful lives. To have reverence for the Holy. God is asking us to love Him, He loves us, He gave His only Son. It is so simple. It is not complicated.

God is asking that he is acknowledged and that the people know him and bring up their children to know him and know Jesus and his Word.

I have no doubt that God is no longer listening to the voices coming from Australian Catholics. For many years including right up to the present time Catholics have conveniently turned their backs to the evils occurring within the Catholic communities (schools, parishes, archdiocese, etc.). Even now with the Pell conviction, Catholics everywhere are in denial claiming media bias against Catholics and so on. The reality is that great evil occurred within Catholic communities whether they are still occurring is a moot point but the suffering that these evils caused and the lives ruined and lost as a result should send a great many Catholics into the fires of hell where they shall remain for all time. Unless the entire Catholic community publicly condemns these evils and demands proper and adequate compensation, then I believe the Church in Australia will continue to decline past the point of irrelevancy. God is asking us all to take up our cross daily and follow him. He is not asking us to hold onto Church assets and not support those in need. He demands that we do so. What is money in the end. Jesus said that for the wealthy to enter the gates of heaven they must surrender all they own and follow him. The Catholic communities in Australia control great wealth why not stop being a slave to this wealth and just sell it and save our souls?

1. We believe that it is vital that priests and people work openly together. Decisions need to be mutual, not demanded by the priest. There needs to be greater participation by the laity. Remove male/hierarchical dominance, and respect the role of women in the Church. The Pope is certainly supporting this. We believe that the language in our liturgy needs to be gender inclusive. 2. BRING BACK THE THIRD RITE OF RECONCILIATION IN LENT AND ADVENT!!!!

CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP Listen to people and then act. Be a humbler, smaller, more honest Church. Honesty, integrity and transparency. Address clericalism and inequity. The Australian Church should be about mateship and a fair go. Move away from hierarchical, institutional and overly

centralised model. Inclusive leadership based on service. Focus on mission and outreach—the Body of Christ—not being a historically self-justifying institution. Have faith in the Royal Commission and follow its recommendations. Governance structures with equal representation of women. Actively support the ordination of women. Sacramental representation of women (who can also represent Christ), e.g. in specific sacraments (anointing of the sick for hospital chaplains, reconciliation for prison chaplains). Acknowledge women’s roles and participation—in the forefront, not just behind the scenes. Leadership to have a relational and pastoral presence. Help build connections to people’s lives. Is in touch with the world and works in and amongst Catholic communities at the grass roots. Local empowering and enabling, e.g. ‘local priests’ in rural areas, such as in the Anglican Church. Survey those no longer active in the Church and use their answers to develop responses to their issues. More overt respect and inclusivity of those who have been historically marginalised because of their sexuality, gender, experience of divorce, or having left the priesthood. Develop a positive theology of homosexuality. Care for Mother Earth—use resources appropriately, recycle, promote theology and heighten awareness of conservation. Be more vocal in the public arena from a minority position. As a minority in Australia today we have a great opportunity to champion the causes and lead the conversation around other minorities and injustices—e.g. homelessness, the environment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and refugees. Church should speak up for the multicultural community when they are vilified.

**CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES—PARISH** Strengthen faith, live a Christian life, nurture the gift of holiness. Build the community life of the Church. Develop Catholic communities integral to people’s lives e.g., past model of social, sporting and spiritual connections to parish. A virtual hub to bring community to together to access services or activities. Create bigger roles for the laity. Real faith formation—encourage people to be broadminded, not critical of others. Today’s Church is multicultural—present and future reality. Utilise the skills and talents of people in our Churches—especially migrants. Identify opportunities to unify, link, ground and outreach—to build and strengthen this multicultural society.

**CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES—OUTREACH**, Outreach to the marginalised. Reach out to families in difficulties, e.g. divorced and to those who are lost in any way. Make connections with others, evangelise. Work out how to engage Catholics that are not currently active.

The Church is an important place, a place of belonging. Here we pray together, and the Catholic education for our children is important. It is important that we are made to feel welcomed, especially people from different cultures. Singing together is important—and being able to sing as Sudanese in the Mass. Understanding God’s way for the future, bringing people together. We are concerned about the government approving euthanasia; the Church voice was not strong enough to stop it going through.

**PRAYER** Most important need is prayer life. Build a strong faith by prayer, God is real in our lives. Pray the rosary as Mother Mary taught us. Start prayer groups in our Churches. Practice prayer, not just learn about it. Encourage personal prayer at the end of Mass or before Mass starts. Also prayer at home. Many people here don’t feel their prayers are important; maybe they depend on material things more.

**PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH/COMMUNITY**—Be a safe and supportive place for all to come and have a place: straight, gay, black, white, city, country, young, old, etc. Church a place for healing and reconciliation, uniting all people and communities. Ultimately, that is what Jesus came here for—communion, Eucharist is to unite people. Church rules are good, but can we make more space to reflect, find joy and get to know other people? Learn how to be

better, love better, understand people better, and serve better. A place to learn what is right and wrong, develop deeper relationships with God, be healed in our personal life, and a safe place to return to when we have strayed. Support family life and young people more. Church should be close to their daily life and connect in with their realities more. For example, work, study, the challenges of life. Serve the community in useful ways; not just worship. Older English-speaking people who are retired professionals could pass on their knowledge to migrants. The Church does not need to be a big institution, but a close community that knows each other well. Help all people to express themselves through participation, for example, in the seasons of Lent, Christmas. Everyone's ministries should be acknowledged. Church members can be instruments of healing for others. Create opportunities to harness the skills of multicultural people (for example, Vietnamese people may not have as much education, but have skills like cooking) as a spiritual offering. RESPONDING TO SEXUAL ABUSE—Because of the sexual abuse crisis, it has created a good opportunity for lay people to speak up whereas before they were silent and unsure. As a result the Church needs to respond. It is a good outcome that parishioners now can feel safe and secure when they go to Church. FAITH AND CHRISTIAN LIFE FORMATION—In Australia there is more freedom to express your beliefs compared to Vietnam; we should make the most of this advantage to be better Christians. Jesus Christ sacrificed his life for humanity; we need to remember the Bible and express that love for other people as Jesus taught us. Help us to lead catechism classes, to teach people to discern right and wrong and to deepen their faith. Have more Bible study groups for adults. Help and encourage us to live lives like Jesus Christ, who lived very simply, sacrificed and died on the cross.

To reform our Church so that the institution models and reflects in every way the teachings of Jesus.

The place of Scripture in the formation of the People of God: flowing out of our baptismal call. We believe that in today's Church, by and large, there is a simplistic understanding of scripture and a very limited sense that these sacred texts are living texts. There is a deep spiritual yearning today to find a sense of the Presence of God in the ordinary, everyday lived experience of being human. Teilhard de Chardin says that we are "spiritual beings on a human journey." Over the last 150 years, there has been a well-researched and honoured tradition of scripture scholarship that has led us to new and fresh ways of viewing the place of scripture. In spite of this we are seeing a rise in literal and fundamentalist interpretations of scripture. We have been blessed with splendid scripture scholars in Australia let alone the rest of the world. People like Mary Coloe, Dorothy Lee, Brendan Byrne, Frank Maloney, John Scullion, Bill Dalton, Mark Coleridge just to name a few, have and are showing us that if we interpret scriptures literally we fail to understand the depth of how our human journey is the vehicle of the Divine. This way of interpretation turns scripture into a series of magical mystery stories about an interventionist God out there who has to intervene in human history because we are incapable of acting with any wisdom or knowledge. It turns Jesus into a miracle worker and God into a person who needs this miracle worker to be a blood sacrifice so that we can be saved. Scripture offers nothing of the sort. It is a chronicle of limited, vulnerable human beings who tell stories of their experience of trying to make sense of what it means to be human and how to engage with a God who is present in every phase of human existence. Therefore, we need a Church that honours the way the stories are told through a variety of literary forms: stories that are not about history but are trying to help us understand what it means to be truly human. Metaphor helps us see the depth of what it means to be human.

Scripture as Metaphor seeks to lead us into the mystery of the human journey and how we encounter the Divine at every stage of this journey. We desperately need a Church that leads us to really value what it means to be human; a Church that really is intent on honouring the Scriptures as an essential tool to facilitate our journey into mystery of Self and God; a Church that treats us as Adults because of its understanding of scripture as living texts for now and not just quaint stories of 'gentle Jesus meek and mild.'

Reforms for transparency and answerability of all levels of clergy and religious. Non-elite clergy. Abolish standalone seminaries so that student priests are educated in the same way as all other tertiary students. This is a step to having the Church community better integrated into the wider general community. Allow ordination of women and permit full participation of married clergy. Make celibacy optional. Surrender wealth to achieve this.

We need to go back to our 'roots'—Jesus. We have lost the insight of our faith—it is a Spiritual war. The Church triumphant—our brothers and sisters who have reached Heaven; the Church suffering—the Holy Souls in Purgatory and us the Church on earth (the Church Militant)—we are to be the prayer warriors in this Spiritual war for souls. Our Catholic Church should be TOTALLY focused on our future—our destination—ETERNITY. Our Catholic schools are not educating our children in the Catholic Faith ... They haven't been doing that job for 50+ years—we have lost 3 generations now. My children, my grandchildren and soon my great grandchildren. Why have Catholic schools?? Count the numbers of children at Sunday Mass...Where are they? Watch the schoolchildren when they sometimes come to a school Mass. Some classes genuflect. Yes. Others don't. BUT IF you watch carefully they do it haphazardly. They have NO idea why they "bob up and down". They have NO idea why they are "signing themselves", because if you watch - it's just a funny little thing done at 100km hour with NO understanding of WHAT they should be saying, WHY they are saying "IT" and TO WHOM they are speaking "IT". The GENUFLECTION is to 'no place in particular' - to the side wall, or pew of whatever. NO acknowledgement that IT is to Jesus in the Tabernacle. NO acknowledgement that "I'm Blessing myself 'IN THE NAME OF (GOD) - IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT'. It is really sad to see—NOT ONE child comes into the Church, before going into class each morning. I recall being taught in my first classroom to "always call into Jesus' home (the Church) and say "Good Morning Jesus, I love You" before walking across the playground to school. The Church has lost the last three generations. You can't blame the children, because their parents weren't taught. You can't blame the teachers, because they too weren't taught... The Church needs to go back to educating the children in our Catholic schools OR close them down ... Aren't they there primarily to teach the Faith to Catholic children. every parent's answer to "Why do you send your child to a Catholic School?" should be "To educate them in their Catholic Faith, that we (the parents) have started to teach them in the home." The Catholic Church (per say) was a sacred place to enter. It was so different from protestant Churches - because ONLY the Catholic Church had Jesus present in the Tabernacle. WE HAVE IT ALL ... WE JUST HAVE TO PREACH THAT TRUTH!! ETERNITY us forever—it is not based on "feel good" feelings. FEEL GOOD Churches are flourishing, where people are welcomed, sing "feel good Songs" and go home say "wasn't that good" We need Holiness - Preached to us, practiced and prayed ...I am sick of political correctness ... it offends me when nouns or pronouns are changed in the readings at Mass. We are not illiterate; we are all educated to understand that "mankind" mean all humans.

To work for the salvation of souls. Our Lord commanded His Apostles to "baptise all nations" ... including Australia! The Church needs to rekindle the fires of evangelisation through her parishes, schools and the liturgy. Our tradition teaches us to do this by finding the seeds of goodness, truth and beauty around us and directing these innate human desires to their ultimate end - communion with God through the means of the Holy Catholic Church.

God is asking us to build stronger community: to create opportunities for parishes to build community and foster friendships between parishioners by gathering outside of Mass, e.g. parish fetes, dinner dances, luncheons, etc. revive expressions of Catholic faith that are non-liturgical, e.g. Holy Hour and Benediction, Marian and Eucharistic processions, public novenas, parish missions, etc. so that the spiritual life of the parish can be broader than just Sunday Mass. To revive parish groups that tie other parts of life to the faith community, e.g. parish sporting clubs, music and art groups and youths groups God is calling us to mission and evangelisation. Through family, promoting solid family environments where kids will learn about God. Empowering Catholics to share faith boldly, share their testimony and have confidence of God's work in their own life. Providing opportunities for young adults to form the youths (noting the strength of youths to youths evangelisation). Promote understanding of other's opinions, ideologies while resisting and condemning negative worldly influences. Focus on increasing aesthetics/beauty of buildings, liturgy, religious art etc. Interior reform of lives of Catholics through depth of encounter with God in prayer. Make an effort for laity to have a clear understanding of Church teaching. Establish identity as Catholic Christians. God is calling us to be well formed. Affirming laity in their role and empowering them as Vatican II truly intended, not to compete with the authority of the hierarchy or impose their influence on liturgical decisions but to fulfil the calls of their baptism as disciples in the world. Learn to listen wholeheartedly without self-interest so we may know how to communicate the truth to those we engage with, always with love. Better sacramental knowledge. Everything comes from the sacraments because it is Christ's action. Don't give sacraments to the uncatechised! Teach and form those preparing for sacraments thoroughly and well. This will enrich the whole Catholic life. Encourage faithfulness amidst the pressures of the world (particularly true for our society) so to be a strong voice of opposition to the evils of our time—many have received Christian catechesis but not Kerygma creating a post Christian culture in which many people know the faith intellectually but don't believe and practice it. We need to draw people (non-Christians and lukewarm Catholics) into a powerful experience of Christ's love and the truth of Catholic faith. Give them a fervour and a love for their Catholic identity.

To have faith in each other and in our Church leaders at a time when the Catholic Church is under scrutiny.

I deeply believe God is asking us for a new and far more inclusive model of leadership in the Church.

Please watch the video at the link below: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqmdLcyES\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqmdLcyES_Q)

It is called "Turning the Ship Around" and is based on the experiences of a US naval commander. When I first saw this I (in a business context) it brought tears to my eyes as I thought about its relevance to the Church, especially in our present situation! Leadership and canon law are particularly relevant!

God is beseeching all archbishops to assemble an advisory body to consider the words “mind” “heart” and “soul” and promote the use the word “mind” exclusively where they are clearly referring to the human mind. In context, the human mind should be promoted as the window to the spiritual soul—the spiritual port for remote guidance by both the soul and Holy Spirit. God is beseeching all archbishops to reinforce the fact that parents are the proper educators of the Catholic Faith to their children. Parents in turn must be supported by parishes in order to possess the required basic understanding that the sole reason for their children and themselves to exist on this Earth is to give their Souls an opportunity to prove their worth for Paradise existence. All else is of secondary concern. God is beseeching all Archbishops to consider whether Catholic schools should continue to exist if their primary aim—to provide a quality secular education in an environment which challenges any practices recommended by state educators which are contrary to Catholic teaching—is thwarted by government legislation. God is beseeching all archbishops to be more courageous in insisting that parents and state educators embrace the duty of providing rules and legislation, both inside and outside homes, to ensure that future generations are competent to prove worthy of Paradise existence. God is beseeching all archbishops to direct Catholic educators to establish a “certificate in basic Catholic teaching” which all parents and teachers must obtain before being allowed to participate in Catholic run institutions. Commitment to regular Mass attendance should be a prerequisite. God is beseeching all archbishops to establish a national taskforce, which collaborates with university researchers, at the leading edge of research, to immediately develop a mobile phone “Pentecost transmitter” application, which allows users, speaking in their native tongue, to be heard by a connected user in their native tongue using “digitized voice translation”. Use in Church environment would eliminate communication difficulties in our multi-cultural society.

Be the Church in modern society. Be humble and let go of wealth. Focus towards a “Franciscan” approach of Church, less about wealth more about spirituality.

I think that the Church has failed to apply the teachings of JC accurately and appropriately. It has, for too long, focused on who is and isn't included, and how you can be included. It has ostracised large parts of the community much before any of these cover-ups were about and now, why should people put their trust into a man-made institution? Although the Church is the house of God, it is still run by men, by flawed men who like power too much. There's too much of a focus on God doing the work, or making things right, that the human element, the onus of our actions and their consequences, is forgotten or simply you won't be going to heaven. The Church has lost purpose.

He is asking us to change with the times so we can attract more people back to the Church. The priest needs to be a dynamic speaker, passionate and well informed. We don't need the Gospel rehashed back to us. Tell us real life stories and relate that back to the Gospel. Children attending Mass get little or nothing from the whole episode. Make it relevant even if that means a separate session for them. I despair when people from other denominations are not offered holy communion by the priest - the Church need to become more inclusive and yes, women have a major role to play, including a vocation as a priest. Priests should be allowed to marry the opposite sex. Abused children have had their lives destroyed. The Church has not handled the situation well. Never again can priests be allowed to use their position of trust for their own sinister purposes. Certainly invite the youths to play a role and have a say in tomorrow's Church. I

<p>believe the Vatican is too far removed from the reality of life to competently steer the Church into a changing future. It seems to be a power house of elderly men looking to maintain their station at all costs. Here's a challenge for them—sell off the Vatican, build homes for the homeless, donate to charities and let the pope and his entourage of bishops live among the people. A form of decentralisation if you will. Now that would be something wouldn't it? There will be many outstanding contributions. What guarantee is there that they won't be shelved because it's just too hard or seemingly impractical?</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to be more compassionate, open to change, welcoming all and listening to people. I think God would want us to change to promote changes in our society, ideas and community.</p>
<p>To be more open to all peoples, whatever their religion is. To reach out to others.</p>
<p>God is asking us to make the Australian Catholic Church a lot more inclusive of all peoples and make them feel equal. Thus we need to have readings in our Lectionary which use inclusive language.</p> <p>To have a Church where the talents of the lay members are better recognised, used and appreciated, especially those of the female members. To have the lay members more involved in the conduct of liturgies.</p> <p>To create broader training for seminarians to help reduce clericalism and the possibility of child sexual abuse.</p>
<p>What God through Christ has always been saying to you; tell the Jews to get lost, and then to physically split the Bible into two; the word of Satan, and the word of God—not between the same covers as now for that is the equivalent of a healthy person being bound to a corpse.</p>
<p>This morning I attend Mass and the presiding father said "The Mass never ends. It must be lived. So, let us go forth in peace to serve the Lord" His explanations for sending us out with these words were firstly Mass continues all around the world (throughout the 24hr period) secondly we are led by Spirit to glorify Jesus (which answers the question 'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?') I would like Australian Masses to send God's disciples (us) into the world with these words instead of "the Mass has ended ..."</p>
<p>To rid the Church of the scandal of sex abuse by proactively investigating and remedying any remaining instances of abuse. To be a powerful agent for change in making our community more equitable, sustainable and less conflictual in line with the Gospel ethos To focus on standing with the most vulnerable amongst us, especially ATSI people, and the most marginalised and to shift Church resources to do this.</p>
<p>God wants the Church to grow and be vibrant. For this to occur, the clergy must offer the sacraments to the laity. I would like to request more Masses be available for the ordinary lay people of Australia. We need you priests to be available for Mass. That is the most important thing you can do for your lay parishioners. Many of us choose to go to daily Mass. We can pray without you and run catechesis classes without you, but we cannot say Mass.</p>

<p>We are called to sanctity, not mediocrity. The only spiritual input of many parishioners is Sunday Mass. Of course, they should read and educate themselves, but they don't. So the Sunday Mass homilies need to have more meat in them to educate the laity and inspire them to reach beyond a comfortable mediocrity.</p>
<p>1. I think God would ask of us in Australia to be faithful and true to the Church. We belong to the universal Church. Though many peoples throughout the world have different cultures and experience life in vastly different ways, in the Faith we are united and hold the same beliefs. The truth is unchanging. It doesn't take on a different face for different people or for different ages. Many like to say that the Church needs to change with the times, yet people face the same spiritual challenges and temptations they have faced from the beginning. The remedy and defence remains the Church and the sacraments as instituted by Christ Himself. I believe God would ask us to hold fast to what is true; to the teachings which have been handed down to us by the Fathers of the Church; truths which have been defended by the saints who have laid down their lives to bear witness. I believe God would ask us to live our faith with conviction, with love, and without compromise.</p>
<p>To show kindness and compassion to others. To protect children from abuse and neglect, to enforce laws that have been put in place for this purpose but are all too often not enforced. The Catholic Church should contribute financially to organisations like Vinnies to help the needy. God must ponder as to why the Church here in Australia is managed so poorly with senior managers such as George Pell and others more interested in finances and politicking than the grass roots that are the foundations of the Church. The Church has little appeal for young people as the perception is an old organisation run by old people and out of touch.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be holy. To have our focus and trust in Jesus, Mary and Joseph. To take full advantage of the sacraments and Eucharistic Adoration and for this to be encouraged.</p>
<p>To remain true to the Magisterium, to not become like the pagans who love the world above God. To listen to His commandments and to live by them, striving for perfection in His terms and to live to be holy. To do everything for His glory and because He loves us first. Please do not betray our Church by becoming worldly and bowing to secularism.</p>
<p>To pray and stand up for the truth, the Gospel. To stand against abortion, to be clear on family-values, homosexuality in the Church—the act is immoral and to not impose it or teach it to our children. For our priests to have faith and teach the true teachings that Jesus has always taught through the Bible and not accept the modern teachings that want to be imposed from the Vatican. We need the truth so we are not led away and be blinded from Jesus but instead walk with our Lord. We are guided by our priests and deserve to be taught the truth for example that it not ok to remarry and receive the Eucharist- this is a mortal sin.</p>
<p>God is wanting me to live by Gospel values. True Gospel values as shown by Jesus, not values espoused by clergy trying to have everyone say yes father no father, whatever you say father. We have to be free to develop our relationship with God, without feeling guilty, as many priests have made me feel. I think God is asking us to be rid of clericalism where the ordained enjoy the power and privilege of supposed ontological change, when priests are brainwashed to believe they are special. God is asking us to look at seminary training so that young men are not hidden away from the world, but live the real life like those studying for other careers.</p>

I think He is asking of us what He has always asked of us: to 'go and make disciples'. We've been pretty terrible at doing this lately—the kids leaving our school system don't understand fundamental Catholic belief and give up religious practice, the great majority of lay people don't see Mass as important in their lives, and in most parishes I've been to there is a real malaise. You arrive, there's some pretty bad music, a bland homily that is usually just a repetition of the same theme week in week out (be a nice person), and then everyone takes off barely acknowledging each other. I think God is asking us to make our schools, parishes and institutions mission-oriented. As a teacher and parishioner, my interaction with the Church is primarily through a school and my parish (as it is for most Aussie Catholics), so I'll focus on those two institutions. We have kids in our schools for 12 years, and yet so many graduate not knowing the basics of the faith. I am a high school teacher and was shocked in my first year teaching Year 11 RE that not one of the students knew that Catholics believe Jesus is God, or that when we say 'the body of Christ' at Mass we really believe it. Our former RE coordinator described people who believe Jesus physically rose from the dead as 'fundamentalists'. How do people like this get positions of authority in our schools? I acknowledge that there has been an effort to address this issue with the drawing up of textbooks like the To Know, Worship, and Love series but the greater issue is lack of theological knowledge (and even belief!) among many RE teachers. A textbook, no matter how good, cannot make up for a teacher who doesn't know or believe the Catholic faith. The bishops seriously need to improve the RE accreditation process and ensure that all those teaching RE are practising Catholics. I know that, numerically, this is difficult to achieve—but at least set it as a goal to strive towards. This probably won't result in mass conversions among teenagers, but if even 5% of our Catholic school graduates commit to their faith due to improved catechesis and evangelisation in school think of how those thousands of young people could enrich the Church. Secondly, the parish. Hymns, homily and hospitality are key to making the Mass meaningful. Whatever musical style used in Mass, whether praise and worship or chant, it should be prayerful and well sung. Please encourage priests to put effort into their homily preparation and focus it on the Gospel. So many priests are excellent preachers who really engage their congregation, but there are many times I've sat through a priest recounting anecdotes unrelated to the biblical readings. Finally, developing a real sense of community among each other is an important way of building up the community. A cuppa and biscuits after Mass never goes astray.

More Bible studies. Focus only on Jesus. Conversion. Personal encounter with God in prayer. Ask to the Holy Spirit be the intercessor instead so many devotions that distort the faith on Jesus. If a priest does violate a person taking him away from priesthood.

- Authentic teaching by practicing Catholic educators for all seminarians, novices, students, parishioners, etc.
- Use authentic Catholic curriculum, no comparative religion study but a focus on understanding the foundations of our faith. This would include teaching from the Catholic Catechism, the 10 Commandments, Creed and other prayers for all students in Catholic schools. Knowing and understanding the obligations of being a practicing Catholic.
- To know and understand the benefits of Natural Family Planning and to understand the Theology of the Body which promotes chastity and moral behaviour. This to be mandated in Catholic secondary schools, universities, youth groups and pre-marriage encounters, etc.
- Media presence in newspapers, films, radio etc. educating the public about our faith. Standing apart from political correctness and promoting true marriage, protection of life at all stages and witnessing and honouring the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

PERSONAL HOLINESS ● Striving for personal holiness through strong

communal prayer, social groups, Bible Study and prayer groups, youth groups, Legion of Mary, etc. encouraged through the parishes • Priests and bishops promote the daily Rosary and a love of Mary by using the Legion of Mary as an excellent tool in spreading and maintaining the faith in the parishes • Bishops recognise the importance that each Legion branch under their authority should have a priest or religious as Spiritual Director • Encourage the revival of Lay associations THE MASS • priests refrain from diverging from the rubrics of the liturgy and The Mass, whether in the Ordinary or the Extraordinary Form, celebrated authentically according to the Church's directives.

What do you think God is asking of us at this time in Australia? The following responses were given over the four weeks. • The Church needs to be relevant, by being part of the everyday dialogue, on issues that are not relevant to this "revived spirit in the future direction of the Church in Australia". It's not about politics, but about things that matter. • To be more brave in faith • To show God's love to others • To show we will look after the vulnerable and poor in a genuine and tenable way • To show solidarity with those who suffer and believe • For women to be involved in Church • To pray that each other has hope and faith • To teach the young to be involved in the Church • To hope that parishes are similar in their delivery, with less variation between the parishes • To modernise liturgy, modernise practice and bring God into our community • To make our Church appealing/attractive • To engage the role of women in the Church • To engage the role of laity in the Church • To rebuild the Church • To find a way to bring our young back to the Church • To have a personal relationship with Jesus • To show God's love to others • To take more responsibility as baptised Catholics in roles within the Church and parish life • To ensure that young primary students understand the sacraments • To meet the challenge of young people's social lives versus practising their faith • To help our children understand the reverence of the Mass • To meet the challenge of children and grandchildren not going to Church • To build a community in all parishes • To have a personal relationship with Jesus • For all to have a desire for the sacraments • To have more appealing music in Church • Personality of priests important • Married priests needed • To connect school and parish • Continued journey to healing in the Church • To involve more people in liturgy • To have Youth Masses • To have homilies applicable to everyday living, short and to the point.

God is asking us to foster a Christian spirituality that is relevant and meaningful to all people in contemporary Australia. All people includes women and men, young and old, engaged and disengaged Underpinning this response are the points included in the additional material.

I have been thinking for a while now that we do not include a weekly benediction in our Churches. Exposition of the blessed sacrament should be available every week. A time to reflect in front of our blessed Jesus to ask what he wishes of us and what we wish to ask of Him. I think we have neglected this wonderful gift for too long, Benediction is a wonderful way of worshipping our Lord in the most intimate, quiet contemplation. With this, there is so much grace. Please consider making this simple request a weekly adoration in all Churches, we must get back to Adoration for the sake of us and the world. I think Our Lady is asking that after the prayers of the faithful we pray the Hail Mary. We need to pray through her to Jesus. It is done in some Churches but not all. This is an important prayer. That way also those children that don't always have instruction at home or school will learn the value of Our Lady and her prayer

To love him. To believe in Him and to trust in His goodness and mercy. To help others especially those experiencing hardship.

To be loving people who are humble and compassionate. No talking before Mass. Reverence at Mass. Devotional music, the Rosary, devotion to Mary, Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed sacrament and Solemn Processions on feasts of Corpus Christi and Christ the King to be promoted. Legion of Mary branch in every parish with an appointed Spiritual Director. Authentic teaching by practising Catholic educators for all seminarians, novices, students and laity. Use authentic Catholic curriculum focusing on achieving understanding of the foundations of our faith. This would include teaching from the Catholic Catechism, the 10 Commandments, Creed and other prayers for all students in Catholic schools. Knowing and understanding the obligations of being a practising Catholic. To know and understand the benefits of Natural Family Planning promoting chastity and moral behaviour in secondary schools, universities, youths groups and pre-marriage encounters. Children at Catholic schools to be taught by teachers who actually profess and practise the Catholic Faith. Media presence educating the public about our faith. Striving for personal holiness through strong communal prayer and encouraged through the parishes. Priests and bishops to promote the daily rosary and a love of Mary. Priests refrain from diverging from the rubrics of the liturgy. priests and Religious who truly love the Catholic Church and Her teachings who have the courage to publicly expound the Church's teachings on abortion, homosexuality, artificial contraception, sanctity of marriage etc. priests and Religious who are an inspiration in living out their faith. Elderly Catholics to be given spiritual comfort by way of devotional activities.

For us to have peace in our society and in our lives.

Greater return of love to Father Son and Spirit. Invoke help of Mother Mary, her spouse Joseph, Angels, Saints, Souls in Purgatory, as well as one another in small prayer gatherings. Include all people of good will. Love is active in a listening community. Be missionary a la Henri Nouwen. I do not know the words to use for my own children to listen to. I DO LOVE THEM AND THE WORLD YOU PUT US IN, O LORD.

As Catholics we are asked to love one another as God loves us. This should be evident in the way we treat each other - firstly within our own circle of family and friends and then in the wider community amongst those less fortunate and towards new arrivals in the country. I'm sure God expects us to treat refugees better than we are doing now keeping them in detention centres. As Christians, we should not be judgemental of people who are single parents or divorced. Nor should we condemn people who are homosexual. The Catholic Church should be inclusive of all people. And we should be reaching out to people who have been victims of sexual abuse within the Catholic community. It should no longer be about protecting the Church and the clergy but only about looking after the victims.

God is asking us in Australia to welcome everyone into the Catholic community. Straight, all people of the LGTBQIA+ community, refugees and anyone that is wanting to know the love of Jesus Christ. He is asking us to love unconditionally, accept unconditionally and not to judge. As a gay person myself, I have my faith and that will NEVER change but I would like to feel welcomed completely into my parish without the fear of judgement from parishioners.

<p>God wants the Church to proclaim the Gospel, and to follow the laws of Christ. The Church's role is to preserve, propagate and defend the teachings of Christ, helping souls to grow in virtue and reach heaven.</p>
<p>I think he is asking the same as he always had. To know, love and serve him, here on earth and forever in heaven. (CCC I.1) I think we need to ask ourselves, do we truly know God? Are we being taught about God in our schools and by our clergy? Do we love God? Are we loving the brother we can see? Or are we just surface love, without truly entering into the great love of the cross, a love that is willing to suffer and die? And then finally are we serving God, our neighbour and the world? Do we Know God, Do we Love God, Do we Serve God?</p>
<p>I think God is asking a lot but getting a fairly limited response. The secularisation of Australian society has marched on with minimal resistance, some would say with the Church's tacit support, and we (and the Church) are now in a very weak position to bring about any coherent response. Partly our education system has let us down in that we persist with it when it produces few practicing Catholics to be the future of the Church. The hierarchy of the Church has also let us down in maintaining a continual apolitical stance in the face of a consistent strong opposition to Catholic values. Finally, the lack of leadership in the Church, both by the laity and the religious, has left all floundering. There is immense goodness and good will out there, but the Church fails to harness it in any way.</p>
<p>PARISHES: • That a new model of parish be developed, whereby the parish priest is able to be the spiritual and pastoral leader of the parish and not the administrator. • That the priest not be the employer of teachers in the parish school. That this is handed over the Catholic Education Office. • That parishes appoint their priests. • Encourage Small Church Communities of different designs in every parish. • Have a focus on adult faith formation in the parish. • Offer varied liturgies for different groups in the parish, e.g. young people. • Offer a space for young people to meet, e.g. a drop in centre. • Have a focus on social justice and outreach in the parish. • That lay people be appointed to leadership roles in a parish with authority. That parishes become more of a welcoming community for all people. PRIESTHOOD: • That priesthood be available to both men and women. • That married priests (men and women) be allowed to be priests in the Church. • Have a review of a priest's vocation after 10 years. • Make the vow of celibacy optional for priests. • Rethink the formation of priests, giving more weight to their pastoral gifts and personal development and less time to academic theological achievement. SACRAMENTAL: • Homosexuals become full members of the Church. • Divorced people become full members of the Church. • Move Confirmation to Adulthood (21-25 years of age). CARE FOR CREATION - OUR COMMON HOME - EARTH: • That Creation will be at the centre everything we do in our ministries, in our schools, in our parishes, in our community, in the Church in Australia. PLENARY COUNCIL 2020: • That lay people be appointed to the Catholic bishops Conference with voting rights.</p>
<p>To stand together as Christians uniting in one voice on our Christian morals as God has commanded us.</p>
<p>1. Treat me as an informed adult, not a child. 2. "God" is not "asking" anything of us. Perhaps the Christ Spirit is blowing through. 3. Terminology - Use the word Mystery or Divine, not the masculine/patriarchal term 'God'. I am 72. My siblings, children and grandchildren (8) do not relate in a positive way to the term 'God'. 4. The Nicene Creed is not FACT. So standing saying: "I believe. ... in 2019, without extensive deep education is asking the impossible of me, my siblings,</p>

my children and grandchildren. 5. Remove the Nicene Creed from Sunday liturgies until there is a major education drive to inform congregations of its history. It is wonderful, important mythic language not comprehended as such.

A new culture of truthfulness. Study and CHANGE attitudes that support hierarchical clericalism—beginning with urgent seminary reform. Church leadership humility. A voice for 'The People of God' at ALL levels of the Church institution, especially at leadership levels. The voices of women to be sort, heard, accepted and valued. Reform and revivify Church synodal governance at the local level.

I have never heard God 'speak' to me. I pray and wait. Sometimes things work out and sometimes they don't. I then have to accept things as they are but I do continue to pray.

Empower Youth / Young people within the Church 1. To seek out young people i.e. teenagers, young adults to participate in value-based activities to serve the community: e.g. fundraising for St Vincent de Paul via cake stalls, Sausage Sizzle 2. Invite all high school aged children to social evenings, bowling games, etc. as an Outreach program 3. Youths to take on trivia / quiz on Bible Study for smaller children 4. Bring in non-practising Catholics especially family members back into our faith- community 5. Help foster care for our Seniors e.g. Morning Tea 6. All youths Choir once every few months 7. Annual youths picnic / excursion to religious sites: [ - ] Submitted on behalf of the [ - ] at [ - ]

\* The bishops to listen with open hearts and minds. We wish to belong to a "servant Church". This is epitomized in Catholic hospitals, hospices, schools and social work, where each person is treated with dignity and respect. This is not always occurring in parishes where the pews are emptying rapidly. \* The skills and experience of women in the Church need urgent review. Women are currently undervalued. This resourcefulness could release priests and bishops to be truly servants / pastors while being freed from endless bureaucracy. \* The sacrament of Reconciliation is in danger of dying out. Reinstatement the third rite, as it is communal and powerful in its witness. \*Review the sacrament of Confirmation. This is for many families the last time they attend Church. The bishops seem to be unaware of the sacramental language used by children and their teachers. To them the bishop is a stranger. The bishops seem not to recognise that almost each family in front of them contains a separated, divorced or remarried member. Their sermons show their remoteness from and ignorance of their congregations. The opportunities for teaching the "Joy of the Gospel" are being lost. \* We are no longer the "Fortress Church". We wish to be a joyful inclusive respectful Church. \* Allow all persons of good conscience to receive the Eucharist, as it is "Bread for the Broken".

God is asking us to be true to what God has always asked of us - to love and care for those most marginalised. God is asking us to be strong and have a voice in the Church and society and that structures in the Church need to change so as to listen to the needs of the people to ensure relevance in people's lives. The particular structures needing change are specifically to equally incorporate and value the dignity of women in the Church and a relooking at specific moral teachings.

How to Crush a Catholic ... I attended one of these Melbourne (Australia) Archdiocese Listening Events recently. The Chairman invited questions if anyone wanted to 'clarify any aspect of the Listening Process'. A man of 80+ years nervously stood and asked permission to explain why he

had come along. He said this: "I am confused. When I was a child the nuns taught me what a mortal sin was—but now I don't understand what the Church teaches anymore. People keep saying different things. I came along tonight because I need to know what the Catholic Church teaches". The parish priest immediately leapt to his feet and shut the man down saying 'We are not here tonight to answer such questions. The Church has other matters, more important matters, more 'macro' matters to address in these Listening Sessions". Ouch.

In preparation for your visit to our parish this coming Thursday evening, I have spent the morning looking at the Plenary Council website. Firstly, though, I would like to commend you for your willingness to play such a vital role in what I expect will be a both lengthy and demanding process. I hope you don't mind me emailing you prior to this meeting, but I would like to convey a few of my thoughts to you as I am not always confident of being able to do this effectively in public. In our parish newsletter we were asked, 'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?' After much thought, I believe that my God is asking the hierarchy of our Church to start listening to the voices of parishioners. For almost 50 years my wife, [ - ] and myself have been parishioners at [ - ] [parish], [ - ]. I have lost count of the number of public meetings during these years, conducted at the request of the Diocese, our parish Council or in response to community concerns. Our decisions, formulated after many hours of thoughtful consideration have included the role of women in the ministry, the combining of local parishes to meet the declining numbers of priests and other matters of common concern. Too often, the responses of parishioners are conveyed to those in authority; only to fall on deaf ears. There is no apparent response and nothing changes! Still, I remain positive and sincerely hope that with the help of truly committed people such as yourself, much will be achieved. The only other comment I would like to make is that the Plenary Council 2020 does not seem to be looking at the past before considering the future. I am terribly disappointed at the apparent failure of our bishops to generate a response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse. Surely matters such as this must affect our future directions. Thank you, Fr. [ - ] for the opportunity to present my thoughts to you. At [ - ] we are so proud of our wonderful parish priest, Fr. [ - ]. He inspires us all, but we worry at the ever-increasing demands that a large and vibrant parish places upon him. I hope that Thursday night's meeting achieves all that you hope for.

After much prayerful discernment and discussion, we, as a group strongly believe that God is asking for the Catholic Church in Australia to be an inclusive and authentic Church. We are being asked to be a Church that truly listens to and involves more people in its decision-making processes and roles at all levels. This especially applies to listening to and involving women and young people.

We believe that this is our opportunity to re-imagine the Church of Australia. To do this, we need a governance structure that enables other ways of being Church, where all the baptised use their gifts and talents to bring the good news to the world. We hope for a community of love, a "Jesus Church" and a less institutionalised Church than exists today. We want to be able to listen and respond to people's needs; to be a Church that celebrates the joy of the Gospel in daily life, that operates under a new egalitarian model, not the current pyramid model. We seek

ACCOUNTABILITY VIA:

- New structures which empower all the baptised to take on roles in governance and service in dioceses and parishes that best suit people's talents
- The freeing up of the ordained from parish administration to allow for more effective priestly work.
- Consultation

on all appointments of bishops, parish priests and all who work in any capacity in a parish, with performance reviews becoming an accepted mode of operation. INVOLVEMENT • Many of the baptised feel isolated and unable to participate fully in the life of the Church. Changes need to be made to parish structures. Leadership needs to be shared amongst all the baptised. Ordination should not be a prerequisite for leadership. • Women are treated in a tokenistic manner and are angered by this. The Church needs an attitudinal shift to align itself with civil society and welcome all women to engage fully in the life of the Church. • There are many who feel marginalised by the structures of the Church: the elderly; Aboriginal people; youths; the divorced and re-married; LGBTQI people; the sick and the dying; single people; former priests; those with a disability; those who have been hurt by the Church, especially those damaged through the sexual abuse scandals and others who are disengaged as a result of hurtful or bad experiences. These people need to be allowed to engage purposefully in the life of the Church. OUTREACH • The nameless, the voiceless, the broken all need to feel the love of Jesus through our actions and intentions. • Deaneries should pool resources to better support the needs of: o the poor: those who lack the means to live a life with adequate housing, food, physical, psychological and spiritual health, education and work. • Australian youths who are often are disengaged from the Church. Aside from school experiences, many Catholic youths view the Church as an outdated and irrelevant institution, offering them nothing of value. Deaneries could work with local or regional schools to address this issue.

God is asking us to come back and return back to the Catholic faith particularly the youths and their parents. Today Catholics and particularly parents are not teaching their children about the Catholic faith and the commandments, and sometimes it is because they themselves do not know what it entails. Too many people are just joining the Catholic Church to get their children admitted in to Catholic schools or to teach in the Catholic schools and to get their benefits. However, these same people do not live by the Catholic faith. Rarely do we see youths attending Mass on Sundays unless it is a school event. Most of our Catholic Church who practices the commandments and attend Sunday Mass regularly entails people that are sixty-five years and above. Australia is heading towards the times before the then arrogant, mostly stubborn commandment breaking Israelites in the Bible were exiled to Babylon (Jeremiah 17:5-6 and Jeremiah 18:15-17 and Nahum 3:11-13), and the time of the Book of Maccabees (1 Mac 1:11-15, 43), where the Israelites did not want to practice their Israelite faith but wanted to exchange this for the then world popular, lazy, addictive, entertaining Greek (idealistic secular) culture lifestyle. But in our Australian nation case, we do not want that particular before Christ lifestyle that results in hell but we are so innocent and naive. We do not have time for God and God is not number one in our lives. Our pleasures, goals, family, work, and school commitments come before God. We are spoilt than our previous Australian generations with the latest medical research, better secular educators and education system, better healthcare, latest technology, a pollution of a vast array of media (i.e. Facebook), an excellent family and individual focused supporting secular pleasing Australian government and a variety of litter of vastly advertised social pursuit options (i.e. Xbox), that do not promote or educate us of our Catholic religion that we cannot find any time for God. Most Australians do not rely on God but on their own self and do not need the Catholic religion. Living in this current culture, even strong Catholics are being influenced and affected by this level of thinking and are having limited time to practice their faith. And it does not help that parents and Catholic school teachers do not teach their students the proper Catholic teaching but are mostly non-Catholic

faith practisers. So who in Australian future after the over sixty-five generation passes away is going to support and uphold the Catholic faith and its values and support (including financially) the Catholic Churches and its people, its priests and Religious worldwide as well as provide prayers for the sick and enter the Catholic vocation of priesthood to provide the Catholic sacraments and enter the Religious Congregations to nurture the Catholic faith till Jesus Christs second coming? This seems to be a few hundred Catholic people with the way things are going now.

Review all structures that we currently use to proclaim the Gospel. In particular: 1. The role and power of the parish priest in the ministering the parish. 2. The co-responsibility of the parish priest and lay people in proclaiming the Gospel and rowing the community. 3. The management, ministration and running of Catholic schools especially at the parish level. 4. The formation and training of seminarians needs to be totally overhauled. A new model needs to be found in which seminarians are involved in the parishes from the very beginning. 5. All dioceses to have a lay council in which the bishop is integrally involved. 6. Priests to be better trained And prepared in giving the homily. 7. Current and better material to be readily available for priests in the preparation of the homily, which is relevant to the people of Australia. 8. Transparency should be the hallmark of the hierarchy and the life of the Church. 9. Processes to be put in place for all who work in the Church structures to take responsibility and be accountable for their decisions and behaviour. 10. Provide accessible material for lay be to be better knowledgeable of the scriptures and their faith.

I am not sure whether honest and true answer to this geographically orientated question even exists.

As always, God is asking us to recognise, and to be and become the Body of Christ. This may seem simple and maybe esoterical, yes simple but fundamental. My sadness is not helped as discussions with different Church workers e.g. pastoral associates, RE coordinators, teachers, parish councillors, Legion of Mary showed acknowledgement but not understanding of how deeply true this is. Even with priests it varies a lot. Our current parish priests seem to think Catholic is Catholic, and the parish is the body of Christ. He is sad that people don't come to the Church, don't participate in the life of the Church. I am even sadder as for me the parish is only a small but vital part, the heart of the body of Christ and it is not bringing life to the rest of the Body. For me, it was distressing to see a heartbeat used for the Stewardship program, great marketing! But ... anyway maybe tomorrow I will have fresh hope. Please accept my apologies if I have been untrue or unfair. God bless.

To act with justice and action in regard to the planet and all living creatures. We need to become a voice and advocate to governments on behalf of the eco systems, which make up this living planet. Safeguarding the future of the planet is a moral imperative which we can do now on behalf of the generations of humans to come after us. The Church must speak out, prioritise and make our Catholic family aware of the strong Eco-spiritualities which already exist and which will support our actions in this area. We could do much more to put "Laudato Si" in front of our Assemblies through word and deed at a local parish level.

I was meaning to do this earlier but couldn't find where to just add my small concerns. As far as I understand it, the main focus of the Plenary Council is on the question of how to draw the youths back into the Church. I think many denominations have tried the 'modernising' approach i.e.

softening the rules, but that doesn't seem to have worked. I actually think the opposite is true. As Catholics, I think we should not be scared to preach the truth no matter how politically incorrect, or socially unpopular. If we look to the Saints, they were unafraid to essentially hurt feeling or walk on toes. If we look to the Saints they went so far as to lose their lives in order to save souls. "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division" Jesus. True courage will save the youths and bring them back. I believe the youths already have to deal with enough issues through our culture not adhering to the faith. Easy divorce has left many children fatherless. Children outside of marriage. Sexual promiscuity. Turning the Government essentially into the child's father with society constantly calling on it to be a 'social justice warrior'. That's the job of the father, not the government. I don't remember the saints calling on people to help the government, rather to help the poor directly. There's no better way to help the poor than to keep a family intact. If I were to pick one group of youths who are especially vulnerable, that would be Aboriginal children. Child sexual abuse is rampant. I would like to see the Catholic Church address this. Not be afraid of being culturally insensitive. There is no culture that supersedes God's will. Traditional marriage with gender roles needs to be upheld. This seems to affect boys more so due to the fact I suppose that it's often a single mother household. This is not a good situation and I think it has now become 'part of the culture' and everybody is too afraid to call it out. I think the Catholic Church also needs to address this and remind us that there is such a thing as sin. I think the fear of going back to the old days where the flock were afraid of the shepherd has gone too far in the other direction and too many people do not actually know what God wants from them and how their sin has consequences on the whole. Lastly I completely understand wanting to be sensitive to LGBT youths. I think the best way would be that rather than single them out, just teach the faith as is. Their hearts and souls will recognise the truth even if difficult to hear in some respects. I apologise if I have sent this to the wrong email. Thank you for your time.

Yes to look into the issues of the sexual abuse that are in the Church, and respond appropriately with honesty, humility, compassion and resolve. Not to spend time and energy going over again matters that have been covered fully and well. There is much in the life of we the members of the Church to examine and be given positive and encouraging hope. That we do not line up in the Council nor in disciples in two opposed sides—using the terms: conservatives/progressives. That all can see this is a lose/lose situation. Pope Francis made sure that in the synod on the family there were members who held different/opposing stances on major issues. He permits Latin Masses and encourages many forms of devotions. There is a core to our faith, which supersedes these important differences. God loves all those Catholics whose practices and spiritualities are different from mine. Look at the numerous cultures, ages, life's journeys. Without seeing the Church as a democracy, for the Council members to trust in the Spirit being in each Councilperson including the non-voting ones and work in a consensus way.

The following are what we thought God is asking of us in Australia at this time To treat all people equally regardless of differences, such as but not limited to race/sexuality/gender/beliefs To respect and listen to each other and reflect our humanity The Church to advocate that government act in the benefit of all not in special interest groups (e.g. policy that gets business to vote for them by offering tax cuts rather than policy that supports an Australia which supports all Australians equally). To reflect on why people are not attending church. The Church to act with Christian values on social issues such as refugees and ensuring they are treated with humanity. The Church needs to be a stronger visual/active and vocal advocate on social justice issues such as

refugees, homelessness and violence against women (particularly in the context of domestic violence) within society and also politically. For the Church to properly and fully support social justice issues (for instance once refugees are accepted into Australia what is done to support them in their transition to their new country?) A Church that recognizes it is not 'bricks and mortar' and protecting its assets is not the point. The point is focusing on Spirituality. The Church is the people not the hierarchy and the role of the people in the Church is crucial. Common ethics and not Canon Law to define how we think and react to situations and for there to be consistency with how we are in Church with how we are in society. For instance in Church to hear and accept the teachings about treating all people equally but then to politically support 'turn back the boats'. The Church needs to respond to the changing needs of the population it serves to remain a relevant, important place within society. The feeling of the group was the Church saw itself as the main thing of importance and not the community it serves. This attitude needs to change. The example of libraries. Libraries need to reinvent their 'model' every 5 years to respond to changing needs within society and how new technology impacts them. If they had not changed libraries would no longer exist. However, they have integrated new technology and responded to the changing needs of the population they serve and they remain relevant important places within communities.

On the face of it, I think that God is asking a lot more of us than we are currently doing. I think God is asking us: to be a voice for God in an ever increasing secular society . To be the presence of God in both sign and activity in our contemporary world. To consolidate our resources so that evangelization occurs more effectively and efficiently through our parishes. To be leaders for 'the good' in our contemporary world. To be mindful and active for the marginalised in our own communities, the aged, the poor, children. To stand up for what we believe and know to be the truth regardless of political correctness. To demonstrate some leadership within the wider community with respect to our core beliefs. This applies equally to the clergy as leaders in our communities and to the members of those communities.

The key points were: 1. The Plenary needs to address ways in which we can rediscover and nurture the sense of joy in being a Catholic. The seriousness of the abuses that people have learned about and lived through has driven joy from our experiences as Catholics. 2. Australia's bishops are perceived as failing all Catholics in key areas of leadership and in getting on with doing those things that do not have to await the outcomes of the 2020 Plenary. 3. Australia's bishops need to get onto the front foot to reclaim and rebuild their credibility as icons of positions that command respect in the Australian community at large. 4. The 2020 Plenary must address the role that the Catholic Church needs to play in Australian life. In particular, the Plenary needs to come to grips with the way in which the Church's dependence on government funding compromises the ability of the Church to hold those in public office to account. Young people perceive that the Catholic Church today is little more than an arm of government, with the consequence that it is reluctant to hold pay-masters to account, has diminished credibility and limited scope to set the bar for values or Christian social action. 5. Clericalism is described by Pope Francis as a cancer in the Church, yet the bishops appear to be doing little to root out this cancer and reform governance practices at parish or higher levels of Catholic administration. Action to remove clericalism, especially at parish levels, does not need to await the outcomes of the 2020 Plenary. 6. Bishop Mark was concerned to say that reforms that might mark the Catholic Church in Australia as a rebel or 'separate' Church in the global Catholic domain will not be countenanced by

Rome or Australia's bishops. Such a statement is intended to limit our expectations of what the 2020 Plenary process can deliver, but it also fails to capitalise on the opportunities for the Australian Church to embrace a leadership role in implementing reforms (e.g.: female Deacons; engagement with groups denied access to the Catholic sacramental tradition; governance reforms at parish level to empower local Catholic communities, allowing priests to concentrate on their pastoral charisms, etc.) that are not inconsistent with Canon Law. 7. The role of women in the Catholic Church must change to enable women to contribute substantively and constructively. 8. Disappointment was expressed with respect to means by which young Catholics have been engaged in the 2020 Plenary journey. The absence of leadership from Australia's Catholic Education Offices to ensure that there are 2020 Plenary programs at Catholics schools is to be greatly lamented. I trust that the forgoing report, which is a personal perspective, will inform and add to the mix of ideas that come together to influence the 2020 Plenary agenda.

To be open to love in each and every person. To allow dignity for all, and to end exclusion. To ensure that Indigenous voices are heard and acknowledged. To act on issues of climate and the environment in a non-political context.

To be loving and caring of others. God also asks that we inclusive of everyone.

The Church needs to be very visible in doing social justice, especially work with the homeless people. The work of CSSV is wonderful and needs to outreach to parishes.

Catholics need to be seen to be ashamed about the abuse of children by Clergy. We need "sorry" prayers said in each Church at Easter time. We need to feel we are all to blame for clericalism which assisted in the abuse to perpetuate in the past. People need to know that we want a Church, which is more transparent.

I think we should revise the language we use in Liturgical setting. The language of "sin" does not speak of human frailty, or vulnerability, or failure or weakness, these are the everyday faces of our human reality, not "sin". We need to see ourselves as a community of people hoping and trying to be good neighbours and faithful Christians.

My thoughts are that the Church needs to start a re-education program for adults. This program would need to be in 2 parts. The first should concentrate on (The 7 Virtues) starting with faith and moving to compassion/kindness before moving onto the rest of the virtues. There should be examples (in layman's terms) on how these virtues can be obtained in modern day terms. There should be examples of the 7 deadly sins intertwined with the teaching of the virtues so that comparisons can be made. (Modern day examples through all teaching sessions). I would not like to see excessive use of passages from the Bible. The 2nd re-education program would be sessions that explain the different parts of Mass, what they mean and why they are in that sequence. There should also be sessions explaining Christian events for the year, e.g. Pentecost, Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, etc. All I have suggested so far could be made into a small pocket sized booklet so that parishioners can refer to the topics above. I know calendars are available but a small sturdy made, hard copy would be looked at more.

God is asking of us in Australia to REPENT and SIN NO MORE. To get rid of homosexual priests. To stand the trial of times and preserve values of chastity. He is asking us not to charge the teaching of the Church as these teachings are based on his truth that is spelt out in the Bible. He is asking

us to publicly state that we stand against any of the letters of the world LGBTQ ...as they represent immorality. He is asking us not to reject anyone but they need to accept they have sinned and make a resolution to sin no more and be welcomed as brothers and sisters.

To focus on His blessed truth. Therefore ALL parishioners should be encouraged to spend daily time in God's Word with an appropriate Bible Reading [ - ].

After praying as a group about this question, I am submitting my own answers. I would like us as the Church (that includes non-ordained) to insist on abolishment of power and privilege. I am sure God is asking the Church to rid itself of clericalism both from ordained and those not ordained. God is asking us to be creative in answering the challenge to change. What would Jesus do if he were here now? The Church needs to address the problem that many people are disaffected and the young people are not being part of parish life - (unless in many cases) they are odd. I don't have belief in the priest being special and changed just because he is ordained—I believe that to be a career choice. God is present in my life as I work as a nurse, when I tend to my family or when I volunteer or study. Will the bishops develop a new strategy of preparing trainees and ordained to be part of Real life? The seminaries need to promote humility and rid itself of arrogance. I'm sure God is asking the bishops to welcome ex priests who are now married to be active in Church ministry. More deacons (including women) and more women in leadership—they have experience in many areas of life which would rid priests being involved in areas they have no expertise in—people won't forget Anthony Fisher during World Youth Day.

I believe God wants us to speak up for what is right, for Biblical teachings. I believe He wants us to loudly denounce abortion, euthanasia, gender fluidity ideology, homosexual acts, injustice and materialism. I believe God wants us demonstrate His love to ALL people, not just those who agree with us. The Church must be proactive in explaining just why euthanasia or homosexuality is wrong but at the same time, stress the value of each person, including the doctor with the lethal injection and the unrepentant homosexual. We must not cave in to popular culture but ask always: "What does God's word say on this subject?" The Bible is paramount.

The short answer is: to speak up for those being led away to slaughter: Proverbs chapter 24:11,12 and Proverbs 31: 8,9 and "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me": St. Matthew chapter 18:5,6 ; St. Luke 18:16,17 The magnitude of this current problem is unprecedented in the decades since the last Plenary Council in the 1930s. Not long after that Council, WWII occurred and nearly 60,000 Australians lost their lives serving this country during almost 6 years of conflict (10,000 deaths per year). The United Nations Charter was formed in the ashes of this global conflict with its horrendous loss of life (estimated at 77 million or 13 million per year). In dreadful and appalling contrast, the available data says that abortion currently destroys the lives of 70,000! Australians per year (and worldwide: 56 million! per year); eclipsing the global carnage of WWII. In fact the UN Charter also includes the definition of genocide in order that it be clearly identified and called out. An advocacy group (one of a multitude): Charter for Compassion, the Gendercide Awareness Project (<https://charterforcompassion.org/gendercide-awareness-project>) describes, in one of its video presentations, that the lives of an estimated 117 million unborn girls have been aborted. This is an atrocious situation, unthinkable and unimaginable, on a scale of utter devastation: for the precious unborn babies whose lives are destroyed, for individuals (would-be parents and families; consider also the colossal loss of future generations) and for society. We need to turn back to

God. Where is the Catholic voice? Jesus' first proclamation: Repent i.e. turn back to God and believe the Good News, St. Mark1: 14-15 I am a member of the Helpers of God's Precious Infants [www.coexistaustralia.org](http://www.coexistaustralia.org). The Helpers advocacy group is well aware of the devastation of the culture of death caused by abortion (and euthanasia) and the fact that it is spreading to other States and Territories of Australia (Queensland being the most recent when it passed an Abortion law in 2018). As such, it is clearly a matter of urgency and vital importance to be considered and addressed by the bishops in the Plenary Council.

Place of women to be recognized. Women to have a share of decision-making and leadership in our Church. Work to remove clericalism in all its forms. A welcoming Church that reaches out to support the poor, needy and vulnerable. An inclusive Church that welcomes you if you have been divorced.

I think God is asking us to be obedient to the teachings of the Church passed down for centuries.

I think we are being asked to stand up for our faith and be strong in light of all the negative things that are happening in the Catholic Church at the moment. I find it increasingly difficult to defend the Catholic Church with regular reports of abuse and breaches of ethics by priests and other religious personnel.

Remain in communion with the Holy Father and Rome. Pray for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Evangelise using such resources as bishop Robert Barron's 'Word on Fire' Catholic Ministries (US) or Scott Hahn's St. Paul Centre (US). Ensure that RE Teachers in our schools are practicing Catholics.

Church leadership by women. Church embracing of LGBTI persons.

I believe is God is asking for married priests and woman priests; God is a making a point that the present set up is not acceptable by Catholics. Our Church needs a revamp or the religion will fade away. I have five children, all bought up as Catholics and attended Catholic schools, and none go to Mass. A couple say they would love to have followed and brought their children up Catholics but couldn't be part of an organization that doesn't allow homosexuals to practice their religion.

THE TIME FOR TRUTH TELLING IS NOW. On May 26th 2017, after six months of meetings and discussion around Australia on how they wanted to be recognised by the Australian nation, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples of Australia made a significant and historic statement and issued an invitation to Australia based on three requests, truth-telling, treaty and a voice to Parliament. "Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia... We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history ..." (Uluru Statement - From The Heart - May 26th 2017) The Church of Australia can be supportive of all attempts by First Nations, governments and groups, toward Treaty and a Voice to Parliament but it has a UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY through the 2020 Plenary Council and beyond to contribute to the TRUTH TELLING. The bishops of Australia did commit to this path in December 1998 after issuing their apology to Australia's First Peoples and the Stolen Generations and as part of their gathering with Pope John Paul II in the Special Assembly of the bishops of Oceania. In the exhortation in response to a Special Assembly of the bishops of Oceania, held in December 1998, Pope John Paul II apologised to Australia's Aboriginal community for what he calls 'shameful injustices' of the past. The Pope asked for forgiveness for

the role the Catholic Church played in forcibly removing Aboriginal children from their families. During the same gathering the Synod supported the establishment of "Truth Commissions", (102) where these can help resolve historical injustices and bring about reconciliation within the wider community or the nation (Paragraph 28). Pope Francis on meeting the Indigenous peoples of Peru earlier this year (Puerto Maldonado Peru Friday, 19 January 2018) also stated "I consider it essential to begin creating institutional expressions of respect, recognition and dialogue ...". The Truth Commissions that the Australia bishops proposed in 1998 would be an ideal way to do this. As Pope Francis said "[1] Recognition and dialogue will be the best way to transform relationships whose history is marked by exclusion and discrimination". The TIME to take up this challenge of TRUTH-TELLING IS NOW. I feel God is asking this of us and it is timely to put a structure and resources towards it.

God hasn't asked me anything thus far.

1. Leadership—a more inclusive leadership structure which encourages the contributions of both lay men and women in the decision-making processes of the Church. We thought that the leadership of the Church needs to reflect that it is part of a community and as such, lay involvement should extend to everything from how priests are trained to which liturgy we use to celebrate the Mass. Further, it should reflect the society we are living in now so should consider married priests and as a minimum, women deacons. 2. Humility—we believe the Church needs to be humble. It is not about pomp and ceremony, but about reflecting the face of Christ to those we interact with on a daily basis. The focus should be on being a humble servant and welcoming all. We can demonstrate this by having a liturgy that is more accessible, for instance, the 1998 translation of the Roman Missal crafting a new statement of mission that emphasises our commitment to being people of the beatitudes, that is, social justice, especially to the poor, the marginalised and refugees and asylum seekers moving to clean energy in all Church properties to reflect our commitment to the earth 3. Acceptance and adoption of all the recommendations of Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Firstly, this begs the question of the "us" presumed in the question. Us as Australians? Us as Christians? Us as Australian Catholics? Roman Catholicism is a broad Church, and Catholics are very diverse. What is the surety that non-English speakers, those without computers, those who are housebound have had their voices heard? That said, our answer is succinctly, "To live justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah). However, we concur with St. James that "faith without works is dead" and we are keenly aware of how Scripture is subject to interpretation and unconscious bias. What did this mean for our group? Living justly demands relationships of respect, within our Church communities, our secular communities and between clergy and laity. It also demands that restitution be made for sin. This is fundamental to the Catholic theology of reconciliation and justice must not only be done but be seen to be done. We have not seen this happening in our Churches, especially in the sexual abuse crisis. Loving tenderly is shown in acceptance of all in the name of Christ. Loving-kindness should characterize our communities—"See how these Christians love one another!"—and our relationships with other denominations, faiths, and ethnicities. Loving-kindness is not shown in the exclusion of people on the basis of gender or sexual preferences. We cannot demonise minorities in the name of religious freedom. Rather, Catholics, in all their diverse glory, are called to model a way of being that will create harmony, work for the greater good, drawing people back to Church and

recruiting new [practising] members. This calls for patience, listening to God, Walking humbly means being prepared to listen to others, who are also in God's image. For us all, it means listening to the Spirit, who blows where She wills, and for the hierarchy, it means listening to the laity. We no longer live in a world where the clergy are among the few elite, educated groups. Most people have a high school education as a minimum. Hundreds of lay Catholics hold degrees in Theology, many at post-graduate level. This has created a [healthy] tension between some clergy and the laity because congregations have learnt to think critically. They are not children to the clergy's paternal adult, but peers with different insights and perspectives. In all dialogues, there is a need for a readiness to challenge justly, the ability to debate robustly but respectfully, and patience to find consensus. Walking humbly means accepting we may be incorrect and listening with compassion to those who may hold opposing views.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is asking me to submit this questionnaire although I doubt the Holy Spirit will have very little say or control as our bishops and clergy are afraid and the Holy Spirit cannot work where there is fear. Our Church leaders are afraid. They are afraid of change. They are afraid of women having a say. They live in the past. Hold on to Roman law, have controlled the congregation by laws and negative control / power/ clericalism and fill people with their fear rather than the love of God. Our Church leaders have tried to control people's lives by power and fear. Our Church is a Church controlled by power, fear and evil rather than being a Church living and following the Gospels. It appears the boys can do as they like but the laity must do as they say but not as they do. I believe this Plenary Council will be another waste of time and money as the bishops will not accept or see the need for radical change unless it is in their interest. With this in mind, this Council will be a waste of time. Sadly, the people who should be completing this questionnaire have left the Church due to the bishops, clergy and clericalism and thus it will be only the conservative Catholics who like the bishops and priests will control this council. No doubt this is what the bishops want. Their yes people. What about the men and women who worked their guts out ... The men and women in their later years who gave of their time, money (the little they had) and energy ... Who gave their all to build the Church we have had over the past 60, 70 and 80 years. They are the forgotten ones. All it is now is the youths and no doubt the conservative youths who bow and scrap to the clerics. The older men and women are ignored. Not important and now with the influx of clergy from overseas who have NO understanding of our culture and customs, NO respect for women and clerics who are holding onto their self-importance and power are driving the men and women who have built our Church away. As they have NO respect for women. No respect for the men and women who have built our Church. NO doubt this flows down from our power and controlling, self-important bishops who live and work in their palaces far removed from the ordinary people. The Church is an institutional mess and not the Church of the Gospels. Jesus lives and walked with the people. He didn't live and work in a palace or on the 10th floor of a high building away from the people who have given their all for the Church of yesterday. Jesus walked with the people; He would not have used business class or first class travel like our bishops. Don't the bishops know they are using the money of poorer Australians to live the high life like kings? How shameful for our Church leaders. As our Church has no respect for women ... and only use women as their doorstops to walk over and treat as slaves to do their dirty work ... then there will continue to be abuse in our Church. Yes, no respect, then abuse.

To be more authentic, compassionate and outreaching, inclusive and engaging from the hierarchy downwards.

The last occasion on which the universal Episcopal leadership of the Catholic Church was convened to 'listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Church' was Vatican II (1962—1965). Not all the ecclesiastical leaders had the capacity to 'listen to what the Spirit was saying to the Church' and this is well documented in 'My Journal of the Council' by Yves Congar, OP - Published 2012. At Vatican II, the hierarchical Church was replaced with a participatory model—'the people of God' (Lumen Gentium), further developed in contemporary theology. This paradigm shift created a deep factional rift within the Church between—(1) Those advancing the Council vision of the Church as the People of God, and (2) Those reverting to the pre-Council hierarchical model—of Vatican I—and justifying their position as a "hermeneutic of continuity." Unfortunately this 'factional rift' is still evident in the Episcopal leadership of our Australian Church. There are those who are suspicious of Modernity and Post-Modernity; who promote an oppressive, patriarchal and clerical model of Church; who are preoccupied with credal orthodoxy and moral rectitude; and who are determined to ensure that the Church's record in dealing with prophets (crucifying them!) is secure. On the other hand, there are the few who embrace the new, secular, pluralistic and liberal democratic society as a present reality; who seek relevance and meaning, being prepared to stand in the ambiguity of change in the quest for a meaningful spirituality. There are the few who accept the evolution of doctrine in response to new knowledge and ecclesial reflection, and the development of sociological and psychological insights. There are the few who accept the *sensus fidelium* as a legitimate discernment of the acceptance of Church teaching. If the Plenary Council is to achieve its goal of 'listening to what the Spirit is saying to the Church', Episcopal 'rifts' must be suspended. To be effective at the Plenary Council, our Episcopal leaders must be men (and at present, it is only 'men'!) of prayer. Are they men of prayer? Of discernment? Pope Francis describes 'discernment' as 'a choice of courage, contrary to the more comfortable and reductive ways of rigor and of laxness ... To educate to discernment means ... to flee from the temptation to seek refuge behind a rigid norm or behind the image of an idealized freedom; ... means to "expose" oneself, to go out of one's convictions and prejudices, to open oneself to understand how God is speaking to us today ... now". (Address to seminarians—May, 2017). Such discernment requires a person of prayer rather than one who simply says prayers. Can we hope for 'a choice of courage' from our Episcopal leaders? The prophetic choice facing the Plenary Council is to deconstruct the patriarchal power structures of the hierarchical model that oppress. It is to bring the liberating vision of Jesus of the Gospel, back to the Church, a vision consistent with Vatican II.

God is asking us to draw upon the gifts, which he has given us as soldiers of Christ. These gifts are contained in the sacrament of Confirmation. We as Catholics need to speak up for life, for freedom of speech, for our right to practice our religion without the risk of prosecution. He wants our bishops and Archbishops to act out their roles as shepherds and effectively manage radical priests and their false teachings and interpretations. God also wants us to ensure that the one true faith is taught in our Catholic schools by teachers that truly know the faith.

To believe in something be it any religion but to believe and also give your children something to believe in. It's very sad to see Catholic families who have never gone for a Mass in decades and

they even laugh about it in front of their children saying they are so busy. And also not to be so harped on self-security that people have stopped being helpful and compassionate.

Generously compensate monetarily and with self-chosen counselling those abused by Church members before anything else. It's the 21st century. Equal participation by women in all roles in the Church from that of a female pope and other ordained ministers including priests. Optional vow of chastity for all clergy. The human right to Freedom of conscience to be preached from the pulpit and media. Obligatory Sunday Mass and Holy Days to be abolished. Make it a joy to voluntarily worship our Lord and Saviour on these days. In following Jesus Christ's directive, sell all artworks to art galleries and give the proceeds to the needy (starting with those abused by Church members) and the poor. I will not be contributing funds to the Church until I am well satisfied that those abused have been most generously compensated. I hope the Church finds its way back to the way Jesus directed. It has clearly lost the plot and has done so for centuries. May God guise us with his good grace and let us truly respond with heartfelt goodwill.

"What is God Asking of Us?" To be a Faithful People: We need to fully live our faith and not take it for granted. To be spiritually renewed as followers of Jesus living out the Gospel values. We are a prayerful people unified by the Holy Spirit. As a community of equal disciples, we try to be open, welcoming and inclusive. We see ourselves as stewards of God's creation trying to live in harmony with each other. We are looking to build the Church for future generations and have great concern for our absent youths. We should be positive and hopeful about our Church, supporting each other and being fully involved and an active participant in the parish and outreach acting with compassion and love seeking to serve others. Our Catholic Church needs to be open to scrutiny, accountable and to accept punishment for criminal offences especially for sexual abuses.

To hear the cry of the earth for ecologically sustainable lives. To hear the cry of the poor in the immense inequity in the distribution of God's earthly gifts and usurping by mega rich and multinational corporations. To restore female pastoral leadership as in the first three centuries that will assist with healing the recent past scandals of abuse of children and the vulnerable. To hear the cry of the outcast whether it be due to mental health, drug addiction, old age or asylum seeker.

"What is God Asking of Us?"—Grass-Roots Christians—a strong feeling in the gathering voiced a call to return to our grass roots faith in following Jesus. Jesus is the focus of our lives and we need to follow the Gospel message fully. We then become a Church that is a light for the world, to mirror what all society should be—an inclusive company of disciples equal before God where everyone is valued. A missionary outreach Church that like Jesus can look outside the official rules, laws and rituals of established religion, to be pastoral and spiritual companions to each other and those on the margins. We need to be inclusive and welcoming to those shunned or hurt by Church teachings including the LGBT community and divorced and remarried Catholic's. Recognition of this in our liturgies, we are all one in Christ, sisters and brothers united together, not a personal but a communal response. The grace and power of the Eucharist should achieve this. We have a growing awareness of our place in God's created universe and that the Divine incarnation spans 13 billion years into the past and is ongoing today and into the future. This theological reframing of our lives enables us to embrace all people, all creatures, all aspects of culture and life as part of God's plan and to respect and honour it.

“What is God Asking of Us?” Repentance and Reform: A sign of genuine repentance from the Church hierarchy (Vatican and all bishops) is urgently needed to address the damage done to victims, their families and communities by the sexual abuse by clerics in our Church. And further apology for the psychological damage inflicted upon generations of believers in following the rigid doctrinal demands placed on them in the realm of sexual and marital matters (e.g. contraception, divorce/remarriage and homosexuality). A national/international Apology is required with the promise of decisive action to change the codes of canon law and pastoral practice that underpin this damage. A process of genuine reform is needed in a number of crucial areas. The Catholic Church, in order to carry out the mission of Jesus in the 21st century, must live and act by the values of the Gospel to bring justice and truth, mercy and compassion to the lives of all people. Several key areas were highlighted: \* The need to rebuild trust in our Church. That we are all the “People of God” by our baptismal commitment in a multi-cultural society that is often media unfriendly. We should proclaim the message of Jesus by the integrity of our lives. \* The need to discern how the laity and clergy can work together in making decisions about the governance in our own Dioceses. We need to break the nexus between decision-making and ordination. \* The need to be more inclusive, non-judgemental, reaching out to the disconnected and marginalized, and to listen to the voices of women, youths and the dispossessed.

To pray for and protect the Catholic Church against the continued infiltration of homosexuals, to cleanse the Church of current homosexual and other immoral behaviour, and to strengthen our Catholic faith in spite of these deeply concerning homosexual trends.

God is asking us to follow the Church with faith. Allow the Church to teach about morality and for us not to demand any changes to comply with “modern society”. To enjoy the Church as a slice of heaven here on earth, a safe place of soulful direction that people can enter to escape the immoral world.

To serve Him faithfully and strive for the betterment of our neighbour and ourselves. To acknowledge that the prime purpose of His Church is to save souls and that Catholic social policy is an expression of that faith, not the faith itself. To stand by traditional Church teachings in this difficult time, when there is immense pressure on His Church to compromise hard teachings on matters such as sin and mercy. His Church is the guiding compass that brings the children of light to their true home, Heaven. To beware of the great deceiver, Satan, who is trying to lead many Australian souls astray. And to understand in full clarity that many souls are being misled by the devil's lies. To promote and encourage a sense of faithfulness to true reverence and mystery in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. God is rightly outraged by sins that have been committed by His representatives against children. He wants us to better prevent these grave abuses from occurring again.

To do more to help those in need. To be outward examples of what it means to be a Christian and a Catholic, and not to hide behind the stone walls of the Church. To speak out against injustices—especially locally. Let's clean up our own backyard first. Let's be more inclusive of all elements of the community and rethink how women in particular can contribute more effectively to the way the Church delivers its mission. To expel immediately from the Church any priest/brother found to be a child abuser—we should not protect criminals and this is what the activity is, a criminal act. In addition, the Church MUST deal with victims openly AND WITH COMPASSION. To pay victims compensation quickly and to stop traumatising them more by pursuing issues in court

<p>unnecessarily. This is an evil within the Church and it needs to be expunged completely. It is a horrible example of abuse of power and can never be explained away or dismissed. I have not been a victim of this, but as a Catholic and a mother, I am deeply ashamed of the way the Church in Australia has covered this up and managed events since the RC so poorly still. If the Church does not correct this, many more will have no choice but to walk away from it. It is an open wound; and it needs to be healed by individuals with a merciful and compassionate heart—one that reflects the true values of Jesus.</p>
<p>[ - ] College - Group A Inclusivity of people on the margins of the Church.</p>
<p>Engaging more young people. Making Church and faith more practical.</p>
<p>Less judgement of sexuality. Exclusivity to all.</p>
<p>1. Be open to existing rules relating to eligibility for priesthood, communion, marriage; in particular where rules limit participation based on gender. 2. To review the traditions and dogma that the Church has stood on over the centuries, in so far as those rules discriminate against different members of the community...</p>
<p>Equality. We spoke about equality in various forms within the community. • Acceptance of different races / religious backgrounds • Clergy—role of women in the Catholic Church—as compared to the Anglican Church where women are ordained and married. • Catholic clergy to be allowed to marry. • Treating our Indigenous with greater appreciation in parishes.</p>
<p>God is asking what he has always asked, for compassion and understanding of others, including minority groups. It's just that the Church forgot its path and was willing to ignore minority groups to appease the vocal members of the flock. We need to understand others to fully understand ourselves and our role in society and the Church.</p>
<p>God wants us be joyful witnesses of His Gospel and live our faith with courage, faithfulness and sincerity. In order for this to become reality, the Church needs to offer the sacraments to the laity. I would like to request for Masses to be available for the lay people.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us as members of the Catholic faith to stand up and act more responsible for the sexual abuse that has occurred in the Catholic Church.</p>
<p>I think that in this current time where both attendance to Mass and the decline in faith among Catholic is most pronounced, God is asking us to think about, what truly is the message of his incarnate Son, Jesus. This message, which was not changed through the ages, is this; I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. In other words, everything that Christ taught 2000 years ago is as relevant today as it was then, or will be in the future. Everything that he taught is still relevant, it has not changed because our social norms have changed, or people feel that the Church should relax their stance on things like, attendance to Mass, sexual morals, respect for life or marriage, etc. Just because the Church is not with the times, and if it doesn't not change then Catholics will continue to leave the faith. Quite the opposite. The mere fact that the Catholic Church is trying to be like society wants it to be is exactly why people leave the faith; it is not seem as special. Yet it is, it was the Church that was handed down directly from God himself through his Son, and the first apostles. In fact, if the first Christian of 100AD could come back now and be present at a Mass, they would recognize much of what goes on, the sacraments, the Presence of Christ in the Mass etc. This cannot be said for the, over 30000 different strands of Christianity we have today in</p>

the form of the many Protestant Churches. Over the centuries, they tried to change to make their the faith more relevant, and it still has not satisfied them, because humans only long for the TRUTH, and any Church calling something now 'moral' (e.g. same sex unions, contraception, sex before marriage, abortion, euthanasia, etc.) does not change the TRUTH. Only the Catholic Church has remained true (in most respects) to its origins. No other Church can boast that. It is far better for the Church to reduce in size than to become all things to all people. The Catholic Church is NOT entertainment, it is meant to guide people to SALVATION. If we only can recall the many times Christ kept emphasizing that the way to salvation is through the NARROW GATE. And as we know through the many Marian apparitions and the words of many saints, they also emphasize the same theological notion; that the road to destruction is very wide. So on this basis, we need to ask, what is God asking of us today in Australia? Is he asking us, " yes, by all means, please do be inclusive, let same sex couples wed, relax sexual moral laws, let women be priests, etc ... after all, what my Son said, well, we might need to modify it in today's society, because we do not want people to fall away from my Church". I very much doubt it. God wants us to live the TRUTH. Especially for young people. They don't care much, because (as an ex-RE teacher), they see the Catholic Faith as not standing out like the shining light it should be. If only it could be remain as the One True, Catholic and Apostolic Church that stands for the truth Christ preached.

To be accepting of women in Church—Involving them more within Church proceedings.

I believe God represents love and acceptance. I believe that the Church has frowned upon certain groups of people for too long when they are causing no harm. I believe God is asking us to embrace all equally.

We feel that God is asking us to be more active witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus. Some of the ways that we as a Church can do this is: 1. to be more welcoming to the community when they attend Mass. There are many various reasons why people attend Church and it is important for people to feel welcomed personally as they enter Church and know that they belong to a community who will support them. 2. The way that we celebrate the Mass is very important. Mass should be joyful and uplifting. This can be achieved through the music which is played and opportunities for the laity to participate actively in the service. Spontaneity and informality, at appropriate times, can lead people to experience God's love in a variety of ways. Making time to talk to the other attendees at Mass can create a sense of importance of being there and connection to the community. 3. The homily is an opportunity to instruct the congregation on the law of God—what it takes to be a 'good' Catholic. Catholic Education no longer teaches young people the 'how to' of being a Catholic and without this instruction people feel ill equipped to tough out the hard times. They don't feel like a Catholic because they think they don't know if they are doing it right. This includes why we do certain things at Mass—why should we kneel? Why do we bless ourselves, etc.? 4. Many Church members look for inspiration in their faith online. The Catholic Church is underrepresented online compared with other Christian Churches. Also Christians (non-Catholic) are very good at quoting scripture to support their faith and actions. If Catholic elders were able to explain the importance/difference of our faith they would encourage more people to attend the Mass and receive communion. There are many Christians online who openly denigrate the Catholic Church and there should be a stronger apologetics presence to support us online and develop Catholic faith.

I think God is asking us to be open, tolerant, accepting, inclusive and forgiving. This means being open to new ways, being tolerant of other people's opinions, ways of life and religions, accepting people for who they are and forgiving people and opening our hearts to everyone with kindness and acceptance. I have always practised my faith by asking myself what would Jesus say. How would He behave in this situation?

I think God is asking us to be inclusive of all through accepting everyone—LGBTQ community, different ethnicities/cultures, genders, etc. He's asking us to not discriminate or be racist towards other groups, and to instead learn about and accept them for who they are.

To be good people. To treat others as we would like to be treated. To follow only God.

To harmoniously together and have compassion and tolerance of others. Equality and fair justice regarding race, gender, religion, sexual orientation. Disagreements to occur safely. A sense of respect towards all. God is asking us to live in peace, without hate, injustice and judgement. To spread the Word of Jesus and live His example. Be understanding of others. God wants us to unite. Help the poor in spirit and bringing those people who are lost in the faith back to God. To be understanding and compassionate, active disciples of Jesus and stewards of our beautiful country. Unity, Community, Faith, Empathy. Live out Gospel values. Be honest and enthusiastic about our faith. See the good in others. To get the focus back to the message of Christ. To ask more honestly, "What would Christ do?" and NOT "How do we protect the Church?" To remove the power from the priesthood. To give people a real voice in the Church. For the Church to become relevant to all Australians. To follow in Jesus' footsteps and pass on His message Engage active participation in the Church by EVERYONE—the gay, the divorced, the marginal. Celebrate Feast Days more fervently. Allow the youths to engage and connect more freely with the messages of the Church without judgement. People to help each other, be kind and do good in the world. Kindness and love to all. People coming together to support one another. A celebration of faith. A respect for other cultures. People feeling like they are safe within the Church and not judging others.

To be more relevant to our youths. This means: To be a community of faith that lives out Jesus' Gospel values, through its celebration of the sacred Mass, its liturgies, its teachings and life within the community, in a way that speaks to the yearnings of our youths for a deeper relationship with a loving God. As teachers and staff at a Catholic school, we know our youths are searching for meaning, asking those deep questions about faith, identity, belonging and a spiritual connection with something greater than themselves. But unfortunately they struggle to see beyond the rituals, traditions and rules, and failings of the Catholic Church—they are rarely given a real opportunity to experience Church, to feel the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, to feel the saving love of Jesus. WWJD: What would Jesus do? Speak in the vernacular; engage via social media—e.g. to connect local communities with those groups and providers offering outreach events, witnessing to the relevance of God in their everyday lives—employ contemporary music in the liturgy; allow young people to hear the testimonies from their contemporaries during Mass.

I believe that God is asking for the Church leadership in Australia to take a proper stand for His causes. The Catholic bishops and archbishops, for too long, have been noticeably weak in responding to pressing issues such as the same-sex marriage plebiscite, the child sex abuse scandal, and even less pressing issues such as the language in which services should be said. The flocks, without bold shepherds, are wandering in their own directions, hoping for the Church to

conform to their desires. The Church's takes on issues of morality, society, and treatment of one another need to be outlined clearly and preached from the pulpit, Confession needs to be re-emphasised, a respect for the Blessed sacrament needs to be reinforced, congregations need to be reminded of their roles as Catholics in society (such as taking a stand against evils like abortion, euthanasia and maltreatment of refugees), and the truth of the Church needs to be preached. This can also be achieved through a return to the beauty of the past—this does not mean we spend all our money on beautiful vestments, because even a simple Church building can be utterly beautiful, but is a call for future buildings to look like Houses of God and to revere Him in their designs. Blasphemies and heresies are becoming all too common amongst the Australian population, and it is up to the Catholic leadership to preach against them to prevent the propagation of incorrect beliefs. Less focus needs to be put upon making the Church 'appealing' to all people, because in doing so we have lost what has made the Church truly appealing: its conviction to its principles, which are the same principles that have been preached since the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Church currently spends too much time on fixing its image in the public instead of reaching out beyond tokenistic gestures to actually step in and actually help communities in crisis. In all, I ask for a return to the tradition and conviction of the early Church, where Catholicism commanded respect from people, and was not relegated to being the end of every joke.

Women in all levels of decision making. Embrace Laudato Si. Have courage to call out power and control boundaries should be about behaviour (calling out any behaviour that is about power and control wherever it appears), not people. Return to Jesus' message, repent and believe, the Kingdom of God is at hand. Love one another as I have loved you. Servant leadership, encourage and support diversity of faith expression...

The Church/structures needs to be in touch with the ordinary person, using language and processes common to the ordinary modern day citizen.

The Catholic can offer Australians an alternative view of consumerism and deeper meaning to life... if the Church uses language and rituals which touch peoples' real NEEDS.

I think we are being asked to be more humble, today we have nearly everything we need at the touch of a button, except human connection. I hope that we can come together as people to recognise and treat everyone with dignity and respect. To help everyone feel the love God has for us. To understand that there is more to life than the very superficial life that currently seems to popular especially amongst the younger generation.

To return to the model of the early Church where the variety of gifts present in the community were honoured and welcomed. We have moved to a model where the one person, a male ordained cleric exercises complete control over the parish. He presides over celebrations, preaches, heals, forgives, appoints, manages, decides, interprets and ... If he is diligent in all of these things then he may become a bishop or a cardinal and decide on what is correct teaching and God's will. The Spirit that is alive in everyone is smothered completely in this model. It is a model based on fear and control. No wonder the weekly parish Mass I attend is sparsely populated and the children I teach at a Catholic school have no interest in participating in their parishes.

<p>To let the Holy Spirit breathe new life into the Church, to restore health and integrity, trust and hope.</p>
<p>Pray and fast and have plenary [councils] more often and discerning with charismatics. Catholics and the leaders need to not be afraid of losing government funding. They need to stand up for their faith and not afraid to share faith in Catholic schools for the fear of losing funding in schools. To start more organisations that are helping people and also putting faith as part of the faith journey. To support accommodation of offices, with groups like the Catholic musical theatre group call of Guadalupe that are supporting the homeless, the addicted, disabled and those in financial hardship. To have Christ in the centre of the welfare services and education, etc. Therefore, I believe Catholicare and schools, to employ true active Catholics. There ought to be paid or volunteer communicators of the Catholic Church on social media FB, Instagram, etc., which is where the world is being influenced they need God’s influence. Also the teachers and leaders need to be an active Catholic or Christian. The students are experiencing a watered down faith as their teachers are not even Christians but teach religion. The students think that there are teaches are hypocrites they speak one-way promoting marriage but their teachers are not married to their sexual partners. The leaders need to speak the truth in the pulpits and not be afraid of challenging the followers to living lives of sacrifice encouraging them to give at least 10% like the protestants. Holy Spirit wants us to use our resources to raise up lay missionaries—we could give students free rent in our schools, and presbyteries so to exchange for them to serve the Church. The priests need to challenge the lay people to give more time to serve the Church. Also I think the Churches need to allow not parish groups to promote their events in the Church notices speaking and in bulletins even if it’s not part of the parish, i.e. support the groups, i.e. healing groups, theatre groups. The Church should not get involved with being politically correct in the schools, Churches and agencies we need to be witnesses of the truth and show ourselves as a counter culture of the world. The Church needs to help the people have a healthy understanding of suffering not to be afraid and see benefits of a suffering Church. We were punitive in past but God’s love may be drummed in too much that people need to follow Him and challenged not to treat God as a Father Christmas. There needs to be a youth worker, youth minister at schools to bridge Church and school and parish worker and secretary at least in every Church that parishioners (family, social worker, counselling, prayer) that parishioners have to pay for so Churches can be vibrant workers. Sell buildings more and make social enterprise so parishes have more money. If not money, sell property. The Church ought to support students at uni who are struggling with finances, looking for support needing mentoring, resources and money. Increase Catholic perspective of abortion law, euthanasia, same sex attraction ...</p>
<p>Living what the Gospel says.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be compassionate and caring of each other regardless of nationality, gender or religion. To live and treat each other as we would like to live and be treated.</p>
<p>Our group thinks God is asking us to advocate for those who are not represented equally in society. Particular focus is placed on refugees and asylum seekers who are restricted to inhumane living standards.</p>
<p>- Treat everyone as equals - Love everyone no matter their circumstances (e.g. gender, religion, sexuality, etc.) - For us to look after our environment.</p>

God is asking us to forgive, be considerate and follow in his ways through our everyday living.
To be caring and understanding. To help those in need. Share with family and friends and do not let greed dominate our lives. I think God would like for more people to become priests and religious. God would ask us to help reduce the drug crisis and to reduce the crime rate. He wants us to love one another.
Gods is asking us to Courageously and Lovingly Proclaim our faith.
God is asking us to keep the Faith alive and strong. God wants us to respect one another and to be courageous, love one another and be friends with everyone. God wants Australians to spread Peace around the world and not help create War. God wants us to make good choices so that we avoid taking drugs and use technology wisely. God wants Australians to have equality among all people, especially Gender and Race Equality. We should all demonstrate Empathy, Forgiveness, Trust and Kindness. Most importantly, God wants us to look after our planet, to be Stewards of the Earth and not destroy Creation.
The Church must: -ensure the safety of the children; -maximise transparency; -ensure clergy are held accountable for crimes and misdeeds; -increase the role of women, including allowing for their ordination; -increase the role of parishes in community life; -make parishes a centre of social and community activity; -ordain married men; -restore the sacrament of reconciliation to prominence by increasing its availability; -increase the number of married deacons; -fully and publicly detail the Church's misdeeds and failures and provide for a year of penance therefor; -enhance the Church's social justice role; -protect refugees and immigrants; -reject all forms of bigotry unequivocally; -avoid promoting any semblance of nationalism; -re-unity with other Christian denominations; -make secondary Catholic schools prominently support the Catholic faith and education thereof or remove their designation as "Catholic"; and -end the disturbing rise of 'elite' and very expensive Catholic schools which are flatly contrary to Christ's teachings and the universality of the Church.
- Spread more love and peace - Have more faith - Love one another - Make positive changes for the wider community - Be kind and treat everyone equally - Be more welcoming to refugees.
We think God is asking us to be accepting of everyone and to love others.
- go to Church, follow your faith - have a meaningful purpose in life - look after yourselves - be kind and give to others - allow everyone to express their faith, free from judgement and ridicule - accept one another - make everyone feel as an individual but part of a community.
A greater effort towards ensuring all groups of society are better respected and accepted. Alongside further modernised views of the Church to match the ideals of the current generation.
- equality - men and women - help those in need - anyone welcome - involvement - no abuse - support - best of yourself - more supportive + faithful community - moral services - inclusive + respectful - selfless - others before yourself for a more harmonious community.
Peace, fairness, equality. Making time for faith. Treated justly and respectfully. Inclusion. Protection. Listening. 'Good Samaritan'. Living an honest life. Charity. Humility. Responding to his call.

To make the best choices for everyone. Be nice and respectful to people. Don't disrespect people for anything. An equitable society. Fairness for everybody. Be inclusive and accepting of everyone, no matter the circumstances. Not blaming others for a situation you're in and working together to improve it. Recognise each other's faults as well as your own.

- God wants to see happy children and equality - No crime - People loving, caring, helping and supporting others - Following the commandments and the Bible - Believers truly believing in their faith and what they stand for.

To work together and be selfless in order to care about the world and current issues.

God would ask us to remain and hold onto our faith, trying to always remain positive. God would ask use to maintain and make actions to continue and better our multicultural society.

God is a relational, caring and loving God who wills that each created person has dignity and is able to flourish and to live life to the full—to be able to be “true to self” and true to one’s own unique “createdness”. The Church is God’s instrument of caring and relational love. It must be less focused on structures and tops-down power and remove any barriers that block the Spirit: this includes 53% of the spirit being blocked when women cannot seek leadership through ordination, as well as being inclusive and open to people of all faiths and with Christ-like acceptance of the vulnerable and those on the margins. With God there are no barriers or distinction to anyone’s gift of humanity. God, revealed and modelled through the person of Jesus, fully human and fully divine, uncompromising compassionate love, authenticity, goodness, friendship, forgiveness and spiritual connection. Jesus intended that all of his followers (spurred on by God’s Spirit and regard for each other) be a distinctive “light of the world” through their relational love of God and love of neighbour as self and even to build a future through learning to love enemies and reflect and pray for them. Jesus was scapegoated for resisting political power and was completely misunderstood when speaking about “inner authority”. God is asking of us to focus on “inner authority” or the depth of divine eternal Love within each of us. It’s our innate spirituality: an “inner voice of love” – God’s gift of love and grace and the depth of the spirit within. God dwells and loves you, a love that precedes and transcends all human love. Jesus, the “human face” of God, sought on his mission to tap this spirituality of Love and to empower each of us to find, embrace and nurture this love relationship deep in our own heart and to transform it through our relationships in our life time. God is not an interventional God but one who empowers each of us with the gift of freedom to contribute creatively in transforming our world through love. Christ paved the way for all human beings to be raised from death and transformed to new life and form the “now but not yet” reign of God “on earth as in heaven”. All our love relationships will be eternally united as one. I deem God to be the creative, cosmic energy and Ground of all Being and source of dynamic and expanding change revealed in all particles of creation. How magnanimous is God who intimately knows, loves, affirms, relates and “remembers” all who are created throughout time and space. Through prayer and contemplation, especially when we gather together in Christ’s name, there God abides. For billions of years our world has been evolving to become the communal, social, relational and eternal Body of Love. To paraphrase St Teresa of Avila: “Christ has no body on earth now but yours”—yours and mine are his hands, his feet and his eyes. Inspired by Richard Rohr: “All matter and Spirit will unite as one in total Love” when Christ comes in glory.

That we focus on the spiritual life. Who said that unless we become a contemplative Church we will not be a Church at all, or something similar? That we support our wonderful priests who genuinely serve their people and must be so shattered at the scandals about the paedophiles in their midst. They must be educated in how to handle complaints that they receive. Above all, we need to empathise with the victims of this terrible abuse, which has clearly shattered lives. If we lose money, who cares? We are not first and foremost a business. Losing "little ones" is far worse. We need to give up our focus on medieval male hierarchies with their attendant costumes and help people like me make the poor and vulnerable our first priority. We need to ensure that the Church does not alienate people—the latest creed is a study of alienation of children and foreigners who can't even pronounce "consubstantial"—and this includes many priests in our diocese; and of the alienation of women in our Church, which is focused on "us men". It should also be a priority that the Church facilities are genuinely there for the people and not so expensive that only those businesses that can afford to pay for commercial convention centres can possibly afford to have a meeting at places like the Catholic Leadership Centre.

This area is addressed in our attachment but some key points are:

- That clergy, the hierarchy of the Church and the body of the Church be open to change.
- To be a Church that is more accepting of all people
- To have leadership that is open, non-judgmental, encouraging and challenging.
- To be a humbler Church.
- To acknowledge the wrongs perpetrated by the Church, to remedy these wrongs and to ensure they never occur again.
- Not just be Sunday Catholics, to be outward-looking and address the needs in our local communities, our country in general and people elsewhere in the world; e.g. refugees, LGBTIQ, divorced people, homeless, marginalised.
- To lead and be a voice in environmental responsiveness and social justice as suggested in Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si".
- To be transparent and accountable in the use of parish/diocesan funds.
- That the parish priest and other Church officials be discerning and in active and effective partnership with members of the wider parish.
- Pastoral parish Councils should be decision-making groups rather than only advisory. Participatory leadership is difficult when there is no attached power and all recommendations can be ignored.
- That training of seminarians be aligned with everyday life/people i.e. in touch with the young, children, families, elderly, marginalised; that there be more time in parishes throughout their training; that there be teaching about family planning, divorce, annulment, homosexuality, gay marriage and that there be more training from women.
- That the third rite of reconciliation be re-instituted.
- That people not be excluded from the priesthood because of gender or marital status.
- That liturgy be meaningful, engaging and relevant under the guidance of informed clergy and an informed parish liturgy. Committee.
- To maintain our stance on abortion and euthanasia and remain clearly pro-life even if it were to jeopardise government funding. That said the Church must still provide pastoral support to people personally affected by these issues.

In the words of one young person's response: "Pope Francis is the best way forward! He is open-minded and includes everyone." We need to be a community that welcomes all people. Clearly our community is calling for our Church to be one where we unconditionally welcome all, including those who are divorced and re-married, people who are openly gay, people dealing with issues of sexuality, people dealing with addiction, etc. We are told that the Eucharist is food for the journey, it is not a prize for the privileged few, therefore all should be encouraged to fully participate and receive Eucharist. It is important that this welcoming is not only reflected in our local communities but it needs to be reflected in the wider Church and by those who have

positions of leadership. Our Church says it is open and welcoming of all, but this is not always displayed or is not the lived experience of everyone. There needs to be visible leadership: in hospitality, in reaching out to the vulnerable and marginalised, in the stewardship of the environment. We are called to actively and openly support and engage with the marginalised: asylum seekers, refugees, the homeless, the disadvantaged. We should be advocating and taking action to show our support. While we acknowledge what our Church already does, e.g. the work of Caritas, Vinnies, Catholic Care, etc. The public profile of the Church needs to be heightened to show what we do really stand for. We should be a Church that enacts everything Jesus taught us: don't have rules that restrict us from being active members of our community, don't put up barriers that stop people from being a part of the community, take a close look at what excludes people from the community, actively work to be a Church that welcomes all.

Prayer and Devotion • Encourage an active life of devotion and worship including active participation in the Eucharist, praying the Rosary, devotion to Mary including a proper understanding of what devotion to Mary should be. • Explore ways to get more people more involved in the Church. • Explore ways to make prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist, devotional practices more relevant and meaningful to a new generation and to a broader generation of young people. • Help young people make sense of God in their lives. • Encourage youth involvement in Church, read the signs of the times.

Leadership • There is a real call for a radical change in leadership—a call that is coming from a wide range of people—women, men, older people, and young people. This cannot be ignored. • We want to see a Church that reflects us, a diverse Church in all ways: culturally, gender, with different faith experiences, etc. • We need to keep the Church alive in the modern world.

To enliven and live the Catholic faith proudly without fear or reticence. We feel God wants us to do more to bring back or attract YOUNG ADULTS to the practice of the faith. ALL Catholics have to make up for the lapses in the recent past (Sexual scandals), by greater devotion to the Sacred Heart, the Rosary and to take part in the sacraments of the Church. God is calling for our priests and bishops to be open and transparent in their management of Church affairs; one way of doing this is to involve the laity much more in Church administration / governance—NOT doctrinal matters. God is calling us in Australia to show the rest of the Catholic world that we can very devotedly follow the teachings of the Church while at the same time being "modern" in outlook and practice. We feel that God is calling for more women to take greater / active roles in the Church. This is for both, laywomen and for women in religious orders. Our group has prepared a list of topics and issues that we have identified and have listed suggestions for how they could be dealt with. This will be uploaded as one submission from our parish but having many topics and issues to be addressed.

At the top of the list we must find a way to express 'sorry' to all those affected by abuse at the hands of the Catholic Church clergy and the failings of the Church, which allowed this to happen repeatedly over such a long period of time. To love one another, be inclusive, to be non-judgmental. We must demand swift changes to the Catholic Church and not settle for band-aid solutions or excuses as to why things can't change.

There is a huge family crisis in Australia, every family is experiencing either divorce, marriage problems, single parents, gay relationships in families, couples living outside marriage, drug and alcohol addictions, gambling, unemployment, care of sick and elderly, abortion and euthanasia

bill, threats to our security from every angle—practicing our faith, our children getting brainwashed at school, aged care dealing with the whole process, plus the Advance Care Plan is very scary. Plus we are hearing of increased crime around us daily. When you are in a life crisis, you reach out to family or friends and if you can't, you reach out to your local parish Church, which you think would counsel you and point you in the right direction. I think every parish Church should have team of people to deal with counselling, whether it's help with grieving a lost one, breakup of family/marriage, unemployment, loneliness, aged care, homelessness, serious illness in families, ongoing support for newly-weds, or converted Catholics. Where else can a person go when confronted with these issues? I have participated in healing and recovery programs which is a great help, but there is no support for growth with these programs more widely. With regards to attending Church, I have also observed that there should be more Confessions held in every Church throughout Australia, before Mass and after Mass. Some Churches have them but not all. Many times on a Sunday, I have felt the need to go to Confession at the Church I attend and there is no Confession. Some Churches are not open. I have listened to many Catholics who have fallen away from the Catholic faith because the Church is not open all the time, there are no confessions, or when they go to see a priest, the Church is locked or the priest can't help them. So they have given up. I would like to see at Mass receiving Holy Communion at the altar rail kneeling and on the tongue. Please announce it, so that all Catholics may follow the same procedure. There is so much confusion regarding this when you stand in line, some people receiving in the hand, some in the mouth, some genuflecting suddenly in front of you. This procedure should be unified. Even in the Confession line, if the time is up and there is a big queue, some priests will close the confessional, some are patient and go past the time, but not others. With regards to the homily, I would like to hear the priest speak more on the Ten Commandments and morality as not many people attend Mass or only attend Sundays and do not hear the truth. People who work shift work or cannot find a confessional because of work commitments should be considered, as half of Australian workforce are shift work. With regards to Eucharistic Adoration, the Monstrance should be handled only by a priest and due reverence shown before and after Benediction. Some churches it is handled by the ministers. I have heard many people complain that they will not go to church because they see all the above.

Jesus said to feed His sheep. There are many wounded people around the world suffering the devastating effects of divorce, not only on the husband and wife, children, but the wider circle of family of the divorced couple. We cannot solve this problem by creating a different Church or changing any of the traditions and precepts of the Church or allowing priests to marry or women priests. The problems won't go away; they will be there for a long time. We need to get down to listening and counselling these wounded families. The same applies to families affected by the sexual identity. We need to protect our families now from further deterioration by establishing counselling groups within each parish for ongoing spiritual support. The same applies to other victims of abuse. Sex education is the job of parents to guide and instruct their children from whatever age they feel is right. Although children are exposed to it by other children at school, I am sure parents are better teachers. Sex education is not a priority. The important subjects at school should be reading, writing and arithmetic and of course, religious education and physical activities, nothing else. Protection of human life from unborn to natural death, protection of elderly in hospitals and nursing homes. Why is the Advanced Care Planning even offered at

Catholic nursing homes? It is totally confusing for families to understand in the middle of dealing with emotional situations of their loved ones.

To be respectful of everyone regardless of race, gender, faith, background, situation and beliefs.  
To follow in Jesus' footsteps.

We have witnessed Australia become an affluent, more inclusive and diverse country. Immigration throughout the years has enriched society with a variety of foods, drinks, art, music and traditions all contributing to its multiculturalism. Aborigines were finally recognised and included in the fabric of society contributing their traditions and spirituality. They are the original inhabitants. Australia has developed into a leading nation in the world of science, education, medicine, research and technology. Women are treated and respected in a more equal status holding high and important positions in both the Federal and State Governments corporate business, education and Public Services. Sadly, the Church hasn't changed, it is no longer relevant to mainstream society expect for the elderly who continue to go to Church. Vocations to the religious life are very few, the Church relying on clergy from underdeveloped countries with different cultural backgrounds. We thank God and are grateful for having them. I believe the Church needs to change so as to reach out to the Australian Catholic men and women of today. The Church needs to listen to the voice of women and include them more in decision-making recognising their potential. After all the world is made up of half men and half women, it would only be fair. In our parish ninety five percent of our Ministers of the Eucharist and Ministers of the Word are women. They organise parish events, rosters, newsletters, fundraising, do the washing and cleaning. We have a wonderful small team of men involved in St Vincent de Paul with women as well, a small number of men dedicated to the Church collections and maintenance of the Church grounds and presbytery garden all ageing. I suggest priests be able to marry if they so desire. Christ was both human and divine, man is only human. The great majority of Christian denominations have married clergy. It would provide a much healthier environment adding an extra dimension to their understanding of a society made up of families. In conclusion, the Church needs to become more inclusive of the gay community keeping in mind that God created all of nature, allowing them as well as Catholic members who are divorced and remarried to receive the Eucharist if they so desire. God is there for everyone, God is kind and merciful, God is love.

To listen to Jesus. To hold fast to the truth of Jesus Christ. To tell others about Jesus. A return to the Magisterium as codified in the Catechism. Catechesis on the faith. A return to tradition. Bishops who uphold the faith as outlined in the Catechism. Faithful and holy priests. Reverent and holy offerings of the Holy Sacrifice. A return to our primary mission, the salvation of souls.

To do something about the global warming in Australia and to organise projects to help the environment. To do something about the homelessness in Australia's cities and to see if anything can be done about low socioeconomic families.

The most traumatic decision a Catholic woman can make is to dissolve a marriage because of domestic violence, (spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and financial). We do not make this decision lightly, but after years of suffering trauma, because of the Canon Law Book IV: Pt 1: Title V11: Chap IX: Art 2: Can 1153. We are asked to forgive to the point of death of body and soul. What we need is for more homilies to include the condemnation by the Church of domestic violence. It is hard enough living in the secular world as a 'Catholic' and harder still living in the Catholic community as a 'divorced catholic', with the judgement of other Catholics who do not

know the facts. I never lost faith in God, but lost faith in the Church and its peoples and left the Church in 2005. I was called back to the sacraments through a dream in the first week of Advent last year. I dreamed I was at a Mass being celebrated by St Ignatius of Loyola. When I went up for Holy Communion, there wasn't any Eucharist left for me. St Ignatius then took the Chalice and walked into the presbytery and I followed him, thinking he was getting more Eucharists. However, he stood with his back toward me and held the Chalice up to a life-size crucifix. I waited for him to turn around, but he never did and I woke up with the most profound sadness in me and I knew that Jesus was calling me back to the sacraments. I made an appointment with my parish priest and told him I wanted to 'come home'. I have been attending daily Mass ever since, with new eyes, new ears and an open heart. I have forgiven all those who shunned me because I am a 'divorcee' and am now going through a healing process for me and for them. There are thousands of Catholic divorcees who have gone through a similar experience to mine. There is a website called [divorcedCatholics.com](http://divorcedCatholics.com).

After four listening and dialogue sessions seeking to answer this question, we decided our response would describe the kind of Church we hope to see. We hope that this Church: 1. Has a preferential option for the poor and the vulnerable, and welcomes the 'distanced' and 'rejected'. 2. Is missionary, based on a return to Gospel Values, is evolutionary and dynamic. 3. Has accountable governance (from the local level to the Episcopate), e.g. parish councils (properly constituted and consultative) [our [ - ] parish needs this] 4. Has a changed attitude towards women including: recognising gender equality, incorporating dignity and worth - giving women a genuine say and role/participation, including in leadership, freedom to participate, introduces women's diaconate 5. Recognises and honours children and childhood, and develops a theology of childhood. Priests must understand the sacred vulnerability of a child that what happens in childhood influences a child for life. 6. Renews and simplifies the language of the liturgy, so that it makes sense in our various societies and cultures. 7. Reviews the dominant (celibate, male only) model of the priesthood, while rejecting clericalism (described by the group as a curse), and its power, in all its forms, e.g. introduction and acceptance of a married priesthood (it was noted that a married priest ministers in [ - ] Catholic parish, who serves the community just as well as a celibate priest would!) - Seminary training needs reform, for e.g. the use of psychological profiles. There is a need to teach meditation and contemplation to seminarians. It is important for seminarians to truly come to know themselves, in Jesus' words in John's Gospel (8:32): "...and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". 8. Focuses on (adult) education in the Faith. 9. Is a Church with a renewed focus, not on our sinfulness and unworthiness, but one which, - recognises we are created by God with intrinsic goodness - recognises we are not separate from God or each other - recognises and is thankful for the gifts of the Holy Spirit - is listening, loving and compassionate, inclusive and empowering of the faithful.

To treat everyone fair and equal.

That we do the right thing to enable all people to live life to the full. To adopt accountability as core. Reject clericalism. Adopt a role in Society that enables the Church to set high standards, be respected as a source of love and credibility, and have the authority to hold to account our leaders and the people of the Church. To adopt structures that will enable its ordained representatives to be pastors first.

Spread the GOSPEL of JESUS CHRIST...The Good News of what God has done in the person and work of Jesus Christ to sanctify and justify all people.

A vibrant and joyful witness of the truth that is our Catholic faith. Young people aren't to be tiptoed around, we want real truth. We're not afraid.

To teach the Truth without fear.

I think God wants all of us as part of the Catholic Church to be honest about the past mistakes and more open to a changing world. God does not want us to compromise our faith however, I think he does want us to be more compassionate and understanding of marginal groups: the divorced, non-practising Catholics and the gay community. Everyone from these groups should be accepted at Mass and allowed to receive Holy Eucharist if they want to, assuming they are Catholics; likewise baptism for their children without having to jump through 1000 hoops. Yes, they need to demonstrate a degree of interest and commitment but I have found it extremely disappointing when people (including my adult children) have met with bureaucratic nonsense when attempting to organise their children (who attend government school) to receive their sacraments. I find this indefensible—particularly when my children were taken to Mass every week as a family and were all married in the Catholic Church; now they face ridiculous constraints in attempting to have their children receive their sacraments (Big eye roll here!). I believe if someone knocks on the presbytery or parish office door and says they would like to have their children be baptised or receive the sacraments of initiation then that process should be supported not "you need to go to your own parish" (they live closer to this parish than the parish they are geographically assigned to). GOD EXPECTS BETTER of us than this!! As a practising Catholic, I find it extremely frustrating to hear this when I continue to encourage my children (and pray) to attend Mass and Holy Eucharist with THEIR children one day! They won't if they keep getting this answer! This attitude isn't helping anyone. Perhaps if we were more open to people, that would build a better sense of welcome and encourage people to then become more active in the Church faith. There are also still many people hurting over the scandals of paedophile priests. I myself feel very betrayed as an onlooker. - It is because of this I refuse to be made to feel guilty any more if I do miss a Sunday Mass here or there for whatever reason. It is going to take a long time for people to forgive these events. And this is exactly why if people are wanting to receive their sacraments (or their children to) we should be making it easier not more difficult! Current attitudes are only exacerbating the problem! Finally I believe God wants the Church to be more generous. The Catholic Church is one of the, if not, the most wealthy institutions on the planet and needs to sell off some of that art work, etc. and distribute the proceeds to the poor and needy. Otherwise, it seems to me to be very hypocritical. Again a poor public perception. So to sum up, I believe God wants us to be generous and open to all people, to be welcoming and accepting of all people, to give where there is genuine need rather than hoarding material possessions - easier pathways to Catholicism!

We think God is asking us to be a more open Church. Too many people see us as a closed group that puts very high ideals forward and looks down on those who do not live up to these ideals. Recent events have shown the public that too many people in the Church were more concerned about the image of the Church rather than the people we should be ministering to. We think God is asking us to be humble, compassionate and willing to listen to everyone. We have to create a community where everyone feels welcome and accepted regardless of their backgrounds and their failings. Most people are searching for meaning in their lives and we have to help them find

the God who loves them and wants to draw them close. We really have to find a way of welcoming the divorced into our community and help them in their struggles. We also have to help migrants and refugees feel "at home" in their new community and be prepared to let them introduce some of the customs that were so meaningful for their way of worshipping God in their previous countries. Just as Jesus fed everyone who was hungry, cared for everyone who was sick, and reached out to gentiles, so we need to make it easier for people to be nourished by the Eucharist. People who are struggling with their sexuality and those who feel they are failing in their relationship with God need to be strengthened by this great gift, which Jesus offered to all people. Pope Francis reminded us that "Communion is nourishment for the weak, not a prize for the good". At the same time, we need to spread the Good News and let everyone know that they are welcome, and if they do come to Church, go out of our way to introduce them to others. Women also need to be more prominent in decision-making in our Church. Even if they cannot be ordained to the priesthood, they should be given roles in governance. We have to look for ways in which the Church can be a "beacon of light" in a secular society. Otherwise we will just be left behind.

The same thing that He has always asked: for us to be faithful to Christ and the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church he founded for our sanctification and eternal salvation. For us in Australia, we need a renewal of holiness. The Church in Australia needs to reorientate itself on Christ and the eternal realities of our faith. This is what will help us to love Jesus our Lord more, and serve others. To be holy, to be saints, as the Second Vatican Council so beautifully stated. For this to occur, we need: 1. A revival of the practice of individual Confession: preach about mortal and venial sin, put more confession times. 2. Youth work. Start youth groups, Eucharistic Adoration and talks for young adult groups, providing social opportunities and also outreach work (nursing home visits, soup kitchens etc.). 3. Chaplaincy: Catholic High schools are an unused resource. It is difficult to fully transform the teaching staff of schools, but it is possible to facilitate Catholic activities that are optional. These could include Eucharistic Adoration and Confession available once a week during lunch by a visiting priest from the local parish, or youth groups inside the school.

I believe many bishops haven't been listening to the Holy Spirit in their lives and roles, over many decades. A toxic clericalism has taken control of the Church, and we have seen the results of this in the media, abuse of children, women, men, female and male religious. We need to dismantle much of the Church hierarchy, and reassemble it in a way that that will ensure that these abuses will never reoccur. The laity, in particular women, need to be intimately involved. The Church must change its culture to one of servant leadership, where toxic clericalism has no place. Lay women and men must be given real positions of leadership and authority. Structural change is essential. We are all called to serve, none of us have a right to abuse another. I believe that God is asking is to accept and respect all people, regardless of race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender or transgender. Jesus called us to love unconditionally and radically. Recognition, acceptance and welcoming our gender diverse sisters and brothers is a beginning to this. The Church's response to marriage equality, last year, sickened me. Media hung on negative responses from the Catholic hierarchy. I love my Church, however it is failing to be a beacon of love. We are being asked to make Catholic worship more relevant to young people by empowering them to work with others to develop opportunities. People seeking Asylum and Refugees are a major humanitarian issue in Australia. The Church must become much more overt

in its response, by encouraging members to take on the issue. We are called to welcome the stranger, and as a country we are failing. All Catholic churches in Australia should perform an acknowledgement of country before Mass. With leadership from the Church, members can put more pressure on governments to enter into meaningful reconciliation, self-determination and treaties with original Australians. The world is in a time of climate emergency. Australia is the world's biggest polluter per capita. The Church should divest from fossil fuels and install clean energy to power Church properties. Finally, I feel the current translation of the Mass to be clumsy barrier to real participation. Much of it is a rambling mess. A relevant translation should be adopted, using the vernacular that modern Catholics understand. I disagree with gender paradigms inherent in the current Mass. It's a sign of a male dominated Church that's forgotten its history and mandate for inclusion. It seems to me that there was an intention for the translation to distance the Church from our non-Catholic sisters and brothers, as indicated by the differences in the current wording of the Lord's prayer. I can imagine a Church that seeks to end discrimination, welcome everyone, practice unconditional love and use any privilege it has to fight with and for excluded and marginalised people. Imagine we were known for solidarity with those who suffer. I believe that Jesus imagined this.

God cannot rely on this Church to represent his will. It is broken as are every other system at this time in history. Faith is knowing the difference. THIS Church has caused untold damage. My priest told my mother my confession ...and putting it mildly most are stuck in a place that is doing more damage than good. Teachers are told to teach RE, it's done poorly. The Bible requires an upgrade, that's right—where is the Gospel of Thomas? Remove revelations, etc ...God is asking me to grow the concept of a simple foods protocol for life, you see it brought me back to my faith, but not as a Catholic. I believe in the light of God and trust Jesus and one or two others. What repose is there for victims of sexual assaults? I do not belong but I will receive communion and block my ears when I listen to a nonsense homily and another flawed hymn. Happy are the poor in spirit, are you sure? Fix it. It should be happy are the poor, in spirit the kingdom is theirs... The first readings are generally heavy and so much more living words could be expressed! Who chooses the readings? We all know that it's a business; that does not really help us spiritually. However, God wants us to live life better, it is unrealistic to deny priests their needs. We should not pray to Angels and Saints, and use the idea of them to promote the Church. Why would a priest say to me that he cannot pray for Julian Assange. He has uncovered the truth and persecuted. And yet all remains silent. I am ashamed to say that this Church has hidden abuse, harmed my parents, almost destroyed my trust in God and harmed itself. Finally God is asking that we remove any pagan elements to worship. [ - ].

To be more inclusive, welcoming of all and a better reflection of general society.

To end clericalism and initiate three-way conversation between bishops, priests and lay people. This summary statement is enlarged in one PDF document as our actual submission.

God has already made it clear what he is saying in the Gospel" you are the salt for the earth" "You are light for the world ". Scandals in Church members destroy the Church as it only exists as a service for the world My personal experience has been to accept the preaching of the kerygma leading me to receive the Holy Spirit Gods free love beginning a slow work of transformation in my life Alarmingly then to discover a Church satisfied with a "belief system" for everyone to follow and not very interested in announcing the Gospel since all baptised are "already Christians".

To emphasize our faith and belief as a community leading by example in order to remove the stigma attached these days to the Church. To remove the barriers between Christian Churches and find unity amongst our fellow Christian's regardless of denomination. Priests should be allowed to marry and have families. We will reach a much greater audience, increase priestly vocation and decrease issues that plagued the Church in recent times.

I think God would like the Catholic Church (us) in Australia to: -refocus sharply on our mission. - Move on from the Child sex abuse issue by taking the corrective action to prevent it occurring ever again in the Church and stop apologising. This issue is being used to shut the Church's voice out of the public space. - Radically refocus our Catholic education system so that it produces good young Catholics who understand their faith and practice it. If this cannot be done then we need to get out of education. - Restructure our schools so that the head RE person is the deputy Principal and the logical next principal. - Stop substituting Social Justice for RE in our schools. - Actively, loudly and consistently advocate for life in our society. - Encourage political action by the laity to address Catholic issues in society. - Priests need to be trained in leadership, teach according to the Church doctrine, understand the secular world, spend time visiting and talking to parishioners, always care for the more vulnerable in the society, ensure Catholic institutions remain aligned to Catholic principles. [Also] spend time in our schools engaging with the students and teachers and preach sermons that help people grow in their faith and live in the secular world, that are consistent with Catholic doctrine rather than just retelling the Gospel story. - Adhere to Church teaching on divorce and marriage and also preach on these issues so that Catholics understand Church teaching. - Priests need to preach on Catholic teaching that is at odds with the secular world i.e. divorce, contraception, marriage, premarital sex, abortion, euthanasia, confession and the importance nurturing a spiritual life. - Take immediate action to turn around the situation where the vast majority of young Catholics stop practicing their faith by the time they leave our schools. We are currently failing them. - The Church needs to ensure that there is always a emphasis on the spiritual side of the faith. - Recognise and celebrate the endless good work the Church does through its various institutions. We need to continually review our institutions to ensure they are consistent with Catholic teaching and also look to see if there are other areas of disadvantage in society where we could help. i.e. providing assistance to young women as an alternative to abortion. - We need a Church that is willing and able to articulate our view of society. - A Church that is a beacon of hope and always articulates all the positive aspects of living a Christian life to a world that often despairs. The Catholic Church needs to change. That change should not be at the expense of the truth we teach but by placing before people the real challenges of being true to the faith so they can make a real choice. Having said all of the above I am confident that the Holy Spirit will guide the Church in the right direction as long as we take prayerful action.

Not 'God". However, use Spirit or Christ terminology. Include women at all levels in the institution. Remove terminology that excludes women and girls.

At this time I believe that God is asking us to renew and revitalise the sacrament of reconciliation by restoring the Third Rite. When the Third Rite was being practised, parishioners flocked to the sacrament. Churches were full for two or three nights before Easter and Christmas. When the Third Rite was banned, the faithful stopped receiving the sacrament, Thus, many Catholics who attend Mass regularly have not been to the sacrament of Reconciliation for twenty or thirty years.

The banning was an extraordinary "Own Goal" perpetuated by the Church. A genuine growth point for active Catholics was cut off in its prime. Now, as a result of the Royal Commission on Child Sexual Abuse, the faithful are even less likely to practise individual Reconciliation, celebrating neither the First Rite nor the Second Rite.

I have thought and prayed. To me the answer is in our national anthem with the words "for those who come across the sea we have boundless plains to share." "Share is the important word. We must share here in Australia and then with our overseas neighbours.

- Hearing and drawing upon the wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. - Hearing and responding to the cry of the earth; taking real and meaningful action in response to climate change. - Challenging the voices of division and fear in our politics and in our media. - Opening our hearts to those who seek safety on our shores by developing a compassionate response to asylum seekers and refugees. - Responding with courage and conviction to all forms of family violence and violence against women. - Addressing the rights of workers, including the issue of just wages, gendered wage disparity, casualisation of work, underemployment and unemployment.

to be honest in naming our shortcomings in the pastoral efficacy of our Church; to be brave and resolute in seeking and implementing responses to the shortcomings; to impress upon our Church leadership (bishops and local pastors) that their inherited exclusively clerically based method of procedure is a century out of date; those who have persisted with our Church during these decades when 50-70% (?) of our "faithful" have retired from active association with the Church are amply equipped to contribute to the reforming of our Church. Key issues at stake here for me are in the 6 pages attached.

Like everyone else, I think that God is asking us to reflect on the current state of the Church in Australia (and, for that matter, in the world), on how it got there and what can be done to rectify it. I think that God is asking us in general to take responsibility for the future of the Church and the hierarchy, bishops and priests, to trust the people and to see themselves as servants, not as holding positions of honour. I think that God is asking us to rethink our current models of Eucharist and priesthood (which are seen by many in the Church as closely linked) and the governance of the Church. In the current structure of the Church these are questions for the Vatican, rather than the Church in Australia but the latter can ask the Vatican to consider change. My impression as a former lay liturgical leader is that the Church with its top-down structure, appropriate enough for an uneducated society, has paralysed the laity, which has become more educated and sophisticated over my lifetime. (My wife has an ACU master's degree in theology). The worsening lack of priests in my rural diocese is met with restructuring of parishes and the creation of ministry districts but not with encouragement of lay-led liturgies. One argument against encouragement of lay-led liturgies is that many of the laity do not like them. Thus, the number of people attending our fortnightly lay-led liturgies was half that of the people attending Masses in the alternate weekends. Of course, lay-led liturgies require discipline and work but particularly the support of parish priests. I understand that when lay-led liturgies were introduced in our parish some 15-years ago, they were operating in our four Churches. When my wife and I came here ten-years ago, our Church was the only one that still had lay-led liturgies. One reason that the laity does not like lay-led liturgies may be that the Church has stressed for so long that the Mass is the only real worship. For the Church to ignore the increased sophistication and

<p>education of the laity in relation to governance and appointments to the priesthood is demeaning to the laity and a waste of resources. Part of the mystique of the priesthood has been the enforced celibacy, which has now become a sick joke. Breach of his vow of chastity by a priest or brother may only involve a consensual relationship but in many cases it has involved a crime, as with rape or child molestation. Whichever way one looks at it, if a person continues to operate as a priest or brother knowing that he is in breach of his vow is hypocritical. Part of the solution must be reconsideration of the chastity vow. If bishops are to continue to be appointed by the Vatican, the process should be transparent and democratic. Rumour has it that the present process involves candidates promising obedience to the Vatican. Requiring such a promise would be to strip innovative thinkers from the field of possible appointees.</p>
<p>Why is the baptismal call of most community members totally ignored?</p>
<p>Peace a welcoming community where every person is valued.</p>
<p>A return to the traditions of the Church.</p>
<p>To listen to the voice of today's society. Live more like Jesus Christ. Acceptance of same gender in the Church and in Marriage, moving with the times without compromising values, be compassionate, respectful and accepting. Accountability, honesty, open communication open minded less emphasis on hierarchy and rules Is everyone really welcome to attend Mass Continue dialogue for change listen to all voices, different perspectives divorcees inclusive in the Church listen to Pope's message filter through bishops and priests. To what degree is the Church willing to align with societal views to be accepting of refugee asylum seekers in Australia regardless of background?</p>
<p>A revolution in thought, mind and attitude in the Catholic Church today—to be more compassionate, forgiving and Christ-like. See attached submission.</p>
<p>To simply help those who are less fortunate and love everyone equally no matter what their background is or road of life they come from.</p>
<p>God is asking us to love and serve as per his teachings in the Gospel.</p>
<p>To live and act in a way that resembles the way Jesus did.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of women. We need women to have a real role within the Church and no more patronisation</li> <li>• Clericalisation: While priests are set apart, largely to help them preserve their celibacy, artificial barriers in residence, mode of dress, and customs should be avoided.</li> <li>• Treatment of refugees: We should be unified and loud in demanding the end of demonisation of refugees and to the adherence to our obligations under the international treaties and conventions to which this country has subscribed.</li> <li>• Re-evangelisation of young people: So many of our families suffer the heartbreak of seeing their children not practising the religion into which they have been baptised and confirmed.</li> <li>• Training of seminarians: Ensure that all candidates are vetted for psychological suitability and that they are not actively homosexual. Institute visitation of parishes by the bishop or his auxiliary and engage meaningfully with members of the congregation. Deal immediately and effectively with complaints of clerical abuse and stop the blaming of the victims.</li> </ul>

To be tolerant (of non-Catholics, their culture, of unions between Catholics and non-Catholics) and conscientious (of everything from how the world and people are changing).

To be more inclusive. The Catholic Church in Australia does not comprise of white Caucasians only as depicted in the videos shown at Masses during the weekend of 16 Feb. Not a single Islander, Asian, Indian, African could be interviewed?

That we learn to love. To put Christ in the centre of the Church. Not to bend to what the world is saying, by relaxing the teachings of the Church. But by the same token, not to allow legalistic observance of the law to come into the way of loving all. We should make a place in the Church for all people, including the LGBTQI community, broken families, and pro-abortion politicians. To truly love them is to profess the truth of who they are, and who made them. However, this does not mean that we should give communion to those living a lifestyle contrary to the Church's teaching. It would be uncharitable to do so, as St Paul tells us in Corinthians. I believe the Lord is asking the Church to prefer His opinion rather than caring so much about what others think. God has always asked us, and continues to ask us to love Him. I think we can reply in two ways: Obedience and Sacrifice. The true spirit of obedience requires us to know and to practise the law of the Church. The Holy Spirit has spoken in the past, and the Church has taken records of this in her canons. We must honour the work of the Holy Spirit in His Church. We must honour the Mass. We must be reverent towards the Blessed sacrament. Not because God needs praise, but because we need to praise Him.

God made the earth and gave man stewardship of this planet. I believe He would like to see us preserve this planet and all living creatures. In doing so we must reach out to everyone we meet along our journey in love.

I believe God is asking us to be a more inclusive, caring, welcoming, open and forgiving Catholic Community and to embrace all Catholics, whether they are practicing or not. Our Church has become stale and our young people are abandoning their practice of the Faith as soon as they leave school, be it primary or secondary. Older people in their 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s are abandoning the practice of their Faith too. This is not only because of the child abuse, but it has also been going on long before the child abuse issue reared its ugly head. For some people, I believe the child abuse issue may have caused some Catholics to walk away from the Church. God is asking us to come together as Laity and Clergy to work together to reform our Church to truly meet the needs of the Catholic and wider Communities. In my own experience, I have been subject to the worst form of Clericalism from a Catholic priest which for quite some time caused me to abandon my regular attendance at Mass.

To serve, Him, spread the good news and live the faith.

To love God and our neighbours and grow in our faith and share our faith with our children family friends and with those we meet.

God is asking us to challenge the thinking, behaviour and practice of our religious establishment, in the same way Jesus did.

God's Church is being asked to modernise, move with the times. We've been stuck in the past for far too long.

<p>To resolve the sexual abuse issues in Australia and the homosexuals priesthood to be considered as individuals submission to God regardless of their sexuality.</p>
<p>The Catholic Church needs to make every believer in Jesus Christ, know that they are completely and continuously forgiven for all their sins past present and future, because of the one atonement, one perfect sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, at the cross. Believers in Jesus Christ need to be forgiveness conscious, not sin conscience. This is the power of Christ to overcome sin. The liturgy ought to be all about Jesus and what He has done for us. When we believe right, we will live right. Jesus said those who are forgiven much love Him much. We need to know just how much we are forgiven and set free from the curse of the law. This is the good news. This is the Gospel. This is the new covenant we are in as believers. There cannot be a mixture of the old and new covenant or else the power of Christ is nullified. We cannot have law and grace operating at the same time. Self-righteousness, depending on our works to earn God’s favour blessings and Christ’s righteousness given as a gift to those who believe in Him, operating at the same time. It doesn’t work.</p>
<p>God is asking us to listen and to not make any judgment on any of the discussions we are partaking in. Listen with an open mind.</p>
<p>To be more tolerant of other opinions and show more compassion.</p>
<p>God is asking Australians to show compassion in their choices, decisions, views and attitudes, regardless of outcomes.</p>
<p>Reach out to others including lapsed Catholics whilst respecting our beliefs and traditions. If we cannot respect our beliefs we cannot expect others to do so. Do not be arrogant but don't sacrifice the truth in order to be nice and accepted by the world.</p>
<p>-Prepare ourselves for the end of time and learn about prophecies, including those that speak about the environment. - Grow and prepare more spiritually (read the Bible) - Give priority to God as the centre of the family and society. 3 people said the same - Be radical with our religion. - Love your neighbour and the differences that each one represents. - Radical in the sense of knowing how to act and preach in such a way that we are a witness of life. - Unity as a Catholic Church and generate changes in schemes with the purpose of increasing the Faith. - Catechetical preparation with knowledge, making and living the Christian faith (spa school in Australia - Christian model) x3 - Go out to preach and unite in action as a Church. - Grow in community and more family activities with the members of the Church. - Participate with the community of the Church where I live. - Exchange the different religious customs among different Catholic and multicultural communities. - Dynamism of the Church according to the technological change of society and technology. - Make yourself known in social networks and share Catholic messages. - Priority to God and not to money. - Renew the method of teaching the word and the Church. X2 - Identity as a Catholic Church and coherence of life. - To assume as Catholics the problems that the Australians have not been able to solve (mental and lack of cultural identity) and to demonstrate with real changes that God exists and can help with this issues.</p>
<p>Plenary Council 2020 Submissions—Women: In Australia, at this time, we believe the Catholic Church must recognize the essential role of women in every area of Church life—In leadership, in ministry and in governance. Q 1: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? • We believe that the Holy Spirit speaks through the Catholic Community (the Sensus Fidelium), and</p>

at this time, impels us to listen attentively and speak out boldly. • We believe that Plenary one of the main issues for our Australian Church today regards the role of women. • We believe that the Holy Spirit is asking that women today are given their rightful, equal place at all levels. • Given that women represent approximately 50% of the population, and that a greater percentage are actively involved in the Catholic community, the thoughts, aspirations and insights of women must be taken into account, and reflected in any renewal of the Church. • That women are appointed as decision-makers and leaders at every level of the structure and governance of the Church: e.g. theological colleges, seminaries, diocesan structures, parishes. • Respect for women demands that all Church documentation, including liturgical texts, uses inclusive language. • That women be able to exercise their baptismal dignity through ordination and sacramental leadership. • That the Plenary Council and the bishops act in this way now for the Australian Church and also argue, with the support of other representatives, for this case in Rome for the Renewal of the Universal Church.

To be more equal to each other, because as Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as you love yourself", and to do what we can to spread this love and equality with the world.

1. Hope for the Church to be of more relevance to young people: That the Church needed to be more responsive to the signs of the times and be brought in to the 21st Century! As young people, they felt the Church was not responding to nor meeting their needs in any way. They felt disengaged and excluded at so many levels and that their voice was not being listened to. The Church in their eyes was for 'older' people and not meeting their needs nor inviting them in, in any way that was 'age relevant.' They didn't feel any sense of belonging to a Church or parish community but understood that the primary schools they attended were located in a particular parish and where they lived was also located in a particular parish. Since leaving primary school, connection with any sense of parish community was tenuous. However, they identified strongly with St Columba's being a faith community. They gave expression of hope for a Church that is welcoming of them as young girls / women who were willing to contribute if their voice was listened to and that opportunities to engage them in meaningful (and age appropriate) dialogue, prayer, liturgy and social action was afforded them

2. Hope for gender equality and inclusiveness: For the Church to be more inclusive and accepting of all (irrespective of race, gender, religion, sexual identity / preference, etc.) in response particularly to the belief they held dear, that God loved everyone! There was great energy around the Church accepting same sex marriage and being open to celebrate love this way sacramentally.

Devotion to God. Demonstration of our faith in our lives. Acts of charity. Participation in sacraments. Instilling faith in younger generations.

In my daily prayers to the Holy Spirit and daily Rosary, I have been made aware that the Catholic Church does not pay enough homage to our Lady. It's only because of Her and Her Sacrifice, that we are able today to share in the Love of God and enjoy eternal salvation through Her Son. Our Lady sacrificed Her Son and that is why we celebrate the Eucharist. At the commencement of every Mass, we should pay homage to Her, with the Hail Mary to let everyone know that they are there celebrating Her Son's sacrifice for us through her unconditional Love for us all. If our heavenly Mother did not accept the covenant from the Angel Gabriel, we would not be where we are enjoying Eternal Salvation. Across all the Churches around the world we HAVE to have a statue

<p>of our Lady at the altar to venerate her and adore Her. How can we show love to Jesus and the Holy Trinity and NOT have Her as the centre of all our adoration.</p>
<p>To keep the tradition of the Catholic Church alive. To go back to our core beliefs—i.e. 10 commandments. For the Church to stay out of political issues and instead focus on moral issues. To remain a steadfast community, one that has lasted over 2000 years, not one that changes with the times.</p>
<p>We pray but we need to voice our opinions at the moment none of us are being heard. They talk about gay people but gay people have been around for centuries and I'd say a lot of them still went to Church without any hate in their hearts but let us make a stand rather than just sit back and watch the Islamic take over slowly we are being out numbered we are being pushed out.</p>
<p>We believe that we are being asked to follow the lead of Pope Francis to renew our Church and reform its culture from top to bottom, to become inclusive, welcoming, non-judgemental, non-clerical, and synodal at all levels. We all, including clergy and bishops, need to be primarily of loving and meek service to each other, as well as to the wider community.</p>
<p>1. GOD IS ASKING US TO . . . embrace openness within the Church. This means that we need to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Listening Church - We need to listen to the messages being passed :             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Vertically—The Church hierarchy needs to listen to the input being provided from all Church members as well as from those who have fallen away from the Church.</li> <li>o Horizontally—The Church, at all levels, needs to listen to those around it; to listen to our fellow Church goers, to those who have fallen away, to those in need, to those in pain. It must respond in a way consistent with the simple Christian values that Jesus taught.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A Loving Church             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o We need to follow Jesus' teachings and implement the basic Christian values and not get lost in theology.</li> <li>o We need to be open to all people, as Jesus taught, not to focus on exclusion but to be open to saints and sinners without judgement as to which category any person may belong. However, Openness does not condone actions, which are against our Christian values—such as child abuse.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>That the Australian Church deals fairly and justly with sexual abuse victims and the hierarchy recognise the terrible disconnect this situation has brought to every day Catholics as it has been handled so poorly. That lay people have a real say in the way parishes are run. That the pretence of celibacy be examined. Once we have married Anglican convert priests with wives it is ridiculous not to allow priests to marry. Some recognition be given to the qualifications lay people possess, such as degrees in theology.</p>
<p>What do I think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? PREAMBLE: First; I am greatly heartened, as would be most devout Catholics, when Archbishop Mark Coleridge assured us in his introduction, "Eventually, when the decisions are made, we'll also need the Pope to approve these decisions just to make sure they are in harmony with the Universal's Church's doctrine and discipline" (My emphasis) Secondly; family life in Australia has changed dramatically in the last 60 years. Up until the 1960s the vast number of families had one wage-earner and that allowed families to survive in relative comfort. The husband was generally, but not always, the wage earner and the wife the homemaker. Such a concept is ridiculed today as old fashioned gender stereotyping yet most families today seem to accept both husband and wife must be wage-earners just to live in relative comfort. That is hardly progress yet in many quarters is hailed as a victory, particularly for women. It is very unlikely in the foreseeable future there will be an</p>

acceptance, and a return to, the family structure that prevailed before the 1960s. Mothers raising their own children can be scorned yet women working in childcare are valued. Odd reasoning indeed. Consequently, parents will continue to have less time to influence their own children. To me parental influence is more critical than ever, especially in light of the serious implications of modern technology and a Massive technology addiction (adults and children alike) where secularism reigns supreme and pornography, movies, fake news and constant stimulation are only a click away. If that is not enough, many parents, exhausted from running a family (particularly with children involved in organised sport) and both keeping a job outside the home, simply drop-off going to Mass. Mass attendances in Australia started to decline most notably after Vatican II and continue today, the sex-abuse scandals have not helped but are not the cause. In the last 20 years or so Australia, and Victoria in particular, has adopted significant policies contrary to the teaching of Jesus, VIZ Abortion on demand, same sex marriage, voluntary euthanasia and gender is fluid, be what you'd like to be. Many Catholics seem to embrace some of these beliefs more fervently than the teachings of the Church, which causes me great concern about Catholic Education. Are children in our Catholic schools taught the Faith? Do they understand the teachings of the Church? Are they taught to 'think'? Are they taught well-founded scientific principles such as questioning, "where is the evidence?" This brings me to the nub of the question, "what do I think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" what God is telling me is: Catholic schools must teach the Faith we profess irrespective of what parents might think. If that sounds hard the simple solution for offended parents is, 'do not send your child to a Catholic school'. Please see additional material at end.

In a nutshell, I believe God still wants us to 'know him, love him, and serve him despite what the world has to offer us instead.

To have respect for others, create a safer environment, lower levels of materialism and reduce the hectic pace of lifestyles.

For bishops to step up and reveal the secrets they have kept regarding sins against others. Mainly sexual sins against children. For priests to own up to their sins also and come clean. Face a sentence and do the punishment according to the crime. Only in this way can the Church reconcile. Until this is done more and more parishioners will leave. The lie is killing our Church and we need to pray for all those involved so that we can finally move forward from the sins of yesterday. As they have been manifesting for decades, so too has the Church eroded and suffered. STOP PRETENDING IT HASN'T HAPPENED AND DEAL WITH IT SO THAT YOU DON'T GO TO HELL.

Holiness. To know, love and serve and to bring others to him through faithfulness to God and his Church.

For all Christian Churches to unite as one strong force. For people to return to the church regularly. For Australia to stay a Christian country with Christian morals values and beliefs.

I know GOD wants each of us humans to realise 1. HE made us. 2. He lovingly looks after us continually through life. 3. He has made each and every one of us to be with Him eternally! 4. He does not want FEAR to govern our lives but LOVE. 5. He wants us to always take the lowest place. 6. He didn't ordain priests to have an over exalted appreciation of themselves but to actually follow HIM and to start taking the lowest place. And on the subject of priests they should do the

main thing they were ordained to do and say MASS each day for their parishioners at a specified time and do funerals and school Masses at times other than this. 7. Priests should stop listening to the "appointed few" in a parish who run the "show" and adopt the principle of listening to the "minority" for a change! e.g. I am a minority! I was a Monk for 20 years. I attend Mass each day for 73 years and with my present priest am not aware of having my opinion asked on any matter for these last 10 or so years since he's been here! P.S I was a qualified Builder for most of my working life and can't understand why I've never had him ask advice on any construction or allied matters around the parish. No acknowledgment what so ever of the life served in GOD'S work for those 20 years from age 16 to 36. Either!

Initial thoughts of the various group members were: - Unity in diversity - Dialogue with all faiths - Love one another and to live our faith - Respect each other and live a God Catholic life - Accept His way leading to eternal happiness, unconditional love, respect, peace, compassion and guidance in our lives to reject evil and live with good morals / values In further discussions we identified that the question in our interpretation (origin by John—Book of Revelation) is asking us the Church as a body for a response focusing on what the Church—including all individuals in faith that make up the Church—are to do. Through sharing individual stories about our interactions with other faiths / Christian denominations and how they value the Catholic prayer and Catholic values, we came to the conclusion that we are asked to share the Good News. We are the voice and mouths of the Church and we are asked to share the Good News. We each have our own personal story on how the Holy Spirit has touched us, how our faith really began to take a meaningful journey—whether through a tragedy which one of the Group member's shared or through a joyous experience. We have our story and by reminding ourselves of that moment, experience or event and strengthening our own faith, belief we are in a better position and stronger to share the Good News with others. We are also asked to reach out to lapse Catholics, families with no faith, techno savvy young people, those on the streets taking drugs, the hopeless, those that have lost touch and so many that need to hear. Finally, we are asked to be constantly evolving with the times and utilise tools of the new generations to share the good news. Whether it's technology or creative means to reach out, God is asking us to always seek the best way to connect and share the Good News as it is us who 'carry the treasure'.

The need for people to treat everyone as you would like to be treated yourself. The clergy must not expect to be served but must relate more to the people in their lives and show the beatitudes that are needed to be practiced in the Church and the world. People need to be shown that they are important and accepted for what they can do in serving God in their lives. The clergy now need to step back and only be the ministers of the Mass and the sacraments not administering schools and other organisations. Less office jobs and more care.

To treat others as we expect to be treated. Respect diversity in all cultures, races and religions. Treat all people fairly regardless of their beliefs. Act in a way in which we would expect Jesus to act bearing in mind that we are all sinners. Do our best for each other and use our talents given to us by God to be the best we can. Help and show respect to those who are less fortunate or are struggling in life.

I believe God is asking us to return to the Church that he began for our benefit, that we in Australia should remain strong within our faith so all can see that no matter what laws are passed or what social media does, the Church should stay as it always used to within the heart of what

our Blessed Father taught us and our Blessed Mother has shown us, not the way it is at present, a wishy washy way of not upsetting anyone or indeed not causing any upset by not speaking out on controversial subjects like abortion, homosexuality abuse by clergy, etc. We need to get back to basics and say it as it is and remain a bastion for God's own.

We as 12 of the members of the [ - ] Association [ - ] at our 2018 Annual Conference considered what God is asking of us in Australia particularly in reference to the call to proclaim the word including the issues of translating the Bible, of allowing qualified men and women in biblical scholarship to preach the word, to bring the word to a greater literacy of the Bible and to address what the word can say about our care of the earth and the poor. As biblical scholars, God is calling for us to speak from the heart of our biblical scholarship and interpretation to proclaim the word in accessible ways to the ends of the earth.

God is asking Clergy in Australia to "spell out" what is required to be a good Catholic. When I was growing up it was weekly (even daily) Mass, confession every 4 weeks, 3 times daily prayer, thoughtful contemplation of various passages in the Bible, good works such as parish activities. In my experience I haven't heard a priest spell this out to the congregation since the 1980s. Confession rates around the world are at an all-time low. (Roughly 2% according to the Vatican website). God is also asking parents who baptise their children in the faith to bring them up in the faith by attending weekly Mass and confession. Only a fraction of parents who send their children to Catholic schools attend Mass. I am sick of these "freeloaders" getting the best education without realising that a Catholic school is not only for academic excellence but for the propagation of the Catholic faith. This must be policed by the school principal and parish priest. If it is found that a family refuses to attend Mass, they should be advised that their child cannot attend that Catholic school (primary or secondary). Parents at baptism make solemn vows. If parents are notified of this by correspondence, they are forced to make a choice of school for their child. At the moment if the parents don't attend Mass on Sunday, neither will the child. God wants them to attend and bring their children with them. This will stop parents only attending Mass at Easter, Christmas and baptism as a preparation for the party that is to follow that afternoon. Knowing the "precious" nature of Australian Catholics as I do, there will be great anger at this but at least the Church will stand up and say here we are in the 21st Century. This is what we believe...make a decision. I have also heard the non-Catholic children are being enrolled in Catholic schools. This must STOP!!!!!! You don't see Muslim or Jewish schools accepting other faiths. The Catholic faith is the "one true faith" based on Jesus Christ and Peter the first Pope. Let's not get caught up in the Ecumenical atmosphere of 2019. I therefore ask the bishops to command that priests have a back to basics Sunday every year and print and distribute Vatican encyclicals as they appear from now and even in the past to the congregation. I have a long held fear that the Australian Church doesn't always follow the Vatican line in all things Catholic for fear of upsetting the congregation and we have 30 or 40 years of Catholic officials placating Catholics and teaching about saving whales and the environment. I beg you to stop muddying the minds of young people. The Church now needs to leave behind the damage control of molestation and go forth and be a "power" to itself and the nation. In 2019, it is now a joke whereas politicians used to fear the Catholic backlash at elections.

To become more relevant to the times we live in.

PLENARY COUNCIL 2020 [ - ], [ - ] A. Communication and Dialogue • Dialogue is the basis of community. The Church should help extend dialogue to all sectors of Australian society, with special concern for Catholic eastern rites and other faith traditions. B. Governance • Every parish should have an elected pastoral council, which functions as a decision-making body. • Every diocese should have active deaneries and a Pastoral Commission representing all sections of the Church, according equal representation to the laity, in recognition to their baptismal call to missionary discipleship. • Parish councils should be involved in the selection of the parish priest. C. Clergy and Clericalism • Eliminate elitist elements in formation of clergy by accommodating seminarians in parishes where they would be integrated into the parish community. • Involve more lay people in the formation of seminarians so that seminarians may appreciate more fully the baptismal vocation of the laity. • Ordination to the priesthood should be open to married men. • We recommend ordination to the priesthood of First Peoples who are married, male or female. • We should welcome former priests who are now married to minister as priests. D. Women • Support the ordination of female deacons leading to the ordination of women to the priesthood, without the obligation of celibacy. • Challenge cultural basis for exclusion of women from certain roles of leadership and governance. • More explicit Church support in defence of women's rights and dignity. E. Laity • Empower and enable all baptised to share fully as equals with different charisms in one covenant family. F. Faith communities: • There should be a greater emphasis on building community. • Churches should be redesigned for liturgies and to be adaptable as spaces for community activities and hospitality. G. liturgy • Establish the third rite of reconciliation as the norm for the sacrament of reconciliation.

Return to the traditions of the Church including the disciplines of our faith that were articulated at Mass, the good works done in the community. Stop allowing our faith traditions to be leached away by passing fads Allow the involvement of a broader range of people (but only if they uphold the traditions of our faith).

To step out of our comfort zones. To stand up and be witnesses—to walk the talk but also talk the talk. Action alone is not enough. To not water down our faith—evangelise not entertain. To challenge others to this and most of all to LOVE ... An inclusive love.

As Australians, we are being asked to be a society which cares for this unique ancient continent. We are being asked to share of the affluence which is ours by promoting a society where fairness and compassion are measures of success. Above all, we are being asked to live more communally within our country and as world citizens.

I think we are being asked "to see the face of God" in others, as per the prayer. This means being an inclusive, pro-active and reactive Church, a positive, joyful part of our local and national community. This means we should be involve all the different aspects of our society, and be able to change to meet the needs of a changing world. Monarchs, kings, queens, tsars, and great warlords may have been the "traditional" rulers of the past, but it doesn't mean we have to stick with that model, and not all tradition is unquestionably good. We should recognize the huge role women could fill in our Church, likewise gay people, 'partnered' or divorced people. I think the Church should be willing to embrace more of the "messiness" of life, because families now are extremely complex and have such different living arrangements. I don't think everybody in the community feels welcome in Church, often our Church puts itself on a bit of a pedestal, which is another problem altogether. But whilst we pray and have collections for the poor and the

disadvantaged, and rightly we should be actively helping, I think we are being asked to be more open to all our own community. And I mean this to encompass people from all walks of life. Just for example IVF, surrogacy, suicide, domestic violence in a relationship, abortion and sexual change aren't so foreign anymore and is our Church ready to open its arms to people who have struggled with these? And if it is, is it only on the Church's terms? I find our Church may pay a bit of lip service and provide recommendations from some bishops conference on "reaching out," but do we have to wait years for a sometimes never-eventuating "policy"—do we seem, as a Church, to open and caring of all our community? Our Church should be unquestioning, unrestricted and not selective about helping others. Sometimes helping the "poor and needy" seems the easier option. I don't think Jesus stopped and asked people if they knew their catechism, were confirmed or "prepared," or if they took their hat off or had to put one on and how long since they had last eaten, before he wanted to help them—he just wanted to help them straight off, regardless of their situation, or especially because of their situation. I think an Australian Church needs to be more open to everyone in our community, without any qualifying or pomp and ceremony, let God do the judging or discriminating if it needs doing. I think God is asking us to love one another, and thereby others will recognize our example as the Christian identity.

#to be less materialistic, less judgemental, and more spiritual and accepting of differences. #care for and reach out more to the marginalised and downtrodden in our society #to deepen our belief, trust and faith in God through prayer life and ongoing education in Scripture and spiritual matters.

To examine and reform Church structures that promote exclusion and division. To be a genuine voice for all. To fundamentally reform power structures to be inclusive of all communities and populations.

God is asking us as Australian citizens as this time to take pride in the original custodians of this land we call home.

More love to communities. More equality for all genders, races and people in society. Treating people, the land and environment well.

To change. What moral authority does this tired, broken, disgraced Catholic Church have in Australia at this time? The Australian Catholic Church needs to be more responsive to the experience of Australians at this time. The hierarchy consists of older men who are out of touch with the lived experiences of Australians. Meanwhile, the other members of my family attend other Christian Churches now, led by younger men and women who really connect with the spiritual and daily challenges of contemporary life—are facing the same challenges as their congregation. Allow priests to marry and have children; nothing would replenish and invigorate the local parish more than the presence of a priest and his family leading the congregation. Imagine how powerful this role modelling would be at the local parish level. Parishioners would support them financially. Allow women to take their rightful place as members of the decision-making hierarchy of the Australian Catholic Church. There are theological foundations to support these moves—the Holy Spirit of God urges you to seek them out. Please do something about the lack of Catholic focus in Catholic schools. It would be better to sell them all off than to continue as they are: an emphasis on doing good works and being loving and inclusive are admirable, but are

our children and young people graduating from Catholic schools truly knowing about such things as the scriptures, the apostolic tradition and the magisterium? I think not.

At this time in Australia, God is asking that we revive the Church. God wants to see us being more passionate about our faith, bolder about sharing the good news, changing the reputation of the Church and of our faith among non-believers, redefining the Catholic Church among non-believers. The Church should be known as a place of love, acceptance and truth, not rules, corruption and stubbornness. Let us be active in our faith, not afraid to advocate for love. Showing people the truth. "Sing to the LORD; praise his name. Each day proclaim the good news that he saves. Publish his glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! He is to be feared above all Gods." - Psalm 96:2-4 There needs to be transparency, openness and accountability in the hierarchy of the Church and in decision-making processes. In order to walk in God's truth and to lead others in the truth, we need to be truthful and honest about everything that happens and in all the decision-making processes. People aren't perfect, laity are no exception. When corruption does appear, it is better that the Church is seen to continuously keeping people accountable and be very public about the processes of the Church. "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out."- Proverbs 10:9 If priests were allowed to get married and have families, they may lead the Church more effectively. They can model good family life and represent the Church more fully. There are many ways to serve God, priesthood is one way, and so is raising children. Priests are capable of doing both, especially if there are more priests because of marriage being allowed. This will help the Church to rejuvenate. Paul in his letter to Timothy mentions "overseers" and their families, in 1 Timothy 1:1-4. There exists this lack of authenticity among young people at this time. The Catholic schools are not doing a good job of keeping Catholicism central to education. There are students attending that openly admit they're not Catholic. This needs to change. Christian practices must be taught. Perhaps if weekly Sunday Mass attendance is made mandatory for entrance into Catholic schools and the rosary is prayed by all the students every day, it would fulfil the fundamental purpose of Catholic schools; to teach the ways of Catholicism. "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them." - Deuteronomy 4:9.

To act. To modernise. To accept all people in the sacraments. To take full responsibility of the dark past.

Attendance at authentic liturgy, not Fr A's version, or Fr B's version, but the Church's version. Adherence to authentic doctrine, adherence to traditional authentic morality, support for our bishops, provided they give authentic doctrinal leadership.

To uphold His teachings and not make up our own to suit ourselves.

Justice for victims of abuse and proper compensation and written apologies signed by the Pope and all perp's and those involved in cover-ups. After all victims' lives are screwed. PTSD and anxiety and depression and suicidal thoughts and sexual dysfunction. Anyone wronged by the 'Church including teachers who were victimized or bullied or terminated because they spoke 'The TRUTH' should be compensated fully.

To be more loving and generous with everyone. We give thanks for our quality of life and we need to share with the less fortunate and to speak openly about our faith. I believe God wants us to be messengers to spread his love to people young and old, from all walks of life, by being truly welcoming.

I think God is asking us to be a community of faithful people who support and respect one another regardless of race or gender or sexuality. There should be mutual trust and a realistic sharing of roles. I guess what I am saying is that we should take a "hard look" at the present clericalism in the Church and learn where the hierarchy has failed the people in such a tragic and catastrophic way. There needs to be transparency in dealing with financial matters in dioceses and parishes. Never again should we suffer the likes of moving priests who abuse children and the vulnerable or the "Melbourne Response" processes. Our community of faithful people are willing and able to take responsibility and strong leadership roles in the Church and this would of course include women! Therefore the hierarchy needs to be aware when appointing a priest to lead our people that he is one who is culturally aware and can rejoice in the participation of women in leadership roles.

I believe God is asking Catholics to look at ourselves, reach out to people who are lonely, befriend them, acknowledge them and support them in their journey. To help people find permanent housing and have Church support if needed. Try and bring people back to attending Mass on a Sunday.

I believe God is calling us in Australia for His mighty will through greater consecration available through the participation and recollection of sacraments. To submit ourselves to his love and therefore live an exemplary life of devotion to Him through our daily activities. Our interactions, passions, lifestyles, etc. To more importantly purify ourselves in his loving forgiveness (confession) that we may more deeply and reverently truly meet our Lord Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. And to greater use, the exemplary standard of our Heavenly Mother, to guide us in our daily life, in unison, considering the lives of saints to be our role models. Finally, I believe through my own experience, only by the grace of God were we chosen to be his children. Yet we should not take this for granted, for we are HIS, and made for HIM, therefore it is only right to do his holy will.

That we hold onto our faith, praying is important. Give example of our faith to our families. Lead by example. Be less judgemental. Look to our youths, why are they so disengaged from the Church? Where is the relevance for the young people? Clericalisation of the Church is a big problem. The hierarchy need to be more aware. Why did they make changes to the Mass that were more wordy and unclear than before? Changes need to be made to make the Mass more relevant, not less for young people. Be more active in having concern for the people in our society who are poor, uneducated, lonely. Should look at joining Vinnies. We should try to get young people to be engaged in some aspect of Church life. Music should be more relevant to the young. Child Abuse- So much damage has been done. Our bishops need to be more humble, less pompous in many cases. Frank Sullivan- CEO Truth, Justice and Healing Council, in his report made so many wise statements; they should be acted upon, not left to be forgotten. - Lack of accountability and transparency within Catholic Culture. The Church is still supporting the abusive priests. They may have publicly cut them off but in fact continued to support them financially.

To vigorously pursue reforms in the structures, practices and attitudes of the Church that will restore community trust and respect in the institution and its priests and enable it to fulfil its

apostolic mission in a contemporary egalitarian Australia. (Additional document has been included at the end of the submission)
* Respond to the call from Christ to be missionary people of God * Clergy to 'know' their people. Address issues with members of the Clergy who are un-relatable. * For the role of women to be looked at and for our language to match our belief in equality * We are called to be adult in our faith. We are called to have childlike faith, but not childish faith—we need to be given the invitation by the Church to grow into our adult faith. * Encourage Australian Catholics in the public eye to profess their faith and use their faith more publicly as motivation
What has the Church done to help save the environment?
To show compassion and love and acceptance towards ALL people and include all people in our society. Irrespective of refugee status, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, religion, socio-economic status, or any other factor that may otherwise divide us. ALL people. Jesus said love one another. He put no conditions or exceptions on that commandment.
To love our neighbours and our environment.
1. That the Church should continue to respect loving adult relationships including family planning 2. Listen and respect people as Church as portrayed post Vatican II. 3. Church positions should not be exclusive to males but also to suitable females including priests and deacons. 4. The Church must recognize climate change and its effects 5. Re-instate Penitential Rite No 3. 6. Welcome back former good, now married priests 7. Married priests are our local future 8. Initiate youth outreach 9. The populace is much more aware and educated and should be treated as such 10. Put old fashioned clericalism (i.e. pre-Vatican II) as seen in some newly ordained extremely conservative clergy 11. Reach out with compassion rather than doctrine with respect to LGBTI Catholics 12. Spirituality rather than rules 13. Tone down the bishops clothing regalia of office, power and status 14. bishops have to act and behave as 'leaders and protectors of the flock' and NOT of the system 15. Trust that the hierarchy will listen to the voice of the people 16. For trust in the Council process, employ public access CCTV.
Covenant demands for Plenary Council - Last Supper: "This is the new covenant in my blood ... DO this in memory of me." - A covenant is a sacred promise made by both parties; here Jesus promises his Father loving loyalty on behalf of all his brothers and sisters. Children in baptism through parents, promise covenant friendship, pledge now personally renewed at First Communion, baptismal promises joyfully renewed at Confirmation and Spirit pours loyal love of God and whole family into young hearts. - Catholic Colleges and teachers to integrate teaching and living of New Covenant. - Building on personal witness of the parents - Linked constantly with Eucharist as family renewal at covenant meal - Eucharist has family repeatedly begging reconciliation as essential before sharing that meal with Jesus and one another - Third Rite of reconciliation could well be normal at start of each Mass - Empower and enable all baptised to share fully as equals with different charisms - as "citizens or brothers/sisters" - Marriage as a further lasting pledge to live out covenant love as permanent and fruitful in new children of God's family - Ordination of celibate and/or married men and women to be "ministers of the new covenant" - As Mary was virginal mother of our High priest with his body and blood. - Jesus explicitly calls women to share the motherhood of Mary saying that whoever does the will of my Father is my brother and sister and mother. - Women's full dignity and potential should be

<p>honoured as essential if "Mother Church" is to have Mother Mary's love permeating its life and priorities. - The evolving global family is now ready to welcome Jesus saying through a woman minister, "This is my body. This is my blood of the new covenant." - Each one's particular role limited according to qualifications, e.g. president of Eucharist from and for First Peoples - Pastoral Councils: brothers and sisters have God-given authority (not distorted power) in agenda and decision-making.</p>
<p>He is asking us to walk with those who have been hurt by the structures and systems in the Church, to listen to the disenfranchised, those on the edges, to open our hearts and tear down our prejudices. To not hold on to those rules and regulations that prevent us from doing this, that excuse our engagement, that enable us to set ourselves apart. God is asking us to have the humility to see that we have been hiding behind a sense of righteousness, a sense of superiority, a need for power, and that we have lost the underlying message of Jesus ... That we must always choose to walk with those who are considered the least in this world, "whatever you do to the least you do to me". We must sit at the foot of the cross and not seek to find the easy way but tackle those hard questions that force us to enter into the grey areas of this world, the area of uncertainty, knowing that the Lord will be there with us at all times ... That is our only certainty.</p>
<p>God is asking Christians NOT to become 'victim status'. He wants us to be leaders to the truth; To follow Christ.</p>
<p>The Holy Spirit is guiding me to alert our religious leaders to maintain our right to EXERCISE religion as the government tries to thwart this basic right through legislative changes.</p>
<p>The Holy Spirit is asking me to ask you to help maintain our freedom of speech.</p>
<p>God wants us as His one people. He wants us to have a Nation - religiously build Australia.</p>
<p>God wants us to remember with rights come responsibility. AND "Love one another as I have loved you."</p>
<p>To be open and tolerant; to bring women into leadership positions in the Catholic Church; to break down the barriers for women to become priests; to be honest and transparent and fair in how we deal with victims of abuse; to allow priests to marry; to understand that a Church in order to connect with and engage youths must be more flexible and less dogmatic; to hold politicians to account by leading the way in how we welcome and advocate for refugees and how we care for our aged; a Church that invites and welcomes and does not denigrate those who criticise it.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to " ... love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. " And to " ... love your neighbour as yourself". Within the current Australian climate, we want to solve the Church's problems from a secular viewpoint and we hold the following platitudes as truths: inclusiveness, unity, more women (no sexism), young people, decisions by edict, the relevance of the Church in today's world, Church attendances, etc. These wants are common in the secular world. You can go to any education system, corporations and find these "wants" because they resonate with the individual. It is easy to say "I WANT ... " the attributes of an idealised society and when I don't get what I want I become disenchanted with the Church. We sometimes forget that the Church is us ... not separate laity and religious. I love my Church! And, I firmly believe that we as a Church can surmount the perceived obstacles with "</p>

... loving more and forgiving more ... ” and being more merciful towards others; and trusting the Lord. Perhaps it’s again time to live the sacramental life.

To love everyone and be generous to those in need.

We think he is asking for better adult catechesis. We think he is asking for the members of the Church to have a deeper knowledge of our religion: the sacraments (and the Eucharist in particular), the Bible and the Gospels in particular, and the Church’s teachings (and the reasoning behind them). We think that many in our parish have never properly understood what the Mass (and the Eucharist) is, and we have no doubt that many who have given Mass up have done so out of boredom. The Mass is admittedly poor entertainment, simply because that is not what it is all about. In our parish, we have introduced a period of silence (about 1 minute) after the Homily. While some wait impatiently and others devote the time to rummaging through their bag looking for money for the collection, some do use this time to reflect on the readings and the homily. We think this is a good initiative. Two of the things we think are needed for true appreciation of the Mass are: 1. Catechises: Catholics need to be reminded periodically of what the Mass is, and even that the Eucharist is the real presence of Jesus Christ. We need to be reminded why we do and say what we do at Mass. We suggest this catechesis probably needs to be led by the clergy. 2. Silent prayer: In our experience, most Catholics know little of, and value even less, silent prayer. Yet the Church teaches that silent prayer is necessary if we are to get maximum value from Liturgical prayer. This, too, needs to be promoted in our Churches.

He is asking us to recognise the importance of lay religious communities and to promote them. The Catholic whose religious practice consists solely of going to Mass on Sundays, weddings and funerals will likely have a weak faith. It is likely that only their sense of duty is sustaining their religious practice. While our parish, like many, have dozens of parish groups, very few of these do much to deepen the faith of participants and our relationship with God. While the Mass is the summit of our Catholic religion, we believe we need something to sustain our dedication to it. We need ongoing catechesis, religious fellowship and silent prayer to sustain and grow our faith. We need to be prompted to think about our actions, examine our habits and to try to live lives in imitation of Jesus. And we need to pray regularly. Jesus' teachings need to be reflected in our everyday life. One of the best ways we know to bring this about is through involvement in one of the many new or older religious communities (many of them lay associations) that have sprung up within the Church. Since becoming a member of the Community of the Sons and Daughters of God (Comunità dei figli di Dio) about 20 years ago, we have found that our faith and devotion has blossomed. All the elements we mentioned are present in most of these communities: vocal prayer, silent prayer, catechises and a supporting community. We are not writing this submission to push our particular community, but rather to put to you the need for Catholics to go beyond Sunday Mass, and beyond even weekday Mass, and try to find out what else God is calling them to do. It may well be to join a religious community. The people who join these communities still live in the world, still work for a living or live out their retirement. And yet they also live, to a greater or lesser extent, the life of a religious (without the habit).

He is asking us to discover and use are charisms in the work of the Church. I understand "charisms" to be supernatural gifts, given by the Holy Spirit at baptism and strengthened at Confirmation, to carry out God's work. They may complement our natural talents, or they may be quite different. They differ fundamentally from our natural talents because they are focussed

outward and enable us to achieve results for God's Kingdom that are above and beyond our normal human abilities. Charisms are always reaching out to others. These charisms may be extraordinary (like healing), or quite "ordinary" (like hospitality, administration or teaching), but all charisms are supernaturally empowered. They are used together with our natural talents for God's work. Every Christian has a God-given mission in life, and charisms are tools we need for that mission. Discerning our charisms also gives us clues as to what our mission is. I think every Christian needs to take on that discernment, and most will need help in doing this. The Church needs to get involved and provide this help. The Melbourne Archdiocese, for example, runs a "Called and Gifted" workshop that does just this over a weekend, and offers one-on-one follow-up to help individuals with their discernment and with testing their charisms. We are Church. We are God's hands and feet and vocal chords. Each of us has a part to play but we need to discern that part. I think discerning charisms is the starting point in the process of discerning our personal Mission in the God's Church.

The Church needs to take action on abortion and other life issues. When we discussed the question of what evils in our country most offend God, we concluded that abortion must be the most offensive. What can be worse than a mother or father purposely killing their unborn child. Abortion is not just a personal sin, it affects the whole of society. It crosses the final line of moral behaviour. If we condone the murder of innocent children, what greater evil is possible in a society. It is not only our secular society that has gone astray on life issues. Many Catholics we have spoken with offer comments like "I wouldn't have an abortion but every woman should be allowed make her own decision on this question" are commonly heard even among practicing Catholics. What about the rights of the unborn child? We don't have a list of actions to put forward for the Church to take. How does the Church go about changing society values? We don't even have a next step (other than to speak boldly against this crime). We just think this, and other "life" issues, must be put high on the list of considerations at the Plenary Council. For a start, the leaders of the Church in Australia and all its priests should stand up publicly on this issue and teach the truth.

God is asking the institutional Church to do two things. One is to relinquish its misogyny; to respect women in the same way that God does; to realise that priests can be women and can be married to women; to trust women to control their fertility in whatever way their judgement guides them; and to acknowledge that women have the same sovereignty over their bodies as do men. Another thing that God is for the Church hierarchy to show the same acceptance of same sex attracted, queer, transgender and gender diverse people as God does.

Bring the word of God to the people through the Gospel, be supportive and respectful of all, and help all in our community through action and word.

The Church in Australia needs to address a number of problems -to have a GENEROUS response to the victims of sexual abuse -to have married priests -to have women priests -to address the role of women in the Church -to address the power priests have over the "flock" and have this power checked -the Church is seen as enormously wealthy, to do something about this -bishops, cardinals and the image of Rome ... fancy dress or an organisation to be taken seriously? -Canon Law: a help or hindrance for the Church of today? While this list is like a list of complaints, I love the Church and belonging to it and attend Mass regularly, etc. However, I would like the world to recognise us, as the song says, "They will know we are Christians by our love ... "

As Catholics, I believe God wants us to be more mature in our faith, focusing less on the forms and going deeper on the meaning of our religion. Letting go of the literal understanding of the Scriptures and starting to live the Gospel every day. We need to understand that sanctity, happiness and everyday life are one and the same thing. Maturing our faith will allow us to go above our differences with other Christians, non-Christians and non-religious who walk in the same direction as us Catholics. God does not want us to reach out to them and work with them. Much more than tolerance, this should be respect, admiration and love to our brothers and sisters regardless of their beliefs. Then, by having stronger bonds with the Australian society overall, we will be able to do more together. Perhaps sharing some of our services in our parishes with other Churches (parents' groups, some ministries, social justice, etc.). There is just so much more we could achieve if Catholics join forces with non-Catholics.

To be more united as a Church, especially helping people who are alone such as the elderly.

To be true witnesses of the Living Christ through our daily actions. To put into practice our Christian values so that we can impact our society without discriminating any person because of their political, religious or cultural beliefs.

1. Participate in Adult faith education- Introduce a parish mission, faith development programs, Lenten and Advent programs. 2. Engage in evangelisation programs- Faith education and formation for young adults, enhance links between parish schools and parish, consider the resistance offered by the broader culture and society to Christian belief, be prepared to welcome new parishioners, engage in formation of new Catholics through the RCIA. 3. Responses required from others- vigorously address the issue of sexual abuse in the Church, inadequate and delayed response by Church leaders, ensure appropriate financial and social restitution for victims, note how everyone in the Church is suffering the burden of the abuse issue. 4. Leadership from hierarchy- stronger leadership is needed, better communication of important issues, update lines of communication, seek to improve the damage to people's perceptions of the Church. 5. Parish life- encourage vocations to the priesthood and male. 6. Female religious life, is marriage an option for clergy?, homilies to address the practical situation of our people. Explain the dogmas of the Church including social teaching. Explain the teaching of the Church on the sacraments.

Listen to your heart and be guided by the Holy Spirit. Pray often and inclusive of all genres. Help the helpless, poor and downtrodden. Be mindful of your thoughts, as it is easy to be led astray. Be a positive spirit in the world and your ecumenism in who and what is surrounding you. Be strong in your convictions and faith by setting as good an example as you can, which requires constant prayer and love in all areas. Listening, prayer and quiet times all lead by your heart and the Holy Spirit.

To know what God is asking we must heed the message of Jesus Christ. Let's remember, Jesus warned humanity to respect the 'signs of the times'. The world in general is undergoing tremendous social and environmental change. The power of consumerism is rampant. Transport facilitates speed and the level of general tension within society can largely be attributed to advanced technology, information technology, the influence of the media and particularly, the all too often negative influence of social media. Surely God is asking the Church to adapt and change to meet the pressing and obvious needs of the 21st Century? Change must take place or Christianity via the Catholic Church will very soon fail. Like a vessel in peril, the passengers have lost confidence, the crew is exhausted and the officers are not taking control. God is asking for

positive change through effective leadership. Currently the Church, especially in Australia is largely silent, having been bruised primarily by the issue of sexual abuse. This mountainous matter must be resolved and put to rest. Yes, clergy and religious have betrayed their office and brought suffering to many. That suffering has also led to the majority of other innocent and faithful priests and religious to carry the burden. Yet from our leaders, the silence on this matter is deafening! Now is the time for leaders to stand with authority to proclaim with confidence the Christian message from which the Catholic Church has been formed. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another", and "Behold, how these Christians love one another!" If Christ's words are to be followed, then the Church must demonstrate through them, the sincere and complete demonstration of what 'we' stand for. Jesus continuously taught love, truth, peace, the absence of fear and very importantly, forgiveness. The sacrament of Reconciliation, or forgiveness in our Church today, means personal change and growth. The Church, for all its oversights, must apologise, forgive, repent and change and grow. It is essential for all people to learn from past errors and change! That's what leads to empowerment. Once that empowerment is in place, then the Church as one will be seen to truly defend Christ's teachings as an example worth following by all humanity.

For the Church as a body comprising individuals and groups, to act in faith, cohesively, confidently, prudently, compassionately and spiritually in our life's journey.

After two listening and dialogue sessions, seeking to answer this question, our group responded as follows: 1. The Church as a whole: • Needs to be radically reformed • Must have 'good' leadership • Needs to be both courageous and humble; loving and compassionate (for e.g. towards the homeless and those in need overseas); tolerant, understanding and not complacent • Must be Gospel-driven and missionary in outlook and practice, based on trust and simplicity • Must be open to all on the margins • Should learn from and about other faiths • Needs to recognise the importance of children and develop a theology of childhood • Must reject clericalism in all its forms • Must move from its monarchical structure to one which encourages greater independence • Has to fully recognise and use the God-given talents of both women and men • Needs to urgently address the perceived loss of young people.

God is asking for people to show kindness and respect to one another, these should be values instilled by the Church in a way that people relate to in 2019.

To be humble and admit we have failed miserably. To accept we have failed to accept that women are 50 percent of the population and deserve equal representation at all levels of the church. To question what our investment in Catholic schools has achieved, could our efforts be better directed? Have we been genuine in our relationship with and our acceptance of people of other faiths? Why is clericalism so rife today? Why are priests so dominant in the administration of our parishes?

More awareness of God's graces in this country.

Transparency on behalf of the Church hierarchy in all matters but particularly in relation to the issue of child abuse by Catholic religious. There needs to be above all in the spirit of Christ's teaching an overwhelming emphasis on the importance of social justice, both individually and collectively, to the exclusion, of all else. God would want us to be participants in Socially Engaged Christianity, to counter the excesses and deprivations of our society. In short, a more inclusive

Church, where laity have an equal authority in the Church and where the characteristics of the wider society are acknowledged and not dismissed.

Honesty, Commitment to refugees, Lay voice.

To make Australia the great south land of the Holy Spirit. A country under God. 1.1 To clean up God's Church of homosexual bishops and priests. Give the opportunity to every bishop and priest to be honest before God and leave rather than continuing to be an abomination before God and His people. If found guilty, they should be dismissed from the priesthood. It is a well-known fact now, that the communists devised a plan to bring down the Catholic Church by sending intelligent men disguised as homosexuals to bring the Church down, from within the Church. However, the gates of hell shall not prevail against God's Church. 1.2 Education of God's people, with solid Catholic formation studies. Today we are taught that evil is good and good is evil. We need to destroy this culture of death. Provide Bible studies in conjunction with the Catholic Catechism, religious talks, parish retreats, EWTN programs, etc., in parishes. Living our faith according to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and waking in the footsteps of Jesus. 1.3 Defend our Church and our faith. Start up an Australian Catholic lobby group to guide Governments in moral issues. We have to be a voice for the Church when governments bring about laws against the law of God. God has given us a blue print for peace and prosperity. Let us abide by it and not do anything to re-define that Blueprint. 1.4 Defend marriage as a sacred covenant between man wife and God. Never to be re-defined. (The marriage act was made by God from the beginning of time, to increase and multiply societies and not destroy it. The foundation of any civilized society is governed by the family. Broken families have destroyed counties and societies in the past. It was established by God and it has worked from the beginning of time. God hates divorce, these are His very words said in the Bible. 1.5 The bishops to formulate plans for parishes to start up "Care and Support groups" and report regularly on its progress. Support groups must be supervised by a priest. • Parish care groups to formulate plans to assist the homeless in the parish/Melbourne. • Parish care Groups to formulate plans to visit and advise / assist the elderly in the parish/Melbourne. Assist them in getting their groceries etc. from the shops. • Parish care groups to formulate plans to visit and hospitals/the dying, giving them communion, in the parish/Melbourne. • Parish care groups to formulate plans to assist those who are hungry and have no food in the parish/Melbourne. (Weekly Dry food distribution to be collected by St. Vincent de Paul society). • Parish care groups to formulate plans to assist the poor families suffering poverty in the parish/Melbourne. (The bishops start up a "Catholic Charity Trust Fund" where each Catholic family member contributes a compulsory \$1 at least a year for the poor). I ask, what is the population of Catholics in Australia? • Parish care groups to formulate plans to assist in community.

Start being serious about laity involvement; bring structure into 21st century as Church structures based on centuries' old western cultural non-democratic hierarchical mores; full involvement of women in all aspects of Church; clergy as servants, not as "princes"; remember Canon law is man(sic!)-made, not God-made, so not immutable and unchangeable; why not married and women priests? Married priests for several centuries and women played some role before culture (not divine inspiration) shut them out; stop "cover-ups" and attitude that priests are "special" - the use and abuse of power (mainly abuse); much better vetting of those wishing to be priests— they need "world-experience" before starting and they need to remain rooted in the world

(clerical clothing, pectoral crosses, rings, red and purple are not real world these days). Missionaries in 3rd world countries may have something to teach here; ALL matters must be "on the table". Very disappointed that Francis appears to have vetoed married and women priests without any discussion.

The Plenary Council is the moment of the Spirit to introduce a process for the implementation of optional celibacy, the female diaconate and the ordination of women. This will more readily enable the sacramental opportunities for so many Catholics, and more readily provide pastoral presence and Christian formation for many people of God. Much has been written and recorded to support these directions. It is not primarily a matter of insufficient priests, or difficulties with the language, accents and understanding of many priests from other countries generously ministering in Australia. At the same time, these facts are contributors to many Catholics/others being deprived of the Eucharist, which is the centre of our lives, and of the people of God being denied being nourished by the ministry of the word of God. Optional celibacy, the female diaconate and the ordination of women reflect the spirit and message of Christ himself. As a member of the Little Company of Mary Sisters for over fifty years, while not personally discerning a call to the priesthood or diaconate, I have frequently witnessed and experienced the negative impact within the Catholic Church in the denying many people of God the availability of the sacraments and of the Eucharist due in many instances to the absence of optional celibacy, the female diaconate and the ordination of women. At least, let us commence with optional celibacy and the female diaconate to be followed by the ordination of women. I am sure the founder of our Little Company of Mary Sisters, Venerable Mary Potter, in her great love of God and God's people, her great love of the priesthood and her constancy in advocating and affirming the role of women in the Church, would be advocating for these changes in our world of to-day. With respect, the current abuse/sexual abuse in the Catholic Church with its immeasurable suffering and injustice will only really be able to be comprehensively healed when the current male domination of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church ceases, when optional celibacy is a choice and the female diaconate followed by the ordination of women is enabled. This is my constant prayer in the presence of the Spirit and in company with Mary Mother of God. [ - ] LCM  
24th February 2019

In Australia, at this time, we believe the Catholic Church needs to take the understandings of science seriously and to cease using and presenting Scripture literally. Most people in Western society now believe that the universe begins with the "Big Bang" some four billion years ago. They also believe that the universe evolved from that time to form stars, galaxies and planetary systems. They believe that the earth, life on earth and eventually the hominoids gradually evolved over time. The belief also entails an understanding that the evolution process continues now and we do not know what is up ahead. This belief is taught in virtually all secondary schools in Australia as part of the science programs and underpins other subjects. Adolescent students and young adults with this belief are then confronted with a Church which through its liturgies and teaching not only takes no account of this belief but also opposes or presents only an alternative belief system which is based on a literal interpretation of Genesis. The alternative based on Adam and Eve is frequently presented, without explanation or contextualising, in Scripture readings at Mass and in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (279-421). Many priests and bishops who complain about low attendance of adolescents and young adults seek to blame others, typically Catholic schools, and don't or can't see the disparity between the two world views. There are

many theologians who take evolution seriously and are re-imagining the whole soteriology to harmonise the reality of evolution and the reality of Scripture, distilled from the biblical narratives. The myths of Scripture embody the understanding of a God-centred people some 2,500 years ago. With what we know from science, particularly over the last two to three centuries, it is now inappropriate to present Old Testament and even New Testament narratives as being factual accounts of how our world began and now operates.

I believe God is always calling us to repentance. We are sinful creatures by nature and the Church is a 'Hospital for sinners', to quote Pope Francis. The World has forgotten God; we live as though He doesn't exist. This must make Jesus' Heart sad. He loves us so much and only wants to be loved in return. Jesus and Mary are the best friends we could have and I believe we need to forget some of the politics in the Church today and get back to the basics. Prayer, penance, obedience to the Holy Father and the Magisterium. Devotion to the Eucharist. If we fix our eyes as a Church on its head and founder, Christ, He will ensure all the other needs and problems are attended to. We must trust Him. It's His Church, not ours to do what we want with it. I am so grateful my family and Catholic primary school handed the Faith I have today to me. Not a watered down or feel good version, but the one they received from their forbearers 😊

WHAT DO YOU THINK GOD IS ASKING OF US IN AUSTRALIA AT THIS TIME? I believe that God is asking us to re-imagine Australia in the light of our Aboriginal First Peoples. "It is an opportune time to remember the important words of St John Paul II in 1896,"the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others." To respond to the aims of NATSICC, to the welcoming presence offered to us non-Indigenous Catholics to the deeply spiritual aspect of Indigenous culture, and to be a source of knowledge and advice to the non-Indigenous Catholic community in regard to issues concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. To celebrate Aboriginal Catholic Ministries. Victoria is a fine example of the Aboriginal peoples having shared their spirituality expressed in the simple house now transformed with magnificent, unique, artistic art and artefacts. The beautiful chapel window and the Stations of the Cross invite deep contemplation. To make a place like ACM Victoria a place of pilgrimage. Just last year huge outdoor paintings depicting OUR SURVIVAL JOURNEY were blessed and launched. Such a joyous occasion! The words from Laudato Si, "Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope."

I think God is asking us to embrace our role of stewards of creation. We, the Church in Australia, have the numbers, the influence and the power, within parishes, Catholic schools and other organisations, to make a real and meaningful difference to the issue of climate change.

At 73, I am coming to an understanding of entrenched unhealthy misogynistic attitudes within the Catholic Church. There is an urgent need for cultural changes concerning: 1. The exclusion of women and women's complimentary voices from all levels, especially leadership positions, in the Australian Church. 2. The reform of training attitudes and practices for priestly ministry. 3. That divorced and remarried Catholics be welcomed to the Eucharistic table. 4. That courageous openly gay Catholics be welcomed to the Eucharistic table. 5. That Catholic Civil celebrants be given permission to preside at the Civil marriages of divorced Catholics in Church owned property - including parish Churches.

Theme: Priesthood and Church Governance

1. Two generations effectively missing from our Church • Stories of conversations with these people who feel anger and disgust at the behaviour of our clergy and that Church is irrelevant to their lives. • Things that would help o True repentance from clergy and Church leaders o Inclusiveness and rejection of clericalism

2. Need to redefine what the vocation of priesthood is • Current model doesn't work • Celibate male model over • Plenary needs to redefine what ministry and priesthood are and look to the early Church where Jesus promised to be present where two or more are gathered and where Jesus asked us to "do this in remembrance of me" • Entrenched clericalism at every level of the Church • priesthood of all the baptised needs to be nurtured and called forth—an untapped resource in every congregation • Allow/encourage lay people to preach and give testimonies about where they encounter Jesus in their lives—not necessarily talking about during Mass—we need to be allowed to hear Christ proclaimed by more than just our priests.

3. Royal Commission • Plenary needs to be an open and transparent engagement with the recommendations of the royal commission • Inhumanity of hierarchy during the Royal Commission hearings shameful and embarrassing. bishops' testimonies displayed a lack of empathy for victims and a striving to defend the Church rather than the injured • Repeated defence of man-made doctrine • Need to return to Jesus

4. Issues of governance • Selection of bishops needs to have local Church and lay input • Selection of the priests to lead parishes needs to more carefully considered and with local lay input. • More transparent and collaborative process. • Why can one priest have the power to come in and effectively destroy the work and community that generations have built? With no accountability to anyone or any care or interest by the hierarchy? These priests are killing our Church and driving lay people away in droves. No one in power cares. Priest is everything and the lay people's right to good leadership don't seem to matter. The power of priests is too much and must change. • Desperate need for strong, informed, collaborative LEADERS for our communities • Formation of clergy for this 21st century a huge issue

5. Return to Jesus • Essential human yearning for God—it's there as much now as ever, perhaps more so • Don't discard too much, don't dismiss too readily the value of ritual and ceremony and tradition • Young people seem to be attracted to "mystery" • Story of Uniting Church: lost its way in attempting to be inclusive and relevant without enough attention to ritual and tradition. 'Jesus is my mate' needs to balance with the transcendent Jesus we encounter in mystery, sacrament and ritual.

Theme: Knowing Jesus—Renew the Church to be more Jesus-centred

1. Our Church should be all about Jesus our best friend. • Experience of the power of truly knowing Jesus: encounter—surrender—follow • Jesus loves ME, faithful to ME, present to ME, sends ME • Alpha helped to encounter Jesus in a new way • Missionary Discipleship o To make disciples who know and love Jesus o Connection to personal Jesus—easy to talk to and to talk about o Witness to Gospel in increasingly secular and hostile society • Church leaders seemingly caught up in clericalism, power and property miss the whole point of who we are called to be

2. Story of encountering Jesus on the cross in the person of sister [ - ], abused because of disability and vulnerability, story attached • Unconditional love and respect: Jesus is there especially for the most vulnerable, and in our vulnerability • Easy to lose connection to Jesus in passion about injustice. • Blaming God for the bad things, rather than seeing God with us in the midst of it • Story of Dad who was an atheist and who accepted death easily and graciously.

3. Oppressed people see Jesus as their liberator—they love Jesus • Society has dramatically changed, and we don't see ourselves as needing to be liberated • Depression, suicide, alcohol, loneliness, violence, drug addiction • Knowing Jesus is

THE answer, but how to we communicate this? 4. Young people and faith • What is it that is lacking for young people in teaching religion/faith? • Why are our young people disconnected from Church? • Doesn't mean they aren't good people and leading good lives • Faith caught, not taught. Need for passionate Jesus-lovers to work with young people • Story of son who has found Jesus in a remarkable and deep way in a Pentecostal Church after many years of Catholic education and sacraments. • Cultural Catholicism: we grew up in a parish where our whole social group, everything we did was Catholic. Others had similar beliefs and we had great mentors. Our young people don't have this • Young people are not the only ones disconnected from Church—two or more generations now, so young people don't have models and mentors—and often neither do we 5. Growth in faith from basic relationship with God as children to adult relationship • Many fail to make this transition, and struggle to develop an adult personal relationship with God • Alpha good for helping make the transition to an adult relationship with Jesus • Story of growing up in Methodist farming community, mercy of God experienced in the elements and vagaries of nature—dependence on God. • The world used to be harder to live in—more conflict, struggle, poverty, wars etc. Stripped of the niceties and comforts of life, people were more aware of the strength of God in their life—and their need for that strength. • Story of seeing Jesus in parents: great example shown by their father. 6. Adoration • Needs to be unpacked and thought about. • Meditation...

Catholic education in Catholic schools needs an overhaul. I went to a Catholic primary school, St Kevin's in Hampton Park and I had wonderful schooling. I learnt about my prayers and sacraments. I think in late primary school we should start to get more into theology. My high school religious education experience was not strong. We should be made to read and do assignments on the catechism, learn more about the saints, read and understand the Bible better, have a deeper understanding of Church theology and the Church's festivities. I want to be able to defend my faith, I was just never taught how to. Young people love to travel; there should even be optional tours of Israel and Rome for those who study religion in VCE. Or the option to do The Camino over the holidays. Our religion is alive and exciting and rich, but we're almost too embarrassed to speak out in our schools. Catechism in our parish - bring more apologists to Melbourne to speak in our stadiums or halls, let's have more programs in our local community too. I want to learn more about my faith. I think there are not enough programs of formation for people in the 25-35 age brackets. I would love to connect with other people my age. I also wish I could connect with other young couples - I am engaged to be married and I feel like we're sort of alone out there.

1. Priests who recognize that parishioners also have skills sometimes greater than their own skills and be humble enough to request assistance. Priests need to empower the parishioners to want to participate and admit that they don't have all the answers. Priests are very busy and need to focus on "core business". Administering the sacraments, presiding at Mass. 2. There are no guidelines for formation and running of parish council meetings. a) Maximum number of 10. Quorum of 4. b) Chairing of meetings and minutes should be done by a secretary. Not the priest. Minutes get circulated within 3 days of the meeting date. c) Members of council have one vote. The priest has nil vote. d) Priests only have a casting vote where the vote is tied. e) Priests must not overrule the decisions of council. f) A priest can only overrule where the matter is sacramental/theology/etc. 3. Stop starting up new Catholic schools. a) The Bible does not ask that we set up schools. b) The need for schools is well addressed by government. c) Catholic parents

do not attend Mass. "We have done our bit by sending our kids to school". d) Schools are a distraction for clergy. e) Catholic schools are elite they cost more than government schools. I feel government schools are better run and are transparent. f) In many cases the government schools have better values. g) Parishes feel they do not need to educate children about GOD because we run Catholic schools. Our kids were not going to Catholic schools 4. Jesus said to feed/shelter and educate the poor. a) In Australia we do "educate" well. b) The Church does a below average job of sheltering the poor. Many people cannot get a rental because the real estate agents want references. I know one woman who is paying \$750/week for a house and the landlord wants to charge extra rent for new curtains! c) I am not aware of the existence of any rooms for 12 months to allow references to be provided and hence a rental. d) Rooming houses. The Catholic Church must do more of this. 5. Clergy (Brothers, sisters, priests) should be able to take the option of being married. 6. Auxiliary bishops a) I have only just become aware of them. What do they do? b) I do not know who they are and we do not see them. c) bishops must not be focussed on finances. They must provide training/support to priests. 7. Privacy Being part of the Church is community and not an individual thing. Therefore the sharing of phone numbers or email addresses should be considered "private". Provided this is stated upfront, there is no breach. 8. Building Spending \$2M on a bell tower is a frightful waste of money for a Church that functions well without one. [ - ] [ - ].

With Pope Francis, to renovate the community, be engaging, and address the social, economic and environmental challenges of our days with a united spirit, founded in prayer and faith. To stay strong, united, grow in faith as a community. Not to adopt attitudes or practices to fit in with the latest fad. Truth and Love (willing the good of the other) never get out of fashion. So the Church in Australia must find ways to ever remind the community of this kind of love, not the Hollywood "love" but the enduring one we aim to transmit after the primacy of God's own love for each one of us.

The Church in Australia has many great attributes. However, the Church needs to reconsider the role, and attitude towards women's place in the Church. The diaconate, and the ordained priesthood would benefit from admitting women. God made 50% of the population as female. In Australia, God already works through many women in the various important and demanding professions, and already many are very qualified to take on important roles in the Church. Clericalism must cease and lay-people should have a greater say in the running of our Church, e.g. being involved in the placement / moving of diocesan priests, and being allowed to attend meetings, etc. from which we are currently excluded. Overseas priests must be given education and training in Australian culture to help them operate effectively when they work here. Gay people need not only compassion from the Church, but also understanding and inclusion. If God makes people homosexual, then if they are chaste as per heterosexuals (celibate before marriage and faithful during marriage) they should be made welcome. Many (chaste) Catholic gay people feel vilified by the Church and so become anti-Catholic in response to this. Lack of participation in the faith by young people requires careful thought and action to reverse this. The bad publicity caused by the child sex abuse scandal has given many young people and others an excuse to leave the Church. Seeing the Church take necessary actions and including lay people in seeking solutions and prevention, may aid in people feeling less negative towards the Church. The Church needs to consider how priests have been trained and how this has led to an unhealthy sexual attitude in too many priests (worldwide) resulting in child sex abuse and other types of abuse. It is urgent review how seminaries are run. It may be necessary to find a totally different way to prepare

young men (and hopefully young women) for the priesthood. Certainly, there needs to be stringent psychological selection process before young people are accepted into training for the priesthood.

- A genuine apology for the past evils perpetrated against LGBTIQ
- A process of recognition, respect, reconciliation and formal polices for the way forward
- For Catholics who are not LGBTIQ to stand up and speak in support as the problem with straights, not being LGBTIQ
- All materials and promotions and parish papers to be LGBTIQ inclusion
- For acceptance to hold services in the Church
- To learn from the way the Church has been complicit with other injustices in
- Make us inclusive in the Catholic Church
- No more discrimination if you say you are a lesbian
- Inclusive
- To be an inclusive Church of all people/ there is no slave nor free, not man or woman, gay or straight in Christ Jesus
- Will you come into communion with other Christian denomination in Australia who have different perspectives and have already been through this process to find ways to be
- inclusive of all people e.g. the Uniting Church
- Re-establish integrity and respect by looking and feeling more like Jesus (radical inclusion) universal dignity, lifting up the powerless
- For a Church that is welcoming and caring (as was Jesus) and is inclusive of LGBTIQ
- To see what it would look like and how to achieve it
- To welcome, include and affirm LGBTIQ people and their relationships in the Church and in the world
- To privately and publicly repent and redress the harm done to the LGBTIQ people across the world
- To provide the Church with education about LGBTIQ people that is scientific research-based and promoting of our health and wellbeing
- To come together as a family irrespective of each other's orientation
- The Church needs unity especially after the various scandals
- To share our faith with all people and look for Jesus in all people we meet
- To unconditionally welcome, affirm and be willing to be influenced and transformed by LGBTIQ community and their families and all others on the margin of the Church and society
- Without this unconditional welcome the body of Christ cannot be whole
- Church needs less head and more heart
- There is a disconnect between the body of the Church and the clergy especially the leaders
- There is a disconnect between the Church mission/what Jesus taught and what the Church does
- The clergy with power like bishops and above are especially guilty of causing a lot of pain, directly or by being silent when other were being hateful
- The Church has caused a lot of pain and clergy in the Church that had power to ameliorate this pain almost always chose not to
- To join a full-society discussion about the meaning, value, purpose of sexuality
- Acknowledging our particular approach to it all through scripture and long traditions of spirituality
- And also acknowledging society's concerns express about reject of violence in relationship, me to, abuse and power relationships.

Include all and remember we are all made in the image and likeness of God.

To respect and support our parish priests at this time. For priests oversee what is happening in the parish. A parish needs the support of parishioners but it also needs a leader. 20 years ago, we started to prepare for priest-less parish and as a result, we have a few people dictating what happens in the parish and overriding the priest making it very difficult for the PP to make changes and lead the parish into the future. A few people are directing the parish in their model of Church. More consultation with the wider parish. We need priest like our current priest that is prepared to sever. A priest like our current priest who is prepared to get in and work with his parish as well as lead the parish in prayer, worship and outreach. The priest must know what is happening in his parish and we must support him.

I think God asks all of us the same request: to recognize the living God within ourselves and in all we meet hence and in all creation and in doing this we would Love our neighbour as we love ourselves and we walk gently on the earth.
He is asking us to take care of each other during this time. To be there for one another amongst the war and death in our society.
-To be kind and respectful to one another - Have faith and a strong belief in your own religion - belief in God.
- to stop the conflict between religions - maintain a strong relationship with God - be proud of your religion - get more young people involved in religion - not to neglect young people in religion - celebrate religion.
I think that he is asking us to come together as a community no matter what religion is. He wants us to treat each other as equals and be more accepting towards us. He wants us to live in peace instead of fighting with one another.
- society coalitions - Peace within the Churches and other community - acceptance of others with different religion, colour, shapes and more.
- Peace - Acceptance - Empathy.
I believe that God is asking for members of our entire society to be more accepting of others REGARDLESS of sexuality, race, gender and age.
To be a cohesive society, to stand up for injustice and the underprivileged, to face the acceptance of others, to remain diverse and withhold peace within all Church as well as ALL religions.
I think that God is asking us to resolve the pressing issues that exist in the Church today. I think that we should be cleansing the Church of priests or any other Church leader that has sinned, committed unholy acts against the Church. I think we should be involving the younger, new generation more and holding community events in order to create bonds; events that do not need to be held in a Church environment.
- To live in peace and harmony no matter what culture, race or belief. - Treat everyone equally - Protect the environment - Help people in need.
I think that God is asking us to be accepting of people of all faiths and to maintain justice and equality in our community as well as getting involved in our faith and prioritising it.
- be kind to one another - to help those in need - to be accepting and not discriminate towards others because of faith or skin colour, etc.
- To trust in him in the midst of all the bad things that are happening in the world - To show love even when we're hurt and it's hard - To be accepting of the misfits of this world - To stand by our faith/religion even in the hard times - To set an example of how a true Christian should be like - To show his love by our actions and words - To turn to him when we are not feeling to good - To pray and read the word on a daily basis so that we are wise in our everyday decisions.
God is asking us not to turn away from our faith.

I think He is asking Australia to pause, reflect, and remove any angst it has towards religion. I think he wants us to give Christianity another chance and to explore it all over again with an open mind and remember the sacrifice that was made for us.

God is asking us to accept others despite their differences and beliefs/faith. He wants us to not discriminate others and make them feel like they don't belong to our community/society. Our faith/beliefs/culture/religion should be shared among others with differences rather than keeping it locked, and should listen and learn from their belief/religion/culture, this way we can share and learn diversity.

God is asking for us to be the one, Catholic and Apostolic Church and not allow others with a different Catechism to establish Churches within the Catholic Church, which divides the Catholic parish.

-There is too much GREED in the world, which has the flow on effect of waste and pollution, we must address the consumerism issues. Jesus was open to diversity, cultures, religions, poor and marginalised. We are called to be strong, courageous and loving. All parishes should welcome and accept everyone. Jesus love did not come with conditions so we are all called to embrace people from all walks of Life and show kindness to all. Move with the times and embrace equality and acceptance. Break down the barriers between Religions to accept everyone. Respect and embrace everyone from all faith backgrounds into the Church. More diversity encouraged and enrolled at parishes and schools. Sharing of different faiths and cultures, developing a stronger understanding of other Religions and embracing their traditions and customs. Taking action in our society to help the marginalised and lonely people. Supporting those to be a part of the community to help minimise Mental Health issues. Encourage all parishes and priests to Re-contextualise the Scriptures and traditions to fit in with our modern society and multicultural communities. Providing opportunities in parishes to deepen our own faith development. Fostering acceptance of the LGBT Community, embracing diversity and being more gender neutral. Allowing female priests. Updating antiquated laws, dogma and rules that have no relevance to us today. Educating priests and parishioners to understand the Scriptures for the time in which they were written and how we can translate the message to be more meaningful today. All parishes need to be supported to embrace change and give flexibility to adapt the tired script of the Mass. Consistency of practice and preaching across the country with new priests moving with the times, to engage their dwindling parishes. Encouraging stronger connections between primary schools and parishes. Where is the follow-through to maintain those connections and build community. Sadly, things have stagnated in many parishes, God is calling us all to reinvigorate the sense of Community in this modern society.

God wants the Church, all his believers and followers, to express their faith through their lives and actions. They need pastors to guide and inform their faith formation (and to provide the sacraments). But the guidance and information can be provided by other believers who have studied. The pastors (ordained ministers) must be drawn from all members of the Church, female and male. We are all God's people; we are all created in his likeness. Women priests would bring more of the pastoral qualities than men generally do. We also need married pastors (women and men): there is no doctrinal reason against this, as there have been married former Anglican male priests in the Australian Church for >50 years (thanks Archbishop Guilford Young). The requirement that priests be male is man-made, it is not something Jesus taught. It can be changed

by people, to better serve the people of God. The Australian Church must stop importing ordained priests from Asia and African—there is a great need for them there. There is nothing racist in my view. My own PP came from India, is now an Australian citizen, and is an outstanding and loved pastor in his 2 parishes. I know of some 'immigrant' priests in the Melbourne Archdiocese who have inappropriate cultural beliefs and practices, mainly against women. This is despite the 'cultural immersion' they supposedly receive upon arrival. We also need parishes to be more democratic, with a democratically elected pastoral council which manages the parish, has a right to be heard in the selection/appointment of PP, administrator, assistant priest(s), and in their removal if they are not meeting the pastoral needs of their parish community. Parallel to this, deaneries and dioceses must also have democratically elected governing bodies, to which the clergy (including bishops and Vicars General) are accountable. Of course there is a need for Dioceses to appoint clergy, laity and religious to the many ministries that are an essential part of the Church. We lay people are capable of managing faith-based services. I was [ - ] of the St Vincent de Paul Society Vic for 4 years. Whilst I met with the archbishop from time to time, the Society operates independently (despite an attempt in the past 3 years to bring it under 'control' of the Vatican). I know my views do not align with what we are told by men in the Vatican and the ACBC is "acceptable", but ignore these views at your peril.

To love one another as He has loved us. Many man-made rules do not enhance this tenet and are not observed by many Catholics.

The need for catechesis. It is no secret that, in our parish and most others, few children go to Mass, compared to the number of children attending the Catholic school attached to the parish. While Mass attendance is not the only measure of Catholic practice, we think it is pretty indicative. Having spoken to children and their parents in the preparation for this submission, what stands out to us from these conversations is the poor knowledge of the Catholic religion and the many misconceptions among Catholics about it. While Catholic schools teach the fundamentals of the Catholic faith (though we cannot assess the effectiveness of this), we believe the greatest influence on the spiritual growth of children is the lived importance of religion in the lives of their parents and how their parents witness to this faith in a concrete and practical way in their daily lives. Here, then, a major problem arises. Catholic adults, generally, seem to have a very poor knowledge of their religion. This may be due to poor catechetical formation when they were children (from school or parents or both), and an almost total lack of ongoing catechesis in their adult life. One of our group works in RCIA within his parish and a number of Catholic adults have sat in on the RCIA catechetical sessions, and he has been amazed at how little they know about their religion—they have either never been taught this knowledge or have forgotten it. We conclude there is a desperate need for good catechetical formation in our schools, and ongoing catechetical formation as adults. We know there are good religious texts available for junior and senior schools. We have some concerns about the competence and formation of some religious teachers, though. For example, one RE teacher from a Catholic school (herself a non-Catholic) joined the parish RCIA programme; her knowledge of the Catholic Faith when she started in RCIA was very poor, yet she was working as an RE teacher in a Catholic school! How do we get adults to take part in ongoing catechesis? We don't know. We just know it is desperately needed if they are to grow in faith and help their children grow up to be good Catholics and practice their faith. Certainly, homilies at Mass can help, but they need to address Catholic teachings, starting with the 10 Commandments and the teachings of the Magisterium. In our experience, such homilies

<p>are pretty rare. Holiness seems to be out of fashion in the Church. Social justice and "being good members of society" is everything. While these issues are important, they need to be based on a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith, and that is sadly missing.</p>
<p>-supporting people affected by the QLD floods -people who live in poverty in Australia -protecting endangered species -helping Indigenous Australians -inequality between males and females - helping refugees -pollution ...</p>
<p>Australia is a very diverse and multicultural country, therefore, all citizens should be accepting of different religions and ethnicities of people, and provide more for homeless people that live within Australia.</p>
<p>God wants us to interact with the real world more than just concentrating and putting our heads into screens. He wants us to live a simple life and wants us to work to accomplish our dreams and goals and be humble, loving, kind and caring towards everyone especially our families.</p>
<p>Covenant demands for Plenary Council - Last Supper: "This is the new covenant in my blood ...DO this in memory of me." - A covenant is a sacred promise made by both parties; here Jesus promises his Father loving loyalty on behalf of all his brothers and sisters, Children in baptism, through parents and promise covenant friendship. This promise for life needs to be personally and consciously renewed at First Communion, baptismal promises joyfully renewed at Confirmation and Spirit pours loyal love of God and whole family into young hearts. Catholic Colleges and teachers need to integrate teaching and living of New Covenant, building on personal witness of the parents. Linked constantly with Eucharist as family renewal at covenant meal. Eucharist has family repeatedly begging reconciliation as essential before sharing that meal with Jesus and one another. Third Rite of reconciliation could well be normal at start of each Mass - Empower and enable all baptised to share fully as equals with different charisms - as "citizens or brothers/sisters". Marriage is meant to be a further lasting pledge to live out covenant love as permanent and fruitful in new children of God's family. Ordination of celibate and/or married men and women to be "ministers of the new covenant". As Mary was virginal mother of our high priest with his body and blood—women are explicitly called to share in and perpetuate dignity and role of Mary: "Whoever does the will of my Father... is my brother and sister and mother". Women's full potential must be honoured as essential if "Mother Church" is to have mother Mary's love permeating its life and priorities. The evolving global family is now ready to welcome Jesus saying through a woman minister, "This is my body. This my blood of the new covenant". Mary shared wholeheartedly with Jesus while he offered up the sacrifice which sealed this covenant. At the Last Supper, Jesus began offering up the covenant sacrifice, which was only completed , "consummated" on the cross. This sealed the unbreakable bond of love between God and the family headed by the second Adam, fully supported by the new Eve's ongoing "fiat". When Jesus also bequeathed Mary as mother for all his family, especially as they gather united with her to celebrate that covenant anew. Women can be "successors of Mary" who was present with other women disciples at the altar of the Cross - where the apostles were absent. Each one's particular role is limited according to vocation, qualifications and assignment, e.g. president of Eucharist from and for First Peoples. Pastoral Councils at all levels: brothers and sisters may have God-given authority (not distorted power) in preparing agenda and decision making.</p>
<p>To live the Gospel and commandments faithfully, to avoid bending them to the whims of the modern world, Christ's words are not open for interpretation by us, we may as well be protestants</p>

if that is the case. God is asking of Australia in this time the same as He has always, stay faithful the teachings of Jesus, don't excuse weakness as it just being the way the world is now. Homosexual relationships are a sin just like any where the sacrament of marriage is not present. Do not excuse the evil sin but help the person who wishes to turn away from that sin, communion should be denied to those who celebrate evil and sin, abortion and those who support it should be excommunicated together with those who promote evil.

More lay representation in the Plenary Council, especially women. Laity to chair committees, etc. in the Church rather than bishops. Close down and sell Churches and schools that are costing the paying laity too much. Use existing public buildings and other denomination's Churches for Church activities, including Mass. Part time priests, available for Sunday Mass. Priest to live away from the Church premises. Cease calling priests "Father" as it is an archaic practice and demeaning for the laity. Allow lay pastoral carers to administer the sacrament of Anointing. Encourage trained laity to conduct services, including marriages, baptisms and funerals.

I believe it would be to be holy. Digging into what Christ has always asked of the Church from the beginning of time. Radical love and evangelisation. There is a huge tradition in the Church of this and little more would be needed than the rediscovering of the old wisdom for a new age. Young people don't want to be lied to and can smell insincerity a mile away. The only thing that has ever created real disciples is the truth that has been taught by the Church.

I think God is asking of us at this time: 1. To have the courage to take brave different steps to share the Good News. 2. To admit that the Church that served us well in the middle decades of the last century is not facing up to the challenges in Australia in the second decade of this century.

For reconciliation among the clergy, leaders and lay people. Make visible and lasting changes to restore the trust of people in Church leaders. Also to spread 'good news' about things done by Church.

We are being asked to have courage and stand up for what really matters. All parishioners need a voice, and need respect.

I believe God is asking us to be a compassionate and humble Church; a Church that loves, listens, and serves. This means we need to strip away the trappings of clericalism and power that have caused much damage to the Church. LEADERSHIP: I believe God sees and loves men and women as equals. Leadership in the Church must be opened up to women. At least to ordaining women as permanent deacons to minister in parishes. LANGUAGE: I believe the language we use in our liturgy has the power to attract and nurture faith. The 2011 translation of the Roman Missal comes across as pompous and convoluted, thus alienating ordinary people from what ought to be a beautiful and prayerful experience of liturgy. The Church in Australia needs to have the courage to remedy this.

I think the God is asking for two things of the Church, and of us. The first is to step up and persecute a mission. In my life the times where my heart has raced and I have been consumed by passion and driven to action was when a clear mission in front of me. It might have been to get to the moon, leave Vietnam, or joint the most important person in the world as husband and wife. In those times, there seemed like there was nothing I wouldn't do. It was all I would think about, and would direct all my actions. Today, I don't know what my Church stands for. I don't feel a mission. Vatican II wound me up and pointed me in an exciting direction, then the carpet was pulled out

from under my feet. I feel that my Church in Australia is more concerned with protecting itself. It needs to again become more like a turtle: it only moves forward when it sticks its neck out. The second is to take and demonstrate true leadership. My Church has fallen under the same leadership malaise as my country. Leadership is not about feathering my own nest. Leadership is taking a position and working towards that position. Leadership is not about being perfect and always right. Leadership by my definition is about stepping into the unknown. If it is just about the known, then it is management, not leadership. And of course, leaders will make mistakes. So leadership is about admitting mistakes without reservation and taking responsibility for those, even to stepping down. It means making things right for those who have been hurt. There are many things wrong with the structure of my Church. Do we need female religious, married priests and empowered laity? Of course we do, but without having a real mission and accountable leadership, then just changing the hierarchy would be like new wine in old wineskins. I feel we need the mission and leadership in place so that when we open up the priestly caste, then it will be a role that worthy people will aspire to.

I think God is asking us in Australia to treat each other equally. That the role of women in the Church is underrated. I strongly believe women should be allowed to join the priesthood and that priests should be permitted to marry.

The members of the Body of Christ are all different. We are a plural Body. That means that no one plan can be outlined and imposed for all to follow. Indeed, attempting to enforce one plan will induce forceful reaction, submission or rejection. None of these responses is satisfactory, nor is trying to enforce such a plan. Instead, each of us must realise that God is asking us to collaborate with each other even if we disagree, even if we cannot discern a plan. This is the love we are called to enact. Such love is not mere acceptance, but a critical exploration of each other, of reflecting on what each is finding and contributing. God is still asking us to love one another.

We all need to acknowledge the harm that has been caused to our communities by the abuse and negligence of our most vulnerable in our society in our parishes and schools and institutions. We ALL need to now work together to provide justice and compassion and never ever let this happen again. The victims of this terrible abuse need justice. The perpetrators need to be brought to justice. No more secrets. The Church has lost its credibility and trust of the people. Clericalism as it stands needs to be eradicated. The current system is more than farce. Where are the so called servants of God? It's time that the old system be overturned and the pyramid be inverted so that the hierarchy serve the faithful with openness and compassion. We no longer live in the Middle Ages when the 'faithful' were not educated. More women sharing the responsibilities in the Church hierarchy (for want of a better description). Formation of priests needs to change. There is much need to improve their psychosocial education. Segregating them does not help. I think application to study for priesthood should be like many other vocations where success is often more likely when the candidates have had some life experience. Cloistering is of very little value. Allowing married priests is another valuable option. We already have married priests from other denominations who have chosen to join the Catholic Church. Ecumenism, accepting other Christian faiths into the Catholic Church, sharing the Eucharist. Is this what Jesus would do. Did he welcome those outside the Jewish community? Yes, I am very angry. The hierarchy are like the Pharisees. Spouting their rules to subjugate the faithful. Financial governance of the Church's properties. Perhaps it is time to offload some of our riches to help the poor in our world? The

Church is also no longer a Roman institution. When you live in Rome perhaps but not in Australia. Our Sunday liturgy could also reflect more our culture here in Australia. The new translation is clumsy and not appreciated by the laity. It needs to be simplified and put into a language that all can understand. Opportunity for even more participation by the faithful. Some parishes are very open to this. There are also some very traditional, fundamentalist Catholic parishioners who have reported priests to the archdiocese for what they consider to be false teachings. This has hurt some priests to the point where they have left our parish. This is intolerable. Our faith does not stagnate, it grows with us. We must be given the opportunity to think, to question and not to fear God. We are all his children. Open discussions about our faith our relationship with God our father. Contraception is another issue. Why does the Church which is currently 'ruled' by men, insist that women keep having children? No speaking as a health professional the ovulation method does not always work! Confession, bring back the 3rd rite...

God is asking me to say that we need to improve how to involve more people in the Mass, the celebrant has many tasks as he should but the people present need to do much more so as to involve us in the liturgy, I keep hearing "it's boring" and I'm guilty of saying this too.

God is asking us to listen to all members of the Church and to discern the future. We need to listen in particular to the laity and hear what our concerns are. God is asking us to allow authentic lay leadership and authentic collaboration between the laity and the clergy. I think God is asking us to develop an Australian Catholicity which takes into account ALL Australians, especially the Indigenous community from whom we can learn so much. Our Australian Church must be truly inclusive of the multicultural society that we are. We need to grow a vibrant, attractive Church that is able to move with the changes our children are living. We, the people of God must reclaim our baptismal right to be a minister in our own setting. Our Church must be humble and learn to lead the way through carefully listening to the people of God.

Overall Statement. Return to Gospel values and be a royal (servant), priestly (praying), prophetic (reading the signs of the times) people as anointed to be at baptism. Role of Women: • To listen to the needs and desires of women • Acceptance of women as equals within the Church, recognizing and using their unique talents and gifts. • Employment of accredited, qualified women in leadership roles within all levels and agencies in the Australian Church. Equality: a) Acceptance • To be an inclusive, open minded, open hearted, welcoming, compassionate "people of God" where all are accepted and all are equal • To respond to God's presence in each person • God expects us to take up and foster the equality of all in society b) Australia's First People and refugees Be welcoming of all races/ethnic groups and Australia's First Nations People c) Hierarchy • To promote equality and eradicate clericalism • Lay involvement in the appointment of parish priests and bishops • To be a humble, servant and just Church with hierarchy listening and responding to all members of the Church • To be open to alternative models of ministry (e.g. Married priests) and reduce the reliance on priests • All dioceses to have diocesan councils as mandated in Canon Law d) •Ecumenism To be ecumenical and interfaith promoters with increased intra religious dialogue e) Openness to all • All people, including LGBTI and Divorced, to be welcome and accepted in the Church and at the table of The Lord • To recognize gender diversity and the needs of gender diverse children in our Catholic Education system. Role of the Laity a) Ownership by all A Church in which all baptized members share co-responsibility for developing and maintaining a Gospel centred Church having roles in: - Teaching - Governance -

Worship and - Mission b) Responsibility Laity to be offered appropriate formation to recognize and fulfil their roles, including the celebration of liturgies in small communities, developing a Society/ Church built on loving open relationships, with acknowledgement of cultural and environmental differences. c) Listening • Listen to God by listening to our neighbour, to those in need and to different opinions • To share the abundance of a life of faith and to recognize the joys and struggles of family, youths and the elderly • Embrace the young by celebrating with them where they are at and lead them to find God in their own lives, and develop youths orientated liturgies and Eucharistic celebrations. d) Celebration To aim for a simpler life of caring, responding, celebrating and prompting leadership from within Royal Commission, a) Support • To support and hold survivors / victims of sexual abuse in their grief • To support those who have been falsely accused • To recognise that perpetrators of sexual abuse are children of God and, while following the law of the land, they are treated with respect. b) Hierarchical Response • The Church needs to follow the law of the land • To continue...

God is asking each of us to speak up, to stand up and be counted. He wants us to be the voice for the voiceless. He wants us to bring the lost sheep back into the fold through practicing what Jesus taught us in His greatest Commandment "Love thy Lord thy God with your whole heart and soul and Love one another as I have loved you". He wants each of us to be a part of the changes we want to see in the current Catholic Church. In light of the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse, God is asking us to make reparation, to lead the way for Catholics worldwide that these atrocities are never allowed to be swept under the carpet. That the perpetrators are brought to justice. That women and children's lives are not to be sacrificed to protect the institution of the Church and the clergy. That we, as a holy people bring healing to those who are survivors of sexual abuse by the clergy through our compassion, support and acknowledgement of their suffering. That we have the courage to review Canon Law that does not serve the good of the people and recommend amendments for the betterment of ALL baptized Catholics, including the LBGTQI community, who are God's creations too. They did not choose to be who they are, it has been medically proven that they were genetically born that way. In true Christian charity, we need to embrace their difference and not discriminate against them in any way, nor exclude them from the benefits of the Holy sacraments, they need compassion, not condemnation. God wants us to be the Light through our example. The way we live our lives should be the message that we portray to all those who know us and all those who know us will know Jesus through us. Not just by our words, but by our deeds and actions. If we truly want to evangelize Catholicism, we have to 'Walk, talk and act as Jesus did' in humility and reverence, with respect for every other human being, regardless of their religious beliefs or lack thereof. When we see the face of Jesus in every other human being, we will truly be practicing Jesus' Commandment "Love one another as I have loved you". God wants us to be brave in the face of the judgments and criticisms from those in the secular world who now have reason to point the finger at the Church's failings. God is calling each of us to be Catholic apologetics to defend our Faith. The only way we can do this is to familiarize ourselves with the Catholic Catechism, raise our children in the Catholic faith and bring about the changes that are required to make us 'One Holy Catholic People'. God is now asking us, as the flock, to guide the Way of our Shepherds. 'We' as the 'People of God', have a moral obligation to support the hierarchy of the Church to 'See' with new eyes, to "Hear" with new 'Ears' and to 'Feel' with new hearts. I pray that the outcome of this Plenary Council 2020 will be the beginning of a new era for the Catholic Church worldwide.

<p>To KNOW him, this is far more important than traditions. He would want Australians to truly relate with him and love him and get to know him.</p>
<p>- To ensure that the Church is an inclusive community with a message that is relevant for today - To accept all in his mission for the Church and be open to women in the clergy - To ensure that there are people who can lead our Church and parish into the future - To ensure that the Church holds onto the unique aspect of our faith including Gospel, Marian devotion, Eucharist and resurrection. - To restore faith and governance of the Church and to be more inclusive and sharing with the laity - To engage more deeply with the Gospels while living out their intentions both as communities and individuals - To re-share our beliefs and attitudes towards the refugee crisis - To show compassion to all - To rebrand the Catholic ethos from negative to positive - To be more accepting and transparent.</p>
<p>To be a light to the world. To reach out in humility and service.</p>
<p>Be patient. Let the Spirit have time to act.</p>
<p>Go back to basics, back to the laws—the commandments. We need to return back to reading and understanding the Bible. We are becoming too secular and seeking popularity, rather than seeking a strong foundation with the source—the Bible. We need to learn from other denominations like Presbyterians. We are losing our values, for example, prayers at home with the family. Catholics school are too relaxed. We are not calling out for the Holy Spirit to come to us. The priest is not spending too much time with the community. We are becoming followers rather than leaders of the community.</p>
<p>God is asking what He's always asked of us: to follow the ways of Christ. In today's secular society, it may be more difficult to do so but the question hasn't changed in over 2000 years. People need support to live the Gospel values. Unfortunately, the hierarchical Church doesn't provide that. The Church, broadly, has lost its moral values and has little credibility today. The Catholic Church needs to start again or reform. If it doesn't it will fade away. A hierarchy needs a base but a base doesn't need a hierarchy. Unless the Church recognises this, it has no future. People need community not hierarchy. Catholic education is more attractive than its religion. Steps to consider: 1) Create an inclusive local community by using ALL resources. Priests should be male, female, married or single. 2) Priests should be facilitators, not dominant and isolated figures. 3) Let lay leaders emerge from each community and take a greater part in services. Let people hear a different view from that of the priest's. People need to hear and see how others live the Gospel values in today's world. Hearing the same views of a male dressed in aloof and insulating robes gives little support and is hardly inspirational. 4) Priests need to be a part—not apart from the community. Wearing of robes for Mass indicates isolation. Tradition and purpose need to be recognised but in a more subdued way. 5) Leaders need to be humble followers of Christ. Dressing in a special way and talking at, rather than to, the congregation, suggests otherwise.</p>
<p>What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? 19th February 2019 GOD IS ASKING US ... To be more accepting, welcoming, and inclusive of people from all walks of life, regardless of background, status, bias, ability/disability or sexuality. To be more acceptance and understanding of people's differences. To be more tolerant to try to merge the Christian traditions. To make a stand and be better stewards of creation, in particular our environment. To be more relevant and connected with society, more accepting of differences and sexuality. Be</p>

<p>more empathetic. To permit women as priests within the Catholic Church in Australia. To be more accepting and welcoming of the LGBT community allowing and acknowledging gay marriage and celebrating this in our Church. To be open in Australia for sharing its vast wealth and resources to others from around the world. To be more compassionate towards disadvantaged in our society. That we do not only show compassion to those who are deemed “worthy” or “good cases.” That we are compassionate towards those who might have been shunned in their past. To be an inclusive community and allow all to participate and receive communion. To be more compassionate, inclusive and treat everyone with equality and respect in today’s world. To be progressive and engaging with others in the Catholic faith. To be reflective of today’s society which is gender balanced and inclusive of women and marriage and have women leadership from the hierarchy and through other areas of the Church. To allow women to make decisions about their own reproduction. To have a greater acceptance of Indigenous Australians in the Mass. Adding parts of Indigenous culture in. To be more Gospel like in how we live rather than a top down institution. To be more understanding and accepting of differing understandings of what it means to be Church. To not be judging or condemning.</p>
<p>We need to do something to make the joining the priesthood attractive—married priests, women priests, etc. The celebration of the Eucharist needs to be made more attractive too, to the wider congregation.</p>
<p>God is asking us to help save the earth and to do something about climate change. He is asking us to help the refugees, asylum seekers and each other.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to be faithful, kind, passionate, loving, merciful and caring, he would want there to be world peace in this beautiful world he created. He would want everyone to come together, closer as a community and strengthen our faith. He would want us to treat everyone as equals, and to look after one another. He would want us to grow in our faith, and pass it on to the next generations.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to keep our faith even in times of struggle and difficulty.</p>
<p>- To care for one another - do something about climate change - look after his creation.</p>
<p>I think He wants world peace and believes everyone can become a good person.</p>
<p>At this time in Australia, God is asking us to come together to a make an even better/improved Church with peace all around the world. He is asking us to be faithful to our Church and everyone around us and grow in the faith to pass it on to the next generations.</p>
<p>God is asking us to take a stand in certain situations, and if we feel something is wrong regarding anything, including the ways and morals of the Church, to say something about it so it can be changed. God is asking us to take care of the environment and the habitats of it (flora and fawner) and to love one another. God is asking us to help the less fortunate, the people who really need it, and to be kind to everyone, even those who you feel is not deserving of your compassion.</p>
<p>To be one loving, caring and welcoming community within the Church.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to look after the land and each other. To help each other and have a loving community. To treat each other as equals. He wants world peace. To come together and improve</p>

<p>the Church. To grow in our faith and pass it on to the next generation. To love one another as God has loved us and to accept everyone for who they are.</p>
<p>I think that God is asking us to love one another and care for each other. I think that God wants Australians to look after our land and animals and to show respect to our environment.</p>
<p>- to care for our environment and our animals - to tell all people of different genders, sexes, sexualities and races that God loves you no matter what because I feel that there are many Christians who have been saying hateful things to people under those categories, and claim that God doesn't love them.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to continue upholding our faith through prayer, traditions, rituals, etc. God is asking us to care for the people around us and show empathy, compassion and love for all. To help each other and maintain a healthy, happy community in which everyone is equal and respected. I think God is also asking us to care for the environment and the world he has blessed us with.</p>
<p>Ways to be more welcoming and inclusive particularly open to the voice of women in Ministry. Move away from a hierarchical structure that exclude many. Look for ways to include the voice of youths. Consider the place of married clergy / women priests. Revisit the documents of Vatican II—leadership structures need to change. Allow priests to be priests, not financial controls—the governance of schools/ parishes. Takes time away from being a pastoral person.</p>
<p>To be a doorway of authentic encounter with God. Australia needs to have places of prayer.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be accepting of people and accept other religions and beliefs. He is asking us to treat everyone equally.</p>
<p>To be a good person in society. To be involved in society and help people. Improve the world in a better way to be faithful, respectful and kind. to be fair to all people and the situations to be able to be and feel safe to not harm others to make people smile to still follow the 10 commandments having equality between all genders being able to see what's right and wrong.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to spread the Catholic faith and the idea that God loves everyone, and that His love is greater than any other. I also think that God, would want the Catholic Church to generally preach more to the youths, because, we are the now and we must be faithful now, not in the future, but now.</p>
<p>Faithful intimacy with him, honest acceptance of the need to find meaning through relationship with the divine, a sense of sacredness in a world that has lost its sense of purpose and meaning, God is asking us to find meaning in relation with him.</p>
<p>As a community of Christians, all who share a common baptism, and a unique dignity born of the creative power of the love of our Heavenly Father through his son Jesus Christ, our Church needs to review its practices so that all its members who share a common faith journey feel valued, loved and respected. In so many ways, our contemporary society in which we live today is very different from that which moulded and informed Church doctrine many centuries ago. Inspired by the Gospel message of Jesus and supported by the writings of St Paul, the Spirit is reminding us to reach out to those on the fringes—the poor, the abandoned , those who are needing healing and those whose cultural heritage is different than our own. We are all treasured parts of Christ's</p>

body, the Church, and each of us has a unique part to play. It is unfortunate that modern Australia has many who are alienated from the traditional hierarchy of the Church—those who are divorced, those who are categorised by LGBTQI labels, those who have been victims of abuse, the youths (many who find the Church liturgies and hierarchy irrelevant to their needs and value systems) and those who have experienced hurt. Our Church needs to embrace all people, give them a voice and it will only be then that our faith community/ies will grow in holiness and wholeness and be more embracing and accepting of the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels. Our Church must encourage all our faith communities to read and actively embrace the signs of our times. Only in this way can the entire community become a living witness to the transforming power of that same Spirit and an effective facilitator of change that enhances and remains relevant to the world in which we live. This is the absolute foundation and call of our collective baptism and is a responsibility that all members of the community share. For a community to be truly vibrant, and to continue to grow in the living body of Christ, each member must feel valued and contribute to a role that is meaningful. The Spirit of God at this time is reminding us that there are so many whose voices have been silenced: the role of women, the future hope for our youths, the full participation of the laity (including non-ordained men), the aged, the unborn, the refugees, the gender challenged, the homeless and other disenfranchised members of our society. Only then can we be empowered to be agents of hope and change so that that we become a community that brings life to our world. This vision of faith community challenges a hierarchical Church structure and rather in its place sanctions a model that facilitates shared leadership and decision making, prayer and liturgical practice. It respects the cultural diversity of the people it aims to serve and sees in them a giftedness and a richness of talents that enhances our world.

Faith Development: The Spirit of God continues its saving work of bringing salvation to all through the Church today. The need to nurture people on their faith journey and to invite them to enter into a personal encounter with our loving God has never been more important or urgent. Indeed our Church's greatest responsibility at this time is to facilitate an environment where an individual's faith can grow and develop so that he/she see themselves as instruments of God's love and grace in this world. Our Church needs to take as her inspiration the Gospel encounters that recorded the impact that an encounter with Christ can have. These are the similar themes that occur in all the Gospel stories and still resonate with us today—1. People approach Jesus with expectation—whether motivated by curiosity, need, fear or even political intrigue, they take a risk to open themselves up to that encounter with Him. 2. Jesus takes that opportunity to relate—in stories, by teaching using parables or by explaining the scriptures; He educates those present to undergo a period of self-reflection. However, he does this so that he is only confronting them where their human condition dictates. The assembled come to an understanding of the challenges that are presented. 3. A period of reflection and transformation happens—the people accept, reject or come to a new perception of how the Kingdom of God can be established in their world and the role they play in achieving this. If we accept this model of faith development and growth, our current understanding and practice of catechesis and evangelization must be scrutinised. First and foremost, our liturgies must address the needs of the community that are present. The Word of God must be proclaimed and broken open in a fashion so that it can really permeate the hearts of those who are assembled. It must be clear, passionate and relevant. It must invite reflection and change. It is only then that our faith informs the mission, in which we all share by our baptism, which demands that we minister to all those that we meet with love and kindness. This

<p>cultivation in faith must then force us to look at the world through the eyes of the crucified Christ so that we too share in his task of providing social justice and outreach. Secondly, we must act with hope. Our Church must model the parable of the sower and plant the seeds of faith wherever it can. It must work to ensure that those seeds are nurtured so that at some stage in one's life, a transforming encounter with the body of Christ can occur. Events in one's life journey—a death, a birth, a wedding, an illness often precipitate that encounter and may let those seeds of faith, planted long ago, flourish and flower. However as we are reminded by St Francis "Preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary use words". The actions of our Church and its members are far more powerful than any homilies preached or encyclicals written.</p>
<p>God is asking lay Catholics and especially the priests and bishops to SPEAK UP AGAINST the culture of death (abortion and euthanasia), homosexuality, transgenderism, relativism, modernism.</p>
<p>I think God wanted us to be more united, compassionate and more caring to one another.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be more compassionate, kind, caring and loving to those around us. We need to not be self-centred and to look out for other people and see the pic issues that the world is faced with, for example, climate change, and do something about it.</p>
<p>Those who have power to make a change are not using it to change. So many are aware of issues such as asylum seekers, climate change and the economy yet don't have the power to change it. Why don't those who have the power use it to help the world?</p>
<p>I think God would want the Church to become more simple and uncomplicated - to remove some of the distractions of over-blown ritual and ceremony which has little relationship to Jesus' message of love and poverty of spirit.</p>
<p>I think God is asking Australia to be more open to the Church continuity. If there are women fighting to work and help the Church community, then that is a sign that they should be open. God is asking for equability between men and women.</p>
<p>I think God is asking for us in Australia to take care of our animals and environment. To accept everyone for who they are and love and respect them. I think God wants us to help the less fortunate and be there for them with whatever they need whether it is food or someone to talk to. I also think God wants us to love ourselves and not to compare ourselves to others.</p>
<p>Why are we treating our environment terribly? Where is the forgiveness? Where's the passion?</p>
<p>God wants us to be faithful as Catholics and serve others. In this way, the Church will grow. To enable this to happen, the Clergy must offer the sacraments to the laity. I would like to request for more Masses for ordinary people of Australia. We need more priests to celebrate daily Mass. My husband and I have to drive to another suburb to be able to hear weekday Mass.</p>
<p>To keep our leaders relevant to modern society and the current Church community, we believe priests and nuns, bishops, etc. should be allowed to have relationships and/or marry and have families. Whether they are gay, bi or heterosexual. This can also increase numbers of the leaders in a dwindling current environment.</p>
<p>To be a united front in the nurturing of our planet. To ensure we as a community of the 'World' care for every one as equals. To treat people with compassion and understanding. To ensure our environment is there for generations to come. To recognise the importance of animals and</p>

species to our ecology. To protect our vulnerable, weak and those in need and with this in mind, ensure there are no cover-ups. Ensure that those who break the law are dealt with appropriately. God would want us to be able to adapt with the times and be flexible for its followers.

I believe that God is calling me, and my faith community, to listen more, not to judge or discriminate, but to welcome anyone who seeks a listening ear and a caring heart. God wants us to preach less and to act in love more. That our communities be safe places where a person can discover who they are (in God's eyes)—lovable and capable of loving others. That the Church consists of small groups of faith and faith seekers who grow in knowledge of each other and in the capacity to accept each other in love; who learn how to pray by learning who God is as found in each member of the small group.

- Revival of the Church in Australia. We are very much 'stuck' in our ways. As a consequence, many are turning away from the Church. Many are seeking comfort in other Churches i.e. Hillsong. - Our Catholic Churches need reform. Female leaders, revived services, engagement rather than tradition. - When will priests be able to get married? This is clearly a problem i.e. Cardinal Pell!! -

Love God and love one another. If we start with this, we will find ways to deal with our problems. The Aboriginals will be cared for with respect. We will find a way for migrants to be housed as well as minimising disruption to existing Australians. We will find ways to help the homeless. It starts with love.

We believe that God would be completely dismayed at the state of the Catholic Church in Australia today—it is a failed organisation in so many ways. The core teachings of Christ are still the same, but the hierarchy of the Church here in Australia has lost sight of these teachings and failed the people it should be serving. Christ loved and included everyone, regardless of gender, power or influence, and in particular attended to the needs of the poor and outcasts. However, here in Australia, clericalism has taken over, with privilege and power the most dominating aspects. Child abuse and the response by the leaders of the Church (denial and cover-up) is a reflection of this. The Church must be reformed. We put forward these suggestions for the Plenary Council to consider about the future of the Church here in Australia:

- The parish priest must concentrate his efforts on the spiritual development of his parishioners and leave such things as parish school management (in Victoria), hiring of parish staff and building projects, etc. to the relevant experts. A suitably qualified person should be contracted to manage this.
- Men and women with a calling to religious life should only start formal religious studies following a substantial time working in the wider community (e.g. 4/5 years) This would help to develop them into much more mature individuals, capable of a greater connection with the laity and better able to fulfil their future role as “shepherds” and pastors.
- The role of women in the Church needs urgent attention. Women are currently seen as not worthy within the Church hierarchy. This has to change. Women must be respected and valued, and their many and varied skills utilised much more fully to enrich all aspects of Catholicism within the Church organisation.
- The youths of today will only be attracted to a Church if they see that Church as relevant in their lives. This will only happen if clericalism is minimalised and the pastoral mission of Christ is foremost in the Church’s practices.
- Re-instate the Third Rite of Reconciliation in all parishes, to encourage the faithful to return to this holy sacrament.
- The Church in Australia is completely fragmented. Unify the approach for the future, so that all priests and laity are “on the same page”. At present, each diocese and even each parish follows its own rules, set by the bishop or in some cases, the parish

priest. The Church must come together in order to survive. Some parishes are very progressive in their thinking and practices, but others follow a very hard line conservative approach. The latter is a real threat to the success and progress of the Church. • Rome must no longer dominate the Church in Australia. We should be brave enough to forge a new way forward for the Australian Church.

We are a practicing Catholic family. We are in love with our Catholic faith, we love our Holy Mother Church not because her leaders are perfect but because she is a channel of grace, love and forgiveness. Her teaching and her truths have stood the test of time for centuries and the gates of hell will never prevail against her. We pray as a family and we follow and abide by the Church's teaching. We think that God is asking us at this time in Australia to worship Him and to love Him the way He ought to be worshipped and loved. We have domesticated God enough and brought him down to our level; it's time we stopped and lifted ourselves up to His level. Reaching out to other people has failed as no one wants to listen anymore to God or to the Church. Truth and goodness have been successfully trampled down by modern philosophies, liberated and compromised truths and misguided love and compassion. Beauty is the only attribute that is still able to reach people's souls by bypassing the intellect, the mind and the will and piercing straight into ones heart and soul. God is asking us to concentrate on beauty in the Church by: beautifying Churches in Australia—use of high quality sacred art, images, statues, stained glass windows, high altars. Lifting up the liturgy to its due and proper status—high reverence at Mass, sacred music, communion on the tongue, communion rails, kneelers, altar boys only, Gregorian chants. Let holiness ooze out of our Churches. The Church lost her credibility by the sexual abuse crisis and the cover up by bishops—clean up homosexuality in the Church. Strengthen and reform seminaries to produce strong, masculine, holy priests. Summon new heroes that will be committed to holiness to drive out evil, set up an ecclesiastical structure to achieve this goal. Strengthen and support the many holy, faithful priests and encourage them to look after their flock, the remnant faithful—encourage simple devotions at parish level e.g. first Friday and first Saturday devotions, Divine Mercy feast/devotion, adoration, rosary groups, youths groups, mission weeks. Straightforward homilies without compromising and watering down the Church's teaching and truths in fear of offending people. Enough of this "meeting people where they are" and "staying at a safe level" mentality and attitude. Encourage priests to give clear instructions in the faith to deepen the faith of the people. Reform Catholic schools: Catholic schools have failed parents who are teaching and imparting the faith to their children by going against the truths and the teaching of Holy Mother Church and teaching lies. We thank you for taking the time to read our submission, please rest assured of our prayers and fasting for the council. We are staying and fighting for the faith and for our Church. Let us be part of the solution. Let us show the world what Australia can do. Let us gather as a family to kneel, pray and worship.

I think God is calling us to holiness, each and every one of us. Whether it is a bishop, cardinal, priest, layperson or religious, married or single. I believe that God is calling us to respond to this call to holiness and also spread the message of the Gospel so that we can evangelise this country. I believe that we have to be an understanding and welcoming community in line with the deposit of faith and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I believe the Church is called to bring people closer to God through the Gospels and the sacraments in particular through active and frequent participation in the Eucharist, Holy Communion and through God's forgiveness in the sacrament of Reconciliation. I believe that God wants us to know him and to know the richness of the Church

that he has founded as an instrument to achieve holiness. I believe that God loves all people and wants all people to be happy by following his Will and loving God and loving our neighbour.

We are at a real time of pain and distrust in the Catholic Church. The clerical Church needs to be accountable for the damage it has perpetuated through religious abuse of children and vulnerable. The movement of priests to continue the perpetuation of these abuses is incomprehensible to me as a follower of Christ. The trust we are taught/encultured to have in the ordained seems no longer relevant: the sacrament of confession to a priest seems to be dangerous with this loss of trust as priests have abused their power. It's the time for transparency in all aspects of the Church It's time for women to step up in these clerical roles It's time to dismantle these patriarchal power structures. I also have real issue in the Churches lack of acceptance of other Christians at the communion table. The judgment of other Christian marriages (not Roman Catholic) as invalid. We need to stand together as Christians, not be separated. There is a lot of good work and learnings we can share as people in Christ. I also struggle at the treatment of LGBTQ community by the Catholic Church. Christ sat with those on the margins, yet I hear in homilies over the years not the value of these people but the 'sin'. We are all saints and sinners. We should all be welcome at Christ's table

To be a Church that is realistic about the expectations of Australian Society in this timeframe. That we be a Church who looks out and not in.

I think God is asking us to step outside the square of our normal responses and ideas to think about how we as Church can do the will of God.

I think that God is asking Australia to accept those who are different and to love and care for each other.

I think that God is asking Australia to be peaceful towards each other. He wants us to stop the petty fights, and to get along with each other in general. He is asking to follow his instructions.

Why we discriminate other people and bring them down? How we can forgive each other? God wants us to be all happy and stress-free. To not judge a book by its covers.

God is asking us to be communal and supportive. God is asking us to not hate people on line and to love as Jesus loved.

I think God is asking us to look out for each other especially as a country we need to be united.

We feel that God is asking us to concentrate in part on achieving change to the direction that the Youth of Australia are taking in terms of their attitude to religion. Areas of concern that we need to consider are, in the past, in the Catholic environment, the home represented a driving force in the development of a child's awareness to and application of his or her faith, with the Catholic school reinforcing that developing, and the Mass providing a material presence and opportunity to attend and experience the event of receiving Christ's body, with the priest offering guidance in matters of the faith. In the lives of Catholic children who had exposed to this sustaining environment, when issues arose that caused deep concern, they could turn to God and His Son with the confidence that they would be listened to and helped in some way. This blessing would continue throughout their lives as they maintained their faith, and gave them the example to pass on to their own children. This wonderful system has become substantially broken because of the changes that have occurred in our way of life. The majority of Catholic parents of young children

attend Mass rarely, if at all, and it could be assumed that, in the main do not provide the incentive or opportunity for their children to attend, presumably leaving it to the primary school to take them to a weekly Mass. Without parental encouragement and example, added to the distraction of the modern world, it is probable that children will become disinterested and lack credibility in the Church, despite attending a Catholic primary school. The attitude of many teenagers as frequently expressed to the Church is a negative one, which would tend to confirm that their earlier impressions have remained. To encourage the Catholic schools to increase the amount of time, energy and creativity in presenting our faith to the children is probably a very difficult task for many reasons, but it seems to be one of very few options available. The strengthening of the nexus between the parish and the primary school in order to make this task more viable, together with the supply of any resources (human and other) to assist would be valuable. The task of attracting those parents back to Mass, indeed back to their faith is a daunting one, but crucial to the future of their children and themselves as members of a revitalised Church. There is a range of possibilities that may help to achieve this such as - Ecumenism - the opening of doors wider to embrace the members of other Christian Churches, to demonstrate that the Catholic Church does not have exclusive rights to the Christian faith and that the spirit of love and inclusiveness is alive and well. Technology - The use of media and in particular social media in all its forms to promote our faith to parents and children alike can be a powerful tool, at the same time lifting our profile as a trustworthy, credible and responsible organisation ...

I think that God would be asking us to stop fighting with each other and to start helping each other out instead. God would be asking everyone in Australia to work together instead of against each other. To figure out a more successful way to control refugees, create more peace, control terrorism and manage racism.

1. God is looking for our bishops to provide brave and fearless leadership, which is clearly lacking. 2. Our Church is so out of touch with the modern world, evidenced in the language we use e.g., matrimony vs marriage. 3. We must include women in positions such as deacon or priest, etc., and change the "exclusive men's club" culture that exists across the globe in our formal ecclesiastic structure. 4. Stop blaming gay people for their genetics, and allow them access to the sacraments. 5. What percentage of priests are gay? 6. I am so disappointed and disgusted with the behaviour of many of our priests in regard to sexual abuse. This is not "having sex", which could be addressed by getting rid of the chastity vow, but is "criminal physical and psychological damage" against children, which causes untold suffering and distress amongst those abused for the rest of their lives. 7. Unforgiveable, criminal and hypocritical behaviour! Evidenced by the hiding of these gross criminal acts by misguided and clandestine priests and bishops in the quest to protect the institution of the Church. Jesus must be weeping at this behaviour by his representatives on earth! 8. I am ashamed and embarrassed to be part of this laughable institution as it currently presents. 9. I will not allow the behaviour which has brought our Church into disrepute, to take my Faith from me. The sacraments are a wonderful gift to us as Catholics, and the camaraderie of the generous and untiring pastoral care offered by lay and parishioners is a treasure not to be slighted.

- to pass on his word in language that can be understood in 2019, and relate this to our everyday life in 2019. Stories from Jesus' time are not being understood by the younger generation, or by many of the older generation. As such people are switching off in Mass, or not attending Mass.

Homily's should not be read in essay form, discussing the intricacies of Jesus' time—this is not being understood. Use these messages in terms of our everyday life—this WILL be understood. I am struggling to get my 5 children to church as they cannot understand a word being said and gain or learn nothing from attending. Have priests that can be understood. Many of our priests have strong accents and can't be understood. They also have an abrupt manner, which is very off putting. provide a safe Catholic framework, which allows priest to marry, so they can truly understand family pressures and have families of their own, and perhaps prevent some of the atrocious behaviours being unravelled today (child sex abuse). They will be able to have an intimate relationship with their partner, and this may avoid them turning to vulnerable children. Other religions allow this, and they don't appear to have the crimes that have been committed by Catholic priests. Allow females to be priests, and females in senior roles within the Catholic Church. Females will bring another dimension to the Church, and assist to keep the Church accountable and honest. Recognise the gay community—stop having priests berate the congregation to attend Mass every Sunday, the congregation are in attendance, and don't need to be scolded. God would recognise volunteer work as a Christian like thing to do. I truly feel that my volunteer work (to no gain of my own), is doing more as a Catholic, than attending Mass that cannot be understood. I have been bought up going to Mass every Sunday, and I acknowledge the Sunday Mass as a time of prayer, however, prayer can be done at any time. I feel the significance of Mass is being lost in current day due to the above reasons. I feel Catholics should encouraged to give an hour of their time to God, be it at a Mass, or volunteering for those more vulnerable—this is what Jesus did. Thank you for this opportunity, and I do hope that one day I can see some or all of the changes I have noted above.

1. Australia has been founded on moral Christian principles, which have been slowly eroded over the last generation or so due to an underlining trend of people turning their back on God. Ways to point people back to Jesus as our path back to having a relationship with God is key. All other initiatives must have this as its central aim. Jesus' power will redeem, remove fear, bring peace and consequently reduce sin and disharmony in our communities. 2. Family unit is key. A stable family environment which nurtures children, and provides them with a secure, encouraging environment. This includes mothers, fathers, and grandparents. "It takes a village to raise a child". Family activities that give time out from the distractions of screen devices (for parents too!), sports that clash with time-out activities, etc. Priority has to be made to keep a stable family environment—reserving Sunday as a day to reflect and hang out as a family. (E.g. After Church or worship, go on country drive, picnic, visit zoo, and immerse in God's creation). Churches that organise engaging family events can assist in this area. Get the ideas from schools and Church groups on what activities families would be attracted to attend. 3. Youth engagement - How do we point the youths to God and Jesus? Youths have many competing and addictive activities which draw them away from considering faith in their life. Some Churches successfully engage youths in faith through fun youths groups, amazing modern worship music and bands, and pastors and speakers that talk into the children's lives through real life aspects that all of us go through. At the same time by maintaining teaching from the word of God, and Jesus as our perfecter, healer, forgiver, and ultimate example how to have relationship with God. 4. Word of God: "For God so loved the world (and still does! Every one of us!), He sent His Son Jesus to live, teach, and take our sins—whoever has faith and believes in this will not perish, but have everlasting life" John3:16 God reminds us "... Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the

Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" Josh1:9. If God is for us who can be against us. The Church must remain faithful to God's word and his character. God is the same at the beginning of time, now and forever. His holy "morally and spiritually perfect" ways should not be reinvented—he is already perfect! Consult faithfully the message of the Bible and Jesus teachings, and be honest at how this should be interpreted "through God's eyes". 6. Websites: the internet is a key medium of this generation and future. The Australian Catholic websites need to be modernised and improved to explain the aim of faith and following Jesus. I attempted to find out what the Church is all about and what God is about, and I was surprised that this was not a prominent and simple message "the Churches aim!" on the main webpage. (more in the attached)

We think God is asking the Australian Church to be more outward facing and relevant. We feel that there is a lot of arrogance and entitlement among 'Church people', which is not welcoming to people who are not part of the Church. There is a feeling that the Church is a club and you have to be a certain type of person and follow the rules in order to be a part of it. It is really sad that people that only attend Mass at Easter and Christmas are ridiculed for being 'seasonal Catholics'. We hope that the Church will be known as people who do good works and be with people as they are. We think that God wants the Church to be welcoming and humble.

God is asking us to be more effective in bringing his teachings to the people, to ensure that the Church membership continues to grow and remains relevant to all people. We are running out of time. This means that we need to:

- Have no secrecy in the Church, we must have absolute transparency, there must be no protecting clergy who have misused and abused their position.
- Listen to and act on women's' voices and concerns as members of the Church.
- Amend existing rules regarding the exclusion of women being ordained priests and bishops.
- Increase the number of vibrant priests by allowing men and women priests to be married.
- Demonstrate the Church's respect for women through the use of inclusive language in all Church documents, prayers and communication.
- Review the rules throughout the history of the Church and determine if they are consistent with how Jesus treated women.
- Demonstrate equality in the Church by accepting and welcoming gay (single and married), trans gender, divorced or remarried people to participate fully in the sacraments.
- Put aside the things that are no longer relevant and return to the basic Christian values as taught by Christ.

God is asking us to correct the following: 1) Catholic schools are not teaching the faith! Primary schools do so to some extent half-heartedly, whereas secondary schools are completely infected with indifferentism. Whereby they assert that the Catholic religion is just another of many equally valid (heretical) beliefs, thereby demolishing the truth in the minds of students that the Catholic Faith is the One, Holy, Universal, Apostolic Faith handed down by Jesus Christ the Son of God. As a result, Catholic doctrine is glossed over, and untaught students are voting with their feet, never to be seen in the Church again after primary school. It is simply a consequence of the fact that you can't believe what you don't know! Bishops have done nothing to rectify the problem over the last 40-50 years, abrogating their responsibility as shepherds of the flock. Churches are now peopled mostly with grey-haired wrinkles and will close in large numbers when they die in the next 10-15 years. 2) Bishops and priests in their moral teaching have the unspoken agenda of emphasizing only the love of God without ever mentioning His justice. They have us believe that we all have a reasonable chance of Heaven as long as we are not like Hitler, Stalin or Pol Pots. This is evidenced by them never mentioning sin and the necessity of sacramental Confession in order to stay in a

state of grace. Everyone attending Church now goes to Communion but virtually nobody goes to Confession when available. Warnings against the sins of the flesh like contraception, abortions and sodomy are avoided like the plague, together with missing Mass on Sundays, marital infidelity and divorce etc. There appears to be an unspoken conviction that the faithful are not to be scared off by the truth and that it is better to have them continually attending even in a state of mortal sin and receiving sacrilegious communion as well, rather than inflicting on them the life-saving truth, that without sacramental confession, Hell may be their only destination. 3) Despite overwhelming evidence coming to the surface only recently, that many Catholic priests and religious have been sexually molesting minors for decades, the hierarchy is extremely reluctant to label any of the molesters as homosexual, despite the fact that more than 8 out of 10 of the their victims are male! To say so would make it too obvious that sinful homosexuality is in fact rife in the Catholic clergy and needs to be urgently eradicated like the plague. Complicit and sympathetic bishops have decided instead to push it under the political rug, since homosexuality there is by now legally accepted.

I believe God is asking us to be more honest. To break down the human construct that we use as tools to gain power and manipulate. He asks us to treat each other with respect and kindness. The hypocrisy of the current man made Catholic system, the Patriarchal leadership of this organisation, has become far removed from God's Principles of Simplicity, love, honesty and respect. He is asking us to radically change the Catholic system to a more dignified, respectful and honest way of living and serving others.

To consider equality within the Church.

To be tolerant, accepting and inclusive of all people including refugees, the homeless, different races, religions and sexuality. We believe that families come in many forms and should be respected and accepted regardless of their make-up. Families should love, support and respect each other, just as Jesus taught us in the Bible.

As teachers in a Catholic primary school, we are asked to lead our communities in a time of great change. We are the faith models for many of our students and their families—what are we modelling? How do we lead our community as we adapt to changing societal pressures? How do we as a faith-filled educational community spread God's message in a way that stays true to our traditions yet reaches a new generation in a meaningful way? We are called to persist and work through the challenges of modern family life as we help reshape the Church for the students in our care who are the present and future Church.

God is asking us in Australia to more accepting, of all people regardless of their gender, sexuality, race, age, marital status and religion. We need to focus on the human dignity of all people and welcome everyone into our Church.

Repent, and believe the Good News. (You bishops will have to examine your collective conscience if you really want to do this). Preach the Good News. (You bishops need to clarify what you think the Good News actually is. I don't think you know). Preach it sometimes in words but mainly in humble and prophetic action. (But you bishops probably haven't the courage for that, I think).

Jesus Christ responded with love and compassion and mercy and joy and firmness and action—always and in every situation. When He gave difficult messages (e.g. to Pharisees, etc., or to those trading in the Temple), He always left a welcome, an invitation, a real possibility of forgiveness.

We are called today to learn to get that balance. To say at the same time that an act is wrong and to live and behave that the person acting is loved and welcomed. Jesus drove out the traders but didn't destroy their businesses as long as they were not in the temple. Jesus told the adulteress that she was not condemned and could try again. Knowing betrayal was already in his heart, Jesus allowed Judas Iscariot to sit at the table instituting the Eucharist and share it allowing the possibility of an openness of heart in Judas and calling Judas 'friend' after all that. Catholics in Australia we need to allow sinners to be welcome even when we might suspect their sinfulness to be continuing. So, we need to allow those remarried without annulment to receive Eucharist, we need to welcome people of all genders even though we might suspect wrong sexual activity: gender identity (regardless of its origin) is not sinful. With all such areas, we need to be welcoming people and inviting them to receive Holy Communion even when we are fairly sure their sin will continue. And! We need to draw more people into real decision-making in the Church at all levels—removing the canonical requirement that only those ordained can make decisions. We need to bring more women, and disabled, and people of all walks into true decision-making roles. Ordaining women as permanent deacons would be one excellent way of bringing women into roles associated with the spiritual development of the priesthood of the faithful through enacting ordinary ministry from a female perspective, they would bring their perspective also into planning and strategic thinking and decision-making. We need to be willing to walk with the people of Australia showing a loving face not a legal/judgemental face. As a part of this generous, bountiful, (financial, spiritual, medical ... ) assistance to those who have been abused by members of our Church is a key even if it comes at a cost of losing physical assets. Most of this is about being disciples who go and make disciples by example of showing compassion and love and mercy and justice and integrity. In changing the face of the Church to the world, allowing for optional celibacy (yes, I know Pope Francis just said 'no') would seem to be sensible -though not a primary driver, it would aide in ensuring the spiritual/mental/physical health of priests.

A much more inclusive Christian community living all the Gospel values- especially respect, nonviolence, love and forgiveness for all people.

I believe that priests should be allowed to be married and women should be able to be priests.

Address child abuse and let the police deal with abuse. The Church is not the law. Romans 13:1-2 Obey the government for God is the one who has put it there. People are leaving the Church due to the lack of transparency. Priests are human beings, they are fallible. The Church in Australia as the rest of the world has hidden its faults and brushed it under the carpet. We the people demand transparency. As an institution you cannot police yourselves. You cannot create your own rulebook. THE MELBOURNE RESPONSE which failed to address the victims concerns and to try and buy their silence for 30 pieces of silver!!

To renew our commitment to fulfilling the Commandments. Particularly respecting and loving others and love and honour God (Also through bringing back reverence in our worship at Holy Mass).

The same thing He always has: to spread the good news and make disciples of all the nations. If Mass attendance of Catholics in Melbourne is at 8%, the only reason can be is because the other 92% don't know what happens each Mass. I think we are being called to re-evaluate catechesis across the lifespan and look at new ways of teaching the beautiful, timeless truths of the Catholic faith in our schools, in our Churches and in our homes. If the Theology of the Body was taught in

our Catholic primary and secondary schools, I firmly believe there would be conversions of both students and their families. I think at present there is a strong focus on social justice, which is a good thing, but I also think that if there was equal focus on theological teachings, particularly around the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist (that extends past first Holy Communion), theology of the body and more formation on the Creed (as a core subject, not just in VCE), students would be drawn to the beauty of the Church.

Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan sums it up perfectly: 'A whole stream of public opinion tells the Church to moderate its requirement of sacrifice and renunciation, to lower its expectations of priests, religious and lay people. Some people believe that a more lenient attitude, a less demanding way of life, would attract more vocations and believers to the Church. But experience has shown this is an illusion. Young people want to give themselves completely, and to become authentic disciples of Christ. They want unequivocally evangelical life and detest partial commitments...They are not afraid of self-denial; their only fear is to undervalue the evangelical call, to live a mediocre Christian life'. God is asking us to defend and protect his Church and to call all believers to higher ideals lovingly but without altering teaching.

God is asking us all to grow in love for him and for our neighbour. The best way for us to do this is to be able to attend Mass as often as possible (ideally daily). This can be difficult for those who work full time or for those who live in regional/rural areas. Obviously there is a shortage of priests but perhaps some logistics can change to allow the faithful to attend Mass daily.

I think God is asking us to deepen our faith through seeking to understand it better. Programs like the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd give children a solid early formation in their faith but can be difficult to access.

God is asking us to draw near to him through immersing ourselves in his word. It is a bad joke but sadly true, that we Catholics just don't spend as much time in scripture study as our Protestant brothers and sisters. The more we can truly listen to God in His word, the more our Church will flourish.

God is asking for us to deepen our faith through increasing our understanding.

I think God is asking the Church to clarify just how much it values the feminine genius. There is so much noise about women being undervalued, that women should be priests, etc. That the beauty of the current beliefs is completely lost. I definitely do not think God is asking us to ordain women as priests; this is simply not logically sound. I really think the Church might just need a bit better PR in this area. This could cover the role of priest as shepherd/servant, the fact that most parish councils seem to be either 50/50 or majority female, how much the Church values motherhood (and the overwhelming influence mothers will have on the next generation of priests/bishops/cardinals). Like most things pertaining to the Church at the moment, it isn't so much what we believe but how people perceive what we believe. As Fulton Sheen put it "There are not a hundred people in America who hate the Catholic Church. There are millions of people who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church — which is, of course, quite a

different thing”.

I think God is asking us to remember his steadfast love and to respond in turn through an increase in devotion to individual prayer. As Cardinal Van Tuan puts it “Are you surprised that there are many people who have lost the grace of God, lost their faith, or have turned against the Church?” There are many reasons for this but there will always be one main reason: lack of prayer.

Adult Education: God is asking us to be open to learn about our Catholic faith. What we actually believe and where our traditions came from? Why the Church teaches its dogmas and where did they come from? We need strong education programs that are readily available to the ordinary Catholic parishioners. We need to encourage people to question their faith and be willing to learn. God is asking us to be equipped to articulate our faith in our workplaces and in family life. Marriage We need to learn about what the Church actually teaches about marriage. What does a covenant mean? What are grounds for annulment? What does the Church teach about violence in relationships? Why does the Church encourage natural family planning?

How we can live and espouse the core principles of ‘love of God and love of neighbour’. For instance, how do we better reflect the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus; how do we better listen to God through scripture and silence as well as reaching out to those in need or on the margins. How we make God the centre of our lives—how can we find ways to be generous to each other and to the Church? How we better give ‘witness’ to God in spiritual and daily life, especially to the youths? How can we empower the youths to know and love God and Christ. How do we find points of intersection with the youths in circumstances where the youths want the Church to be where they are; to be relevant and modern and visible?

The same it has always been. To love and be kind to one another without judgement.

We are being called as a community to acknowledge the wrongdoings and horrors committed by members of the Church. We need to give space to those who need to be heard and the people that are yet to come forward. We need to give space to the trauma that has been caused and scaffold this so that people are supported and cared for. This process cannot be rushed or glossed over. There is generational trauma that has resulted from sexual abuse. There is shame and mistrust. We need to look to a new structure, one where woman play a central role. We need to find a new way. The idea of the infallibility of the Pope needs to be thrown out. No human is infallible. No bishop. No Church member. An outside body of lay people needs to oversee the operations of the Church. The Church needs to be subject to the same laws relating to sexual abuse as the rest of Australia. We need to acknowledge the Churches role in the assimilation of our first nation’s people into missionaries and another culture and religion they were not familiar with.

Making Churches accessible to disabled people with wheel chairs and mother's with prams.

This is a group submission: • Make the Church more open, accessible, honest, accepting and accountable. • Make sure we as the “Church” are impacting positively on each and every one surrounding us. • Reach out to the people who has either left the Church or new to the Church. • Bring young (youths and young families) back to Church. Make faith alive or relevant to them. Make Mass more appealing to youths and all. E.g., not all priests can preach well, improve homily and preaching • Youths and young families do not realize that they need the Church, which is the

source of happiness. • Be like Jesus—show compassion, show mercy, forgiveness. • Church is too hierarchical and not in touch with ground realities • Priest to focus on spiritual and theological and connecting with parishioners. Hire administrator for admin tasks for the Church. • Church should be more open about sexual abuse of children by priest and seek forgiveness.

Priests need to be priests and should be seen in schools several times per week. Administration should be on a several deanery basis, archdiocesan model is flawed and borderline incompetent. Priests should be pastoral and the initiators of evangelisation. It will be a slow process to change but it needs to happen, as priests have effectively become faceless men to their parishes.

I believe that in light of the current verdict on Cardinal Pell's situation, it highlights once again how in the hierarchy of Catholic priests, there are many issues that have been kept secret in the eyes of the Catholic community. Atrocious and very unchristian acts have been committed to vulnerable people whose lives have been undeniably destroyed. If Jesus were present here in Australia, he will be asking the leaders of our Catholic Church, what have you done to my people? Why did you commit all these heinous acts towards children? Why did you betray the trust of my people? God will be asking us what have we done as lay people to allow this to happen to our community. God will be asking our Church leaders, why have you hidden all these acts all these years? Why did we keep silent about these events while the victims of abuse were suffering?

God is asking us to believe in one God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Holy Mary the Immaculate Conception and Mother of God, One holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and to look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, and that we should be taught this at schools, at Churches, not just recited, that eternal salvation is only available through Jesus and supernatural faith. Do not become a dishonest Church where there are no consequences of sin. That is dishonest and not Jesus' message. It is imperative that the Church restates its precepts, The message of the Gospels and holy Scriptures is necessary and traditional Catholic teaching and Catechesis must be returned to Catholic schools and the Church. Only traditional and true catechesis will revive the Church. If the Church "waters-down" its teaching and catechesis, then the faithful and Church congregations will also "water down" in faithfulness and numbers. God is asking that we, his beloved Church on earth, strongly uphold Church teaching everywhere.

I believe that God is asking us to be courageous with embracing and communicating the fullness of the Truth handed down by our Lord and through Apostolic Tradition. Our Heavenly Father desires that we turn from living a cushy, lukewarm Christian life which is filled with pain and false pleasure of this world, to embrace the fullness of His divine message which encompasses both mercy and justice—there is no mercy without justice. We tend to see our Lord as merciful, however, we are so often misled in believing He grants salvation to all who are 'nice people'. So many Catholics don't honour the God that created us, with even the one hour a week in fulfilling their Sunday obligation with Holy Mass and think they have 'a ticket to Heaven' ... What a horrifying thing to be faced with a judgement at death. Over 160,000 souls die each day, but how many will see the Face of God to enjoy Him for all eternity? Nothing really matters in this bodily life, as all things pass away—much of what we seek to accomplish, honour, prestige and wealth is all but mere vapour which is no more, at our last breath (St Alphonsus Maria de Liguori). Both the clergy and lay members of the Church succumb to human respect when it comes to moral questions. God wants His priests to speak the words of truth in its' entirety from the pulpit each Sunday Mass. Much of the Homilies I have heard over the years appeal to our sense of 'feeling

good' as they are at worst, a dishing up of spiritual baby food for the congregation to get us through for a week or if imbued with good doctrine, sometimes fall short on communicating the Justice of God (how many of us actually know or contemplate the 4 last things ...). Those priests who raise our attention to this level of Catholic truth, have typically been those with a sensitivity to the tridentate Mass. (I myself attend the Novus Ordo Mass, generally). I personally have been a very lukewarm Catholic and often skipping Mass and offending God in so many ways—and yet I considered myself to be a 'good person'. Had I died then, eternal Hell awaited me. Over the last 12 years, I have amended my life but more, especially in the last 4 years, I've integrated more fully into the life of the Church and returned to the sacrament of penance, which I frequent often. Most days are filled with attendance at daily Mass and the Holy Rosary, as well as Spiritual reading. This need to make reparation for my sins and make satisfaction in any way possible, has led me to engage in the Spiritual works of mercy where I visit 2-3 Nursing Homes weekly as part of my apostolate work. Consoling them with a message of God's love and mercy for them; encouraging them to raise their hearts to God; to prepare their Soul for this final journey to eternity by praying and appealing to Jesus for the pardon of their sins; reaching out to Our Lady, who is the dispenser of all graces especially, for a Holy death. Dear reader, they are some of the 'modern day lepers'!

To use the knowledge gained by humans in the past 2000 years when seeking God.

1. Major reforms at all decision-making levels. 2. The inclusion of women at all decision-making levels. 3. Leadership Humility 4. The removal of the Vatican code that ensures silence and secrecy 5. Reform the training for the priesthood where arrogance and certainty is bred. Holy Family [ - ] [parish] is an example where the last 2 parish priests have made unilateral decisions without consultation. 6. Wise pastoral care for candidates to the priesthood who are gay. 7. Removal of the garments that are a symbol of power i.e. the soutane, elaborate bishops' hats that are a symbol of power and arrogant authority, bishops jewelled croziers, etc. 8. Cease bringing men from other cultured into the country to take the role of parish priests. As fine as they may be, they continue to support the culture of obedience to rules and un questioning obedience to bishops. 9. Women to be encouraged to give homilies that reflect the reality of people's lived experience.

I feel like He is wanting us to not make humiliation about a person's race or ethnicity.

To stop violence in the world and to make the news so sad all the time.

I think God is asking us to grow as a community. I grew up in the US, and the attendance at Mass was so much larger than it is here. When I attend Mass here, the only people who seem to be going are the elderly, and maybe a few families. This makes me so sad, the young people are the future of the Church, and if no young people are going to Mass, or even believing in God, how will the Church in Australia grow? I think, rather than to continue to modernize the Church like you have been, I think bringing it back onto the more conservative side would really help. My old Church recently renovated to look like an old Church, and became extremely more conservative, and now, attendance and converts to the Catholic Church, are at an all-time high there. It shows when the Church is more conservative, the more people attend.

I think God would be asking us to be more involved in the Church and in our community. God I believe, is asking us to give to others and help each other in today society as many people are poor or do not have a place to sleep.

I think God would be asking for Australia to be more accepting, in that we don't shut people out or discriminate because of different beliefs, decisions or preferences, etc.

I think God is asking Australia to become more respectful of other cultures as a nation. We need to be more open to others in terms of refugees, religions, nationalities, sexualities, (and other gender issues). We need to love one another and not judge each other. We need to keep laws and religion separate as French enlightenment philosopher Voltaire spoke about. Many of the issues raised at the time by French Enlightenment Philosophers are issues raised today. Such as the idea of "can a tolerant society tolerate intolerance" The world needs to be a more tolerant place.

It is of concern to us that the Church has lost her influence in society. We believe the Church can regain her influence through a concerted focus upon truth, goodness and beauty. We see the following ways in which the Church can accomplish this. First, the Church should be involved in the commissioning of the Arts. We must recover and create anew the wonderful sacred artworks that have long been part of the tradition of the Church. We must commission musicians to compose beautiful works of sacred music. We must commission script writers and producers so as society can once again foster an appetite of truth, goodness and beauty in motion picture, film, television and other related media. Second, parish Churches should consider freely opening up its halls for "in-house" artists and musicians, where classes to the community can be offered in art and music by competent and like-minded people. Through this, members of society would be given the opportunity to learn about sacred art and sacred music, as well as be involved in the creation of such art. We see this is an integral form of evangelisation and catechesis. Finally, we express the view that there is an urgent need for a return to an education focused open human formation. Many recognise that education is important in the growth of all human beings, particularly for the young. Furthermore, we understand that the Church also recognises the importance of having a society of many well-educated and spiritually conscious citizens. We believe, however, that the current state of education is not providing this to the level that we as a society need. Our schools have a concerning void in the promotion of truth, goodness and beauty. We wish to make it clear this is not the fault of individual schools but is of a much broader problem where the education system is being strongly influenced to serve the commercial agenda of industry rather than God. Consequently, the moral standards in our society have declined to an alarming point. Our society cannot rely on its politicians to change the education system as their concern begins and ends with the economy, an economy in which the media has done a good job in erecting as an object of worship for the people. We believe that our society needs a new education system, an education focused on classical and liberal arts studies, where God, the ultimate truth, goodness and beauty, is at the centrepiece of all branches of learning. We believe that our Church can and must play a fundamental role in this shift. We prayerfully ask for a serious consideration of a return to truth, goodness and beauty. This, for us, can pave the way for a new cultural renaissance, where the sacred arts serves as the catalyst for evangelism and catechesis, so that hearts may once again turn towards God, who is the ultimate truth, goodness and beauty, and its source and inspiration to all who believe.

This question is philosophically flawed - I cannot estimate the "mind" of God. I have been created by God to exercise judgement in accordance with my knowledge and my informed conscience. Therefore I will answer the question below, which is in my power to consider.

I think that we are asked to return to Gospel values. Jesus message was a simple one but one that covered every facet of life. Over the centuries, the Church has added to this message in ways that make it almost impossible to hear what the true message is. Jesus' disciples argued on occasions about who was the most important and who should hold the highest place, and they were rebuked by Jesus who on one occasion said that we should all be like children in our efforts to reach eternal life. Recently in the news, we have seen many images of the Church with all its riches on display. Hundreds of cardinals in their scarlet robes, bishops in the gathered in a building that appears opulent and displaying all the might and power of a mighty empire. This is a far cry from the Middle Eastern peasant walking around the dusty countryside showing compassion and love for the everyday people that he met. Over the years, we have become so caught up with pomp and ceremony that we have forgotten those beginnings. Where are the women? Where are the young? Where are the poor and oppressed? Where are the gay community? I know that the Church does many amazing things to help these people, but when we see "The Church" on display it is easy to forget the good things that are being done in the name of Jesus. Jesus' message was simple and spoken in a way that all people could relate to, but in our ceremonies we use words that are complicated, out of touch with the reality of our world and the advances in science and technology, words that have to be explained to children and young people because they do not understand them. We sing hymns that were written hundreds of years ago, once again that do not resonate with young people and then we asked why young people have stopped coming to Church. A few weeks ago, it was very hot and our priest and deacon chose not to wear the chasuble, but wore the alb with a stole. I thought it was the nearest thing to how I imagine the Last Supper would have been and I wondered why we persevere with the vestments and other symbols of power when it does not reflect that context of Jesus' message. I could go on for hours, but my thoughts are that we need to get back to basics. Language, dress, buildings, are not what we should be on about. Let's concentrate on the Gospel message, adapted to the 21st century to encourage us to become responsible global citizens who speak the language that everyone can understand and who treat this planet and ALL those who live on it with the care and respect that everyone and everything deserves.

I think He is asking that there be more Saints in the Church of Australia.

Our parish response included a broad range of responses to do with governance structures and structural and issues to be addressed. I would also want to see an emphasis on growing and deepening spirit of the Gospel in our communities and underpinning our parish life and activities.

I believe that many aspects of the Church need to be reformed. I believe that God wants us to live our faith every day not just by attending services on Sunday. I want the Church and its members to do more for those in need. I believe that God wants all Catholics to embrace the faith willingly and knowingly, not out of fear or obligation and that prayer should be focused more on personal prayer. I believe that God calls many to the priesthood and that there should be reforms to the rule of celibacy and to the law that only men can become priests. I also believe that God wants all people to be embraced and accepted irrespective of sexuality. Most importantly, our Church leaders need to become more much more active in being the social conscience for our governments.

It is most important that God (the Church) listens to all of us. We need to re-emphasise the importance of prayer. We need to be more open to helping immigrants find employment. The

<p>Church is not doing enough in this area. We need to be more accepting of people from other religions. We need to do more to welcome people back into the Church. Priests should be able to get married. We should be promoting women to positions of importance within the Church, including the priesthood. Divorced people should be more readily accepted into receiving the sacraments. We should be more accepting of gay and lesbian people into the Church. It is not their fault what they are, they just are, the same as us. It is wonderful that the Church is interested in what people in their 90's think.</p>
<p>God is asking us to forgive one another and accept people for who they are because in society at the moment there is a lot of inequality. God is also asking us to try and explore our faith a little bit more ... Also to follow in God's footsteps.</p>
<p>Peace unity freedom acceptance bettering our country and earth—reducing climate change.</p>
<p>God is asking us to revisit the Scriptures and teachings of Christ, 'the Message'. 'The Message' has been interpreted through the ages. It is meant for all times and cultures and so to be meaningful to us we must apply 'the Message' to the Church of the twenty-first century. The Church is the connection between Christ and the laity. The Laity need to be seen living out 'the message' of Christ. Pope Francis is a role model for this in his love of the poor and a return to simplicity.</p>
<p>I strongly believe God is asking us to made changes to how our Church is governed, by removing all clergy and lay people who have covered up sexual abuse over many decades. He is encouraging those of us who faithfully love Him to speak up and take action to put the Church into our own hands together with the priests, religious and lay people who have never been involved in any such atrocities and cover-ups. I believe God gave us the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Child Sex Abuse in Australia for this very reason. God is sad that so many people in positions of power within the Church have moved so far away from his teachings of love, empathy, inclusiveness, kindness, caring and forgiveness. He is imploring us to do everything we can to remember His teaching and make the changes required to achieve this.</p>
<p>To act as Jesus would have; welcome people as they are; we must stand up for what we believe in—just as Jesus did. Trust, although the Church is broken Jesus will never forsake his people. Have courage to face our critics.</p>
<p>He is asking us to be more accepting of others and become community focused.</p>
<p>God is asking us to help the clergy, the bishops and the Church to listen to and act on our concerns as described in the attached document. The document is a summary of the discussions of our Wednesday Morning Mass Group who meet for a coffee and a chat after 9:15 am Mass.</p>
<p>God is asking us... To be who are we. To deepen our knowledge of the Gospel, our own Christian tradition and spirituality. To recognise our roots in the Jewish tradition. To renew our commitment to being guided and transformed by the Spirit. To be a people who walk together in love and with joy, with our baptised sisters and brothers in Christ To educate and guide our people in relation to other believers and other faiths To be who we are in unity and harmony with other believers. To deepen our respect for, and cooperation with, other Christians and other faiths. To walk with others in the Spirit of God. To recognise our unity with other Christians in baptism. To act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel us to act separately (Lund Principle; National Council of Churches in Australia Covenant).</p>

To be who we are in unity and harmony with other believers for the sake of our Australian society. To recognise that the Church lives in a pluralist society of many faiths and none. To build up God's kingdom with others and other traditions, with a preference for the poor and vulnerable. To speak the truth about God/Jesus/humanity to our Australian culture. To give united witness to God's love to the people of Australia in new and radical ways. To be courageous in expressing and living our Christian faith in harmony with others.

I think God is asking the Church in Australia, that is the ordained, religious and lay faithful, to live out their baptism into Christ more faithfully in the Church's Sunday liturgy and for the Church's liturgy to become what was envisaged by Vatican II as the "source and summit" of the Christian Life. For this ideal to become a reality, certain steps need to be taken as follows: 1) Following Pope Francis' concern, the Church needs to address the problem of clericalism at all levels (i.e. amongst bishops, priests, seminarians, religious and lay people). The culture of clericalism, entitlement and privilege needs to be replaced by a culture of compulsory accountability, transparency, faithfulness, service and charity. Seminary formation (where clericalism starts) needs a radical overhaul, particularly the Tridentine model with its distorted emphasis on ontological change, clerical titles, choir dress, and black Roman collars. 2) Given 11-12% of Catholics regularly attend Sunday Mass, the Church needs to attract more Catholics to weekly worship. Improving the quality of the liturgical experience is vital, particularly the ministries of presiding, preaching, hospitality and music. Given the existing professionalisation of the priesthood, teaching and nursing, the ministry of music coordinator is the next one that needs to be professionalised in parishes (perhaps in collaboration with schools) in order to lift standards, which are often too low to be edifying. 3) Compulsory in-service training for bishops, priests, deacons and liturgical ministers is essential, esp. for presiding celebrants, homilists and organists/cantors. 4) Given confusion surrounding seal of Confession following the recent Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse in Institutions, the ACBC needs to produce a clear statement to indicate what is/what isn't covered by the seal. In addition, the ACBC needs to provide a credible statement on the appropriate uses of the Rites of Reconciliation (Rites 1 and 2) and seek permission to make pastoral provision for Rite 3 (which has met a pastoral need in decades past). A statement should also include commentary on the significance of the Penitential Rite at Mass, reception of the Eucharist and forgiveness [cf. CCC (1992)], Anointing and Forgiveness and Penitential Services and forgiveness. 5) Provision of Ordained priests for all dioceses is a pressing priority. The importation of overseas priests is fraught. Many are too difficult to understand. Many are not sufficiently interested in pastoral ministry that is effective in the Australian culture and some don't show enough interest in local people to whom they have been invited to serve. Bishops need to ordain more properly trained, mature men (married or not) in order to improve the quality of ministry amongst men and women. A number of young ordinands are simply too young and sometimes immature and ideologically driven to be effective/credible ministers of the Gospel.

- That the Church place Jesus Christ at the centre of all that it says and does. - Real leadership positions should be opened up to women. - We need to address the scandal of polarisation in the Church. Concern that there is a growing movement of conservative Catholics obstructing the spirit of the Gospel of inclusivity and hospitality and the teachings of Vatican II. - That we appreciate the damage wrought by clericalism and a lack of transparency, especially, but not limited to, the sexual abuse crisis. Review screening for new candidates, formation of clergy, enculturation of

overseas clergy, regular appraisal of parish clergy... - The language in the liturgy needs to be accessible and meaningful. - That the Church finds a way to meaningfully engage and talk to young people about both faith and life. - Active involvement of all in the Church, particularly Church leaders to speak out on issues of justice, peace and care of creation issues. - Access to the sacraments for all who believe and choose to receive. Communion for divorced Catholics.

He is calling us to live holy and unselfish lives and to remain faithful to the true teachings of His Church. We are being called to be courageous in our Faith and not to give in to the errors of modernism and now post-modernism. Our Lady has asked us, at Fatima, to pray the Rosary daily for the conversion of the World and the CONSECRATION of Russia and the World to Her Immaculate Heart by the Holy Father in UNION with the bishops of the whole World.

Make Changes to our response to victims of abuse. Put in place steps to screen eliminate this from happening again. Better gender representation. Apologise unreservedly.

We need to be an inclusive Church. This means accepting that we are all individuals on a journey ... Some of us are gay, some are divorced and some have partners who are Catholic and go to Church regularly with our spouses. Why are we not invited to the table of the Lord to share in his resurrection and meal? What would Jesus do? Definitely invite all to be part of his family and accept we are all at different places on our journey! Why are women not included in mission and clergy? Times have changed! The fact that old men are running the Church speaks of misogyny and entitlement. What about equality and human rights? Why isn't the Catholic Church a leader to the world on equality and harmony? How can we expect countries like Afghanistan etc. to do the right thing by females if the role model of Jesus' Church is backwards thinking and stuck in the past? What would Jesus want? We must celebrate one another's God given gifts and talents and not discriminate on ones gender. Sex is on the base line of Maslow's hierarchy of needs ... Rabbis marry! Other Christian Churches allow their clergy ... Male and female to marry! It's sex that has haunted and destroyed and badly damaged the Church ... Contraception, abortion, rape by priests and nuns being raped and abused! The Church should keep out of the sexual lives and privacy of what happens between two adults with consent! God is asking for compassion and loving kindness and no judgement ... That you shall be judged! Who is casting the first stone? We are each on a journey and need spiritual support from one another and everyone is equal in the eyes of God!! Get rid of male entitlement and include all at the table of the Lord and stop being divisive..

I think God is calling each of us to stand up and be adults—to reject the clericalism and secrecy that has caused so much pain and disappointment and to build a Church that is more open and democratic. Whilst the clergy are to be respected for the commitment they have made to God and to the Church, if I acted the way some of our priests and leaders have in the past, I would be labelled unprofessional. I believe that God is calling us to be prophets of peace and justice. Our nation needs the Church, our society needs the Church. The Church does so much good and yet this is consistently overshadowed by the ongoing pain caused by those within our Church who have preyed on the young and vulnerable. I think we're being called to be humble and compassionate in our response to the sexual abuse scandal—something that has been sorely lacking in the words and actions of some of our leaders.

For a total change. The Church is run by men for men. There must me more women in power. Priests must be able to be married. Nuns must be able to say Mass. Confession must be stopped-

it was introduced so that men can have power. The tax-free state of all religions must stop. Get back to basics- especially the bishops and higher. I cannot believe the money that is used for these exulted people/males. Nuns would never be grated the same amount of money spent on robes, huge gold crosses hanging around their necks and expensive houses to live in. The Church is a money making place. Got to change.

God is asking us to help the people of the Church to deliver justice and peace. God is asking that those who work in his name truly carry out his work with respect and ensure all are safe. God is asking us to bring those in the Church who have committed atrocities against women and children, the most vulnerable such as people living with disabilities, people from the LGBTQI communities to justice through our criminal law system. Today's Church is not what God would have wanted. God is love. Please do right by God because the Church has let God down and me.

I think God is asking us in Australia at this time to live the Gospel message. I believe it can take a lifetime for a person to fully know what this means for them and they may find different ways to express this at various stages in their life. I see the role of the Church as providing guidance and support for people in this search. The Church should welcome people at all stages of their spiritual journey and encourage them to explore their faith. It should be a nurturing organisation open to all rather than an exclusive club for the select few. How else can it engage with those starting their spiritual journey?

The Church is virtually become irrelevant in the lives of both practicing and non-practicing Catholics. Why does the Church continue to ignore the issues and real time problems of both individuals and society? Continue down the same path as is, where we ignore your parishioners and society and their opinions and you will simply be non-existent in 10-15 yrs.

Over decades the Church in Australia has gained enormous wealth, power and influence. Radical reform is needed not just to ensure the safety of children and the vulnerable, but to ensure the Church is just, serving, loving, inclusive and Christ centred. Some crucial steps in this would be: - To ensure greater leadership role for women, including women priests, bishops, cardinals and potentially popes. - To ensure a welcoming and non-judgemental approach to those who are same sex attracted or transsexual as well as others who the Church has been judgemental of over time such as those who are divorced. - To ensure that clergy and those in position of power are humble and there to serve. Titles such as 'Father', 'Most Reverend' and 'His Eminence', create unnecessary power imbalances which in turn can contribute to the misuse or abuse of power. -To ensure that the primacy of conscience is affirmed in practical ways to ensure that those who form ethical positions different to some Church teachings are not repeatedly made to feel judged and unwelcome within the Church. - To ensure that affirmation of the sanctity of life is not done in a way that is unnecessarily judgmental of the vulnerable. This is particularly needed in relation to the issue of abortion, where the issue at times becomes such a strong focus for particular groups within the Church that well-meaning intentions can lead to the alienation of others. - To ensure that the Church takes a meaningful role in the great environmental challenges of our time, in particular climate change. - To ensure that the Church is always looking for ways to serve others, particularly the poor and vulnerable - To review the seal of confession in the light of past sexual abuses and cover ups. - To review the language of the Mass. Phrases such as, 'my fault, my fault, my most grievous fault', feel odd and lacking authenticity. There is also a question as to whether such language contributes to the power imbalances that exist within the Church, by encouraging

all, but particularly the faithfully laity, to repeatedly put themselves down. - To ensure that those harmed by clergy in the past receive some sort of just recompense by not in any way prioritising the ongoing wealth of the Church. If the Church becomes poor and certain dioceses go bankrupt, so be it.

With all the immigration and many people moving interstate, parishes need to put more time into welcoming new parishioners, helping them settle and provide connections with other families and ministry. We believe that the Church should not shy away from big moral issues such as homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, same sex marriage, contraception, etc., but be bold in speaking the truth. With our secular culture being more influential on our youths than ever, we feel that there needs to be more programs for youths in Catholic schools and parishes that discuss sexuality, celibacy, and Catholic moral issues in general.

- Expand the role of women in the Church: half of God's children are women, and yet in the RCC women are tucked away. What a waste of knowledge and experience that will bring the RCC into the 21st century and introduce the rest of the RCC to the wisdom of the oppressed gender. The RCC is treating women like they are living in the 1960's. o Affirmation and the Celebration of LGBTIQ+ people: It is time to stop bullying the LGBTIQ+ community with the catechism (2357-2359) and the 'clobber passages'. The clobber passages consists of verses (such as Leviticus 18:22) in front of a chapter on cleanliness/rituals which we Catholics conveniently choose to disregard because we have deemed it inapplicable, yet put Leviticus 18:22 above many chapters in the same book just to suit the Church's need to control the LGBT community. When is the Church going to understand that 2000 (and beyond) ago, sexual activities between two men (most of the time between a man of power such as a senator/centurion and a slave boy) is not the same as a consensual, loving, monogamous relationship in 2019 between two people of the same sex? When Paul wrote Romans 1:26, 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Timothy 1:10 (all clobber passages), he would only have understood homosexuality as an abuse of power—not love between two persons.

What do you think God is asking of us at this time? The leadership of our Church has failed us greatly. Pell's situation is a huge letdown and embarrassment irrespective of the results of any Appeal he may lodge. How Rome responds to this will be significant for the Church in Australia and how the Australians view the Church. The root cause of this failure is poor governance, clericalism and the hierarchal structures with which the Church has persisted for far too long and which are now irrelevant in the Australian Culture and don't work in the Australian Church. The Leadership of the Church in this country is viewed with contempt by people. It is widely recognised that the great good done by the people associated with the Church, and which is widely recognised in the community, happens in spite of the leadership and governance structures. These structures can make it difficult on occasions for those at the coalface to get on with the good works they are striving to carry out. We all need to agitate for changes in the governance and structures of the Australian Church that are more reflective of Australian culture, significantly reduce clericalism, and give a more effective voice and role for all Catholics in Australia (irrespective of gender or background) in the governance and leadership of the Australian Church. Australian Catholics can do this by thinking, praying about, discussing, formulating and disseminating a new governance and administration structure. This structure must be in tune with the values, attitudes and culture of Australian Catholics and still in step with

<p>the fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ as outlined in the Gospels and Scripture and as understood in the milieu of contemporary Australia. It is recognised that our Clergy are under increasing pressure with their lives, work and vocation due to declining numbers, celibacy, rapid societal changes, and loneliness. Australian Catholics could make a positive contribution to the reduction of this pressure for our Clergy by agitating for: • Allowing priests to marry if they wish • Allowing those who have left the priesthood to be married, to be able to carry out priestly, pastoral and teaching roles in their communities • Allowing the ordination to the priesthood, bishopric cardinalate or Papacy of anybody irrespective of gender, sexual orientation or any other factor • The removal of Church practices that discriminate. I do not believe that there is anything in the Scriptures or teachings of Jesus Christ that prevents any of these matters to be implemented. Changes to Canon Law could be developed to enable these matters to be implemented. [ - ] 1/3/2019</p>
<p>God would like to see people practicing Christian living. To do this, the Church must become relevant again to the people. Our world has changed and the Church needs to adopt Vatican II and more as a matter of urgency. Female priests are a must. Schools must become Catholic schools, not just High schools with a Catholic Badge. Re-contextualisation of our Christian Identity is our only hope. schools need to be living witnesses. [ - ]</p>
<p>God is asking us to follow the essential messages of Jesus to love one another, to care for all in our community ensuring equal access, dignity and respect. God also asks us to care for and be stewards of a unique environment which we are responsible for.</p>
<p>To share our differences, different nationalities, etc. in the spirit of love of God. To think, pray and put into action good deeds. God wants love and peace in Australia. To obey God and witness God's presence in the goodness of others to witness God's calling. To believe that God's spirit is working in all people leading them to do good. (interfaith)</p>
<p>To integrate faith in everyday life, to become more like Christ. To contribute to build parish community. To be transparent about the problem of abuse. To be more compassionate, be seen to help the outcasts, to listen to those in need, to unite people, to set up a phone line where people could discuss abuse and make help callers to make referrals...</p>
<p>To be unified, to worship God meaningfully, to have empathy and to understand the lives of others, to find answers to the difficult challenges that confront us. The voice of the Church has to be a powerful voice.</p>
<p>The Church should be more active, outreaching, inclusive and follow the example of the disciples in reaching the non-believers, the disenfranchised, the youths, the old and the disconnected.</p>
<p>That we be an inclusive Church which acknowledges our past, seeks to bring about healing for the vulnerable and our Indigenous sisters and brothers.</p>
<p>God is asking us to become more involved among the Catholic Church and trying to encourage a positive view of the Catholic faith. He is also asking us to unite together and respect each other. By respecting others and treating our neighbours with thoughtfulness, we will be able to come together and seek benefits in the world, for example, bettering the environment and preventing war/hate in the world. • If God were here, he would have wanted us to be humble, kind and loving. He would want us to be having a growth mindset and focus on the future rather than</p>

dwelling on the mistakes of the past and to learn from our mistakes. He would want everyone to stand together in the face of a situation that tests our unity. He would want us to be accepting of all and not discriminate. • Having the best experience of faith by being united and have hope and listen to everyone and respects opinions. To be faithful and work as a community, to treat everyone fairly, regardless of religion, colour, race, and to be kind to everyone. There has been a lack of a sense of community in our current society; therefore, we should work towards unity and acceptance. Although we should forgive other people's actions, we need to remember and understand that there is a room for growth. We should shift towards a more modern approach and consider the needs of our future. • God is asking for Australia in unity to accept all people with compassion and love. • Our group thinks God is asking us to make sure we are active members of society. It is important for the Church to recognize current issues like people movement and climate change and not remain isolated and stuck in the past. Once we recognize that these are problems we become closer to solving them. • We think God is asking us to promote humanity through equality, love, peace, faith and generosity through every action we partake in. • God is asking us to stay true to our faith and love one another. • To be kind to one another by showing kindness and taking action for peace as well as keeping our faith strong wherever and as much as possible • Respect and Accept everyone for who they are • As a group we all believed God is asking us to show compassion and be accepting of all those around us e.g. refugees and asylum seekers. God would like to see everyone loving each other and being inclusive of everyone no matter their race, gender or cultural differences etc. • God is asking us to not damage our world and others (people, animals, etc.) in any way or form. • "Respecting and treating people equally while maintaining faith" • God is asking us to be in service to others. That is to love and serve one another and the world. • God is asking us, to be unified in our diversity.

1. Social justice: How do we find a voice in the social justice direction: socially, politically and religiously? How can we be sure that our Church in Australia will listen and act? a. Social justice statement and booklets are all well and good but more needs to be done practically—and this means not only relying on volunteers (e.g. St Vinnies) but the Church putting more of 'its money where its mouth is'. b. Social justice means that the Church should immediately accept all the recommendations from the enquiry into sexual abuse. Listen to what we are saying and show us that you are willing to change. Take ownership of what has been done. c. Social justice means a tolerance of and acceptance for all, be it prisoners, LGBTQI, anyone. Everyone needs to be accepted at the table of the Lord—social justice is about all of the community. It is a broad issue and refers to more than volunteers and is not just about those who need Vinnies or who do charitable works. It is tolerance and acceptance of all. Speak out loudly and clearly. d. Finally, show us that our Church will listen and act. 2. Clericalism a. We all have our vocation and all vocations are equal. Do away with the clericalism that has meant unquestioned acceptance of 'pronouncements from on high.' b. Review the operations of the Church as a structure and listen when the Pope says that we should be a synodal Church. c. Show respect for the laity and seek input from the whole community. A contemplative Church is the Church of the future. d. Make God's message more accessible—opening, welcoming, less rule-bound, less focus on rewards and punishments. 3. Bring back the 3rd rite of penance/reconciliation. 4. Allow married priests 5. Allow female priests. 6. Give laity a stronger voice and ensure women are represented as voting members at the Plenary Council. 7. Revisit the wording of the Mass.

For the Church to be courage and up to change. To look into our hearts and ask: what would Jesus do today? To speak from humility in the time when the Church is criticised and try not to judge. To be a community that reaches out to the less fortunate as Jesus did. This sense of justice will inspire young people. In our reaching out, we are need support from liturgy and rituals that link with the living of Jesus' Gospel in this day and age. We need to consider structures in the Church, the community of God has people of varying gifts identical to the gifts that were in the scriptures. The parish priest would facilitate the use of these gifts and not to be expected to be a jack of all trades. To go back to the original program of the Gospel and be a radical rebuilding of the community.

God is asking us to be open and REALLY live the Gospel—acts NOT words.

To acknowledge the good works of the Church at this time such as social justice work, asylum seekers, refugees, and to challenge the Church in how it determines the role of women and roles in general (e.g. Married Clergy). Be transparent.

To build Catholic communities where people of all ages can belong and be strengthened in their faith ... like the old days.

Be a community that is universal, transparent and inclusive. All people are able to engage in the Catholic Church's sacraments, services and pastoral care without prejudice. To be transparent in decision-making and open to the voices of its people, to be communicative as to how and why decisions are made. To be open and genuine in reconciliation with those abused by members of the Church and to listen to what is needed for there to be a true reconciliation at the individual level.

1. Common sense 2. Allow female priests 3. May a daily parish Mass be said at appointed time? 4. School Masses and Funerals be independent of daily Mass. 5. All parishes MUST have a parish council selected by the parishioners.

Extend beyond the Church worlds and make connections for example through parish activities and dances. Look to forgive clergy for sex abuse and build a future Church. Beauty in liturgy through art and music. Centre of the Church to be based on the truth revealed by God. Work together as one for an inclusive future so as to continue the nurturing of all God's creation for a more faith filled, loving and compassionate world. Show compassion, respect and tolerance for the most vulnerable in our society, particularly being a country blessed with abundance; acting as role models for the global community. In doing this, we adhere to the core values of the Catholic Church when we practice social justice in the Church, particularly amongst the younger generation. In view of what happened regarding the crimes committed by the Clergy in the Catholic Church, the Church needs to change in order to avoid future criminal behaviour and move in a Christ-centred direction for its survival of the next generations. We think asking the Australian Church to be inclusive and compassionate; to seek out all of God's children, making them feel welcome and create ways for them to participate within the life of the Church. **ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.** Be tolerant, united, transparent, inclusive, acknowledging of past wrongs, with the aim to rebuild trust, understanding, leading in global issues and welcoming of all people, not exclusive to some. Be more like Jesus. Continue to expand the compassionate teachings and assist the poor and the marginalised. Change the way we treat other people—be welcoming and compassionate. By showing equality, social justice, empathy, community spirit.

Protect the world entrusted to us. Live by the maxim 'Do unto others'. By adopting the above we believe we are doing what God is asking of us. Be a Church that is open to all people. To be of the people and for the people, inclusive and welcoming of all people; adopt new ways of thinking. We think that God is asking the Australian Church to be relevant and representative of the people at a parish level and at senior leadership levels. Open to change and a voice for all. Be more truthful, responsive, inclusive, aligned with Gospel values. What needs to happen for the Church to be a truly inclusive community? • Personal responsibility • Authentic hearing • Core beliefs that we stand for.

"The sacred sacrament of Holy Orders will be ridiculed, oppressed and despised... The Devil will try to persecute the ministers of the Lord in every possible way. He will labour with cruel and subtle astuteness to deviate them from the spirit of their vocation and will corrupt many of them. These depraved priests, who will scandalize the Christian people, will make the hatred of the bad Catholics and the enemies of the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church fall upon all priests. This apparent triumph of Satan will bring enormous sufferings upon the good pastors of the Church... Further, in these unhappy times, there will be unbridled luxury, which will ensnare the rest into sin and conquer innumerable frivolous souls who will be lost. Innocence will almost never be found in children, nor modesty in women. In this supreme moment of the need of the Church, the one who should speak will fall silent" Our Lady of Good Success speaking on The Crisis in the Clergy... Who can deny that this has not come to pass in this moment in history of our beloved Catholic Church? Anyone looking with the eyes of Faith can see that there is now a diabolical disorientation in the Church today. You ask ... "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" If we search deeply into our hearts we can in all humility, say that God wants us to return to Him with prayerful courage, to lead with His truth. To live up to our mission to lead souls to Him. Indeed, He instituted His Church for that very mission. Who can deny that in the last five decades His teachings have been attacked with a renewed vigour which has resulted in an almost total corruption of Dogma and Traditions within His divinely instituted Church? It's like we are the stolen generation having had all our sacred traditions, practices and the Holy Mass hijacked and this unholy mess is then held up and we are told this is the Catholic Faith. Even the sacraments have not escaped this diabolical attack. The Word of God, sacred scripture, is changed according to the whims of the political bias of the pastor, sermons are in the main, banal mutterings of nothingness. It is a false idea to interpret Christ according to our own authority. What does God ask of us? Courageous bishops and priests ready to lead their flocks to Heaven. To be in the world but not part of it. A return to authentic holiness and authentic leadership. Look to the authentic formation of conscious in the young, teach the truth according to Jesus Christ, bring back a reverence for the Sacred, a love for the Holy Mass, Church architecture that reflects the sacred, a place of peace, refuge and beauty. We need to be real about trusting in God that through prayer, fasting and repentance of our sinfulness, He, in His unfathomable Mercy, will provide. Build it and they WILL come ...

PLENARY COUNCIL 2020 RESPONSE BY THE GROUP MEETING IN [ - ] CHURCH [ - ] ; 28 FEB, 2019  
"What is God asking us to be in Australia at this time" God is asking us to be • People who reflect and pray and express our love for Jesus in service People who "bloom where we are planted"  
People who accept others and enable others to experience God through our actions God is asking us to be • An inclusive community which reaches out to the marginalised: the poor, the refugees, homosexuals • To be a community which interacts with our Indigenous communities appreciating

their knowledge and care for this land, and learning from their wisdom especially in regard to the initiation of their young people God is asking us to be • Stewards of God's creation and to take part in repairing the damage done to the environment • Innovators in bringing the Church "into the 21st Century" so that we reach our young people who do not find meaning in our traditional structures God is asking us to be • Compassionate and forgiving people who enable the healing of the wound in the heart of the Australian Church: the evil of sexual abuse which has been so destructive in the lives of so many.

I sense that the whole Church, clergy and people, should humble themselves and come before the Lord for the times that we have failed the most vulnerable in our Church. This could be done in a National Day of Repentance with each archdiocese and diocese holding a penitential service. Let us all return to the Lord humbly asking pardon for all manner of sins committed in our Church.

I think God is asking us to hear his message with fresh ears: "Love one another as I have loved you". Catholicism is not appealing to the youths in the area that I live and work. God is asking us to find a new way of connecting with them and finding relevance in their lives. God is asking us to re-imagine the Mass—instead of repetitive prayers said with little or no emotion by the majority and the kneeling and standing, create a new way of gathering that is more meaningful God is asking us to no longer rely on the priest as the patriarch of the Church. The current system of formation of the "leaders" of the Church is not capturing the full potential of all of God's creation and is flawed, as seen by the incidence of paedophilia. God is asking us to acknowledge the huge amount of good that is done in His name and under His guidance but, like a coach, He is telling us that "you can do better". God is asking us to live His message every day.

God is asking us for peace in the world, to be tolerant of all people, of all religion, of all colour and races, to stop the endless wars, the endless power struggles, and to stop the mistreatment, of children, women, homosexuals and refugees.

• What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? • Open-Ended Response • To make good choices and make Australia even better by keeping the environment clean and healthy. • To be respectful and kind, considerate people. • I think that God is asking us to do our best to be successful in our study. • God is asking us to spread the word of God and be kind, loving and caring to one another. • To be good people and to be grateful for what we have in Australia. • To help people in developing countries so that they have the same type of enjoyment of life as us and don't waste there life. • To make sure you're a nice kind and friendly person and listen to what he says • To be kind to everyone • God is asking us to love our neighbour as we love our self. Take care of others and love them and God with all our will. • To have persistent in all of the problems around Australia like the drought from the farms and the flood in Queensland. • To Worship him with your life to go to heaven • I think God is asking us to be kind to one another because the world today is full of good and bad people, so try your best to respect others. • To help people and to show respect to others • God wants us to make Australia a better country to live together in peace • Just to live according to the example of Jesus, He sacrificed his life for us and it is necessary that we understand we only get this life once so we should make the best of it. We a caring hand for everyone around you because there always some people out there who don't have what you have. • To help homeless people and take care of one another • I think God is asking us to always make the right decision that is best for you. Something that can help you improve your life even BETTER • God is calling us people to kind to one another and to help each

other to build Australia to become a better place. • To be kind to others as he is to us • God is asking us to follow his ways, share his faith and be grateful for what he has done for us. He is telling us to keep the rule of stewardship so we will not suffer. God also wants us to help the ones in need such as people who are homeless, people who have mental illnesses, and those who are addicted to drugs. • As an agnostic, I don't believe in God. However, if God did exist, I believe that God would be asking for the protection of his creation, the following of the ten commandments and the listening of God. • Please stop hurting my Earth. Bad humans • That we should respect others no matter their race, gender and religion. Be stewards, protect and maintain God's creation. Be caring and generous towards each other • God would want us to follow his teachings. • I think God is asking us to be appreciative of everything that we have right now. God is expecting us to be stewards of his creation and respect our environment; something that all of us, not just people in Australia, are not doing so well in recent times. I think God is asking us at this time...

To participate in the listening praying dialogue.

I would like to say that the Catholic Church is not recognising that parents; mothers and fathers work full time and in order to keep their children on the straight and narrow must keep them busy with after school activities also on the weekend. I think given this, the Church should begin to look outside the square and offer Mass during the weekdays evenings about 6pm at the local parish churches. All parents at the attached school can bring a plate of food if they wish to make it a community thing. It is essential the priest is there to offer reconciliation, privately for adults and publicly in the Church space for kids. If this were done, the Church would find the people coming back because they are freer these days during the week than on the weekend. If the Church continues to be stubborn about Sunday Mass or Saturday Mass or weekday Mass during the day which is a waste of time because nobody goes; they are all at work, then they will lose more people, I cannot see the Church surviving. [ - ]

The Church in Australia is at a crossroads; either we wither and become diminished or die. Alternatively, we respond to the challenges of our time knowing that the Lord Himself said he would never abandon us, giving hope for the future as people of Faith who believe in the Resurrection with a life to come. This is our message, this is the Good News, let's celebrate what we have to offer and share with all God's people the love He gave so completely on the Cross.

What Jesus said as always, in particular what you did to the weak, you did to me. The Church needs to cut clean the crimes of their members, and offer some compensation with the aim to do as much as possible to heal, acknowledging the failures to be avoided forever. Considering the first Catholics were killed for believing, only a life-time compensation is just a minimum in comparison. For this to work also, all people working for the Church must commit and not put excuses to help comply with all checks going forward. As the old testament shows over and over, when people get away from God, the world takes over and all goes wrong. When people sacrifice their lives to God which is only by doing good, everything goes well. God is asking to Australia to be brave, to start again the love revolution, showing that we shouldn't hide the truth of the main commandment to Love each other, not only with words but facts. Going out more, helping more the lonely, people that are feeling without hope or desire for living. Doing volunteer campaigns to help the Aboriginal people that still suffer discrimination and didn't get back their land in the country. The Church and their people need to fight against injustice and defend the family values by showing people the goodness of been part of God's people.

GOD: Where have you gone? Why have you forsaken me? "And whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and he were cast into the sea." [Mark 9:41] We have forgotten the face of our Father. Priests, bishops and religious have deserted their flocks to follow their own interpretation of Catholicism. It's now all about how YOU feel about things, how YOUR conscious is (whether or not you receive Holy Communion). Mankind is now God. As a result we are now a stolen generation who have had our rights to authentic Catholic teaching ripped from our very being. God is asking us to:

- Get rid of the 60's folk music and rock bands and turn to hymns of praise and worship giving glory to God.
- Get rid of homosexual priests and religious, sexually active priests and religious, predator priests and religious, scandalous priests and religious and bring back intelligent, holy and prayerful priests who have our salvation as their primary goal.
- Get rid of mind numbing and condescending homilies.
- Bring back reverence for the sacraments.
- Bring back respect for authority.
- Bring back priestly authority in parish decisions.
- LEAVE gender politics at the door of the Church (it's not a Mass centre!)
- Read the black and do the red, it's simple, yet week after week we have new ways of bastardising the liturgy to accommodate some political or inane social justice issue (it's never something gritty like abortion bills or same sex marriage agendas or the evils of contraception).
- STOP dancing around the Altar! It's offensive!
- Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist, act like it.
- Bring back the supernatural aspect of our faith.
- Encourage devotion to the Blessed Mother and educate the parishioners on the communion of Saints.
- Teach us, especially those who are tepid, about the treasury of Graces to be had in the Church.
- Stop hiding behind the veil of political correctness and give us God's truth as handed down through the traditions of our Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Don't treat the young as fools, they deserve the honest truth, that's the least you can do after letting so many down by your inaction and silence in this, the most desperate time our Church has faced since the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ Our Lord and Saviour.

May God bless me with wisdom and give me words to write my answer. In the most basic explanation: God asks us to love one another as He loves us. We are to live our lives according to how Jesus taught us. We are to walk with Jesus. Live as Jesus lived. I often say, 'if Jesus was standing here right now, what would He do (or say)? We are not to judge each other but to help each other. We are to come together often as a community to pray together. To learn the truth and Spiritual strength we receive of attending Mass and of receiving the Holy Eucharist. Prayer is so powerful. Our Mother Mary tells us to 'pray pray pray'. To truly live God's words and teachings within the Holy Bible, and not be flexible with these rules. As Catholics, to follow these rules of the Catholic Church. Which should be taught to each of us through primary school teachers and by the priest at each Mass. To know that the Spirit of God is in ALL of us and to act accordingly out of love. I will love you because God made you and is in you. We are all sinners and I may not agree with, and I do not love, everything you do or the sinful things you do, but I will love you because God asks me to. The teaching of God and our Catholic Faith needs to be more active! Particularly to school age children. They need to grow up to continue living and teaching our faith to others. More teaching at school. More teaching by the parish priest.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Our Church must not be drawn into following the secular crowd. As soon as we do that we may as well cease to exist as we will have become all but pointless. Our history, tradition, liturgy, etc. etc. is all so rich. If anything needs to change, it is the rediscovery of the richness of our tradition. We must stop watering down the

message of our Lord Jesus Christ. I hope our Catholic school system can improve at forming good young Catholics. As a musician, I would advise this can be done through more use of the instrument unique to Church: the organ! Why are we playing guitar and singing half-baked pop songs? Is it to appeal to a younger audience? If so, it isn't working! Do not underestimate our young people! If the seeds of our great musical tradition can be sown in our young people, we will reap the benefits within decades. I also find that in my local parish, there is almost no mention of the sacrament of Confession. The importance of this sacrament is being lost.

I believe God is asking us to step out in faith, be courageous and not be afraid to speak the truth about our faith and what God calls us to but instead invest in finding out the best ways to lovingly call non-Catholics to the truth and to the God that loves them. There are so many Catholics who have left or turned away from the Church because of what they wrongly understand. As Fulton Sheen once said "There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate The Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be." I believe we need a re-evangelisation in the Church. We need to show people the beauty and goodness of our God and what His love and His will offers. We need solid catechesis for Adults and Children in our schools. Our Catholic schools teachers need proper formation as well as opportunities to encounter Christ in their lives. Parents (as first educators) need opportunities to learn more about the faith and support in helping bring their children up in this anti-Catholic world. I believe God wants us to be joyful messengers of the Gospel, because we have so much to be joyful about- but it is hard in today's world. We need encouragement and support from our priests and bishops and we need people to stop being afraid to speak the truth.

God is asking Australia to review the prohibition on a married priesthood. God is asking Australia to recognise the dignity and praise of God in married life. God is asking the Australian Church to give equal status to women in the Church. God is asking the Australian Church to allow married couples to plan their families through contraception, including non-abortive artificial means.

Open our doors to refugee and asylum seekers, Equality for all (regardless of gender, race, age, sexuality, religion), Respect our environment, Respect one another, View one another as sacred humans, not objects, Listen to each other with open minds, Love one another, Bring the Church back to its core messages of acceptance for all.

God is asking far greater humility, including a willingness to listen and stand with people going through difficult times in a non-judgemental way. For far greater openness to the laity, for far greater openness to and listening to and working with other Churches and other faiths. We need to focus on the Gospel as good news for our times, and on the person of Jesus Christ. Instead of trying to tell people what to do, we need to listen to their concerns and their striving, and show how the Gospel responds to their situation. Fundamental to Catholic faith is that its ritual, practices, art, buildings, and way of life reflect the Incarnate, Risen Jesus. We must do all we can to make that visible, stripping away anything that gets in the way of it. We are being asked to be humble and joyful in the hope that the Spirit is with us and present and active in the world.

To offload old traditions within the Catholic Church that are outdated and not relevant to current life. E.g. 'it's a sin not to go to Mass on a Sunday', use of contraception and confession. I can speak to God anytime without having to go thru a middleman. It is my belief that a lot of people

<p>including some priests of the past have used confession to do horrendous things and then get absolution from confession. We need to rebuild respect and trust in the Catholic Church.</p>
<p>I think we are being asked to minister to, care for and make reparation to the victims of Church sexual abuse.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to renew the face of Catholicism and bring us into the 21st century. I believe that we the baptised people of God, the Church, must work to make our Church relevant and welcoming to all and respect and support the traditions of other religions. We must care for the homeless and all disadvantaged people. We must work towards being a caring, searching and loving community. Matthew 11.18 "Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest."</p>
<p>POWER, address the use and abuse of power. Address the SYMBOLS of ecclesial power and authority. 1. Rethink and remove Symbols of autocratic ecclesial medieval power and authority. i.e. Gold croziers to be replaced by simple wooden "shepherds/ pastor stick." Rethink and encourage the removal of gold thread in ALL liturgical garments. Cease now the habit of addressing a bishop as "My Lord". Cease now the habit of kissing the bishop's gold. 2. Remove the power that some PPs still have within local Catholic schools i.e. there to be NO right of PPs to interview candidates for teaching positions in our Catholic primary schools.</p>
<p>I firmly believe that God is asking for : Ø A compassionate Church focussed on caring for its people and the needy, a voice for justice and less about its position of power and privilege in the world ; Ø An open Church prepared to be brave in acknowledging its failings and prepared to make and embrace decisive changes to its leadership structures; Ø Specifically: one to act compassionately and be generous (to a fault) to those who have suffered directly or indirectly of and from the abuse of the clergy, religious and those in the employ of the Church and its institutions; To readily and forthwith abandon the closed leadership structure and replace it with a structure that reflects modern contemporary best practice and embraces the talent and expertise of the men and women of the laity; To welcome women and married persons into the priesthood and approach not with fear driven focus of why but be brave and embrace the notion why not? I accept that that the structures of the Church underpinned by Canon Law do present real issues about how the Church can deal expeditiously the changes necessary to reflect a living Church that embraces a leadership structure based upon merit and not clerical status. However, time is of the essence and courageous decisions must be made now to effectively introduce temporary canonical arrangements that place minimal restrictions upon what leadership structures can be put in place.</p>
<p>I think the Holy Spirit is inviting the Catholic Church in Australia to make caring for our common home—earth the centre of our mission.</p>
<p>To continue the mission of Christ in the modern world, consider the ethnicity and diversity of the faithful to take the opportunity, to listen to each other, to understand the struggle of minority groups and recognise that all people come from the same creation and each is entitled to his own dignity.</p>
<p>We think that our lives should be more centred on God. How do we bring people back to the Church?</p>

Sexual abuse- The Church has been totally negligent in its behaviour, the perpetrators are criminal; the hierarchies' cover up a disgrace, and in my opinion, criminal; the dishonesty and the victim blaming is unspeakable. It has nothing to do with Christian values; it is totally about POWER—the maintenance and abuse of power. Like all sexual deviance, it is about power and nothing else. The Church needs to truly address this issue. Conservatism is NOT a solution. It is emerging that there is a Conservative movement in the Church in Melbourne—wearing blacks and dog collar, every day; preaching ultra conservative views; trying to 'regain' control; being formal with parishioners in my opinion is driving people away from regular Church attendance. As a 60 year old, for the first time in my life, I am seriously considering my place in the Church. Attending Church is NOT giving me any nurture.

The key themes that arose in our small group: Disillusioned, Revolution, Inclusiveness, Forward thinking, Modernisation, Relationships.

To be a humble, inclusive and compassionate Church.

I feel we desperately need education. The general Mass going Catholics don't understand the treasure they have! Why they should attend Mass. We need the Churches' teachings taught to us as young (and older) adults. We need to hear the Mass explained, the beautiful teachings of the Church explained. Catechesis of the Good Shepard should be spread throughout the country!!! A beautiful way of introducing our children to JESUS, it teaches the children about PRAYER and helps them understand the Bible, Gospels, the Mass, and sacraments all from a very young age 3-12 yrs of age. Catechesis of the Good Shepard is the FUTURE of our Church.

... To be totally accepting of the LGBTI Community is those who have been excluded from full sacramental participation in the Catholic. Otherwise it is a contradiction to say, or sing 'All are welcome in this place' when this is not so.

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? We offer the following responses under these headings: The Status Quo: God wants us to address the Status Quo. He calls us out of our slumber to challenge ourselves. He wants our faith to be vibrant and alive rather than us possessing a faith that is excessively ritualised; a faith that simply goes through the motions once a week on a Saturday night or a Sunday morning, a faith that simply stagnates. A Church that welcomes all: God wants our Church to be a place of welcome for all and not just a place of welcome for the virtuous and sanctimonious. God wants us to welcome back the 'sinner, the tax collector and the prostitute'. He wants us to reach out to the marginalised, the divorced and re-married and the broken. The call to be missionary: God calls us to be missionary. He wants us to be apostolic. He wants us to reach out beyond the walls of our Churches. The priesthood of the Laity/Leadership: Through their baptism, God wants all the laity to embrace Vatican II's calling to 'priesthood'. God wants the clergy at all levels to encourage and facilitate the Holy Spirit's calling of the laity to take on leadership roles within the Church. God wants to use the talents of all the baptised (particularly at parish level). He wants the laity to take on all of the various ministries; e.g. educational, liturgy, music, prayer, etc. God is now asking the clergy to either step up or to get out of the way. Far too often, priests at parish level fail to embrace the calling of Vatican II and many, at the risk of stifling God's Holy Spirit hold firm to a 'hierarchical model of Church' that has the parish priest as being above his congregation rather than journeying with his congregation. Parish Councils: God would want for the laity to take up their priestly responsibilities by being members of the parish Councils. Being led by the Holy Spirit, and working within the Church

guidelines, the laity must take charge of their parishes. Council members, in no way shape or form, must be appointed by the parish priest. While parish priests are welcomed to be a member of the parish council, decisions of the parish council do not need to be ratified by the parish priest. The parish priest must serve his people and not be served and must not “wield” power over them.

I believe God is first and foremost, asking the Church clergy to “lead” the people to a clear and thorough understanding of SIN in their daily lives so that they may experience the conviction of conscience; feel sincere sorrow and regret, and desire a change of heart and mind in accordance with Christ. They cannot love Him if they do not know Him and His saving power. This formation is vital for human life to be lived in Christ. It is transformational! When this does not occur, God's children simply cannot grow to be mature Christians and are lost in worldly pursuits, making every excuse to stay in their self-centredness. The Devil's lust for power overwhelms mankind when left so vulnerable to sin due to lack of formation. This tragedy is playing out in our society now and the consequences are slowly destroying all that is good. The rot of deformation begins early in the education system. Teachers have not been taught the foundations of our faith, and simply cannot teach what they do not know. They are programmed to 'reject' Catholic teaching and in my experience, are askance at the suggestion of basics such as reference to catechism and Bible study. The standard response is “we don't do dogma”, and this seems to cover anything that has any depth. The spiritual nature of our Catholic faith is actively obscured by deliberate omissions. We have a supernatural mystical Church that is almost unheard of these days. Those in positions of authority in government, and state services, have financial control over us, and are corrupted by an understanding of the human person that is a false libertarianism and quite destructive. Sin makes us deaf, dumb and blind to God's word and we lose our way. This is why proper formation especially of the young is of the utmost importance. They are the future and we are failing to bring them to a love of God and to trust in Him. The laity have a vital role to play, as our shepherds need their help in rebuilding the Church, in our families and communities. Our paths are interconnected and we can transform this society if we come back to God through Christ and His word guided by our faith, traditions and teachings of our forebears who exemplified that necessary holiness of life. God will act through us if we give ourselves to Him.

- To treat people with respect and dignity. Make the marginalized in our community feel welcomed and accepted despite their failings and criticism of the Church. For our priest to be pastors of their community and not to be caught up with the administrative issues that can be dealt by lay people. For our pastors to be encouraging and focus on scriptures, the sacraments and prayer. For our overseas priest to better understand our way of life, culture. To work on their language difficulties and pronunciation. For our women to be heard and be given leadership positions in the Church and participate in discussions relating to the Church. For our dioceses to show deep compassion towards victims of abuse, support the victim, deal with alleged abuse quickly. For those that have committed serious offences, to be supported and shown care. I would like to see that the Church responds to social issues and injustices as soon as they become news and releases statements immediately. The Church's silence about the way that asylum seekers are treated reflects the way the general community sees it, rather than what we should be doing as a community.

Honesty, and humility.

We are in a fortunate position as a Church at present. We have experienced troubling times and we know that the Church as it stands, is no longer aligned with a contemporary society. We now have the opportunity to rebuild so that we represent a modern society and Church. God is asking us to recognise our responsibilities as Christians to be more inclusive especially of those who are marginalised just as Jesus would ask us to do. We must be bold, open, brave and honest to look at what is important and challenge the status quo. This can only be achieved with a vocal laity and supportive clergy/hierarchy working collaboratively to better our faith journey. Society and the Church must grow and change together.

He is asking for us to find time for our faith, so that we can walk in his shoes. But this is hard to do with so many factors influencing against this. God is asking us to reach out to the disenfranchised. Refugees. Homosexuals. Victims of abuse. Those who have no hope and no faith. We need to do what we can for these people. We also need to be ambassadors of our faith - by walking the talk.

Explanatory note: I am a committed Christian, a confirmed Anglican and lover of the Roman Catholic Church. My wife is a devout Roman Catholic. The health of the Roman Catholic Church is vital to all Australian followers of Christ. This is why I am making this submission. To listen to the laity and to give more power to the laity in Church structures. To help break down the barriers between mainstream Churches of other denominations so that we are all "one in Christ". To make significant, not token, material sacrifices to redress the wrongs inflicted on innocent children by priests and others associated within the Church, This will help to partly redress the wrongs of decades of a culture of abuse within the Church. To allow women to enter the priest hood. There is no doubt that some of the ugly distortions that have been a part of the lived Christian Catholic faith in the past decades would not have happened if there had been a priesthood for women. Jose Pergola's book "Jesus: an historical approximation" gives ample evidence that Jesus was radical in his honouring of women in 1st century Judea—that he "broke" all the prevailing rules about how women should be treated. It is time that the Church followed Christ's lead. The culture of "cover up" and secrecy should cease. It happens at a seemingly innocuous level. I go to Mass with my wife often and receive communion because I have been encouraged to by both her, Roman Catholic priests and those in religious orders at various times. They don't wish to exclude me, but the doctrines of the Church do. They have to "cover up" the fact that they have administered communion to a non-Catholic Christian. My wife who is divorced, attends Mass. (She was advised that she would be granted an annulment but declined because of the hurt it would bring her five children). In confession, she told a priest that she receives communion. He told her she shouldn't do that. When she challenged him, asking whether Jesus would have given his answer, he relented saying; "Alright, receive communion but don't tell anyone". Cover-up, secrecy! Briefly, celibacy in the priesthood. It is time for it to be relaxed! Peter and most of Jesus' disciples weren't celibate. The Church of all denominations in Australia must identify with the excluded, the oppressed, the powerless, the vulnerable, the poor, the sick. This was the hallmark of Jesus' ministry: "thy kingdom come on earth ...." This is the visible sign of God's love for his people. It must stand up against governments and multinationals that oppress. It must take a stronger stand on asylum seekers.

To listen to the words and actions of Jesus and reflect on what he would want us to do. And ask ourselves what would Jesus say about the Catholic Church in Australia in 2019. Did he expect his followers to stay rooted in the 1st Century or progress in accord with the changes that have

occurred since then? Would he expect the clergy to be male only? Would he expect clergy to not marry? Would he exclude over 50% of the Church's laity from being ordained? Would he agree with the Church's current power structure? Would he exclude LGBTI people from membership?

If God is love and truth, then we have no greater example for us as Catholics is to make Jesus our friend and live a life according to his in the Gospels, NT and the tradition of the Church. The Church in Australia has been attacked by people who have a limited understanding of the dignity of the human person. Protecting and teaching about true human freedom in Jesus Christ is the role of all Catholics. The Church's principled stand against same sex marriage and protecting the sanctity of marriage was admirable and should be encouraged strongly in the future. One state in Australia has decided after a close vote to embark on state sponsored suicide program (assisted dying) or euthanasia. All Catholics have duty to resist this legislation and implementation from July 2019 onwards. The widespread and unthinking acceptance of the principle of autonomy and the insidious movement of moral relativism in our Australian society is a real danger for our legal and moral attempts to protect the dignity of the human person in Australia, Other areas of concern for Australian Catholic Church: I belong to lay Benedictine prayer group as a Benedictine oblate (centred on the Benedictine Sisters of Jamberoo) that meets once a month to pray, share, discuss material relevant to the Rule of St Benedict. Being a mystic in the daily is a spiritual pathway for all Catholics. Lay people and women need to be encouraged to take leadership roles. Women need to be encouraged to take formal ministerial roles—including priestly roles. Clericalism (and its associated institutional power) that now plagues the Church has been found to be destructive for children and the vulnerable and it needs to be combated with greater lay participation in formal leadership roles. Women need greater participation in formal leadership roles. The sacrament of priesthood needs to re-examined and celibacy needs to be abolished or at least made an option for priests. Decades of abuse by priests and religious attest to the failure of formation processes over a long period of time. We have a deepening housing crisis in this country and attempts to restructure our tax system to eliminate tax benefits for investors, negative gearing and capital gains tax, is a way to make the housing market affordable and accessible for young people and their families. The housing market needs to be affordable for people trying to buy their first home. The unplanned forests of townhouses and apartment blocks sprawled across our city metropolitan areas are not going to make housing affordable. The Catholic Church needs to continue to speak out for all marginalised people—especially the homeless, Indigenous Australians and asylum seekers seeking to find a home in Australia. The Catholic Church needs to continue to advocate for Catholic schools that are the cornerstones of our faith and Church in Australia. Affordable Catholic education supported by the Commonwealth and States need to guarantee funding for families.

God is asking of Australia what God has always asked of humanity as per the teachings and lived example of the way the Lord Christ lived his life, i.e. love the Lord God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself. Lord Jesus reserved His greatest criticism for those in power who oppressed others to retain their power, wealth and power structures. He had compassion for outcasts, he was inclusive and so should we be. He did not shy away from speaking truth to power. The obvious expressions of this in Australia—welcome Asylum seekers, ensure that we uphold the human rights of the vulnerable, the poor, homeless, mentally ill, the frail, the elderly,

children and the disabled. Provide access to the necessities of life for all: food shelter, education, and healthcare.
Acceptance and inclusion of those who are not accepted: change marriage laws: accept gays and lesbians: allow women to participate at all levels of the Church: Mass and homilies to be more relevant: more Bible explanation not preaching at people: Mass needs to have changes made around the Eucharist.
I'm not certain God is asking us ... I wonder if He's telling us ... telling us to get back to tried and true teachings of the Catholic faith, not tweaked around the edges. Things have been 'modified' since Vatican II, and the results have been less than spectacular in terms of dwindling numbers, ignorance of the real teachings of the faith, reluctance to adhere to the hard teachings.
Peace and happiness, faith-filled people all getting along.
Importance of the role of the discernment process in every part of the Plenary Council process including the actual Plenary Council. This requires preparation so that the good spirit prevails. Story of Church choir -> example of spirit of community all volunteers Warmth all celebrate together @ Christmas Question: If each Mass could have this community choir/music, wouldn't that be wonderful interdenominational Easter Stations of the Cross and Easter meals ->. Importance of community worshipping together in a public space, catechism for children and adults on Sunday, followed by Mass Learn from Protestants give more money (percentage of income compulsory. Youth ministries and Sunday school programs. More vibrant music ministries. Most important duty of spiritual director is to connect—to invite the directed to connect with themselves, with God and with others. Invite lay women to create more connections and they can in turn invite priests to build connections, as most priests tend to analyse rather than build connections. Need to elevate women and value their different gifts more, and a more just position and not as to "bone of man". Helping and welcoming refugees when they are first released from detention in without judging them, their religion or history. St Augustine's organised this. Better than just vouchers, as it builds connections between refugees and others.
What do I think God is asking of us in Australia: 1. Humility: much humility—in the face of the past transgressions that Church leaders in Australia covered up. Much humility and continued acknowledgement when the topic is brought up. I understand that the Church is aware and conscious of this all. Yet this subject is going to be around for some time, sadly, all the Churches people be it clergy or lay people need to be prepared for this acknowledgement, how to deal with it and what to say. Continued acknowledgement will then enable a line to drawn and we can go forward with healing and a strong message of renewed hope. 2. Actions - faith by actions. I think God is telling us that right now, the Church in Australia can heal by addressing current issues with real tangible action. As an illustration of this could be the Creation of centres for domestic violence - a section which educates schools on how and why it occurs. Education enables Prevention for future generations. Creation of 'transitional safe houses" for women or men seeking to leave domestic violent situations. Giving out literature/media presence so that it victims can find assistance. A section could provide legal aid. A section could provide spiritual guidance and healing. Trail blazing is what this would be. Changing one life, one family at a time. As a Church being known for creating change. 3. Spirituality/meditation centres— these exist in our Church - creating awareness of these facilities and encouraging the utilisation of these centres to provide spiritual reflection time. 4. Advocate spirituality as being an important "ingredient" in

life. Many of the current generation are growing up with non-Church going parents. Are parents aware that in doing so they in fact not providing their children with a choice in relation to faith. Children are growing up "faithless". Is it possible that some people are no longer drawn to the traditional Mass service, which so many of us love? Would the facilitation of a "meditative lay service" which includes gratitude, meditation, story and some prayer be a way to engage people who don't appreciate the traditional Mass. Children and parents could be interlinked in faith journey, by creating monthly children Masses on Sundays? With children participation, parents will also attend. 6. Simply be Christlike— Jesus accepted everyone. To illustrate, as Christians, why are we excluding divorced people who remarry from communion? Why do we exclude visitors from communion? Seems so unchristian ...As a Church, we are called to be inclusive. As God's people, we know that he is a forgiving and loving God. We also know that Jesus whilst inclusive and mingling with "sinners and outcasts" wasn't afraid to voice his anger when required. As a Church, God is also calling us to do that. We as a Church, need to have a strong clear voice and not be afraid to express our anger, such as, when morality is lost or social justice is compromised.

To listen to God and to one another, to pray together, to discuss, and then to decide.

To love all people, as God has loved us. To care for all of God's creation: people, animals, natural environment. To be a shining light in our country. To be inclusive. To have a relationship with God. To turn towards the Trinity and review outdated Church doctrine.

Greater respect for the Holy Eucharist in receiving Holy Communion. Receiving the Eucharist on the tongue only. Priests should be teaching the doctrines of the faith from the pulpit. Our schools have failed for the most part. There is no room for political correctness when teaching the faith. Every Church should have one Mass said in Latin in the traditional form. It is not enough for us to attend Mass on Sunday. Each parish must develop an evangelical arm to reach out to people by way of a lay apostolate. Pray for our Jewish cousins so that they can enter the barque of Jesus.

To stand together to do what is best for the planet and therefore the future of the human race. To be fully inclusive and lead by example in regards to equality of all people. To look past the rules of yesterday, so as to find the way to reach the people of today.

To seek Him by allowing Him to speak to our hearts daily. It involves us having the discipline to allow quiet moments alone or in a group, reading scriptures, prayer and devotion.

LIVING GOSPEL VALUES. Living Gospel values identified as a primary issue. The top five values elucidated were: • Unconditional love of God and love of others. • Actions showing we are children of God • Recognising our equality and treating all equally • Forgiveness • Acting with compassion PRAYER was recognised as a vital part of our lives—taking time to slow down, be with Jesus praying for all and praying as a family. SOCIAL JUSTICE Being more pastoral, inclusive and accepting. A welcoming community, accepting ALL and celebrating ALL, the LGBTIQ Community, Refugees, Catholics married outside the Church. A call to works of mercy: the homeless poor, elderly, outcast, refugees—helping all in need. Advocating for Social Justice—speaking the truth and seeking justice, hearing the voices of ignored communities. Involvement in climate change - we are all caretakers of the environment. INCLUSIVENESS An inclusive and welcoming Church. Being at peace and engaging in our multicultural and diverse society, not judging or discriminating, accepting the LGBTIQ community and work towards acceptance of gay marriage

(two respondents saw this as an eroding of traditional values.) Be open to ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, focusing on what we have in common, moving forward, not backwards, and meeting the needs in 2019. ROLE OF THE LAITY The increased role of the laity. That all, clergy, religious and laity work to bring about change. Opportunities for Adult Faith Formation, involvement in decision-making and equality in liturgy leadership. The role of women. The need for more women in decision-making roles, training of seminarians and the inclusion of women at ALL levels of the Church (six respondents requesting consideration / introduction of ordination of women.) CLERGY The need for married clergy, the abolition of compulsory celibacy (one saw the retention of celibacy as vital) and the abolition of clericalism. Reconsider bringing priests from overseas. LITURGY Changes with a spirituality that touches people's lives, creating new ways of delivery: welcome on arrival, homilies relevant to everyday life, being more liberal at weddings and funerals regarding music and photo presentations, having liturgies meet the needs of different nationalities, nation's first peoples. The reintroduction of the second and third rite of reconciliation. HIERARCHY To have compassion and justice as strived for by individuals, recognising the current male dominated functioning of the Church. The Church must look to the future and acknowledge the mistakes of the past. Child abuse Acknowledge and take ownership of the abuses that have occurred, listening, being compassionate, identifying how we can have reconciliation and ensuring abusers are brought to justice. YOUTHS Parents actively involved in bringing children to Sunday Mass. More youths focused liturgies, encouraging youths to be part of the Church. Being less judgmental about their lifestyle.

The word that came to my mind in the listening and dialogue process was 'humility'. I think God is calling us to become a more humble Catholic community. Over the last few years, we've had good reasons for humility - we've proven to be human and fallible as any other institution. Not just our leaders, who have let us down in their responses to challenges the Church is facing, but also we in the broader Catholic community, who have failed to show leadership and reach out to those hurt and disaffected by the Church ourselves. Who among us can say that we have done everything we can to be loving and welcoming to abuse survivors? Who among us can say that we've stood alongside fellow members of the Catholic community marginalised by teachings on divorce and remarriage, or those who have felt torn because of same sex attraction? The disaffection of so many in the Catholic community should be a challenge to us all - how can we better embody and give witness to Christ's love today? A word that's similar to 'humility' that has emerged in this process to me is 'humiliation'. It's a good word that describes what is happening in the Church today. Our lack of humility as a community has resulted in humility being imposed on us—a process of humiliation that is continuing. Humiliation is also a dehumanising process. It's a lessening of dignity, imposed by force on others. It's also something that others have felt the Church has imposed on them when they have failed to live up to what seems stringent and impossible standards imposed on them by unsympathetic clerics. A form of humility, then, is being imposed on the Church, often by people who have themselves felt humiliated in the past. I do think the Holy Spirit is present in that process. But I don't think God wants us simply to have the humility imposed on us. We have been put through this process because we weren't humble enough in listening to, and walking with, those who felt humiliated. The answer then is for us to become humble in the way we interact with people as Catholics. Archbishop Mark Coleridge recently posted a series of tweets that to me gets to the heart of what it means to be a humble community (here: <https://twitter.com/ArchbishopMark/status/1094541211254190082>). We have

to be able to ask questions, and answer 'I don't know', as Catholics. We have to understand ourselves both as gifted and loved by God, and also human and limited in our ability to understand what that means. We have to be open to conversation, particularly with people who have different perspectives on God's love and gifts. A more open, more humble Church will lead us closer to God, not away from God. Karl Rahner wrote that the Catholic of the 21st Century will be a mystic or they will not exist. The mystic sees themselves surrounded by mystery, possessing only a small and limited insight into that mystery, but drawn to understanding it further. That's what I think God is asking of us today, to be humble mystics.

Greater empowerment to women in the Church is needed. Too often decision-making in the Catholic Church does not consider the voice of women on important ecclesial issues. Greater consideration of the permanent deacons recommended. Having married permanent deacons will allow greater participation by laity. Church needs to be accountable and transparent especially in response to child sexual abuse scandal. Real solutions to victims in terms of financial compensation, not just words of sorrow or prayers. Reform by Vatican Council II on role and participation of laity also needs to continue. This extends to allowing a vibrant Church model for young people. Young people will state they have a spiritual centre but not a religious link. The role of parish in the life of families has decreased significantly. Church needs to return to model of community and belonging, not just connection via religious observance.

We are called to be people who give witness to the love and mercy of God for all by our living of Gospel values. We are to be welcoming, open, honest and inclusive, following the example of Jesus, not just in words but by our actions. We are called to especially reach out to the poor, lonely underprivileged and marginalised. By being humble, living simply and avoiding all forms of legalism and superiority, we will truly become a community of love, compassion and healing for our world.

To believe in a superior being or authority which we call God. To live our lives being fair and kind to all other people.

He is asking us to move with the times. Society is changing at a rapid rate and the Church is a very fixed institution which is good but it needs an ability to have some flexibility to adapt quickly to changes so that people can still practice their faith despite changes in society. How do we manage sport attendance at the expense of Mass attendance on a Sunday?

See attached file for details. Initially we prayed and listened expectantly and these were the topics which were raised: 1. Turn back to Me (repent). Acknowledge my presence and sovereignty. Acknowledge Jesus as head of the Church. Remember we are all members of His body and He (Jesus) is head. 2. The Catholic Church to become more focussed on the simple basic teachings of Jesus 3. Love exhibited through people and a sense of community. Everyone needs to hear the message of Jesus in everyday language. 4. Parishes to develop prayer ministry teams and to make prayer a personal encounter with Jesus, more than ritual. 5. Australia needs God's love for peace in every home and the Church. God will give us peace in Australia. 6. As Church and individuals, we can present a challenge to politicians to act in an ethical manner, especially when answering questions. 7. Married priests 8. Remove the seal of secrecy or silence from the confessional if a serious breach of common law occurs (i.e. sexual abuse of children for example) 9. Open the door of the Church, of our country, of our homes and of our hearts to refugees and asylum seekers, to

<p>those who have been disenfranchised, to the divorced and/or remarried (or a Catholic person who has married a divorced person).</p>
<p>To have the language used in our liturgies, especially the Mass, to be changed to everyday Australian English so that it is more "user friendly", especially to our younger people.</p>
<p>The Church and its members should be practical, that is, homilies should provide practical advice for life. Members of the parish need to be encouraged to demonstrate Christianity by actions, not just by attending Mass on a Sunday. There are numerous areas in the community that need kindness, charity and support. Small groups can find their special niche which uses God's gifts to that particular group of individuals possess.</p>
<p>A return to reverence and silence in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, from which all graces flow. A revival of catechetical in parishes and in our schools, so many do not have basic knowledge of the truths of the Catholic faith. Setting up of Eucharistic Adoration in parishes, which always brings blessings, and the preaching of the Gospel without fear or favour, especially in areas of sexual morality regarding the sanctity of marriage, artificial contraception, and abortion. For this, we pray for holy and courageous priests, and active encouragement of the laity to pray for them. Thank you.</p>
<p>Increase devotion to Mother Mary. Encourage people to pray the Rosary daily. Attend Holy Mass as many as possible. Do this in parish to parish basis.</p>
<p>As I prayed on this question over several weeks and months, the words I felt in my heart time and again were: open the door. At first, I thought this was referring to the asylum seekers and refugees applying for residency in Australia. But as I prayed and reflected, I realised the command was much more directed towards the Church and individuals of faith. The presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit in every person of faith is a wonderful gift to all. The presence of Jesus in the Eucharist in every tabernacle and at every service is also a wonderful gift. In one prayer session, I came to realise that even the smallest sliver of a consecrated host or a drop of consecrated wine, being the body and blood of Christ, brings healing, grace and forgiveness to those who receive Him. And further to that, those believers who receive Jesus in the Eucharist can be sources of light and truth to all those they encounter in everyday life. The command to OPEN the DOOR is a call to enable MANY people to receive the grace that is present within our Church. For far too long there have been gatekeepers, denying some people of faith the sacraments. And worse than that, the behaviour of those who profess to be keepers of the faith (perhaps guardians would be a better term) has driven away good people, children and those who most need Jesus in their life. Open the door—of the Church, of our country, of our homes and of our hearts—to refugees and asylum seekers, to those who have been disenfranchised, to the divorced and/or remarried (or a Catholic person who has married a divorced person), to those seeking God or higher truths.</p>
<p>I was touched by Micah 6: 8 when I prayed for inspiration on this Q" to live justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God". In today's world, God is asking us, his Church to be less judgemental and more understanding and accepting of others who may not believe or behave like we are. To be more than this - to be welcoming of others who are different. To open our minds and our hearts. To go back to Jesus' word. Jesus had time for those that society labelled</p>

"unworthy". We need to get off our high horse and embrace his message of love, mercy, forgiveness.

In a Church where some do not feel included or heard or do not feel valued, we believe that God is asking us to give voice to all, to recognise the value of each and every person. This includes all community members being invited and encouraged to participate in the reception of the sacraments, especially participating fully in the Eucharist by receiving being able to receive Communion. This inclusion should / must be extended particularly those members of our communities who are divorced and re-married. We believe we are being asked to be involved in decision-making processes both at the local level and at a wider Church level. At the local level, we should all have a voice and have the opportunity to be included in decision-making, e.g. parish councils, groups such as liturgy planning, finance committees, etc. We should also be offered the opportunity to have a voice in making decisions at a diocesan level. More people being involved in decision-making and being able to take up their responsibilities to be full and participating members of a community fulfil the call that was made at our baptism. Decision-making and roles of leadership must be extended to women who make up at least, if not more than half of our parishioners. In a society where some people do not feel safe, our communities should be so welcoming that people can find at least one space where they do feel safe.

To remain faithful to the Gospel and teachings of the Catholic Church, especially in regards to sanctity of life, sexuality, contraception. To spread the Good News of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

God as always is asking us to reach out and accept everyone. We need to be more openly welcoming to displaced persons, abused people, homeless, divorced and gay and lesbian. We should help people whenever we can and let them participate in our Church to a full extent. We need to show all people that we live by God's love. We live a Christian life of honesty and integrity. For those survivors of clerical abuse, ongoing professional support should be offered without question.

CHANGE is needed. This must involve some major changes not just tinkering with some easy and somewhat minor issues. The Australian Church is at a crossroad, if it doesn't make significant changes it will become increasingly irrelevant to the Australian community and there is the danger that the flow of people who have already decided they will no longer be active Catholics will become a flood. The sexual abuse revelations have contributed to this situation, and particularly when it exposed the extent to which cover-ups had occurred. Structural changes are critical. The institutional Church can no longer be dominated by male clerics. It is no longer acceptable that lay people have the limited role they currently have at a parish, diocesan and national level, where this role is consultative only and decision-making is in the hands of parish priests and bishops / archbishops, etc. And of course, it is also critical that women be involved in all this; the image of a male dominated Church has to change. In addition to this, there is a need for far more transparency and accountability than currently exists. The "Church" does not belong to clerics; the "Church" should be the "People of God" as was so well described at the Vatican II Council. We should be working together and sharing responsibility for decisions about Our Church.

That we heed all the warning signs indicative of a Church body falling apart, especially the volume of previously devoted and committed Catholics leaving the Church.

<p>To behave more like Jesus and less like a large, male-run institution that doesn't listen to the laity.</p>
<p>Australia is traditionally an egalitarian society and I think this should be reflected in our Church. There should be far less emphasis on hierarchical power and more stress on democratic processes. Women make up at least 50% of the Church's population, but are vetoed from full political participation. In the land of the 'fair go' this is a complete anachronism. The latest scandal being endured by our Church and its members, can be, I think, in no small measure attributed to the misuse of power, which seems to be enshrined in the traditional European Medieval clerical power structures. I do not think the Holy Spirit would endorse this corruption. We need to be far more open and transparent, so that secrecy cannot be employed to the detriment of our community. Clearly, vocational callings are dwindling, so the Church needs to examine the restrictions it employs. Perhaps being open to fixed term contracts, rather than a life-time commitment, removing celibacy and gender restrictions could be considered. I know this is a matter of economics, but I think that providing more scholarships or grants to pay for education for the underprivileged— without any stigma— is also important. Social justice is something that our Church strives towards. I believe much more emphasis needs to be placed on the Church's achievements in this area, rather than grandiose statements about submitting to the Church's teachings and traditions.</p>
<p>God is asking us .... To stop and think and focus and act on 'What would Jesus do?' and relate this to our society—to divorced people, to gay/homosexual and inter-gender people, to abused children, to abused women and men (no matter where the abuse occurred). We are a broken society and we need to refocus our mission here on earth--'to help each other on our journey'. We are losing our young and middle-aged people from the parish Churches—the children may attend for the sacraments to secure entry to high schools, but then we don't see them again. Sadly, there is little to attract the youths to our Church anymore. Certainly, the abuse in the Church has done untold damage to victims and their families and friends, to good priests and to Catholics generally. We need more people like Fr Kevin Dillon. God wants us to live the Beatitudes with our heart and soul and mind.</p>
<p>I believe that constant and continued formation of our priests is so vital for their spiritual growth and faithfulness to their vocation. We need holy priests, holiness is the remedy.</p>
<p>That those who have the responsibility of determining and supporting the laws of the Church around homosexuality, revisit those laws by applying courage and humility to their endeavours. Such courage and humility requires that they engage in and with the gay community to open up their hearts and minds to what God is telling us about his creation in those who are homosexual.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need to recognise that the role of the Church in the community has changed, it is no longer the centre of people's social lives, fewer people are identifying as Catholic, need to be more engaging and relevant to young people and others in the community (e.g. Pope's suggestion to be vegan during Lent, gives meaning to the abstinence, draws on concern for environment and sustainability)</li> <li>• be more welcoming to all people (more progressive on LGBTQ, role of women)</li> <li>• more focus on Social Justice and community work, less spending on upkeep of Church assets.</li> </ul>
<p>Our Church needs to follow Jesus as he walked around his community. He showed us how to love your neighbour, and care for each other. A Church that say come as you are, that how I love you. A Church that respect all people whatever level of faith there at within our own Church and the</p>

boarder community. Jesus became man to show us how to build the community of the Kingdom here on earth. Not an institution with 1752 Canon laws and code. We need to move beyond Christianity as a religious institution and toward the humanness of the Gospel message. Love of God and love for our neighbour through Worship and Service.

We need to see leaders who are prepared to live what they are demanding the laity should do.

1. Listening to the spirit of truth in silence, gospel to each other in the sense of peace. 2. Pray more, believe more, try and accept changes. 3. Prepare to suffer for the faith, to be faithful to God and give first priority to him always and everything else will come. 4. Jesus is our centre. We need to get back to real gospel values, acceptance and lack of judgementality. 5. Priests to inspire us to celebrate the Eucharist with joy and enthusiasm. 6. Priests to speak to people on their terms about their challenges and how they can deal with these. 7. Transparency, honesty, ownership responsibility 8. Be open and practice, lead by example—that is a failing of the Church. 9. How is the Church going to bring and reconnect lapsed Catholics? 10. Foundation of truth and justice to be promoted by Church. 11. Confusion exists—develop strong sense of identification, individually, socially, Church, Jesus is living in our hearts—always go back to that foundation. 12. Acknowledge the presence of Jesus, pray, believe there is hell and critical thing applies to us. 13. Accept everybody regardless how and what they are. 14. More about prayers, Masses. 15. Sincerely apologise to everyone including God (in the form of Reconciliation).

Be kind to others, care for the poor, the helpless.

Our Catholic priests to return to the tradition of their vocation. 1. Teach according to Apostolic tradition and Magisterium of the Church. Teach the Catechism! 2. Sanctifying—promote Confession and make it available. Celebrate Mass according to the Canon and follow the rubrics. Don't promote secular ideologies and practices. Promote and facilitate pious Mass attendance. 3. Governance—promote/endorse the teachings of the Church for the salvation of souls.

To stand up for human rights by: Supporting asylum seekers; Working to eliminate poverty by supporting workers in their fight for fair wages and safe working conditions; Supporting a tax policy that is fair so that there is money to support health, education, care for vulnerable people; Speak out against racism; Contribute to actions to save the environment and take action to address global warming. Be supportive of the Indigenous peoples struggle for their rights and for reconciliation. Reach out to minority groups.

A complete renewal/reformation of masculine, hierarchical institutional Church. The hierarchy to be accountable to the people. A renewal of a spirituality based on an incarnational, gendered Christianity. Mary said Yes to the Holy Spirit. She is of the earth and so are we. The Church is exclusively masculine. It needs a feminine balance. Mary conceived, carried, birthed and nurtured Jesus. What better model for the environmental challenges we face? She was not a surrogate or a gestational carrier. We should look to Celtic Christianity and our own Indigenous spirituality as a model. We need a transformative spirituality from the community, not imposed by disconnected men. Whilst we should be ever responsive to the wider, secular world, we should not be enslaved by the post-modernist social constructionism which swamps the media and politics.

I think that the Church would be better able to conduct its ministry if priests were free to marry if they wished. The burden of ministry for a priest could be greatly alleviated if they had a wife and family to support them in their ministry.

I think that what God is asking of us has not changed since Christ's Final Commission to His Apostles around two thousand years ago: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). The problem for the Church in Australia is that this is not being done, not even to members of its own flock. Speaking personally, I went to a Catholic school and had always been involved in Church events in my youth. However, I found as an adult that I did not have nearly enough sound formation and catechesis to be able to stand up as an adult Catholic in the world. In fact, I have had to make huge sacrifices to fill this void of knowledge and formation, which has affected my career and my personal relationships. Of course, I am prepared to make such sacrifices for the Faith; but how many Catholic souls of my generation (Gen X) have already gone to their particular judgement or have made all their main life decisions without even knowing properly the full truth and beauty of the Catholic Faith! Moreover, in my opinion, the scandals that the Church currently finds Herself in are, in fact, consequences of the failure to adequately preach the Catholic Faith to all nations—Australia in particular—as without the Catholic Faith, the Church sadly becomes a pointless, apologetic and inward-looking bureaucracy. So what should be done? Firstly, the Catholic Church in Australia needs to recognise that there is an enormous problem of whole generations of Catholics in this country who have had poor catechesis and formation. Secondly, this problem needs to be addressed by both prayer and action to supply for these decades of neglect. And thirdly, the Church then needs to fulfil Our Lord's Commission of going out to baptise and teach all nations, i.e. the non-Catholic world. It is only when the first two of these steps have been taken that the Church can actually fulfil Our Lord's Final Commission.

To live and lead by example and to be a witness to the Word of God. To connect to our historical culture of the Indigenous culture and authentically honour their contributions. To listen to the youth and respond to the challenges they face in everyday living.

To help the Church be more relevant in today's world and to determine how we can inspire others, especially young people, to practise and celebrate our faith. To be more accepting and tolerant and less rigid in our thinking in this constantly evolving world. To go back to basics and involve the "ordinary" people, including women, in the Church community.

The reputation of the Church has been stained by the abuse of minors and of women to a degree that had not been imagined. We are being called to re-imagine what it means to be a Catholic, universal Church. The Australian bishops must hear the clamour of the faithful for serious, root and branch reform. This must involve re-asserting forgotten traditions of the involvement of women in the Church in the time of the New Testament.

God is asking Australia to stay strong and committed to being Christ-like in the face of extreme adversity as we face a critical situation with the conviction of George Pell. There must be a steadfast commitment to upholding gospel values notwithstanding the injury felt by all Catholics at this time.

<p>God is asking us to know, love and serve Him here on earth and to be happy with Him forever.</p>
<p>God asks us to address the problems emanating from clericalism and leadership structure.</p>
<p>To be Christ-like and live our Catholic message.</p>
<p>God is asking us to assist today in the 21st Century to better modify the institutional Church so as to meet and hear the needs and expectations of today's Catholic's in a changing world.</p>
<p>I am the wife of a devout Catholic. My husband and I regularly attend Mass in our local parish along with our two children. I am Greek Orthodox as are our children. So on every alternate Sunday, we attend a Greek Orthodox liturgy. We like to think that we have an ecumenical view of our faith and that both traditions should be respected. I like to think God wishes for the Catholic Church and other Churches to be more inclined to work together to achieve good and showcase God's love.</p>
<p>The formation of the Plenary Council indicates Pope Francis' recognition for the need to revitalise and re-evaluate our faith and our Church, to preserve its future. I believe God is asking us to renew and revitalise Christianity and bring it and our Church into the new millennium. He is asking us to work together collaboratively as a community. Both ordained and laity, both young and old, the righteous and those who have lost their way, to find a common ground from which to begin. Over time, more and more Christians have turned away, or are turning away, from the Church and their faith. The attributing factors are people's indifference to faith and religion, the unpopular image that faith portrays, especially among the young, and more recently and most significantly the exposure of abuse against our children. There is a fourth factor I feel and that is a lack of understanding of God and faith. Many perceive having faith in God as a guarantee that there will be no suffering and hardship in their lives, and when that does not come to fruition they question His existence and more often than not, they turn away from Him and the Church. God is asking us to find a way to bring back the lost, inspire the new and build a future for our faith and our Church. When things aren't going according to plan and a new strategy is in order, the rule of thumb is to go back to the old drawing board. A phrase by a Peter Arno originating back in 1941. God is asking us to start again. Format a new strategy. Be open to new ways new approaches and have the courage and conviction to navigate new paths as a way forward.</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us how as Catholics we as a religious group can remain relevant as an organisation going forward. Our modern world has so many challenges and there are many distractions pulling people away from the Church. I believe that God is asking us to examine our current structures and to ask many questions relating to the delivery of our services given that some parish priests are servicing more than one parish, the possibility of female priests or married priests of either gender, and perhaps an increased role for devout lay Catholics. Given the sexual abuses against children that have taken place by members of the clergy in Australia and other countries, I believe that God is asking Catholic leaders to never undertake cover ups of this nature again and to protect the vulnerable and acknowledge the failings of its leaders in this area.</p>
<p>At this time in Australia, I believe that God is asking us the same thing that He has asked of all His children from the beginning of time: to know Him and to love Him. In the current secular context of Australia, it is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to truly understand who God is,</p>

due to the plethora of voices around them that constantly lure them into thinking that this life is all there is, and that all that is required of them is to 'be a good person' in whatever way they justify it. But these ideas are completely false and incompatible with the end for which we have been created: to be with God in Heaven for all eternity. In order to recover this understanding of the truth, we need to focus on the main place where confusion is being sown: in the Catholic schools. With more training for teachers of Religious Education, and more availability of priests and the sacraments—especially Confession—at Catholic schools, young people will at least have the opportunity to know and love the God who has destined them for Himself from all eternity. In a time where there is so much ambiguity about morality and the meaning of life, we need to respond with a more thorough formation of the rich truths of the Faith. In a time where young people are becoming complacent, we need to challenge them to strive for the perfection in love, to which they are called. And this requires nothing other than the sacraments that God gives us through His Church - in order to give nourishment to the soul for the spiritual battle - and a deeper study of the Faith, because we cannot love what we don't know. The Catholic schools are the best place in which to focus this, since it is these schools that are the hub of Catholics that will lead our future, and spread the faith to others.

We are here to express our belief in God and live the life of the Trinity within our Catholic faith as expressed in the Catholic Catechism: 'Father ... that we may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.' John 17:3. 'God our Saviour desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' 1 Tim 2:3-4. 'There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.' Acts 4:12.

To pray for priests and support them as much as possible at this time—we need them!

Change certain Catholic traditions that once served a purpose but are not in touch with today's day and age (e.g. priest celibacy, acceptance and inclusion of minorities such as LGBTI, stronger voice on issues the Church is dealing with such as paedophilia). The Church needs to clearly understand the essence of its core values and modernise traditions and messaging to suit the 21st century.

To light a pathway of lay leadership in the Church (live the values) To have vision To have courage to challenge conventional structures To be involved Treat others as you want to be treated Keep families and children engaged in their faith by enabling them "to lead" in their faith Develop new traditions and ways of living the faith Be Inclusive: Our group thinks God is asking us to - Take opportunities as educators to make connections with children who have challenges. Don't get caught up in the busyness of life. Work with children proactively. Express tension of what is accepted in society and what the Church accepts as right in its teachings. Community and belonging—Using positive experiences / good things within the Church and work on ways on how to continue to build on them. The apartheid marches in NZ driven by local Church communities—helped to break down barriers in time

Get back to basics. Jesus' message is simple. 'Love one another as I have loved you.' Keep the message simple, clear and concise. Let Australian people see the Catholic Church as a loving, caring and human community—committed to spreading the message of Jesus - LOVE!

The active and valued participation of the laity in Church governance and in the liturgy. This includes enhanced roles in parish decisions as to finances, way forward and the liturgy. This would include some roles not essential to the priest, e.g. the whole congregation recite the printed prayer before the readings. At present, most people see the Mass as a priest Mass that they may follow as he READS it to them. Some find little benefit from the Mass and many who have stopped attending have found it boring even. Apart from sermon time, the priest has little eye contact with the people and much of the Canon is often read through with little if any change of tone or emphasis. To me, this takes away from the importance of the Consecration - which is certainly the province of the priest. I believe the Mass to be a celebration and my experience with youth tells me that they for the most part do not find that to be the case, even if they have an idea of what the Mass is really about. In my own case, I have the Mass as central to my life and make the effort to attend daily if possible. We hear a lot about vocations but the emphasis seems to be on priests, brothers and nuns. There is the need for these but they will have no role to play without families. My impression is that if you cannot measure up to the former, then a second rate option is provided for in the latter. The undefined group called the CHURCH teaches that not to have the sacrament is a sin if persons live together. That may be true but an emphasis on the love of God being reflected in the sacrament may be more fruitful. Modern pressures on people and better life expectancy make large families a real challenge so people make decisions in line with their circumstances. The emphasis on these being made in the context of their loving relation with God may move them better than a rule about contraception being put as the only solution to the problem. The latter approach is questioned by good people and the paedophilia situation does not help. In times gone by, the Father would bless the family in some cases but many people seem to think that only the Clergy can give a true blessing and I think that is not right. The Pope has condemned clericalism as a blight on the Church. It is a good move that "Sister said" or "Brother Said" seem to have less effect today. That "Father said" might be reduced and people encouraged to relate directly in conscience to a loving relationship with God in making their decisions would be a good move. There is much that the members of the Church at all levels have done that is good. We would be kidding ourselves however if we do not face what we can do to help people stay or return even if some moves seem extreme. We are by nature rather slow to accept change or the need for change. God bless the effort that has been begun.

God is asking us to be more inclusive by making people feel welcome to celebrate their faith at church irrespective of gender, age, sexuality, nationality, marital status, etc .... Overall, people often move away from the Church due to change in personal circumstances which they did not choose, but which makes it hard to fully practise their faith. For example, nobody who gets married ever intends for a breakdown to occur but when it does through no fault of a spouse they find it impacts their involvement and the entire family's involvement due to being out of alignment with the Church and its values. Even the marriage annulment process is cumbersome and not guaranteed if a partner decides to walk out. So if you can't get an annulment not only are you left not being able to fully participate in Mass, but you live a life alone and unable to celebrate your faith together with a future partner. This is sad and I don't think it is what God would want. God doesn't want us to be alone and would want it to be easy to follow in faith and not to be feeling guilty if life's circumstances go against you. For the annulment process, a no fault process

should apply to enable people to be open about their circumstances and keep engaged in their faith at a difficult time in their life. Similar for people who are bisexual, homosexual, etc ... should not be excluded from taking the Eucharist. In fact, all Christians and even non-Christians who attend Mass should be able to take the Eucharist if they choose to do so in a solemn and respectful manner. I firmly believe this is what God wants. He wants us to celebrate the Eucharist with everybody.

I think God is asking us to embrace our Catholic identity and find beauty in our forgotten traditions.

I feel that God wants us to catechise the little ones in our parishes. We run the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in our Holy Family Parish [ - ]. We have children attending the atrium where the Catechesis is held. From ages 3-6yrs, 6-9yrs and 9-12 years. You may know about this programme, or you can check it out on the web. It helps children come to know the love and nurture of the Good Shepherd. Our Catechesis is held after school, it would be ideal to run it through the school curriculum. The Catechists need to be trained in the method. The training consists of two blocks of study for each age group which we pay for ourselves or subsidised by the programme. Many of our children have been with us for 10 years, just 2 hrs a week. The Programme has 3 parts, Scripture, Structure of the Mass with details, and Practical Life works. This programme gives each child a grounding in understanding their Catholic Faith, and a relationship with the Good Shepherd. We present our materials to the child, and get their responses by asking them questions and drawing out of them responses, many inspired by the Holy Spirit. I sincerely hope our Church sees the need of our littlest in the Kingdom of God.

I believe Australia and the Church requires stronger formation of Catholic teachers and students in Catholic schools. Our teachers in general, seem to lack many of the core principles and have not grasped the fundamental teachings of our faith. All Catholic secondary school students should be compulsorily taught *Theology of the Body* from St John Paul II.

God is asking of us in Australia to ..."go rebuild my Church" ... as he told St Francis of Assisi. We are called to rejuvenate the Catholic Church in Australia and that should be an example for other Churches in developed countries where support for the Church has waned. I believe God is calling both clergy and laity to re-invigorate the Church in visible ways; to be publicly proud of our faith (despite the recent sexual abuse scandals) and practice the same with humility and genuineness. God is calling us to particularly pay attention to nurturing the faith in young adult Catholics. With particular emphasis on how we get young people to maintain their faith, even though their own parents have fallen away from practicing the faith. God is asking us to reinvigorate ourselves and the Church ... particularly with young people ... as Jesus told St Francis of Assisi: "Go rebuild my Church."

I believe at this time God is asking us all to listen to each other. Within the Church, there are many different views about the issues we face in the Church and in the wider world. I have been a Catholic for 33 years and in this time I think these divisions have grown wider. They threaten to tear us apart. I think we need to pray for the gift of unity because these divisions confuse people both inside and outside the Church and mean we cannot proclaim the Good News because we waste time fighting among ourselves. This listening which must be done with great respect and

patience must start with people in the same parish listening to each other and then move into the wider world. Lay people need to listen to each other, bishops and priests need to listen to each other and to the people God has placed in their care. People need to be able to share their joys and worries, confident that they will be heard, even if the person listening holds a completely different point of view. Once we have learnt to listen to each other, we can start to listen properly to people who have no faith. Of course as Christians, we also need to listen to God and ask him to show us the way he wants us to spread the Good News of Jesus to all we meet. In these difficult times we need to find ways to work together to witness to our faith, so that others may come to share this priceless gift we have received.

To stand up for what we believe in. To be a living example of the message of Jesus Christ

I think God is calling us for us to be a more welcoming, relevant, dynamic and appealing organisation that offers a true sense of community, warmth, belonging and mutual support of all members of local and wider communities—not just those who identify as "Catholics" and not just those who identify as "Christians" but all members of our local, regional and worldwide community. Catholic schools are appealing and valued by many non-Catholics. This is very encouraging and a sign of something we offer that is valued widely. We need to build on that as this is the best place to attract youth. The outreach and support services offered by the Catholic Church and affiliated organisations is greatly valued, usually respected, in high demand and there appears to be continually growing community need. This represents another great opportunity.

- Be open and loving to others
- God wants us as Catholics to come together and show others the way, to teach others about God (or to spread the good news to others)
- We should be more supportive to our existing priests as well as the retired priests
- God is asking us to love one another and he loves everyone unconditionally
- God is asking us to love those, as in the book of Matthew 5:43-48, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"

– That our Catholic Education should be equipping and preparing Secondary College students for marriage and to contribute to society in a Christian manner. —That the faithful need to be educated to proclaim its faith more openly and boldly to others. The faithful need to show more compassion and be made more aware of the power of the Holy Spirit working within them.—The Church needs to proclaim itself more through public events. We need to provide vibrant hospitality.—The Church should consider optional celibacy as a solution to problems it is now facing.—The need for good Shepherds to feed the flock.—That the Church should equip the faithful with sound teachings and instructions in our faith, starting with school children. Adult information evenings should be held in every parish to help the faithful tackle assaults on our beliefs and help them to be able to respond to these assaults.

Honour and respect our community in every way possible. Create worship that is more open.

God is asking for justice for the people of God, particularly those who as children have suffered from clerical and religious abuse, that they now receive what their needs demand, and for their whole lives. I believe God asks that children never suffer, never have their innocence destroyed by paedophile behaviour, their futures ruined by the foul actions of predatory religious, those whose position, status and authority give them power over the most vulnerable. The exercise of excessive authority of priests and bishops for many years has led to shocking abuse of victims and

their families, to the loss of trust in the whole institution, and to terrible dereliction of pastoral care. Such clearly overbearing authority in priests who abuse and bishops who lack accountability has been poisonous, and will no longer be tolerated by Australian Catholics. It is well past time that well-qualified Catholic lay people, men and women, who have well-founded management skills, often theological training, take up responsibility for much of the administrative and organisational work of the Australian Church governance, implementing a Code of Conduct at all levels of the hierarchical structure in order to attempt to restore trust in a Church that is broken, if not dying. Celibate life has its challenges, the priest population is aging, an acceptance of married priests to restore balance is recognising an imperative sign of the times. Married clergy are a more appropriate reflection of the community they serve. The vocational training of priests in seminaries over past decades and at present produces clerics totally unfit for interacting with all the demands of their pastoral role in the diverse community that is today's Church, much less the practical necessities of daily life that living a celibate, socially isolated life asks of them. I believe God is guiding Australian Catholic thought in ways that would have prospective priests train in the world as any student does and with spiritual and theological training as part of that lay world. I think God is asking that a modern Australian Church should have credible language used in all liturgies. Contradictions such as references to the virgin birth to the modern mind are anathema. Simple truthful language will do more to create meaningful participation for all ages in liturgical celebrations.

To return to teaching the faith in its entirety, not neglecting any of its teachings which sadly, have been neglected for many years. Also greater transparency in the Church.

God is asking the Church what He has always asked of the Church: to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. In order to do this effectively, we must recognise that what we have been doing for the last fifty years hasn't worked, isn't working now, and isn't going to work in the future. We have NOT been proclaiming the gospel effectively and, as a result, the Church has been marginalised in a once Christian society. Many of our liturgies are celebrated in such a banal and casual manner that nothing of the transcendence, the beauty, or the joy of the gospel is evident. The preaching is, all too often, poorly prepared, badly structured, and offering little or only superficial insight into the scripture. The music in most parishes is, frankly, awful. Childish ditties badly sung. This is not a reflection on those who volunteer for this ministry but on the lack of emphasis, indeed antagonism, given to it by priests. We have put a great deal of effort and resources into schools which not only fail to evangelise their students but, in many cases, work against the faith that the students already have. While social justice and morality are of enormous importance in the Church's teaching, they are not its central message. Yet, in the public mind, they are most often the only things known about the teachings of the Church and without the salvation offered by the gospel, they make little sense. No wonder people turn away. It is clear that business as usual won't cut it. We need to take drastic action. Firstly, priests must be held to account for the way in which they carry out their duties. This has clearly not happened in the past. To do this, bishops must know their priests personally and be aware of the way in which they preach and celebrate the liturgy. Large dioceses need to be broken up into smaller units where the bishop can be closer to his clergy and people; less of a manager and more of a father and teacher. Assistant bishops are an ecclesial nonsense and the principle should be that any diocese that is large enough to

require an assistant bishop should be broken into smaller dioceses that do not: a geographically smaller Church that can more easily smell its sheep. We need to acknowledge that our schools, set up to support a believing people, are now missions to an unbelieving and even hostile population. They need to be set up as such and we need to be prepared to close those schools which fail in their mission to evangelise their students. There is no reason why any parish or diocese should be running just another private school. In parishes where schools have been closed, the resources and facilities have often been re-purposed to very good effect. If a Catholic school does not actively support the Church's mission of proclaiming the gospel by evangelising its students and parents, why does it exist? We need to focus on proclaiming the gospel and the worship of God and worry less about managing assets.

o Live faith on a personal level daily. o To be a voice for those who have no voice, social justice. o To be courageous in change, to bring people back. o Called to be a witness to the truth. o To really believe the gospel is a treasure that has to be shared. o To focus on the sacraments, and to keep emphasising the Eucharist as central to the community we try to build. o To be present, to be active, and to be obvious. o To be more inviting and inclusive, a Church which is a safe place of encounter with God. o To be welcoming, to have fellowship. o To be leaders in our faith communities. o Be an example of the beauty of the truth of the Catholic faith, to inspire others through practice. o Called to know our faith. o Called to put resources into calling youth back into our Church. § Tapping into youth spirituality. § Compete with the spirit of the world. o Challenged to be authentic to the spirit of the gospel, and agents of change. o To be encouraging and affirming of our brothers and sisters, not of the Catholic faith. o To know how to explain our faith, who we are, and how to communicate it. § Confidently, respectfully, and passionately o Support parents with stronger faith education

The institutional Church in Australia is in tatters. God is now asking the Church, the People of God in Australia, as a matter of urgency, to reform ourselves radically and to rebuild so as to: - be relevant to the times in which we live, - regain the respect of the people of Australia, - be recognised as a sign of God's presence in Australia, - be predominantly outward-looking, pastoral and non-judgemental in our approach, while at the same time being inward-looking to the extent needed to provide for the spiritual development of the People of God, - be mindful of the needs of the people of Australia, and - work collaboratively within the Australian community to satisfy those needs. The starting point for this reform should be the immediate implementation of those Royal Commission into Child Abuse recommendations that relate to the Catholic Church. Concurrently, other issues need to be identified and addressed via a process of dialogue ("speak boldly and listen with an open heart") and discernment such as the current preparation for the Plenary Council. This work of reform and rebuilding - needs to involve collaborative effort by all of the People of God (including clerical and lay; women and men; LGBTQI; young and old; single and married; divorced and remarried; unmarried couples; practising and non-practising Catholics; the doctrinally orthodox and the unorthodox believers; mainstream and marginalised; those active in geographic parishes and those in "communities of like-minded souls" (such as Christian meditation groups, St Vincent de Paul, Teams); and - needs to be wide-ranging, vigorous and address all issues of concern. By going through this process of reform the Church, the People of

God in Australia, must become - inclusive, - transparent, - accountable, - non-clericalist, and - humble.

We speak for the 500 Catholic Secondary Principals in Australia. Our members have a variety of experiences of Governance of their schools - some positive, a growing number less positive. We believe it is timely the Church adopts a more contemporary way of exercising Governance of our schools and in doing so ensure that the role of Principal is respected and given appropriate authority and support to lead their school communities effectively.

New faith that promotes culture of life and harmonizes with all cultures, with nature. New liturgy that signifies the connection with the land, especially a demand for a complete new liturgy of Indigenous culture in Australia. New spirit of brotherhood between Catholic rites, between Christian denominations, and between religions. Holy Spirit also wants the Australian Church to eliminate and abolish clericalism.

Late last year, we invited everyone in our parish community to contribute to the preparation of a [Church] submission to Australia's Plenary Council 2020. In October 2018, we hosted three gatherings to discuss the question asked by our bishops. Fifty + people attended these meetings and there was rich dialogue, candid discussions and inclusive engagement. From this rich feedback, a group charged with developing the submission on behalf of our community has identified 7 broad themes. The emerging themes for what God is asking of us include:

Leadership in the Church: The future role and involvement of laity (including the roles of men, women, youth and people of diverse genders). The role of ordained members of our Church and the increased acknowledgement and respect for the roles of laity and ordained in living the gospel traditions of Jesus in future. Faith Development: How do we relate the gospel values enriched by the stories of Jesus to our Church of today? Where can I identify and find Jesus in today's world? How can we as faith communities enrich our faith values and development? Faith Communities: How do we re-think our interconnectedness and relationships in light of the early Christian community gatherings to create a sense of prayer, belonging and justice for all? Hierarchy: The [Church] has developed and sustained a model over 20 years that has seen shared responsibility and roles to support the parish priest in his decision-making role. It has engaged our community in recognising a belonging in our Church, both present and future. The Holy Spirit is challenging us to think and act differently. We, at [Church] have taken on the role of change and challenge to actively live the good news of Jesus. Healing and Inclusion: Our future Church needs to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging, and include:

- Respectful acknowledgement for our first people from Indigenous communities for more than 60,000 years.
- Everyone from the LGBTQIA communities.
- Actions that address the social and structural injustices arising from previous and current situations (e.g. sexual abuse, youth justice, homelessness and social housing, social, racial and gender isolation.

Social Justice: God is asking us to "Live justly, love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Living the principles of justice as Jesus did, guided by the Holy Spirit is what God is asking of us in Australia at this time. Care for Our Earth. Living and adopting the guidance from Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*: On care of our common home. And challenge to actively live the good news of Jesus.

To spread faith in positiveness, to turn all negatives around in a solution, to stand up for your faith and not to be ruled by the press.

Unity is important for the Catholic Church. Liturgy provides a way of examining problems with unity. Here I am writing about the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, which I am more familiar with. Some parts of documents approved by Australian bishops or the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference are not consistent with documents that have papal approval. Here are some examples. Example 1: Catholic Worship Book 2, published 2016, page xxiii gives greater priority to singing the “Post-Communion Hymn/Song/Canticle” than the “Communion Chant/Hymn/Song”. General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) 86—88 conveys the reverse priority. Some excerpts: “86. While the priest is receiving the sacrament, the Communion Chant is begun ... 88. When the distribution of Communion is over, if appropriate, the priest and faithful pray quietly for some time. If desired, a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the whole congregation.” Example 2: The 2004 Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* has in n. 103 that it is always an option to distribute Communion by intinction. The July 2018 “Guidelines for the Reverent Reception of Holy Communion” has: “16. In keeping with Christ’s command to take and drink and consistent with the Church’s tradition that the sacraments be ministered, it is not permitted for communicants to self-intinct (or dip) the host in the chalice. The practice of dipping fingers with the host in the chalice can also lead to other hygiene issues.” Having “Christ’s command to take and drink” in this way, incorrectly condemns intinction. Example 3: The General Instruction of the Roman Missal has: “98. The acolyte is instituted for service at the altar ... 100. In the absence of an instituted acolyte, there may be ministers deputed lay ministers to serve at the altar ...” At <http://liturgy.perthCatholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Guidelines-for-Ministers-2018-Edition.pdf> (accessed 4 March 2019) it has on page 13: “In the Archdiocese of Perth the ministry of Altar Ministers both junior and senior is encouraged. In order to make sure that this ministry continues, only ONE Acolyte, with the required number of altar ministers, assist at parish Masses.” Instead of institution for service at the altar there is institution that prevents service at the altar. An ideal professed publicly in the Oath of Fidelity is: “I shall follow and foster the common discipline of the whole Church and I shall observe all ecclesiastical laws, especially those which are contained in the Code of Canon Law.” I think liturgy, being so public, provides a good basis for performance appraisal. For example, are hands joined holding palms sideward and together before the breast, the right thumb crossed over the left? (Ceremonial of Bishops, footnote 80). Is a bow of the head made at the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary? (GIRM 275).

To be open to the voices of the spirit coming from all over the Catholic community. For the Church to be fully committed to truth and justice, accepting responsibility for those clergy who have failed in their duty by abusing children and vulnerable adults, to put victims first ahead of the protective instincts of the Church to protect itself and its ministers as its apparent priority was seen to be until recent times.

To continue to reach out and support the most vulnerable in society - refugees, the poor, Indigenous Australians, struggling parents, the disabled, drug-addicted, those experiencing violence and abuse. Also to be a voice and help to those suffering poverty, war and disadvantage overseas. I think we must continue to use our voice to speak up against mistreatment of people and to question values in society like capitalism over human rights; also speak out against racism,

sexism and all discrimination. To be truly inclusive, I believe the Church must end its stance against ordination of women. I love the Catholic faith but being female have always felt the Church did not value me as much as it did my brothers. You can tell me women are "equal but different" as much as you want but that doesn't make it true. I know I am blessed to have become a mother (as men are blessed to become fathers) but if I had chosen a celibate life, then I could have been just as good a priest as any man. Perhaps if the Church had always been more inclusive of women and their points of view at the most senior levels, the terrible abuses in our Church might have been questioned earlier and not occurred. As corporate research shows us, a diverse leadership team produces the best outcomes. Mostly, I think God is asking us, as always, to show love and compassion for others. To see the dignity, value and light in every person and enable them to let it shine. But let us do this with fresh, open minds, not too caught up in the hierarchy and traditions of older times. With deep respect for the wisdom of those that have gone before us, but also with joy, curiosity and enthusiasm for how things might be improved.

God wants me to be more outgoing with my faith, be a pro-active Catholic, step out of my comfort zone when required to reach out to others who may want to be Catholic, be proud of my faith and to be ready to help within my parish

Look at where the Church is going in the future.

God is asking us to strengthen, to share, to re-emphasize the basic foundation in Catholic faith that we share and to project it both internally and externally. We need to understand what our faith is—if we don't understand it, how can we live it and how can we project it to others? Not at a grand theological level—just at the everyday level of our lives. Where once the Christian outlook was at the core of Australian society, this is ceasing to be the case and we are being challenged to measure up to our faith. Understanding becomes more important than ever to be able to live our faith and therefore to project it to others both inside (e.g. in our schools) and outside the Catholic Church. It is important that we as the Church (individuals and leaders) act in a way that is consistent with our faith, to do otherwise weakens the Church and ourselves. Examples of contradictions and inconsistencies are:

- With the issue of contraception—the Church stated that it was wrong; avoided cases in which it was arguably essential and generally got tied in knots with the contradictions of both condemning and condoning the practice.
- With the issue of child abuse—it is not only the abuse itself but the reaction to the abuse and the abusers that appears so contradictory to our Christian faith. The Past: - We cannot change what has happened in the past, only face up to it. The Present—we are measured in the present by:
  - How we handle those issues arising from the abuse of children in Catholic institutions in the past e.g. the (lack of) promptness in responding to the Royal Commission compensation scheme. (Yes it happened in other institutions but our immediate concern is within the Catholic Church)
  - How we respond to those who were/are abused. Do we listen, care, support or tie them with legalese?
  - How we respond to those who carried out the abuse or who failed to act appropriately when they knew of abuse?

The Future—we are measured in the present by what we do to identify and deal with such issues in the future—we are fallible human beings and as such it will happen again. We need, now, to put in place the processes to manage the future. While there has to be room for discussion and while we as Christians should not turn away sinners, when we mismanage these issues they call into question the rest of the foundations of our faith, what we stand for and

the credibility of the Christian message. Such failures cause those within the Church to fall away and those without the Church to discredit the morality and ethics that our Christianity should represent. More than ever, we need to strengthen and re-emphasise our basic foundation in our Catholic faith and to project it to support our fellow Catholics and to those who are not yet.

In Australia at this time, we believe that Catholic teaching on Social Justice needs to be promoted much more vigorously both within and beyond the faith community, and that responses to social justice issues need to become mainstream within the life of the Catholic faith community. As people of faith and followers of Jesus Christ, we are the inheritors of a great and holy Tradition, “the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). It is clearly expressed in the teaching and practice of Jesus. “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” (John 10:10) The gospels are full of references to Jesus casting out demons (Mark 1:34 and many similar references, best understood as Jesus freeing people from all that holds them back from having and living life to the full). We are called to proclaim this Tradition to the whole world (Mark 16:15). In modern times this Tradition has found expression in papal teaching ranging from *Rerum Novarum* to *Laudato Si’*, in conciliar teaching, ““The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of human beings in this age, especially those who are poor and afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1), and in the many Social Justice Statements of the Australian bishops, including 2018’s statement on homelessness. Today we live in a world in which millions live in dire poverty, millions have fled their homes in search of asylum, billions of dollars are spent on arms that inflict havoc on citizens and have the potential to destroy life on Earth, and the threat of catastrophic climate change is largely ignored, to name but a few of the ‘demons’ that prevent the people of this world from living life to the full today, and threaten to destroy life on Earth. The call to address these evils and many others is clearly articulated in official Church teaching including the documents already mentioned, and in many other places, but how clearly has it been proclaimed to the people of the Church and to the world? How many of us are familiar with the teaching of *Laudato Si’*, or even aware of its existence? Are the celebration of Social Justice Sunday and the promotion of the Social Justice Statement given high priority in the parishes of Australia? Many Church-based or connected organisations, for example, Caritas Australia, St Vincent de Paul Society, Jesuit Social Services, Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project, social justice groups in schools and parishes, are actively involved in promoting and practising this teaching. However, active involvement in such activities, beyond perhaps a contribution to special collections, does not seem to be seen as fundamental to Christian life by the majority of Catholics, even those who are regular church attenders.

In Australia at this time, we believe that a thorough reassessment of the Church’s teaching and practice on marriage, and in particular on divorce, and on the status in the Church of people who, after the breakdown of a previous marriage have entered, or wish to enter, a new relationship is necessary and urgent. Current Church teaching and practice are based on the presumption that certain teachings attributed to Jesus in the gospels in response to particular questions raised in a particular time and place have literal and universal application. This must be questioned, and is questioned by eminent scripture scholars loyal to the Church. When a marriage relationship has irretrievably broken down, when there is no longer any intimate relationship between the couple, how can it be said that the marriage still exists, and that, therefore, another marriage cannot be

validly entered into? To say that marriages do not end is to fly in the face of reality. To demand that a person whose previous relationship has broken down can never enter into another relationship without the blessing of the faith community is tying up impossible burdens and placing them on people's shoulders. Intimacy is a basic necessity for a full human life. For many people, this will be committed sexual intimacy. To demand that people who have committed themselves to a new relationship either exit that relationship, or continue in it but without sexual intimacy, or be excluded from full participation in the Eucharist, is both unrealistic and unjust. The thorough reassessment of the Church's teaching and practice on marriage and divorce must draw on the experience and reflection of married people, divorced or separated people, and people who have entered a new relationship, not just on the understanding of a clerical hierarchy.

To be a strong and loving community, to be a prayerful community, to be open to others, welcoming to all in need.

I believe that if we are to be the body of Christ as a Church that is the incarnation, then we need to know our world very well and respond to its needs. No good to keep trotting out answers to questions that are no longer being asked or empty rituals that do not speak to the people of our world in their living context. So first, we need to discern the signs of the times. These are not merely trends or the flavour of the month but truly the enduring, persistent and genuine insights that our culture is holding out to us. A few of these genuine signs of the times that we need to engage with in our culture and in the light of the gospel include: 1. Accountability and transparency in all things. It seems as though the rest of society has raced ahead of the Church in relation to these values. Secret processes for selecting bishops, lack of financial reporting, unclear decision-making processes to name a few, are no longer acceptable. 2. Equality: again our society is pressing ahead of the Church in recognizing full equality between men and women in what they can contribute 3. Sexuality: again our society has come to a greater understanding of human sexuality than has the Church which has failed to integrate the outcome of genuine inquiry and research which accepts that not everyone is heterosexual. Non heterosexual is not disordered it is differently ordered. 4. Sexual Abuse crisis has demonstrated a complete disregard for victims at the expense of the reputation and privileged position of the Church. This is an utter disgrace and must reawaken us to the cries of the poor as the starting point of our ministry.

Work out how we, the Church, can be seen and become a forgiving Church. Showing the world that the people who gather at the Eucharist are the Church as this is the centre of our faith.

We believe God is asking us, as Church, to be people of prayer and conversion; both personally and as a community, cultivating the core gospel values, including valuing the gift of life and family relationships and valuing the marginalised. We believe as the Church we are asked to evangelise in various ways, including by our lives. This means that every one of us must learn to be disciplined and committed to prayer, conversion and evangelisation. Our conversion to Christ will mean that we don't live life cheaply. One example of the way that life is lived cheaply, is the frequent collapse of marriages. One symbol of the way marriage is encouraged to be viewed as cheap—and thus one influence in the world through the media, is the [television] program *Married at First Sight*. Then we must, especially at the moment, reach out to the victims of sexual abuse; throw open the doors of the Church, perhaps with a dedicated Sunday and through outreach, to show victims and survivors that we care and that we love, so that they may come to

know the love of God. Then the liturgy should be shaped sensitively to the needs of victims and survivors and ourselves. More generally, our liturgies should be more engaging. The new translation of the Mass is not accessible to modern communities. The liturgy should be more dynamic so that it encourages greater participation. The Medieval vestments are an example of the Church being represented as being removed from ordinary people.

God is asking us to LISTEN TO HIS WORD.

For the body of the Church to work towards a personal relationship with Jesus.

To have joyous communications with one another. Imbue a spirit of joy and happiness in the Mass like we want to be there and we acknowledge our privilege at having our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ as our redeemer. So let us be like the Ephesians 5:19-20 'Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.' Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the learned of our Church to devise a Lenten programme that the whole of Australia participates in. The parishes get to choose what night to run it on. This will aid in more unity for our Church, rather than all this "our Church does this and your Church does that ... yakkety yak, blah blah blah. They can still have 'their' niceties but let's maintain the 'core'.

KEEP THE MYSTERY. Faith does not need understanding. God cannot be defined and 'boxed' when people ask who He is. He replies "I AM".

I think the Holy Spirit is asking us to live our beliefs proudly in the public square - peacefully and with confidence, particularly when considering the large number of highly contentious issues that confront us. Many Catholics cannot understand how we have been betrayed by our leaders - either directly by committing or concealing sexual abuse, or by silence, in not teaching and protecting their flocks. We need shepherd leaders who are visibly following Christ, and who are unafraid to confront the wolves. We need to be commissioned and strengthened to go out and preach the Good News - God loves us, Jesus saves us, and Eternity awaits us!

Good honest leadership. Open communication from priests to congregations. Until this goal is achieved openly and positively, the Church will remain stagnant. The Church needs to overcome the cynicism from the public and reunite.

Where can I begin in answering this question? Through illness, I've run out of time to construct the depth of submission that has been forming in me over recent months. I've assisted with several listening and dialogue sessions in our parish and it has opened a whole gamut of issues that have been woken within me. So with time a limiting factor, foremost in my mind, God wants us to be clear about who we are as Catholics, to challenge ourselves, question our long held position on all sorts of things. To be true to His values/beliefs. Revisit in depth with our communities, what it is to be Catholic. What we stand for? We desperately need to reconcile our held position with what we think Jesus would be telling us if He were standing here today. Listen to the Spirit. Listen to God and His son. There are so many contradictions in the wishy washiness of our current faith that our youth are forthright enough to call out. And now, so am I. I don't come from a position of great theological knowledge. In fact, I'm probably very average up against some of my fellow parishioners. But I have a deep faith and love of our God and trust in

His son's teachings. I keep finding myself thinking, I don't think Jesus would have responded in this way. I am devastated by the deep crevasses that appear as people I have shared my faith journeys with have turned away from the structure of the Church. So God is asking us to be true to our faith, define it, challenge it, recognise that the world has changed over centuries and that some of the concrete positions that have been held need to change. Not because the world has changed, but because we can see that God might judge some people's actions differently to how He might have in another time. God is also asking us to consider breaking down the existing structure of the Church and rebuild it. With a mesh of systems that integrate lay people on a much grander scale, to incorporate lay persons and systems/processes that would stand the test of any organisation. The built-in systems have to foster transparency, integrity, the capacity to call out 'badness' and deal with it in real time, to bring varied people to the table so that different ideas/perspectives/filters can be considered in decision making. It would also create a Church structure that is far more representative of its people. The Church organisational structure must bring diversity on many levels: balance of lay people (not in a peripheral capacity but central to how the Church operates), gender, ethnic backgrounds, etc. etc.

To get to heaven by stay faithful to sacraments of His One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and Her traditional teaching. He's not asking us to give in to the world and her prince. He's not asking us to be syncretic or get distracted with the worldly programme of political correct causes or attitudes. He wants us to start talking about Heaven, sainthood, charity, the virtues and how we will know him, love him and serve him in this life and be with him forever in the next. He also wants the filth of sexually abusive clergy and their cover up mates (whether bishops, priests, nuns or laity) to be eradicated once and for all from the Church and for justice to be done. And it seems in these months it is clear to all people of good will and honesty that homosexual clergy are also part of that problem and it needs to be honestly recognised and dealt with (regardless of the world's view of that).

Follow the commandment of Jesus Christ and to love on another as He loves us. Allow this to drive the way in we approach our lives. Continue pushing for the dignity of human life and love through continuously supporting those who are less fortunate than us or are suffering (homeless, disabled, domestic violence, abuse victims and refugees). To show respect and love to all no matter their religious beliefs, sexuality, race, etc .... To continually promote and engage young people in the Church and appeal to them so as to foster the Church of today and promote vocations and discernment.

We think God is asking us to be innovative in our society. We should be a reflective society that engages in dialogue and feels confident to speak about issues. We think God wants us to be united and engaged as a community. Our group thinks God is asking us to make Church worth it. To reflect on ourselves and our identity and ask how we can better ourselves. What will young people get out of Church that they won't get elsewhere?

To be a more inclusive and welcoming Church. To place less emphasis on barriers to belonging and participation. To allow separated, divorced, remarried and LGBTIQ Catholic people to receive Communion. To include female representation around the decision-making table. To have greater input from and involvement of the laity in the structure of the Church in Australia.

To be compassionate to each other and to ensure that our environment is protected and conducive to human life.

God is asking us to reform the Church structure. Lay people should have voting rights in Church decision making. We believe that God is asking Church be an inclusive community, that all are accepted as God's people and that women and the laity play a more fundamental role. Catholic organisations such as hospitals, schools and support services, are examples of God's love. We believe Church credibility is demonstrated by the actions of lay people, not dogma but the morality of the living. God is asking that we need action to restore faith in the Church, for Catholics and the general public. So God needs the Church to work more with the poor and needy, showing publicly its Christ-like love for all God's people.

God is asking us to "Live justly, love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Living the principles of justice as Jesus did, guided by the Holy Spirit is what God is asking of us in Australia at this time. There are so many injustices lived out through current Federal Government policies that diminish the integrity and value of every human being. Jesus is the living example for us and our Church should be bold in taking a strong position on walking in solidarity, building the right relationships with all people of faith, welcoming without prejudice and calling all Australians to action. It is only through courageous leadership, learning for justice and establishing a Community of Witness that Jesus will remain in the hearts of Australians and fire the passion of our young people whose contemporary faith and love of God is displayed by having a strong sense of social justice and supporting their fellow human beings. They are not motivated by attending Mass, or the current Church hierarchy—rather their God is lived through support for the disadvantaged, dislocated and disempowered (marginalised). Seven years ago, the Roman Catholic Church canonised its first Australian Saint, Mary MacKillop, the founder of the Josephite sisters who have provided education and welfare services to the poor, especially in remote and rural parts of our vast Australian continent. Her brother Donald, a Jesuit who ministered amongst the Aborigines of Daly River in the Northern Territory at the end of the 19th century, wrote one of the great letters to the editor when he sent his 1892 Christmas epistle to the Sydney Herald: 'Australia, as such, does not recognise the right of the blackman to live. She marches onward, truly, but not perhaps the fair maiden we paint her. The blackfellow sees blood on that noble forehead, callous cruelty in her heart; her heel is of iron and his helpless countrymen beneath her feet.' In many ways, our Church has not challenged or attempted to change this situation, though the meaning of the "blackman" has changed considerably for our Australian culture. There is optimism and wide interest in engaging with the Council process to help build the Church in Australia so that we truly reflect the expectation that we live Jesus' message to love one another as he loved us, and that we love our neighbour as ourselves. This expectation needs to be fully authenticated, respected and have true recognition.

I do not assume to know what God may be asking! I can only speak of my experience and the stories of many others. I have experienced a Church that is looking to engage with the world, be of service to others, help others to grow as a whole person and look to create a better world. However, I have too often experienced a Church in which a minority of hard line reactionaries, afraid of any notion of Church beyond what they view as 'permissible' according to the strict 'rules' of the Church. I have experienced and still see bishops, priests and others deciding that

they 'speak for Christ' and that they will decide what the Church should be. I have seen training institutions taken over by such mentalities, desperate to return the Church to the glory days of the 1950's where obedience was expected and seen as a sign of being a 'true' Catholic. I hope going forward to see a Church that can move away from being a centralised police state, to a community of people with similar, but not necessarily that same beliefs and expressions of those beliefs, who work to bring about the Kingdom Jesus talked about, one where all are welcome and where difference is celebrated. A place where the local community elects their own leaders, where various theologies can be discussed and celebrated. Where people are not scared about doubting certain traditional beliefs, because that is 'heretical', but where these ideas can be shared in a mature environment, exploring the mystery that is God. Where 'bums on seats' is irrelevant, but open mature discussion and celebration of our common humanity and spirituality is central and where this overflows into working to bring about a better world by addressing key justice issues of our time. Can I suggest looking to St Mary's in Exile, South Brisbane as a starting point?!

God is asking us to look at our Church structures (including dioceses, seminaries, parishes, etc.) and assess how they are positively enabling all Christians to live out a vocation of love and service. God is asking us to be the Body of Christ—to be truly nourished by the Eucharist to be bread for the world. God is asking us to ... Reform. Reconnect. Reach Out. God is asking us to renew the culture of our community life as Church with places of inclusivity, listening, and good formation for and through mission.

God is asking us to be a compassionate Church with empathy for those in need. We should be providing financial support to those in need. The Church needs to be less ostentatious with its ownership of Catholic Church properties, adornments, priests' and bishops' adornments and paraphernalia. The Spirit seems to be moving us to use the Catholic Church's financial and physical resources and properties to support Australia's poor, homeless and vulnerable, and to compensate the sexually abused in a timely and realistic manner.

That we be an inclusive Church, calling all to gather at the Table. With Jesus as our role model, that we be foot washers, serving those in need, that they may live 'life to the full.' (John 10:10)  
That we establish structures to protect the young and vulnerable in our community.

I believe that our Lord is asking us to stand true to our Catholic ethos and values, and not kowtow and bend to an ever changing and ever crazier society. It is especially true in these trying times. We only need to look at the examples of the early martyrs, who chose to give their lives rather than go against the Word of God. We must stand true to our principles, those which have guided and guarded our souls for millennia, those which have ensured the promulgation of our Faith. The Word of God stands the test of time and is immutable, not to be changed to accommodate the fads of the era, hence why most of its practises continue centuries after their introduction. To put it in Biblical terms, 1 John 2:17 states, "The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever." In other words, fashions and fads come and go, but God's Word remains true for all eternity. We must also look at the very final passages (Revelation 22:18-21) of the Bible to learn that, "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any

share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll. He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen". God's word is not for us to change according to the world, it is for us to follow as He told us while His Son was on earth! One need only look at those Christian denominations which have tried to pander to the whims of modern society to see that they have not worked in winning over new believers, but rather have alienated believers who wish to stand for proper Christian principles, and have failed in converting the secular Masses. Thus Churches like the Anglican and Uniting Churches have seen congregations plummet and buildings sold off on the back of pandering to the secular world on issues like same sex marriage and female clergy. We must also not be afraid as a Church to defend our stance on such issues. We should also seek to return the sense of the sacred to the liturgy, and restore many of our rich and discarded traditions. This is what has made Roman Catholicism so appealing to billions over the millennia- the continuing unbroken line of history!

To endure suffering with strong faith and a bright witness. To show a different face of the Church in our society. To witness in mercy and love like the first Christians. To stand firm in times of tribulation. To look at the reality with open minds. To turn the other cheek. To carry our cross (a very heavy cross indeed!). To follow Christ with this cross, through death, into new life. To have compassion for those who suffer with us. To bear witness to our integrity through our forgiveness of others. OUR RESPONSE IS WITNESS: 1. Affirmation from bishops and Leaders of the Church is important to know that we are standing together in unity. 2. The only leader or person who we all can truly rely on is Jesus Christ. 3. Forgiveness of the perpetrators of sexual abuse is an important witness. We need to preach the gospel in our words and actions. We do not condemn the sinner. Without true forgiveness, the hurt of our Church at the moment will never dissipate. 4. Mary, at the foot of the cross, seeing her Son crucified and standing amidst the pain, transforming it to love in her heart, needs to be our model. 5. We see that great pain and division are affecting all aspects of society, not just the Church, perhaps our response to this will be a witness to society. 6. We know our history, we can use this for good. Learn from our mistakes.

We think God is asking us - To remain faithful and united in and through the Church in times of division and conflict. - To recognise the power in our faith that can guide us and shape our moral judgement. - Asking us to stand up and be heard and shape and make the future of the Church in Australia and Australia itself. - To recognise what is important to us. - Asking how as individuals we want to be shaped by our faith. As a group we believe God is asking us to remain true to ourselves and our beliefs and aspire to lives of faith and compassion.

I think God is asking us to continue to defend the timeless truths of our faith, particularly in regards to human sexuality. These teachings are poorly understood by young people today and few are aware of 'the reasons behind the rules'. Better formation across the lifespan could address this.

Numbers 23:19 - God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil? Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. James 1:17 - Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. We can see in these passages of Holy Scripture that God's message does not

change. God does not need us. It is us who need God. There is one way, one truth and one life. That is in Jesus Christ whose message does not change with the times. It never has. This is because our Holy Mother the Church and her faithful are living in the world, but are not of it. "But let your 'yes' be your 'yes' and your 'no', 'no'." says the Lord. "For whatever is more than these is from the devil." (Mt 5:37) God demands us to hold firm to the truths of our faith handed down to us from Jesus Christ and the early Church fathers. Any sort of fleeting changes is from the devil himself. The evil one wants to plunge the Church into confusion so much so that we don't even know who we are any more. Upon much prayer, meditation and consultation with faithful priests and laymen, I believe that God is asking us to hold firm to the truths of our Catholic faith.

To have belief and faith in the Catholic Church; to follow our faith and have trust in it and to try and keep faith. We think God is asking us to come together as a community to support one another and demonstrate his teachings through faith, by embracing it.

God is asking us to open our hearts to follow the guidance of his son. He wants us to respect everyone, not be judgemental and listen to the words and requests of his followers. Please abolish clericalism, embrace all genders and cultures into the running of the Church at all levels. Women need to be present in the highest level of decision-making and respected and given respectable and equal roles in the Church where they should be seen as equal to the men. Allow ordained priests (men and women) to be given the opportunity to marry if they desire and lead a life with their families sharing and participating in the workings of their parishes. Jesus did not discriminate like the Catholic Church does today against women and for celibacy. Be transparent and accountable. There should be a collective of lay and ordained people providing oversight and governance to the parishes and dioceses and indeed all the institutions in the Church. This could be constructed in a similar way as a board which provides governance on finance, law, risk, strategy and audit components of the parish, school or diocese. The parish priest should not be the sole governor of the parish. Priests that are accused of child abuse should never come into contact with children and be disrobed if convicted. Children, elderly, disabled and vulnerable should always be respected and protected against any wrong doings.

I believe God is asking the Church in Australia to be his beacon of light in this highly secularised society. The Church should continue its efforts in: - Allowing people to rediscover traditional rites and customs including the extraordinary form of Mass - Strive to find ways to proclaim the gospel by holding more public events that become points of interaction with the unchurched (not actively involved in the Church's sacramental life) - Support endeavours and formation of apologetics in local church communities so Catholics are equipped on how to explain and defend the faith in public - Incorporate practical ways of applying the gospel in daily life (through homilies, hot topic seminars, formation sessions). These topics could be anything that affect a lay person's life such as finances, career, relationships etc. - With abundance and convenience as a common privilege of many that sometimes leads to neglect of faith or trust in God, emphasis in fullness of life as key message may change this "I don't-need-God-my-life-is-okay" mentality.

God is asking of us to put our Australian house in order.

My view is that God is seeking that we engage in a wholesale renovation of the institution of the Church. I recall years ago reading Baron von Hugel, writing at the beginning of the 20th century,

saying that a Christian life required attention to the Christ in the Church was calling to and answering to God in the world. That seems to me a profound truth but God's response within the world has been largely ignored by too many clerical and lay figures in the Church. Church structures need to reject reliance upon outdated monarchical models including the nonsensical nomenclatures such as "princes of the Church" and curious clothing (as the nuns have mostly done). And the strange obsession with sexual morality and the various strictures that go with it must be abandoned or drastically revised.

Communities of baptised Catholics with a heart for the Mission of God who, with Jesus as their model do all in their power to create a just and welcoming society in a uniquely Australian way. This would mean a community that is totally inclusive and welcomes the differing gifts of all. It would mean a radical change in the culture and the structures that give precedence to clerics. It would mean liturgies that link with the lives of people and especially the young. It would mean that adult faith of the community members was enriched with sound knowledge of scripture and theology made available in ways that people of all ages and cultural origins would have access to. It would mean learning from the spirituality of the first peoples of this land. Pope John Paul II said in Alice Springs that the Church in Australia will not be the Church that God intends until it joyfully accepts the spirituality of the First Peoples of this land.

God is asking us to always keep those less fortunate, such as those in famine and war, in our minds and making sure we care for them and everyone, through remaining faithful. Also making sure our own actions serve us in the future by making sure we are serving, always the least, the last and the lost. Jesus would want to see a socially just community, one where there isn't any social hierarchy, pollution and poverty. Having faith matters because it can mean that you will always have someone watching out for you and you don't have to do everything alone and suffer alone.

Our group thinks God is asking us to: Continue the creative and responsive work done by schools, in partnership with families and parishes, to bring about God's kingdom. Break down the hierarchy that creates barriers so as to create a more relevant, inclusive and dialogical Church that exists to serve all Australians and those who seek our help. Return to the gospel inspiration of how to live as the People of God; to build God's Kingdom.

I spoke to my 23-year-old daughter who grew up in a Catholic home, went to Catholic primary and secondary schools. She went to Mass weekly with her family in her growing up years but probably since the age of 18 has not come near a Catholic church while still being a person of faith, she feels quite dissatisfied with her Church. All of what I write would also apply to my 27-year-old son and basically to all of my daughter's and son's Catholic friends. My daughter offered the following reasons as to why the Catholic Church has no appeal to her and all her other friends: - Church services hold no atmosphere or joy - Church has no spontaneity or fun - Church is regimented, ritualised and boring - The clergy both at local levels and at higher levels do not have a genuine interest in young people - The Church do not care for the young - The clergy have no idea of how to communicate to the young - She believes the clergy are removed from the real world - The Church is too structured - The clergy need to come down from their clerical high horses and be with people - The Church has nothing to attract young people - The Church apparently does access social media, but my daughter has no knowledge of this and has no interest in seeking it

<p>out - For young people, the Catholic Church is completely irrelevant - She believes with the present age demographic of clergy and laity that the Church and its message will be extinct in 30 to 40 years.</p>
<p>To evolve from level four to level seven (see Frederic Laloux for details). A big jump! It can be done. Specifically, the administration needs to develop a better complaint feedback process e.g. I've been complaining about a priest for some two years, got nowhere. Apparently because it's not about sex ... ! Recall 'broken windows'? It's important to 'nip things in the bud', else bigger lies grow. And, as you know I trust, Lucifer is the father of?</p>
<p>We are being asked to go back to the roots of Christian belief. This means shedding ecclesiastical trappings and legalisms. We need to be a Church that supports the poor, the pilgrim, the outsider, the unbeliever. We must be a Church which is authentic to the loving and forgiving messages of Jesus; a Church which understands the messiness and complexity of human life in all its greyness; a Church which rejects dogmatism and rethinks its theology in light of the amazing advances in science and technology.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to find forgiveness, love and to believe in the faith of the Catholic Church again.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us what we can do as a community to bring the Church back together and prepare it for the future.</p>
<p>God is asking for a progressive, welcoming society, free of prejudice that embraces those of all walks of life.</p>
<p>Share a common good for humanity. Treat people equally. Awareness of every living human creature organism on this planet.</p>
<p>Forgiveness, searching for answers.</p>
<p>To support each other and bring out the best in others.</p>
<p>To move forward with love for each other; not to judge others but to make a positive difference to the lives of others, through the work of the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>God would like us to be inclusive of our changing population. Make the Church, the traditions and Catholic culture accepting and open to everyone living in Australia (including LGBT community, Aboriginal community). Listen to each other. Recognise the mistakes of the past and learn from it.</p>
<p>To recognise mistakes of the past and actively seek to do something to support those who have suffered due to decisions made by the Catholic Church, i.e. the Church was so active in removing the culture and customs of Indigenous people during the 18th - 20th centuries so as Australians, what can we do to recognise this and support the reinstatement of these? To recognise equality in the community.</p>
<p>Be patient and have faith in the system.</p>
<p>1. To live out the social and spiritual dimension of our Christian faith, through involvement with local and overseas communities, by undertaking activities to provide support and aid, material and spiritual, to those in need, and by educating ourselves and others on environmental and</p>

economic justice issues. 2. To demonstrate and encourage the living of Jesus' message of love, through compassion and respect for all individuals, groups and communities. 3. To follow the precepts and values found in the Bible—to show constant love, let justice flow, do for others what you want them to do for you, love your neighbour and to remember that whatever we do for the least important we do for God. 4. To ensure that just and ethical actions take precedence over dogmas and bureaucratic responses. 5. To recognise our fortunate position in life and use this situation to help those not so well-off. 6. To pressure our Federal Government to provide safety and shelter to those trapped on Nauru and Manus Islands without adequate health, education or employment prospects. 7. To live as servants of God, not as privileged, 'God-favoured' leaders, who believe ourselves to be the sole and rightful owners of 'the truth'. 8. To work to ensure that those of us who are physically, intellectually and/or mentally challenged receive the support and assistance they need to live fulfilling and happy lives.

I think God is asking us to evaluate the importance of Him today and to make time in our lives for Him. He is asking us to consider the moral ethics that are important today. How the Church can be an important part of our lives.

I think God is asking us about how to be Jesus. How can we truly welcome people - transgender, same-sex attracted, all cultures, women's roles, how to deal with and prevent further child abuse, etc.? How can we, the Church, be relevant for today's generation? How to be Church beyond Sunday mornings or the school gate? I think God is asking us why we do things the way we do—i.e. structure of services, symbols, etc.—are they actually helping people to connect with Jesus or are they merely tradition?

All of the disclosures from the Royal Commission and the subsequent events that have occurred must be seen as a turning point for all of us in the Church. This is an opportunity for the whole Church, not simply in Australia, to really strip back to the basic important message of the gospels. All the trappings of Catholicism are so unnecessary and the leaders of the Church have to see that there has been too much emphasis on protecting "Holy Mother Church" and not enough done to value each and every soul in it. The hierarchy of the Church must start to put so much more value on the people who are the Church, not the structures, not the wealth, not the organisation. I really think that this has been lost and is the reason that people don't see the relevance any more. People experience God and have faith despite the organisation of the Church.

To be inclusive agents of change in a challenging society to help build positive relationships offering hope and comfort and acknowledging the sacredness of every person.

To renew the way the Church communicates with the people so that the message of Jesus comes through. This message is totally relevant to people in today's world, but it needs to be communicated in language that is relevant to them, not hidden in obscure old fashioned wordiness. This is especially important to young people if they are to have faith. Priests need do more to communicate with their parishioners, especially the younger ones who are increasingly finding religion has no relevance to their world. They need to try and understand the problems of people in the world of today, especially the young. They need to engage people (especially young people) in the liturgy by using language that will make it meaningful. Priests should be able to be married and women should play a more important role. This would mean they would understand

the ordinary person better. Focus on the New Testament. Jesus' words have relevance today but the Church seems to focus too much on the Old Testament. Priest's need to find ways to make the New Testament even more relevant and they can only do that if they spend time gaining an understanding of their parishioners' lives and their problems.

I think God is asking us to make his Church a place where everyone who embraces Christ's teachings of loving God and one's neighbour is included in our worship communities. This means that all of God's people irrespective of gender, ethnicity, marital status or gender orientation can feel respected and welcome to partake in the full life of the Church including the sacraments. For example, people who are divorced and remarried or are living in faithful homosexual relationships should feel accepted and at home and able to bring up their families within our Church structure without being told that they are 'living in sin'. I would like to see a Church that concentrates on the teachings of Christ on social justice, on supporting people in times of both joy and sorrow. I would like to see a Church where men and women both have equal voice and equally share in the administration of the Church. I would also like to endorse all the wonderful actions of both religious and laity who tirelessly work to run our parishes, our charitable organisations, like CatholicCare and St Vinnies and minister to the spiritual needs of the millions of Catholics both at home and around the world.

- Working on reinforcing and reconnecting with the Catholic identity in schools—at a staff, student, parent, whole school level. - Work on rethinking the image of the priest in the Church—bringing back down to the image of the shepherd, among the people. - Proactive (not reactive) statements acknowledging the mistakes of the Church in regard to sexual abuse. - Addressing the correlation between science and religion in order to clear up misconceptions in regard to the Church's views. - Continued engagement of young people in the Church and emphasising the importance of them in church/parish life. - Greater transparency in the Church in regard to decisions and leadership for the people of the Church. - Greater relationship between parishes and schools—schools are resource rich, parishes are spiritually rich. - Church needs to evolve so as to protect values and teachings of the faith—change of MIND not change of tradition to allow for increased engagement. - Church is a place of acceptance NOT judgement or ignorance—PREACH acceptance. - Shift the focus of religious studies in schools to emphasise the importance of nurturing individual faith. -Women need to play a bigger role in the Church—more visible to allow for better engagement of women in the Church, especially young women.

3 significant areas: Reverence: When we see reverence, we sometimes imitate it. Reverence is a heart action. It speaks about not only the relationship but the quality of the relationship with our God. It is reflective of gratitude or the lack of. It speaks of connection or indifference. Children at an early age need to be encouraged to practice reverence. Adoration: St. John Paul II, St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. John Vianney, etc. were proponents of Adoration. St. Teresa of Calcutta says of it 'Every holy hour deepens our union with Him and BEARS MUCH FRUIT.' Adoration for a limited number of hours each week maybe a good place to start. Whether in a chapel or before or after Mass. Children at an early age need to learn to spend time before the Blessed Sacrament. The Church/Australian bishops could promote, encourage and extend support in various ways for this. Talks about Adoration can be given. Most of the time people do not know what it is all about. We all need to learn. Sometimes the simplest things can be the answer and, at the same time, can be

the most difficult to accept. Is it a case of letting go and letting God? What will God be doing with our 'being still' and knowing He is God? Scripture - I have seen a family with three sons attend a Prayer Group. I was struck by the three sons aged from about 6 to 12 yrs. Each had a Bible and each had an enthusiasm for the Word of God. It is not only the physical fact that they carried a Bible with them, but there is a wisdom about them - a Holy Spirit about them. They are being nourished by solid food— the Word of God. I believe this is happening at their home more than anywhere else. We need this in our Catholic Church. Only the Holy Spirit will bring the people back to God and Scripture is where we will find the Holy Spirit. Now, you may say that Scripture is read at Mass. I have come to the realisation that that really is not enough. It would seem Catholic schools need to intensify their scripture content and faith generally. Classes could start with prayer, if this is not already being done. If in each year of school several passages could be chosen from scripture and repeated and memorised by the students through the year. The quotes would be appropriate for the particular level. There could be 4 quotes, for example, one dealing with love of God, sorrow for sin, protection and joy. 3 other areas for consideration: 1) Catholic TV station like EWTN is most desirable; 2) Promotion of Mother Mary, our leader in spiritual warfare and as the model for women; 3) Teach how to evangelise in day to day conversations.

I believe that God is asking Australians to not give up on being faith-filled Catholics. We are being asked to continue to align ourselves to the Catholic faith. God is wanting us to recognise that the Australian Catholic Church is still viable as it is the best place to be part of community. Whilst the Australian Catholic Church is facing a deep crisis not only in this present time but I think for at least 20-30 years, it is important that people remain strong in their beliefs. God is asking us to question our faith and our religious teachings because it is our right and it is a vital way to strengthen our faith and commitment to the Catholic Church. God is asking us to be more inclusive of all peoples from all works of life as their experiences and what they bring to each other is essential to the fabric of our faith filled community. God is asking us to open our eyes to forgiveness, to not only accept forgiveness but to willingly participants of forgiveness. To offer solace to those in pain or have had wrongs done to them are at the core of healing. Finally God is asking us to never give up hope because hope will enable us to find and give love and to be committed to ensuring that our faith-filled community can thrive and be one.

To provide and enhance sacramental support for our patients and residents in Catholic hospitals and aged care ... A health crisis can create a faith crisis; ageing can evoke a spiritual crisis. Our role is to support these crises with confident, competent, pastorally-oriented chaplaincy.

I think God is asking ALL of us to rebuild the Christian Church in Australia. I think God wants us to spend less time worshipping him as a substitute for actually following what Jesus taught. Jesus asked repeatedly to follow him and never once to worship him. He wants us to act, to help, to love, to share, to accept, to give, to forgive, to listen, to help, to assist all less fortunate as Jesus clearly showed us. God wants all of us including my Church the Roman Catholic Church to do more to assist all those less fortunate than ourselves. The Catholic Church is a very asset rich organisation and it is time to evaluate its commitment to charity in view of this wealth. This is the case especially for the need for generous, (not just adequate) speedy and heartfelt compensation for the victims of child abuse. God wants this and He is still waiting.

It would be good if the Church could take into consideration Christian communities where faith is handed over to the people in the form of adult catechesis, given by people who are reliving baptism and are on the way of conversion. Where faith is lived and experienced in a small community of people on journey together seeing for themselves the love of God and in Jesus Christ who is the model of humanity. To be formed in the Christian way of life through the grace of God will give you the urgency to evangelise and to announce the good news which the people are so thirsty to hear.

The group felt that Catholic education in Catholic schools needed to be seriously revamped. The young are the future of the Church, but if they are not getting the right sort of Catholic education, then the future of the Church is at stake.

-Go back to basics: Catholics need to return to fundamentals of faith: personal call to holiness, spirit of repentance, frequent the sacraments, and trust that when we are sincere in establishing our relationship with God, He will call us into mission. The Church is made of individuals: a holy Church needs saints. -Bold faith accompanied by actions, repentant of past mistakes, and paving the way for a more faithful and spiritual future. -Renewed focus on each individual call to holiness: help people pray and understand Church teaching so they can live faithfully (catechesis), accompany people who are not there yet through community, re-energise religious vocation as unique examples of striving for holiness, focus on supporting families as a training ground for holiness. -renewal in Catholic education: we need faithful teachers, schools to celebrate Church traditions and heritage, integration with parish life, review how religious education is being conducted and how it can more effectively evangelise young people. -Renewal in prayer: teach all Catholics how to pray, make sacraments more prominent and available (especially confession), focus on prayer in Catholic institutions (health, education, etc.), promote spiritual direction for all Catholics (and train more spiritual directors), be open to the charismatic renewal.

The role of the parish priest and the setup of the parish need complete overhaul. We have a dwindling supply of priests currently and we do not organise the laity to run the local parish. The priest's function is to preach Christ and make the sacraments available, thereby enabling the laity to seek sanctity. What the world wants from the Catholic Church is saints. The crises in the world are crises of saints.

God is asking for an end to clericalism, the main stain on the Church in the modern time. Clericalism was part of the problem underlying the covering up of sexual abuse. Clericalism currently frustrates the lay role in the Church, treating the laity like minors who need instruction while they sit in the pews on a Sunday Mass but sees no real role for them in running the Church. You talk about more lay involvement, but it is just talk until you radically reorientate the parishes to be run by the lay not by the clerics. Look at the way local councils and political parties are run and change what needs to be changed, and then allow the laity to do this.

How can we as a community of faith be better at evangelising the truths about our Catholic faith to our family, friends and all whom we make contact with. Being more open to change and not discarding anyone that wants to be part of the Eucharist. Live the commandment to love God and one another as God loves us.

As Knights of the Southern Cross, God expects us to stand up publicly as Catholic men.

We, members of Women's Wisdom in the Church (WWITCH), support the Plenary Council. As long as: the process is a transparent process whereby all submissions are collated by a body completely independent of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia to ensure that the faithful set the agenda; all submissions are published on the website; a woman is appointed as co-chair; and every meeting is simultaneously streamed. As WOMEN actively involved in the Church, mothers, sisters, friends and teachers, we are shattered by the revelations of the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse and the Papal summit on child protection, by the extent of the sexual abuse of children and vulnerable adults, and by the extent of the criminal cover up by the Australian hierarchy. The Plenary Council offers the opportunity for the Church to develop and implement a plan with a timeline to ensure that this never happens again, with independent and transparent professional standards for reporting and managing abusers meeting civil requirements. What we think God is asking of us in Australia today God speaks to us through the signs of the times. Signs of the times: Thousands of lay women have degrees in theology with expertise in teaching, communication and spiritual direction. Women are leaders in public life, professions, academia, politics and the military. Most congregations at Mass are at least 60% female and parishes survive because of these women. Therefore, God is asking is that the voices of women be heard, and their expertise be accepted at all levels of the Church to shape the future of the Church we love. Our practical suggestions are: 1. baptism introduces each person to full and complete membership of the Church. As full members, women must be included in all decision-making in the Church because we are all equal in the sight of God. 2. All language used in Church documents and liturgy must be inclusive. 3. Training for priests must take place within the community and women are a necessary part of this education. Ongoing priestly education must become mandatory, with sanctions. 4. Spiritual care, as well as psychological and physical care, of those abused by priests and religious must be provided by properly trained persons. 5. There is no reason why women could not be ordained to the diaconate immediately. 6. Because there are neither scriptural restrictions nor valid legal impediments to women being ordained as priests this must be actively embraced. 7. The Church's negative theology in relation to homosexuality and transgender must be overturned given that every person's sexual identity is God-given. 8. Clerical celibacy must become voluntary. 9. Homosexual and transgender persons must be able to be considered for ordination. 10. The health of the Church depends on the immediate establishment of synods in every diocese, with at least fifty percent lay, male and female, representation.

More proactive leadership from the Archdiocese on Catholic education for schools. New way to communicate gospel to Australia. Consistency of faith expectations in different parishes. Youth can be role models. Encourage the young to speak up about their faith. Rebuild Church from sexual abuse crisis. Priests not equal to good leaders. Should have married priests. Priests should not be on pedestal. Rethink sacrament of Confirmation at Year 6. Church in Australia needs to modernise to stay relevant. Gay rights - need to change the law? Eucharist/Mass needs to be more appealing to congregation. Role of music.

Formation!!! I grew up in a Catholic family and went to a Catholic school but it wasn't until my thirties after reading a lot that I truly understand the teachings of the Church. How can we understand our faith and love our Church if we are not formed. After going to a number of youth

groups, I became so tired of sitting in circles eating pizza being asked "What do you think (fill in the blank)?" I wanted to sit in the youth groups and be taught what the Church teaches and why, and then I will tell you what I think. But firstly educate me and form me!! I am a cradle Catholic so there was no need for me to do RCIA but in a way I would have loved to have understood the Catholic teachings as I was not getting that education at school. It would be amazing to have formation, catechesis classes, Bible studies and apologetics classes running out of parishes for teens and adults!! We need formation. There is so much miscommunication within the Church because people have not been formed and who don't truly know what we believe, why we believe, what the history of the Church is, etc. The Church will come alive when we Catholics truly understand and know the treasure of our faith.

God is asking for a more formed and unified Church within Australia. A Church that thoroughly knows and understands its teachings and gives all people the ability to confidently express their faith and articulate its teachings.

This is a time to go back to what Jesus' mission was for his disciples. In the Great Commission, Matthew 28, Jesus has a strong focus on making disciples. In cultural Catholicism, we have done a poor job in making new disciples. What traditions and methods have become barriers to us making disciples?? We need to make some courageous calls and align what we do with Jesus' mission.

Restore the Church's loss of credibility. Make the Church less hierarchical and have a flatter structure. Be current, modernise the approaches. Reclaim the youth. Liturgy/Mass - make it more interesting and appealing. Re-visit style and structure. Fair distribution of wealth - Distribution of resources and management (e.g. between Church and society). The Church has become too engrossed with the material. Look at the causes rather than symptoms in order to come up with the solutions.

I would love for there to be more options in the suburbs for daily Mass outside of work hours. I work from 9-5pm and it is very hard to find daily Mass before 9am and after 5pm. This would be wonderful. I have many friends who feel the same way. It would also be wonderful to have more churches across Melbourne with perpetual adoration. Prayer is key to the transformation of the Church. "Are you surprised that there are many people who have lost the grace of God, lost their faith, or have turned against the Church? There are many reasons for this, but there will always be one main reason: lack of prayer." Cardinal Van Tuan "Why are there crises in the Church? It is because people do not take prayer seriously." Cardinal Van Tuan

I think that God is asking us as individuals and as a Catholic community to be more trusting in His love and mercy, to be more faithful in following the teaching of His Son, to practice more genuine Christian love and compassion for all those we encounter in our lives, and to be more active members of the Church in helping it to fulfil its mission of bringing the Good News of the gospel to the world, especially to those who do not know about God. We are called to build up the Kingdom of God in this part of the world and make Australia a more faithful and caring nation through our own example. At this time, the Catholic Church is under attack from many segments of our society for its failure to respond properly to the scandal of sexual abuse of children by clergy. We as lay people could be tempted to withdraw from active involvement in public debates and remain

silent about important issues such as the sanctity of human life at all stages including the unborn, the importance of traditional marriage and family in holding society together, overcoming the ever-increasing gap between the very rich and the very poor in our country, and the decline in respect from more and more people in society for their fellow citizens, property and maintaining law and order. Instead, we as the laity must stand up and support our Church leaders at this time so that they know that they are not alone in their daily struggles and that we appreciate and recognise the importance of the lives of service that our clergy and religious offer for us as the Catholic community. We are called to look at our own individual situations and come up with innovative ways of bringing the Christian message through our words and actions to people we meet, to counter the secular and atheist messages that are especially bombarding our youth. We are called to become more active as lay people in community and political affairs so that the laws and morals of our country will return to being more in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ, which is why Australia has been so successful and peaceful compared to many nations around the world. Some people are calling for changes in the priesthood to allow married priests or female priests. I believe that this is unnecessary, as can be seen in the example of the Seminary in Melbourne Archdiocese where the number of Seminarians has increased from 12 in 1996 to over 50 today. We are called as Catholics to promote the importance of the priesthood to the young men in our parishes and provide greater support to those who answer God's call to this vocation through their journey. We are all called to spend more time each day in prayer and quiet reflection so that we become more aware of God's calling in our everyday lives.

Solid formation. I have had experience with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and I am absolutely amazed at how much the children know and understand the Catholic faith. It is so beautiful.

God is asking us to live by the gospel values, to carry the word of Jesus Christ by the way we live and act. God is asking us to accept and understand others. He wants us to have a sense of others, to live in communion with them and for them; to be aware of what service I can do for others, how I can be present. Compassion and empathy are important so God calls us to practise social justice. He calls us to work for the common good; to worship and celebrate together.

We need to get out of our comfort zone. We are being called to be witnesses to God's truth. There is more than one type of Catholic and there needs to be a greater acceptance that there is a wide spectrum of "good" Catholics. We are called to be authentic witnesses to Jesus. We can be more attractive by showing love for one another and others—governance, closeness to God, healing the separations, priests and vocations.

To accept gay men and the LGQBT community! Stop saying I'm not welcome and I'm not perfect. To have a radical reform of the liturgy which does not welcome young people. To allow women to become priests and to allow priests to get married. To say sorry to all the people hurting because of the Church—those abused by the Church, those rejected by the Church because we didn't succeed in religious orders, those who give of their time and volunteer for their whole life then the Church turns its back on them in their elderly years. To make music a major force in driving people back to the spirituality of Christianity. I cannot say the Apostles' creed 'I believe in the Catholic Church' as the Church as an institution has hurt so many and is not relevantly reaching out to the community. To open up various forms of temporary and contemporary religious

<p>commitment and missionary work. To ask why aren't Australians committing to religious life? To ask where are all the people in our Churches and liturgies? There you will find the answers on how to change.</p>
<p>1. To be more welcoming and to build community in and around the parish. 2. To get the laity more involved with parish life. 3. Re-introduce strong catechism classes for children at schools and parishes. 4. Programs to encourage and build strong families .... that's where virtues and values are inculcated.</p>
<p>God is asking to believe more in him, to minimise material things and give more time to him praying and tell to others that God still alive, everything comes from him.</p>
<p>It is a time to return to our roots, or traditions. Young people yearn for true guidance. So bring back the real deal: Eucharistic adoration, faithful youth groups praying the Rosary, meaty catechesis and sermons, beautiful solemn Masses and music. That's what we need and want. If we are not nourished, we will not remain. If you, the Church, do not offer this, who will? The world can't.</p>
<p>To care for, consider, and reach out to all young people in these very challenging times. To develop a Church that has equality of opportunity for women, including ordained ministry. To return to a Church that is simpler, less institutional, and with more humility, a servant Church with a servant ministry.</p>
<p>God is asking us in Australia to face the difficulties in our present Church hierarchy and deal with the truth of child sexual abuse in an open and honest manner. We need not hide from the truth but face it and allow our children to flourish in safe and healthy environments. The Churches are losing numbers every year as people become disheartened. I do not personally know how I want to proceed with my faith at this time as the Church is not responsible or being open and dealing with situations, hiding behind the seal of confession. We need to rebuild our trust and show others that Jesus is the centre of our religion and we need to be true to him.</p>
<p>1. Allow women to be in leadership roles of the Church, allow women to participate in decision-making process. 2. Women priesthood and deacon issues need to be openly discussed again - that women can become deacon and priests</p>
<p>To be faithful and authentic Catholics. Faithful to the teachings of Christ and his Church, authentic in how we live out our Catholic faith.</p>
<p>Hopefully people haven't just submitted a shopping list of grievances and personal opinions of changes they want to see. Because I could do that also. Especially how ugly the Church buildings have become, etc. But, the question isn't what don't you like and how can it be fixed. The question is "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" What is God asking of us? What does God want us to do in Australia? If Jesus visited Australia right now, the first thing he would do is comfort the victims of His Church, attend to the needs of Aboriginal Australians, welcome and help the refugees, help the poor struggling families cope with the demands of modern cost of living, and bring people back to belief and his Church. Therefore, surely God is asking us to be his hands and feet in the world. For us Catholics to have more obligation than just attending Sunday Mass. But giving us all an obligation to tend to the needs of</p>

the society. God is asking that laypeople and clergy to be equal partners to leave the comfort of the Church and get our hands dirty to help. To serve God by serving others. And then to give thanks to God each Sunday in joyful fellowship. For the clergy to provide the education needed for us to be equipped with the tools to tackle issues. By simply discussing the real issues...not as a speech, but as a conversation. We all must heal wounds of others, comfort others, help others, spread love to others. And God is asking all Catholics to practice what we preach.

In conclusion, [ - ] parish hopes for a Church: \* That is inclusive, welcoming, compassionate, more humble \* That adopts a model of leadership which is democratic and inclusive of laity \* That builds on the existing strengths and gifts of all - including our Aboriginal and other migrant friends \* That uses language and symbols that are relevant in our modern world \* That is responsive to social justice issues \* That shows leadership on environmental issues and climate change \* That engages in rectifying the wrongs of the past and through our actions show we are striving to bring healing and to be authentic disciples of Christ \* That makes Christ the centre and heart of our world, our communities, our homes and our hearts

[ - ] parish also includes three primary schools within our boundaries. Our parish priest visited each school and asked students from different levels these questions: 1. How do you understand the word 'Church' and what does this word mean for you? 2. What is attractive to you about Church? 3. What difficulties do you experience? 4. In my ideal Church we would do ...? We would see ...? We would hear ...? We would hope for ...? Church would be even better if ... Below are the responses from the students: 1. How do you understand the word 'Church' and what does this word mean for you? o Holy / special place of God's house/home o Whole school o A place to get things off your chest o A place of prayer o To think about family members who have gone to heaven o To be grateful o To be in your own quiet world and think o Church is a gathering place o Place to celebrate the life of Jesus o Place of prayer 2. What is attractive to you about Church? o Quiet place o Time to relax and be quiet o Music/singing o School community o Learning about God o Listen to scriptures o Calm/peace o Saying prayers o Lining up and getting blessed o The bread and wine o The respect in the church o Shaking hands with other people in the church and giving peace o Learning the history of Church and the tradition o Watching what the priest does o Being able to laugh at jokes ... o Answering questions 3. What difficulties do you experience? o Understanding unknown/confusing words o Concentrating/can't see and keep focus o Sitting for a long period of time o Babies crying/hard to hear o Pews are uncomfortable (suggestion: putting pillows on the chairs) o Pushing and shoving when getting the Eucharist (saying hurry up) o Standing for a long time o Kneeling when there is not knee pads on every chair o When your back gets sore o Letting all year levels speak during Mass o Lots of people going up for a blessing o Church can be boring sometimes o Stories can be interesting but it is a bit boring o Don't understand everything that is happening o It can be all the same 4. In my ideal Church, we would do ...? We would see ...? We would hear ...? We would hope for ...? Church would be even better if ... o Comfortable seating or sitting on the floor on beanbags/recliner chairs o Modern music/rock. Songs that we can sing along to. o Shorter Mass times o The school to go to Mass at different times so it can be changed and made easier for the younger years to understand. We could have a Junior Mass then a Senior Mass. o More understanding of Bible o Greenery o Non-alcoholic wine o Digital story rather than Scripture

being read o Have Mass outdoors o Bless the bread in front of us o Alternative to wine for the kids to have at school Mass o Music as you walk into church o More decorations o Play instead of reading scripture o Make the church colourful o Provide snacks o Mindfulness in church-guided meditation o Eucharist all in 1 weekend or classes o Waterfall o Kneeling pads

That changes to the training of priests be developed, which are more in tune with today's society, and to avoid the possibility of sexual abuse by clergy ever happening again. That women feature more prominently at the decision-making level of the Church and have equal access to roles within the Church. That, somehow, the Church become more relevant to young people so that they may be encouraged to have much greater involvement in the life of the Church. Priests in active ministry in the Church should have the ability to marry, or be married. The Church must defend the dignity of the human person at all costs, including the unborn. That the Church be more welcoming of all people, and be more inclusive. That the Church considers ways that people who have left the Church can be brought back into the fold. Although the importance of the clergy must not be devalued in any way, the concept of clericalism and centralised pier must be avoided. That the Church fosters the passing on of the faith to new generations, as well as stressing the importance of living the faith. That the Church more actively promotes all the good works (and there are many) that the Church is responsible for, which may help to boost approval of the Church in the eyes of the faithful and beyond. That the Plenary Council works with ACU and other expert educational institutions in the developing of its agenda and outcomes. That consideration that the Church be subject to the law of the State over Canon Law That the Church consider how to further implement the precepts of Vatican II, such that greater lay participation is a result. The Church needs to be seen to be authentic and transparent. That the Church continually be aware of, and show that it is aware of, its mission to be a sacrament of God's love and mercy in the world.

To be a better listener and respect others and to pray for tolerance. We need now, more than ever, to be humble. At the same time, we need to help one another in our journey with Christ. I feel overwhelmed at times but I really hope and pray that the community work our parishes do, will help us- the faithful and bring more people back to God.

Our challenge is to heal the hurt caused within and outside the Church by the clerical abuse scandal. Key to this is to review our humility and our love for those who have been hurt by abuse. The Pell verdict (regardless of the appeal decision) is a wake-up call to the Church. It is a wound to the very heart of the Church of Jesus. It affects all within the Church and the public as a whole (especially the victims) but critically it also affects our mission - to serve the Australian community. While our brothers and sisters are suffering a crisis of belief in God and looking at a future involving possible environmental catastrophe, we are morally compromised and demoralised.

1) God is asking us to be responsive to the signs of the times; we need to be a Church of the 21st century: + we need a reform of Church governance + we need to respond to falling attendance at Church; welcome young people into a new flexible community, without neglecting the needs of the current age groups attending Church + move the Catholic Church into the 21st century and to be part of the evolving world + we need to respond to the victims of abuse and not protect the institution of the Church + Jesus gave us the Be-attitudes and the Catholic Church is stressing the

commandments + begin to listen with new ears to *Laudate Si* + change the English version of the Mass to be a comfortable version of English as it used to be 2) God is asking us to be a Church that is inclusive of women at all levels and in all roles within the Catholic Church: +a Church that builds on the strength of all +a Church that acknowledges and encourages +a Church that trains lay people for leadership, refer to Corinthians 14 and the gift of prophecy; John 20 where Mary of Magdalene is sent to find the men who had hidden; the Catacombs where there is an image of a woman bishop + a Church that rejects clericalism and removes the notion of priests on pedestals

This is a submission from Acceptance Melbourne. Acceptance Melbourne is a collection of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender, intersex, queer and Catholic. This community embraces and welcomes diversity, and is inclusive and open to all who identify as LGBTIQ+, supporting their integration of faith, sexuality and gender identity. The Listening and Dialogue Encounter with the LGBTIQ+ Community held in Melbourne on 6th February 2019 commenced with an almost unanimous acknowledgment that we all care deeply about the future of the Church. In this document, we have collated the submissions from the listening session and formulated some specific requests for Church action. We have not included every point made at the listening session but have discerned the main points from the general consensus. We hope this marks the beginning of a true encounter between LGBTIQ+, people and the institutional Church —the end of a deafening neglectful silence —and perhaps the first step toward reconciliation. We have not chosen to be LGBTIQ+; but we exist, and we claim our place as God’s children and as a part of the Church. The Church must be radically inclusive and actively reach out to all margins of society if it is to look and feel like Jesus. She will need prophetic Church leadership to achieve this. In response to, What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? The following points were made. 1. There is a marked disconnect between the ‘Person’ of Jesus and current Church teaching (particularly regarding LGBTIQ+ people). For us, Jesus is a symbol of radical welcome and reaching out to the margins, regardless of perceived ‘purity’, despite the disapproval of the scandalised. 2. There is a marked disconnect between Catholics and the hierarchy. The Catholic laity do not generally agree with the socially conservative vocal minority. Leaving any consideration of sacramental same-sex blessings aside, according to multiple polls two-thirds of Catholics support civil same-sex marriage in Australia (Crosby/Textor 2014, Jim Reed Newgate Research 2017). Similar numbers appear in Brazilian and Irish polls (Pew Research Centre 2013). Could the Spirit be leading the Church from the ground (or the heart) up?

To put our trust in God and have hope for the future. God is a compassionate God and would ask Australia to be inclusive and welcoming to all.

I believe God is asking us to get back to His core message: love Him and love one another. For too long the Catholic Church has been associated with sex. If you ask non-Catholics what word they most associate with Catholicism they don't answer peace, or love, or charity, they would answer sex. Celibate priests, no sex before marriage, no homosexuality, no birth control. And that's the positive messages from the Australian Catholic Church. The negative messages from the media are that it is a Church that turns a blind eye to paedophilia, rape, and incest. We, the Catholic laity, are daily asked how we can support a Church that is more interested in condemning normal sexuality than condemning immoral and illegal acts. The Prayers of the Faithful acknowledge the damage caused by the abuses exposed by the Royal Commission and various court cases, but the

congregation is asked to also pray for ourselves and our own culpability in not seeing and acting. I would prefer to hear prayers for the culpability of Catholic leaders who have done these deeds and/or covered it up. As a parishioner I have no culpability and I resent the clergy trying to diffuse the blame. At this time, I think God is asking for the Church to rebrand itself and that will require hard work on the part of the bishops. I would like to see Australian bishops actively stepping away from the link between sex and Catholics. I don't want to see bishops big-noting themselves by lecturing anyone on the horror of sex crimes and the horror of non-reproductive sex outside of marriage. It has to stop. In my humble opinion, it would be a more appropriate act of penance for the clergy to renounce all mention of sex, especially media comments, for one human lifetime in recognition of the damage they have caused. Prayers, Masses, etc. are ego boosting and self-affirming for the people who are the most responsible for this blackening of the Church's name and purpose. As I wrote at the start, Catholicism is and should be associated as being more than just the Church that rejects sex. It should be the Church that honours God by leading the way on climate change and spends more time arguing for the first three commandments than arguing against homosexuality or the freedom to discriminate against homosexuals. Surely, given that homosexuality is not mentioned in the commandments, attending sporting events or the shops on a Sunday is a greater breach for Church employees than marrying a same-sex partner? As a lay-person, the Church's decision to vilify homosexuals and not attack a consumerist culture suggests that the Church likes punching down, not up. The Catholic Church has done much for refugees, but the child abuse scandal means that any time they offer to help children, they are perceived as grooming the vulnerable children to be sexually exploited. The Church has a lot to offer. It provides a valuable time and space to deeply reflect on oneself and the world. Its core message uplifts the spirit.

Plenary 2020 Consultation Responses [ - ] Public Hospital [ - ] February 18th 2019 We need the Church to be a place of welcome, forgiveness and non-judgement where we can be refreshed. Jesus, in his ministry, was slow to judge. We, the Church, need to go back to basics—to the story of Jesus. Many people of faith do not know of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God—about the importance of outreach to the poor and those on the edge of society. This is the direct focus of our work at [ - ]. The homilies at Mass need to interpret the gospels for our time. The Church should be an oasis that inspires the pilgrim to rest and reflect. We need to celebrate the now of the seasons, the awe of beauty, and the silence of simplicity. Get rid of structures in Church buildings that divide people and adornments that separate people from one another. Embrace the young and give them opportunities are there to reflect on the concerns of their world. Parishes need to be supportive of all, use rituals with music to celebrate life events, and involve a wide variety of people. Sometimes the tradition of the Church is too heavily overlaid on people's present experience so that people feel the Church is completely disconnected from them. People have a spirituality which the Church does not really understand. Dulles' models of Church need to be revisited: Servant Church, Herald of God's Word, Body of Christ, and Church as Sacrament. Catholic Health lives out these different models every day. It cares for the most vulnerable in our community and celebrates God's presence in those for whom we care. The people involved in Catholic healthcare are the leaders and experts in the field so should lead the Church in the consideration of all issues related to health care. Listen to these people and their views on trends and trials in health care. The people of God have so much experience of what best practice for a

corporation or an institution looks like, so the Church needs to consult with lay experts in their fields of expertise. Respect and honour needs to be given to unpaid workers—don't call them volunteers—they are workers for the Kingdom. Clericalism is problematic. A male dominated, hierarchical institution that has lost relevance is a significant barrier to the development of trust. The sexual abuse scandals in the Church have been a disaster and leading to the fact that many have little trust in the Church as a moral compass for society. Married priests and women priests may be a way forward. Half the population are women so they need to be involved in the leadership of the Church. Many priests are lonely and especially when most parishes have a priest living on his own. Priests need to see that they are job-sharing with others. Co-responsibility for ministry is the way forward.

Plenary 2020 Consultation Responses [ - ] Private Hospital [ - ] February 13th 2019 We need to return to the Jesus message—to repent and believe in God's Kingdom, to love and serve: • the Church belongs to the people, not the clergy • the Church is present in our daily living and with the people we encounter • the Church at [ - ] is caring for and supporting our community with love, patience, compassion in times of joy, suffering and fear We need a Church that speaks boldly and listens with a humble heart. Attention to the voice of the laity has to be more than tokenistic. We look to be: • a Church that is hope-fuelled and therefore hope-filled • a Church that recognises the face of God in the encounter with the other • a Church that is inclusive, transparent and compassionate in practice from within Our Church opens the doors to all: • boundaries or exclusion should not be applied to people but only to behaviours • we should be places of hospitality and celebration • a Church that is assertive and proactive in its looking outside of itself and its service of the poor and marginalised, and • promotes the Pope's teaching in *Laudate Si* We need to have the courage to shine a light on power and control evident in the institutional Church, to transform it into one with humility and love and servant leadership. We need to involve women at all levels of discernment and decision making. There is a cry for the legitimate inclusion of women at all levels of the Church. Hear their voice with respect. Allow priests who wish to get married. Married priests in our diocese now are accepted. Seminary training has to change. Seminarians need to have more experience of real life concerns of the ordinary person in the pew. They need to see themselves as members of the people of God, rather than being from a different, higher class. We may need to use different language for and about God so that our young people see and experience the spirit of Jesus alive and active in our world. The language of the liturgy sometimes hinders people's experience of the Spirit in their lives. We need to be inspired when we go to Sunday Mass to go and bring about God's kingdom. The Church has changed from 50 years ago in that now we have very active cultural groups in our churches with some more traditional than others, but with many of the Australian-born parishioners not present. So we need a Church which is flexible and responsive enough to allow all to worship in their own appropriate ways. Who will be in the church on a Sunday in the future? We need space and time for meditation and opportunities to help in the formation of people in contemplation in action.

The answers were prepared together with the leadership of Portuguese-speaking community in Melbourne, which usually meet on the last Sunday of each month for a Mass at [ - ] Church, located at [ - ]. In this context, 7 members of this community were present, sharing their ideas and

suggestions replying to the questions for the Plenary Council. A common occurrence in our community is that we have come from active communities in our country of origin (Brazil), to a country where we experience barriers to integrate into parishes and/or communities. This is due to either to issues of communication and the language used at church and or in communities of which we are part. Many of us have also found a lack of spirituality and attractiveness in the various parishes we have attended or to which we belong. We feel that the Australian Catholic Church is not renewing, and we have not been seeing in our communities, a clear strategy to attract and integrate new people, especially the youth. We believe that God is asking of us, as active members of the Australian Catholic Church for:

- A greater search for renewal.
- To develop strategies to attract children and young people to the parishes and communities, in order to form an expressive active Church of tomorrow!
- We also feel that the Australian Catholic Church should have a welcome pastoral and engage in activities directly with young, including meetings and retreats, seeking for dialogue and understanding their expectations and interests, so that we can attract them to the Christian community and Christian life.

Some of our suggestions would be:

- Appropriate meetings and retreats for young, where— in addition, to foster spirituality and prayer—they could find a supportive environment to debate controversial themes, such as abortion, homosexuality, drugs, depression, etc.
- § Raise a welcoming community movement, where new people could feel welcomed and an integral part of the same family of the Church.
- § Establish young groups, after their First Eucharist and Confirmation—where they can be nurtured on the path of spirituality, and into being active parishioners and members of the Church.
- § More engaging Masses, with different music and specific language to nurture young people, and where they could identify themselves as part of the community;
- § Running surveys in Catholic schools, raising a forum where young people can express their ideas, so we can renew the approach and the way Catholic communities work.
- § Use social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.), more efficiently as this the best way to reach the young and foster dialogue, and hopefully participation.
- § Masses focused on a spiritual approach, where everyone could have the opportunity to have a true encounter with God.

God is asking us to reach out to all people and lift them up. God is asking us to be the human face of God. God is asking us to be humble and inclusive. This is what God has always asked of us.

What we discerned that God is asking the Church in Australia: Renewing the interior the Church (parishes and the domestic Church—the family) in order to renew the exterior—going out on mission to build the Body of Christ. Growing parishes where liturgy and the sacraments are key, for the sacraments are the basis of who we are—the exit and the return. We exit to minister and reach out to others, but they are also what we return to: from the sacraments stems all else. They are the end and the beginning. Renewal of community in parishes so that they are a family of families. Not a place where we happen to be in the same room with other people, but where people take responsibility for one another and consider one another as family. Summary: parishes where the liturgy and the sacraments are the basis of who we are: the foundation of our lives; so that the interior of the Church (parishes and the domestic Churches/families) and our mission in the world can be renewed.

There is a tone of misogyny in the Church's teachings, e.g.: reading St Paul's exhortation to women to obey their husbands - what message is this sending to half the population when the

rest of society is concerned with protecting women from domestic violence. The language of the readings is so dated - we stand at the lectern and see people from non-English speaking backgrounds who have no idea what we are proclaiming. The wealth of the Church is a scandal when so many of the faithful, in fact the world's population, are suffering from poverty. The word 'scandal' is on everyone's lips and the Church must support Pope Francis in his determination to help eradicate paedophilia and concentrate instead on building a stronger Christian Church.

God is asking us to recognise sin.

To make the Catholic Church relevant to people in Australia today. This will involve making big changes to current practices. Also, these reviews should take place more often - 80 years between plenaries is too long as society has changed so much.

The Catholic Church needs to LEAD THE WAY in changing the inequality in Australia and the world by LOVING LIKE JESUS LOVED: Stopping the judgement and exclusion of people e.g. LGBTIQ people, divorced people and becoming totally inclusive; Stopping amassing property, money and possessions and do more by humbly using its vast resources for the poor and disadvantaged, including victims of sexual abuse rather than for hiring the top lawyers to defend sexual abuse clergy. Ordinary people are not helped in this way - George Pell should have used legal aid lawyers like I would have to! Totally reforming its governance structure to be DEMOCRATIC, REPRESENTATIVE - 50% women at least, multicultural, diverse e.g. LGBTIQ, people with disabilities, Indigenous, etc. represented; Leading the way in closing the gap for Indigenous Australians; Being TRANSPARENT, HONEST and SELF-SCRUTINISING rather than trying to protect the institution and the clergy before acting compassionate; Reforming to reflect the values of the wider Church of the 21st century e.g. stop telling people not to use condoms and other contraception methods - many cannot support large families and HIV/AIDS is still a major issue in many countries, celibacy is totally unnecessary and outdated and arguably a major contributing factor in child sexual abuse; Engaging the youth of Australia in contemporary ways - we are losing our youth to Evangelical Churches or to secular society; Clergy reform - they are supposed to be SERVANTS not RULERS!! Anyone who has the skills and heart to be a priest, including women, married people, LGBTIQ people, etc. should be able to be priests; We need to be a Church that is obviously Jesus-like; obviously on the side of the outcasts, the poor, the suffering; the disadvantaged, the abused, the oppressed etc.; Stripping the parishes and seminaries of ultra conservatives ('Pharisees') and judgmental, self-important persons who are on a quest for power! THIS IS NOT JESUS' MISSION and NEVER WAS! Becoming active and VERY VOCAL in public debate on justice issues and social reforms - not lagging centuries behind - on issues such as refugees, exploitation of workers, safe injecting rooms, etc. etc. We need guidance from INFORMED and COMPASSIONATE members of the Church, both clerical and lay; Reforming liturgy to be more reflective of the world we live in - how ridiculous that a slideshow of photos can't be shown at a funeral! This is overreaching, unloving and unnecessarily dictatorial - have a liturgy team that oversees things like this to ensure there is moderation but room for self-expression. In short, the Church, from the person on the street to the Pope, needs to be JESUS in the world not dictators, power brokers, consumers or judges. WE are the CHURCH - let's be CHURCH TOGETHER in reality rather than a hierarchy that lords it over the people and is very removed from the everyday

struggles of people, some of which has been created by the disgrace of child sexual abuse by clergy.

God is asking us to lead. To lead a global renewal unseen in the Church's history.

To treat people fairly and equally. To care for people of all walks of life. To be humble, not obsessed with doctrine or wealth (why does the Church guard its riches so vociferously, denying victims of abuse access to critical compensation?). To care for the environment. As a young, progressive Catholic (yes, I still consider myself a Catholic even though I am utterly appalled by the sexual abuse perpetrated and covered up by the Church and completely disagree with the Church's current direction), I strongly feel that unless the Church returns to that basic teachings of Jesus (i.e. love your neighbour, don't judge another, help others wherever you can), the Church is doomed. Most young people—even those who have gone through the Catholic education system—have already given up.

To be more honest in our witness, to be less pharisaic regarding moral teaching, and to be more generous in our outreach.

As a Church in crisis across the world; sexual abuse, declining active participation and outdated structures and decision-making processes; the Holy Spirit calls us to renew our mission and embrace the world we live in. This is a crisis that has been centuries in the making and cannot be decades in resolving. The Catholic Church should be a beacon that welcomes all, includes all and provides moral guidance for how to live in this post-modern, neo-activism world. If the Church (the bureaucracy) does not change, it will become irrelevant to more and more people. In practical terms, this means opening up Holy Orders (married priests, former priests, women priests -other faiths have shown how this enriches), optional celibacy (and caring for psycho-sexual health), doing away with clericalism (the notion that only ordained Catholics have the power to make decisions denies the Church the benefits of the wisdom, perspective and experience of the majority of its members - laity, religious sisters and brothers, youth). A more democratic and transparent Church is what is expected in this age and what was glimpsed at by VCII. Anything less than that loses the respect of its people and is at odds with what society experiences in other aspects of life. The language of the Church is patriarchal and outdated; people are excluded by language. A non-gendered God has been gendered. The majority of the congregation (female) is not represented on the altar (male priest). I am a committed Catholic and a hope-filled one too. But at this time in our history, I am disillusioned and fearful that change will not come in my lifetime. The wheels of the Church do not need to move slowly - there is too much to lose by doing so. My son trained to be a priest for many years and is now in a loving relationship. He loves his faith and the Order he joined, but he also loves a faith-filled woman and wants a family—the Church has lost a wonderful man because of its intransigence. The Church loses people every day because it is losing its relevance. We are a highly educated and spiritual people: this must be respected and laity must be fully active in the governance, liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. We need to listen to each other, value each other more and break open, not only the Word, but also the doors and allow the Holy Spirit to work through everyone; not just an elite, self-selected few. To release a grip on power is a daunting proposition, but no change will come and the many blessings will not be realised unless the Church undertakes genuine and authentic reform and change. Obviously, not all priests, nuns and brothers are guilty

of sexual abuse, but the good are tainted by the sins of it. We need to work together, listen to each other and fully reconcile with those hurt by the Church's actions and inaction. The work of the Church is Christ fully present (faith development, education, health and social justice) and is predominantly undertaken by the laity. The laity are not just the worker ants; we are the Church.

To be more a Jesus Church and less of a Church fashioned on/by the Vatican and historic rituals and language. Be more transparent and more simply follow Jesus' message to share, care, be less judgemental, laughing for joy Church. Change the language of Eucharist to something more spontaneous and pew-led. Be daring and invite the people in the pews to assist in Eucharist. Be honest when dealing with sexual abuse. Grow up in relation to understanding the creator's gift of sex and sexuality. Get rid of the robes, skull caps, rings, anything scarlet and/or black. Take off the white collars, remove the rings. Make it the priest's job to open the church in the mornings. Get real - more like Jesus.

God is asking the same of us in Australia now as He asked over 2000 years ago- "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you ..." Matt 28:19-20 How do we do this? The blind cannot lead the blind. In order to teach our faith, we must ourselves be formed in the faith. This can be achieved in our churches by: - A national Adult Catechetical Program - Discouraging children's liturgy programs which take children out of Mass and are not long enough to teach effectively - Implementing Catechesis of the Good Shepherd programs at every parish. This can be achieved in our schools by: - Acknowledging that Religious Education in our Catholic schools is failing - Encouraging Catholic schools to employ teachers who know and live their faith - Introducing programs like COGS or similar which encourage faith to be viewed not as a subject but as a relationship to be built over time - making sacramental preparation the responsibility of the parish. The current abuse scandals have shaken our Church. Parishes must implement strategies to protect children and the vulnerable immediately. It is getting harder to live Christian values in an increasingly secular society. But we must not use this as an excuse to make Catholicism more palatable by watering down the teachings of our faith. Lay Catholics look to the bishops and priests to do as Christ instructed—stand firm and hold fast to tradition, especially on moral issues such as gay marriage, LGBTQIA "acceptance", abortion, euthanasia, paedophilia, etc. "The age of casual Catholicism is over, the age of heroic Catholicism has begun. We can no longer be Catholics by accident but instead we must be Catholics by conviction." Fr. Terrence Henry, TOR

We think that God is asking us to place Jesus at the centre of our lives in accordance with the basic ideas and the original message of the gospels—the presence of the Risen Christ. We are being asked (notably by Pope Francis) to read and reflect on the scriptures, especially the gospels and also the primary scripture of creation, ideally on a daily basis. We are being asked to pray—more and in more mature ways—especially in the silent listening and gazing of meditation / contemplation. We think that God is asking us to gather more in small groups such as we have for our Listening and Encounter Dialogue, for family groups, for Lent, for meditation, for scripture study and for much more—an Australian way of 'basic Christian communities' where we hold Jesus at the centre with symbols such as cross, water, seed, Bible, etc. We think that God is asking us on this driest of continents to reflect on and to highlight the sacredness of water and its role in the health of land, rivers, lakes, seas and oceans—and of all the life forms, including us humans,

whose life and wholeness depend on its flow. As well, we can reflect on the power of fire—that of bushfires out of control, of the fire-stick burning of Indigenous people in renewing the food chain, and of the purification and passion of the fire in Jesus’ eyes. As a rural community, we think that God is asking us to care for all aspects of our land because we will reverence and protect only what we know and care about. We can be leaders in telling the story of our mountains, rivers, wetlands, forests, deserts and grasslands and in calling for even half of our land to be protected from exploitation so that nature has a chance to recover from the effects of climate change—for the sake of our common home and future generations of all life forms. We think that God is asking us to honour the Indigenous peoples of this Pacific region, to apologise for the misrepresentation of their culture (as described in writings such as ‘Dark Emu’) and to invite their unique contributions as we work together in the Spirit who recreates. We think that God is asking us to welcome difference—ecumenical, inter-faith, cultural, educational, sexual, inabilities and disabilities, age—in our common search for wholeness and peace. In particular, let us welcome and encourage the blessings of the feminine in all aspects of our organising, decision-making and outreach in mission. We think that God is asking us to grow in faith and in the knowledge of our traditions and scriptures so that we can be life-giving leaven in society and humble servants of Christ’s Realm.

God is asking us the same question Stephen asked in Acts about ministries and equitable distribution of our gifts amongst the community. The need to listen to the grassroots and live an authentic life in a developed egalitarian multicultural land of all its people, Western Culture where everyone came as a refugee. The Middle Eastern cultural roots and the Imperial Roman culture that was imposed by Constantine has cut off the faith message and the transmission of the true gospel message of Jesus and his Apostles to be a welcoming, forgiving, loving and healing community of faith which is inclusive and equal in all ways and ministries like the role of women and the laity generally. This was acknowledged in the Vatican II Constitution where the Church was defined as the people of God and everyone shared in the priesthood. The history and politics have seen the worldwide Church pay lip service to this and in microcosm the Australian Church has repeated this loss of direction from our core mission. Archbishop Polding and Archbishop Ullathorne described the pastoral challenges that lie ahead in our wide brown land and devised a structure to deliver our faith. For practical reasons latter bishops chose another plan for pragmatic reasons of control and staffing but beginning with the censoring of Mary McKillop's pastoral plan this system has shown its weaknesses because it assumes every parish will have a skilled pastoral leadership who will support their bishop's policies and papal teaching . It assumes this leadership would have the time to continue their education beyond the seminary and have the energy to cope with the immense workload and emotional stress placed on them beyond their skills, capacities or time. We assumed the parish pastoral leadership would be able to delegate and trust their lay community to complete their task. The emotional, spiritual, moral and medical breakdown of our clergy beginning with Fr [ - ] in Tasmania was foreseen by Polding which is why he advocated regional centres where priests could live in community and be delivered the care, spiritual support, mental health and exercise as well as friendship which our lonely men are denied living in empty parish houses which are not tolerated in the commercial world where employers are liable for neglect. We have a great record to promote and excellent pathway to wholeness, contentment and peace that the material world cannot match. However we have

abdicated our role in the media [where the medium is the message especially in social media] and the public realm leaving the major issues to a few lone voices or leaders of our Protestant and inter-faith organisations to speak out. This has left disconnected, uniformed pew Catholics and those Catholics who have walked away ignorant of what we are doing other than Pope Francis. They are demoralized and dispirited or very, very angry. Our job is to reconnect them but we need strong, positive leadership like Bishop Long.

*[This is Part 2 of submission as a result of discussions in 5 states and 7 dioceses so first submission covered structural reforms which have lessened or blocked message of God between the executive and people in the pews or who have walked away.]* Jesus, the Apostles and latter day leaders like Francis of Assisi down to Mary McKillop have had good messages and values to make our lives better than we imagined but they are not being heard. If we reform the structure as proposed in Part 1, what are those messages and how can we deliver them? Across the seven dioceses the common message was we cannot pick and choose issues. While some know that Church agencies are putting out points of view in the various corridors of power, the ordinary believer is ignorant of that and left with the media space filled with the opposing point of view. Some examples: 1. The Euthanasia Bill passed in Victoria ignored all the mistakes made in the Netherlands and Belgium and according to sources within the Ethics Commission, there will be many lives terminated and medical staff heavily stressed as they were in Northern Territory when good palliative care was required. However, no substantial summary was given to pew believers beyond the sacred nature of life. We all know of cases when prolonging life would be wrong but no talking points were provided for these grey areas. 2. The third term Abortion Law in Victoria has been dreadful with two prem-baby nurses coming regularly to Mass in tears after their shift after they witnessed the termination of babies for contraceptives, not health reasons. Neither party is reviewing law but Church is silent. 3. The plight of the refugees, homeless and young couples who are forced to rent and both work at the expense of their children who suffer the loss of family time and long term consequences of inadequate child care. 4. Promotion of quality aged-care provided by churches where residents are prime focus as opposed to profit based bodies where only bottom line matters. 5. The long term cost of creeping, invisible environmental and ecological degradation that Pope Francis has pointed that market-oriented politicians and policy makers ignore. 6. The ongoing harm of gambling on the family and the public subsidy to Crown Casino. 7. The gap in support for the mentally ill and their families which could be addressed by groups like Catholic Psychological Care Service based in Brisbane. 8. To educate every member of our congregation that these issues go back to our beginnings with Matthew's Gospel on looking after the least of our brethren and what Romans identified us by. It is not political but social justice that every formed Christian is called to deliver by their baptism and confirmation. 9. The bishops need to enter public debate in these matters either personally or with an appointed, skilled delegate, just as Archbishop Penman has done with his regular public forums. 10. We need to promote dialogue on multicultural and local values.

I think that God is asking us to gather in 'circles' or small communities explicitly centred on Christ. These 'basic Christian communities' will have an Australian flavour as they tell the story of this continent and its part in the story of our planet, 'our common home', with its unique features

including geology, lifeforms, over forty thousand years of human impact, colonisation, multiculturalism and recent history of democracy and climate change. We will listen to the Spirit of the Cosmic Christ guiding us through present challenges and into new manifestations of love. I think that God is asking us to see deacons, both men and women, as key and equal members of these groups who will give witness to and support the life of all as baptised 'in Christ' and sharing the offices of Priest, Prophet and King. I think that God is asking us to discern how these shared 'offices' can manifest in a sacramental way 'where two or three are gathered' and where stories reveal our needs for healing, reconciliation, Eucharist and gifts of the Spirit. These gatherings become sacramental places of encountering merciful love. I think that God is asking us to learn the lessons of the child sex abuse situation, to listen to stories of abuse, wilful ignorance and cover-up—in small groups—and to invite all to walk the way of humility and forgiveness. Then we can apply the lessons to other issues including the abuse of 'our common home', Indigenous people, refugees, homeless people, victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, drug users, terrorists, racism and more. I think that God is asking us to discern how abuse of children is symptomatic of the failure of 'The Body of Christ' to teach about and witness to Jesus as the fully human incarnation of God in whom, as Cosmic Christ, all creation is 'good' and sacred. This discernment may call for confession in Church settings (like a Plenary Council) of 'missing the mark' and for repentance/metanoia—with Church leaders showing the way and demonstrating their faith in the resurrected 'Son of Man'. I think that God is asking us to learn the story of our evolving and expanding universe and to consider how Jesus is the epitome of the fully evolved and alive human being, the Alpha and Omega of Creation. Then we will be able to discern how to use it as a source and resource for the parables Jesus tells today. This could be done in a similar and parallel way to the cycles of gospel readings, especially for Sundays (like a 'drip-feed'). I think that God is asking the Church to develop something like a policy of learning, preaching and teaching *Laudato Si'* and a culture of seeking wisdom from our Creator Spirit as we discern our response to today's crises including climate change.

I think that God is asking us to gather regularly in small groups where we learn and practise the disciplines of following Jesus 'in Christ'—including meditation, contemplation, Lectio Divina and daily reflection on the Bible, especially the gospels. I think that God is asking us to engage our whole selves—body, mind and heart—with Ruah/breath, song, dance, etc. as a way of bringing our shame into the Light before it emerges from the 'shadow' in dark and destructive ways. The news of this week has been George Pell's guilty verdict. There has been much discussion on this sexual child abuse issue over the past few years with the Parliamentary Enquiry and the Royal Commission and I have been waiting for those involved to talk about the Mission of the Church and to use words like Love, God, Trinity, Jesus, Christ, Spirit, forgiveness, and Mercy. I think of the line: "Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save." (Psalm 146:3) and I think that God is asking us to discern how much one 'plank' to be removed from our eyes is our inability or unwillingness to talk about God and Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord as well as the 'evil' still present in creation—to trust in God alone as mature, evolving and discerning followers. I think that God is asking us to be prepared to be persecuted Christians rather than prosecuted rightly as culpable sinners. I think that God is asking us to remember that 'God first loves us!' and that our encounter with mercy will overflow to those whom God brings into our lives. I think that God is asking us to tell the victims (including perpetrators), "God loves you!" and to show them

the road of forgiveness as we admit to the ways we have 'missed the mark' when it comes to our mission to live and proclaim the Good News. Forgiveness is the Creator's only way for us into the peace the world cannot give. I think that God is asking us to discern how much this line might apply, "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did to/for me.'" (Matthew 25:40) when asked where God was in situations of abuse. I think that God is asking us to believe deeply that the true Body of Christ CANNOT cause harm to anyone and that any 'Church' which has done so is at least fallible and may be a 'false Church' with 'false pastors' who have little or no relationship with Christ. I think that God is asking us to take our concerns to Jesus as the first and most important step in opening up to his love and healing flowing through us for the sake of our common, suffering home.

More transparency. Pass on our faith to the young by example. Share our wealth with the needy. Accept all people as equals. Live the 10 commandments.

It seems to me that the Spirit is saying to the Church in Australia today what the same Spirit said through the prophetic Saint John XXIII when he summoned the Second Vatican Council, namely that constant and careful attention and effort must be applied to two primary guiding principles as the Church seeks to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ: *Aggiornamento*: Literally, 'updating': opening the doors and the windows, looking outward rather than inward, going out and becoming more intimately involved in, and bringing the life-giving joy of the gospel to encounter with the joys and hopes, grief and anguish of the people of our time and place. *Ressourcement*: Literally 'return to the sources': the way of life of the Church today has evolved through two thousand years of history. This has inevitably involved the adoption of attitudes, forms of behaviour, social and administrative structures, most of which were begun with the best of intentions as appropriate to their time. It is not so easy, however, to determine whether these ways of thinking and of doing things are still appropriate or whether they may even obscure their original purpose in the contemporary context. It is therefore necessary to return for guidance in determining the present value of these elements, to the earliest recorded sources of the Church's life, the letters of the Apostle Paul, the gospels and the other documents of the New Testament. *Aggiornamento* and *Ressourcement* are two sides of the one penny: one seeking to bring love and wisdom into the lives of people today; the other seeking to sustain that endeavour authentically in accord with the life and teaching, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. Analogy with climate change is particularly apt here. New understandings in science, changes in social relationships, changing perspectives on the dignity and uniqueness of persons, all made more readily accessible to more people by the immediacy of today's means of communication, present new possibilities for manifesting the gospel. At the same time there are 'climate change sceptics' who find the pressure for change unsettling and fear the loss of arrangements and practices which are important to them. The questions for the Plenary Council then become those of practical management of this process of *Aggiornamento* and *Ressourcement*: - Which matters do the People of God in this place consider to be most in need of attention? This is a critical measure of *Aggiornamento*. - What light do the earliest sources shed on these issues? - Does the Church have tested examples of responses which might be used to address these needs? These are critical aspects of *Ressourcement*. - Collaborative development of a participative implementation plan.

This is the methodological legacy of Saint John XXIII and the, as yet incomplete work of the Second Vatican Council.

Thank you for the opportunity and challenge to think, listen, speak openly and submit my thoughts. The Spirit continues to speak to us through nature and her people, I am often surprised on a daily basis how strong that word is. We need to be open to those whisperings. There is so much distrust in our world (and locally) today. Politicians and leaders who have not only let us down but can be convicted of fraud and malpractice, hence the Royal Commissions into banking, aged care, etc. Our institutional Church and its people and their faith have been rocked, destroyed by the sexual abuse findings. Evidence that continues to be unravelled! We are so angry and despaired! We, as a people of God, have lost trust and hope in the future of our Church. How can I convince my young adult children to have faith and openly and confidently live out the gospel message when this is our Church? The hurt is also found in our parishes where the divorced, women and LGBT are not openly welcomed and refused participation in many roles. God is asking us today....that if Jesus was amongst us who would He welcome? How would He react to the rules and regulations of Canon Law?

The need for discernment and change not only in relation to the question of communion, divorce and remarriage but also in relation to cohabitation and civil marriage. The need for Australian bishops to advise the Vatican what they see as necessary for the Catholic Australians and that they intend to implement that whatever the Vatican might say with reservation. The need to revert to the third rite of reconciliation, the children not to make their first confession until they are at least 12 years of age and persons not to be confirmed until they are at least 18 years of age. The need for the forthcoming meeting not to be hidebound by Canon law pertaining to a Plenary Council but rather a meeting of the Australian people of God in which voting patterns can follow normal procedures with all participants regardless of their status having a determinative vote. The need for celibacy not to be a prerequisite to ordination and the need for the recall of men who have left the ministry because they do not accept celibacy as a way of life, the ordination of women both single and married and the need for the ordination of married men. There is a need for better training for priests whether they be male or female. There is need for more women to occupy senior positions within the Church. A need for clergy and parishioners in the selection of those to be appointed bishops.

This submission is a cry from the heart: I think God is asking the Church in Australia to speak to our lives in the context of our experiences, particularly when matters in the public arena impact on our Church personally and as a community. Last week, the verdict on Cardinal Pell was made public. The media outcry was vitriolic rage, not only regarding Pell, but also the Church. As a Catholic, and as a Catholic community, we are reeling under the onslaught. We have been carrying the burden of shame for years, especially during the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse - shame at the prevalence of abuse by people representing the gospel, shame at the complicity of Church leadership in covering this up, and shame that victims and those affected received no hearing, understanding and compassion from them. Over the years, I have repeatedly requested that we hold a parish liturgy in which we can acknowledge our shared burden of guilt and shame and begin to see this in the light of the gospel. It never happened. This Sunday (3rd March), there was no acknowledgement of the hurt, shame and confusion we

are experiencing at the publication of the Pell verdict and the outpouring of rage and scorn in the media and social media. It was the elephant in the room! It was the final Sunday of our stewardship programme, and that got all the focus. When I spoke to the priest afterwards, his response was "I am not the parish priest. It is not for me to comment." What nonsense! What I was asking was not to comment on the Pell case, but to acknowledge the impact on the people in the pews, individually and as a parish. It could have been done so simply at the introduction to the penitential rite. There were some petitions in the Intercessions, but very generally worded and aimed at healing for those affected by the abuse. A letter from Archbishop Comensoli was available in the foyer as people left the Church. Why was this not read out? It beautifully acknowledged and expressed what people are feeling. It is no wonder people leave because the liturgy does not engage them in the realities of their lives. When our current translation of the liturgy came in the Royal Commission was already under way. The new translation introduced "holy" in the response to the "Pray brethren". What an inappropriate time to insert that, when the sinfulness of the Church was in the full glare of the world. This submission sounds angry, it is true. I am angry. I have endeavoured to live my entire life in response to Christ and the gospel of Jesus. I am aware of my sinfulness and failures. But a "holy Church" does not include us sinners. If we claim the Church as holy, and it is, we need to also claim that we are a body of sinners - as Vatican II acknowledges so beautifully. Thank you for listening.

God is asking of us to take action. There needs to be a re-reading of the gospel in the light of the present so that we can be a mission Church for others and all of creation. We need to have a functional structure which is relevant and reflective of Jesus' message of equality. We the ordinary people of the Church must be listened to, respected, and responded to—so that the actions of the Plenary Council reflect our thoughts and values. This requires us to have the moral courage to:

- Love and accept all we encounter
- Speak out in support of others and the environment (advocacy)
- Examine the current situation in the Church, learn from the past and move forward with this.
- In this Plenary process, the Council gathered must not let rhetoric and false promises sweep the real issues—and our (the lay peoples') voices—under the table
- Allow God's Spirit to come through our ACTIONS
- Ensure that the Church of the future is transparent
- Have a just and compassionate society
- Be engaged world citizens, welcoming of others locally and worldwide
- Look at our structure. At times, ordained clergy appears to be removed from the lay Church community. There is a need to break down hierarchy and the monopoly of unmarried men in the 'top down' leadership model we find in the Church at present. Leadership needs to be inclusive and shared by all members of the Body of Christ - as is our right and responsibility as baptised members of our faith.
- Care for our continent, environment and people in a way that reflects our beliefs and our practice of faith. The gospel calls us to "Love one another"—this needs to be brought into the present so that we can make our faith practice meaningful and relevant and inform our daily actions. We need to ask ourselves questions such as:

- \* How can the Catholic Church be truly 'universal'?
- \* How do we reach out, interact with and respond to other faith communities?
- \* We have conflicting messages regarding gender, marital status, sexual orientation, and individual 'worthiness' to fully participate in our faith. How do we make our Church inclusive and welcome to all?
- \* How do we meet people where they are at in terms of their faith, rather than expecting them to conform to traditional practices? This may require meeting the younger generation through today's communication practices of social media and

technology. It may also mean moving out of the Church pews, into places where society gathers such as—shopping centres and sporting clubs, etc. The younger generation is not driven to practice its faith through fear of not conforming to Church rules but rather, approaches it through a lens of love, acceptance, tolerance and social justice. We need to ask ourselves: What is the spirituality of our Church in light of the above?

To be a more outward looking, missionary Church

Secularism is on the rise in Australia and I believe it's the Church's biggest enemy. The Catholic faith and the notion of God aren't topics of interest for the majority of people. When you do hear the Catholic faith being mentioned, it's mostly because it's being bad-mouthed. I believe God is asking Australians to move out of the soul shrinking world of secularism. To move out of religious indifference and move into a greater awareness of him and his purposes. I believe He wants Catholics to make their presence felt more and bring the truth of our faith to the culture.

God is asking us: • To be more Christ-like • Examine our Mental Models that underpin our Church and greatly influence our thinking and structures around; clergy, religious, laity and the broader Australia. There is discussion around the inverted pyramid—this has to become more that cute in discussion and become something that lives in our structures and actions • To be resilient in these tough times • To evangelise, welcome and serve through our behaviours—not words • To open the humility of the clergy to be more accepting and utilising the skills of the laity. Particularly in areas that they (the clergy) are not trained in or strong in. There are wonderful skills in our communities that can complement and complete one another. Business and organisational skills as one example • To admit through leadership behaviours that the responses to the abuse scandals were poor and in many cases incompetent • To earn back the trust of the laity, broader community and other priests and religious • To dispose of the outdated titles, and manifestations around “Your Grace, My Lord, Your eminence, Your Lordship”. They reflect a mindset and time we are and need to be well past. To abandon them is a key step in humble leadership. • I need to live my faith and how I am Christ-like in the daily world.

That all Churches work towards unification so that all may be one. To present God as a loving God as there is enough misery and pain in our world. That people who do not go to church are seen as much Catholic as those who do. Increase our emphasis on the care of the environment and focus on what *Laudate Si* puts forward. Be tolerant of people's differences. Be a Church that welcomes all people regardless of their race, sexuality or behaviour.

Firstly, I think God is asking us to be united in prayer as Christians. He is asking us to pray hard for the sanctification of all representatives of Jesus Christ here on earth (especially all the priests in Australia), as they are our role models. Secondly, God is asking us to have more recourse to Mother Mary through the Holy Rosary. Thirdly, we need to go back to the foundations of our faith. We, the faithful, need to learn more about our Catechism. Our generation hardly understand what Catholicism is all about. We need to teach our children about our faith through our parishes and schools as we need to understand that most Catholic parents of this generation do not know much about the faith and therefore, cannot impart this knowledge to their children. Please help us young families to be closer to God by teaching us the basics of being Catholic.

Please bring catechism back to our schools and communities. Please ask our parishes to pray the rosary frequently. Please help our parish priests not to be afraid to reach out to us, their flock.

We need to develop the contemplative dimension of our life more fully to give us an experience of God and His love for us: the God who gives Himself for us and to us. So that we may personally experience God's love for us.

We want to thank the organising committee of the Plenary Council for inviting all of us to be part of this important moment of the Church here in Australia. Be assured of our prayers for the Plenary Council. As members of the Focolare Movement in Melbourne, we have been part of the consultation process in each of our parishes but we wanted to offer a perspective through the lens of our particular charism summed up in the word 'unity'. ● We feel that the new ecclesial Movements have something to offer the Church in Australia in these times. We recognise the importance of fostering collaboration between various ecclesial realities, in their unity and diversity. We draw inspiration from a "spirituality of communion" and we believe this could strengthen relationships at all levels in the Church. ● The connection between faith and daily life is vital and it is often a challenge. We need to find new ways to help people to make this connection, making faith relevant and a source of strength in their everyday life. And where possible and desirable, to offer opportunities for a shared faith experience. ● We feel that it would be helpful to have greater involvement of lay people (in particular, women) in leadership and processes of shared decision-making at all levels in the Church - not as searching for power but because together we all—lay and ordained—are the Church, and from this awareness flows the need to take on responsibility together. ● The Church is in the frontline in offering education and formation, which are the key to awareness of social justice and moral/ethical issues in our society, working at the grassroots to inform and engage people. The Church also acts as a public spokesperson on such issues. We need to encourage and be encouraged to advocate for gospel-based values in a secular society. Also in this field, the contribution of lay people with relevant training and formation could be immensely valuable. ● There is an urgent need to prioritise young people in the Church and to adequately resource youth ministry as a way to reconnect and engage them in a faith-based experience which is relevant to their lives. ● It is important to address the danger of clericalism and to foster relationships of equality and collaboration. This could include creative and innovative ways to train seminarians and in the ongoing formation of newly ordained priests where they could also receive support and feedback from their parish community. ● How can the Church regain trust after the abuse scandals? Transparency and humility are important in this process and we acknowledge the progress made. The Plenary Council could also be an opportunity to reflect more generally on the role and vocation of priests. We need ways to open up a dialogue about mutual expectations and needs between all stakeholders.

To listen. Without judgement. Listen to the voice of the youth. Listen to the voice of society. Listen to the voice of women. Listen to those who have walked away. Jesus walks WITH those who are suffering and on the margins. Yet we barely invite and include those who ARE ALREADY in our communities, into a place where they can feel safe. It only takes one person's experience of hatred to harm a young soul ... any soul. Let that never be a voice that comes from within the walls of the Church. Protect our teachers, our Catholic workers and protect our youth from the

hatred within. All are welcome? How about we remove the fine print and follow through with what we sing?

Can we make relevant the gospel without diluting it? I think in this time of re-examining the failures of clericalism in the past, we should consider allowing suitably qualified lay people to offer the homily during Mass. This would reduce the stress on priests (particularly those without English as their first language), while drawing on the wide expertise, experience, and teaching skill of the laity. I recognise the liturgical consideration of the priest speaking in *persona Christi*, but often this is not the case. Christ was engaging, relevant, and dynamic. There are priests who lack this public-speaking skill, despite their brilliant pastoral ministry. At a liturgical level, this could be achieved by allowing the priest to introduce the lay person and then allowing the lay person to preach. This happens in extraordinary circumstances anyway (such as when a member of the parish council discussed sacrificial giving), I think God calls us to expand this practice to regular homilies. Any suggestion that lay people get the chance to lead non Eucharistic 'prayer services' ignores the reality that most Catholics who attend any ritual attend Mass. This is their only chance to receive quality teaching, so we should be offering the best teaching possible. I would argue that the priest is often not the best teacher in the parish. I imagine the bishops do not experience the poor homilies that we lay people do. Most bishops are good preachers, and deliver the homilies at the Masses they attend. On the rare occasion they hear a parish priest's homily, it would no doubt have far more effort put into its preparation than the average weekly homily. I challenge the bishops to actively seek out opinions on this matter. Otherwise, I love our Church, despite our weaknesses. I think God tells us to continue the great work, even though others just wish to speak about our flaws.

God is asking us to all make better choices, and when we make bad choices, to seek forgiveness and healing. - To be present and active in our Church - Hope and Justice. To put words and teachings into action. We are all guilty of knowing teachings but not expressing them when we walk out into the community. These include loving everyone, being kind, compassionate and understanding. Take note of Pope Francis' approach. Find ways to support priests who depend on traditional dogma to preach rather than meaning of gospel today. We all have learnt critical thinking and cannot be asked to switch it off! To actively propagate the good news of our salvation brought to us by our work and saviour Jesus Christ especially to the youth of our time. To support our local church leaders as they work in our local parishes bearing up to some tough media and problems in the past. To improve community in our parishes, how to be kinder to all Australians. To engage with our world and acknowledge Christian ideals as they are relevant to key issues in Australian life, continuing oppression of Aboriginal people and cultures lack of care for our land, justice to the poor and for refugees. To be a Church for all, not just a small group of believers. Too much negativity, concentrate on the good. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" Help people who are in need. Don't worry so much about sin, be positive?! To again live the spirit of Vatican II. To raise leaders who are in tune with the needs and wishes of the ordinary people who can listen and act on what people in the pews are saying and to provide opportunities for all people to be involved in setting Christian of the faith. To unite all people and bring down the barriers between the people in power, the Church and the ordinary faithful. Inclusiveness—open our heart to all regardless of age, gender, race or sexual preferences.

Inclusiveness. Love our neighbour regardless of sex, race and religion. Help those who are less fortunate. Take time out to pray and attend weekly Mass. Alms giving. Sense of belonging. To treat each other with love and respect in so many ways. Refugees with our inhuman treatment, the elderly in how they are taken advantage of. To treat women fairly and equally within society starting with our Church. Keep in faith, Church should be opened, more transparency. To be people who respect and forgive each other no matter who they are. To help people suffering in the drought and support everyone. I think God is asking us to love each other and to remember the gift of charity. If we love each other, we will respect each other's opinions, visions and culture, we will truly care for one another and will help each other. I think he is asking us to remember that we love him, then our family and then our neighbour. - Women—in Church leadership positions (female priests) - LGBTI—embracing Catholics of all genders -Advocate for the release of men from Manus Island and Refugees from Nauru.

To keep our faith strong during this time when the Church is going through the revelations of child abuse, because many people have lost their feelings of respect for the clergy. The Church must become more people-focused. God talks to us about forgiveness and caring but I don't think that these are the sentiments that the Church as an organisation displays. Perhaps the Church has lost sight of the real message that God really wants us to live each day. The message the Church is giving is very different of the message God intended. To rebuild our Catholic community and to regain the trust of society. Speak for those who can't comfort those who need it, give strength, help those wanting to exclude not to be afraid. Be a Church based on principles and not rules the greatest of these is love. I think God is asking us to be more accepting, more laity, more inclusive and to respect people, black, white, gay, straight, divorced, named, young, old ... I think God wants us to be a less judgemental Church and a more inclusive Church. To share our story before we came to know God, by going to Church, to Bible study sharing how God improved our lives and lives of so many other people. Some people have a misconception about God however when they hear how God loves people then their beliefs and opinions change for better. At least have time to gather together to pray and thank God for his blessing to us as community. To help and have some spare time and contribution to help for the improvement of the daily routine in the Church either way, like reading and commentating in the Mass. We pray for God's Kingdom, but we need to be praying for a kingdom of kindness. Our culture and history favour a cruel interpretation of the word Kingdom. We need to always reflect on the kingdom of kindness and this will lead to better decisions for all of us. To have a loving, strong and committed relationship with God. To seek and find God in everyday life, to be a person of God. To do the above within an inclusive active outward looking Church which neglects and respect its diversity. We need to unite strongly and have a strong presence in government policy decisions. For protection of family from the concern to old age, protection in schools from government interferences in faith and religious freedom. I need help will rise in caring for elderly, issues and help with aged care and support for family at parish level, for support in grieving for different life crisis People living alone need community help, more support. Look after the world we have been given and preserve it for our future generations. God is asking us to be a servant Church ... follow Jesus. Bishops need to serve, live more simply and dress simply. Recognise and give our baptised a central voice. Their right as

baptised, it is their Church. To be closer to God, to know God better and to remember Him in our busy lives.

I believe what God is asking of us in Australia at this time is to bring more Religious Education to the children so they understand their faith. For R.E. we should be taught about the Holy Trinity, the meaning of the Mass, the significance of Mary and going deeper into our faith. Also, I believe what God is asking of us in Australia at this time is for us Catholics to go to Mass as often as we can (always on Sunday or Saturday night.) By going to Mass, we meet Jesus more often and have a good relationship with him through the Blessed Sacrament. We will know about our faith even more if we attend Mass often. Also, I believe what God is asking of us in Australia at this time is to call people to come to the feast, the Mass, through the Church bells! Hardly any of the parishes ring the Church bells before and after Mass. I only heard the bells ring at St. Patrick's Cathedral, St. Francis and Our Lady of Assumption. We should reintroduce the ringing of the Church bell tower before and after Mass because the bells call everyone to come to the celebration of the Mass and to tell everyone that we Catholics are going to proclaim the good news. Also, all Catholic schools should have a symbol of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Eucharist, Mother Mary and the Pope above the schools' logo to tell everyone that we are Catholics and this is what we believe.

To inspire hope in others. To live lives of faith, hope and love. To be faithful to God and the gospel - to live this out in our lives and in our Church. God gives us this opportunity to look at ourselves (nationally and locally) and respond. We are obliged to respond. Not sure how we are to use it. All of us need to listen. It is disheartening and distressing to see how many people have walked away from the Church. The role of women is nowhere near where it should be. The lack of Australian priests means the priesthood has moved in a different direction to the rest of the Church. There is no consistency from parish to parish.

Greater accountability and transparency in policy making and administration of the Church. A Church that is inclusive, recognising the voice of women and the laity in the decision-making in the Church. Open and welcoming of the marginalised. The broken and listening to their voices. A Church that seeks to serve, to be responsive to the needs of others. A Church that is just and compassionate. To move away from an authoritarian stance. To own and accept the wrongs and seek healing. To be unified by our faith and to seek a sustainable balance between protecting creation and enough energy and resources for society to function honestly and with integrity. To be a contemporary Church - changes in rules, structures that reflect a modern Australian society - married priests, women in leadership, in ministry - women priests. To be honest, courageous, and bold in acknowledging that many of the traditions, structures are no longer relevant and to ensure continued relevance through a contextualisation in the spirit of Vat II. Remember and honour the simplicity of our core beliefs and work together to build the structures that will enact these beliefs at all levels. To be bold and rage against injustices and make the necessary changes so that the Church remains relevant and serves God's ultimate purpose. To be relevant to the wider community by being active, engaging within the community. Advocate for justice for all, making known to government the injustices that impact on the marginalised, the broken - homelessness, refugees. To care for all peoples within our larger community - physically, emotionally and spiritually. Listen - to the voice of the "other". To be a Church that welcomes - less about structures and rules more about relationships. God is asking us to be unconditional in our care for

<p>all, our response to the needs of others. To be critical and examine our structures and traditions and their relevance to our contemporary context and be prepared to make changes that are required. To be an advocate for the vulnerable and the marginalised. To think of, respect and value the voice of all regardless of their social, economic or religious beliefs. God is asking for "rage" - a temple kind of rage that we have come to this—to reflect the impact and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. Demanding the Church cast the net to the other side—seeking the voice, guidance, spirit and leadership of the 50% of our population that has been ignored from age to age—the voice of women in leadership.</p>
<p>If this question means anything, it means "what do I feel strongly about?" My answer to that question is "A reform of the Church, to make it a Church of Jesus of the gospels, without the trimmings. The trimmings at present constitute about 90% of the Church.</p>
<p>To build community, to ease the burden on our priests, to have more collaborative leadership, to more readily acknowledge God's presence in our lives, to look beyond our failures to our obvious strengths, to stand up for our beliefs, to learn more about our faith, to wear our faith on our sleeves, to identify ourselves as Catholic, to have the ability to answer the question, "Why I am a Catholic?"</p>
<p>To keep the Church going. To keep our faith going. To pass on our faith to the next generation.</p>
<p>To understand that it is time for the Catholic Church to embrace modern times and to treat men and women as equals, and priests and laity as equal, and most of all, put the needs of children and vulnerable people as the priority.</p>
<p>To truly live as Jesus did - to be inclusive of everyone, non-judgemental, non-elitist, respect everyone, to respect women and give them leadership in our Church, to support our parish priests as Jesus supported and guided his apostles and to allow priests to have families of their own - Jesus came from a family, we all did, the apostles and early disciples had families - it is not right to forbid our priests to marry and have families of their own. It is critical to allow the legal process to investigate and convict child abusers within the Church, and to do everything we can to support victims. The Church needs to get back its integrity if it is to survive.</p>
<p>To become a Church of community. A Church that is welcoming and supportive and NOT AFRAID to reach out and meet people. Us Catholics need to STEP UP and live our missions, empowered by the gospel message and our Christian brothers and sisters, confident in the support given by the Church and those in her leadership. It is TIME FOR ACTION.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us in Australia at this time to be a Church of the poor. A Church that uses its underutilised resources, e.g. large presbyteries with one priest as resident. There are many thousands of homeless women, children, men without adequate shelter and living in poverty. There are asylum-seeker families and refugees needing housing. Jesus welcomed the poor at all times and asked those who followed his way to share all with the poor. Australia is a wealthy country and the Catholic Church is wealthy. The Church and those in authority need to embrace material poverty and be inclusive of all people in need of a care and compassion.</p>
<p>I think God wants us to involve our youth in the Church to participate more actively. We ought to understand the mindset of our youth and help answer their questions about God and the Church</p>

better. They do not have blind faith like us, they need answers, and if we do not provide them with this they will stop coming to Church as most have. We have to start being more modern within the remit of the Church and Her rules, permitting more upbeat music and inviting aspects of praise and worship in a more vibrant manner. I think God wants us to speak up more to defend Him and His name in society. For instance, all references to Christ, Christmas, Easter are being taken away from public mention to satisfy the Muslim or other minorities. We will end up like the USA referring to Christmas as a holiday and kids being unable to have a nativity scene in their school etc. I think we should have a voice (peacefully) where we can ensure politicians understand this is a Christian country and that we should not lose that identity in an attempt to win an election. Jesus said we should not be ashamed to declare our love for Him on earth and I think He would expect us to stand up in His defence. I am a senior executive and over the years I have seen how the approach to management has changed. It is a more inclusive culture where people need to be brought along the journey for a change initiative to be successful. Similarly we must change how we communicate the rules, behavioural expectations and traditions of the Church by explaining to the congregation why we do certain things and what they mean. The younger people live as an 'entitled' group and in order to bring about change in their attitude we need to work much harder. In the words of my school motto "Gently and Firmly", the approach should be gently, but bring with it an authoritative air which will ensure people will comply. Also, sadly our priests should be rotated more often. Unfortunately, lots of people leave parishes these days due to dull and boring priests who do not get the message across but have been in the same parish for many years. Although I have much respect and admiration for them and the sacrifice they make, many do not see it that way. With the current generation's mindset of 'what's in it for me?' we need to ensure there is some incentive for them to keep coming to Sunday Mass at least. Finally, I'd love to see a more public display of our love for Christ and His blessed Mother as is done in the Cathedral. A public Way of the Cross or procession with the statue of our Lady during the month of May / October would be a wonderful way of showing this.

God is asking, seeking: - a more caring and loving senior leadership and hierarchy of the Church. Our senior Church leadership have let the members of the Catholic Church down so badly over recent times. The leadership of the Church needs to be more focused on the Church as it was meant to be and not the needs of the Church as an economic entity - senior leaders that are closer to the parishioners and recognise the needs of the Catholic community. Leaders who recognise their role to primarily be about care and support for the community, especially our most vulnerable. God would want more loving and supportive leadership demonstrated by the senior leadership of the Church. - The senior leadership must see their primary role as supportive of the new needs of the Catholic community, the parishes and local priests. Less about telling and more about listening and supporting - senior leadership that is able to recognise the modern community they need to support and the transition that has occurred in recent times on key social and moral issues like the role of women and the standing of homosexuals. Our community has moved on from historic, dated social models and positively embrace changes made. The senior leadership of the Church does not embrace these social changes. They act as anachronisms in a modern social context, demonstrating irrelevance - senior Church leadership that is open and

<p>honest about the wrongs of the past. A leadership that openly recognises the mistakes of the past, expresses deep remorse for the suffering and takes positive action for meaningful remediation.</p>
<p>I find it hard to know what God wants but I'll try to say what I want. The Church has lost moral credibility. It needs a sign of good faith with the faithful and the world that it means to change. I know that celibacy can be a great gift but I no longer think it's a great sign. Clergy should be allowed to marry. For the faithful it will mean priests will appear more approachable and sympathetic. For society it will give the impression that the Church is not full of sexually repressed individuals. These ideas deal mainly with perceptions in the vast majority of cases. But in these times, perceptions are everything.</p>
<p>Reinforcing the community. Being more accepting towards people around us. Building up individuals who choose married life.</p>
<p>With humility, I believe that God requires a more robust propagation of the fundamental beliefs of the Catholic faith. No non-Catholic has ever converted because the Church said sorry about child sex abuse for the millionth time, or because they think it's nice the Church believes in climate change and social justice. People convert to Catholicism, or remain as Catholics if they are from the cradle, because they believe that the doctrines of the Church are the truth. It is not our job to be political activists for other people's causes, and it does us no benefit to keep apologising for the sex abuse. It is demoralising for lay Catholics to see our clergy cowed and brow beaten by the media and politicians. Surely, God would not want non-believers to dictate to His Church what she can and cannot do and say. If the Church is to survive, then it must return to its fundamental truth: we are the original, authentic and only Church and we alone possess the fullness of the truth about the nature of man and God. We need to be unafraid to propagate our views and even more unafraid of the possible offence we may cause. The hippies in the Church have had their day. They have all but run us into the ground and brought shame and dishonour on the Church through their lax morals and social activism.</p>
<p>I don't know what He is asking of us. But I am sure he would be bitterly disappointed to see the public perception of the Catholic Church at this time.</p>
<p>We need to be welcoming communities, living our faith in all our actions every day in what we do and say. Celebrating and drawing our spiritual nourishment from the Eucharist at Mass. Being open and non-judgmental focusing on our faith and connection with God.</p>
<p>Be more spiritual and do more for the poor and those who have less. Integration of all people (inclusiveness) "Thank you to the Church". To participate wholeheartedly in the various Church ministries. To spread the love of Jesus I have experienced to all the people around me. More attitude of greater awareness and openness to all people. Forgiveness, hearing and encouragement for all people. Finding faith, what it means to live with belief and a sense of spirituality. In today's world we have lost our ability to dedicate attention. We run the <i>priore</i> of raising a generation that focus on materialistic and not the meaningful parts to life. Keeping faith. Kindness, compassion and inclusiveness. United, pray as communities.</p>
<p>We are a small parish in central Victoria, in a secular town of about 6-7,000 people. We had a couple of Listening and Dialogue sessions and although many ideas were discussed, some with</p>

opposing viewpoints, we have decided to pick a few of the recurring themes and encourage everybody to make their own individual submission, especially those who have contrary opinions.

- Greater focus on social justice. Our bishops need to be more courageous and vocal on social issues like asylum seekers. We need to encourage and support parishes to be more proactive around these social justice issues and to be more inclusive and welcoming of others. We need to be the face of God in our communities. To walk with others and support them in these changing times.
- Equity within the Church. All members of the Catholic Church, whether religious or lay have equal standing. As we are all priestly people it is our vision that the laity can take a more active role in the Mass and sacraments and a greater say in the running of our parishes. Opportunities for formation need to be made available to parishes and the hierarchical structure which currently exists within our Church, needs to be changed to a more inclusive one for all roles in the Church.
- Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse. We feel the Church needs to make atonement for the criminal behaviour which has been unearthed from the Royal Commission. We need to cleanse the Church of those who committed the crime and those who knew about them and failed to act. We need to take ownership of the crimes committed and accept with humility and remorse the recommendations made. We need to provide ongoing support for the victims and ensure they are compensated promptly.
- Maintain our devotions and reverence to the saints. Members of our Church nurture their spirit in different ways. An inclusive Church would provide opportunities and support for its members to practise and participate in various forms of prayer and devotion. We need to respect and cherish our traditions and continue to pass them on to future generations.

To put God first in all things. To have an intimate relationship with him; To consult him in all that concern us: our family, our relationship with others, and to seek his guidance and direction; To get off the fence, to proclaim our faith to others by our words and actions; and to be all embracing, whilst speaking the truth of our faith with love and compassion. To stand up for truth and to defend those without a voice (through prayer and public demonstrations lead by our priests) and to reject deception of all kinds. The Church needs to be vocal from the pulpit guiding parishioners as though Christ himself were speaking; To protect the body of Christ from the onslaught determined to destroy the family and the dignity of the human person at every stage of development. Not to be fearful of a decline in attendance at Mass but to lead us in prayer, the Rosary, the Divine Mercy; and to be a shepherd to the people of God with courage and vigour. Have only male altar servers as they attend the priest during holy Mass that they may be called to the priesthood. That special ministers be uniformly gowned appropriately when assisting. That employees in Catholic educational institutions should uphold and practice our Catholic faith and be a good example to all students and employees. That the House of God be known in word and practice as a place of worship, praise and thanksgiving to our creator and father not a meet and greet which can be accommodated after Mass outside of the Sanctuary. How do we behave before or in the house of royalty? God is beyond our human concept of majesty, we should remember this and behave accordingly in his presence. That seminars may be offered freely and encourage parishioners that they may be grounded in faith. Parishioners need strong, courageous and prudential guidance in our faith - let our priests and religious be infused with the Holy Spirit as the apostles were at Pentecost. May God bless Australia.

Women in our Church. Inclusion. Formation in the seminary. A parish response to sexual abuse in the Church. Governance.

- To show hospitality + welcome to those in need + to everyone without exception. To show these understanding by more obvious emphasis in the wider community. It needs to be seen!
- To be closer with God, to know God better, to remember him in our busy lives. Answered prayer.
- Pray, be kind, tolerance of other faiths. Readings need to be changed sometimes, can be boring. Sunday Mass times not suitable for some of youth. Please look after members of Church and value their services, regardless of their ages old, young, respect.
- I think God is asking us to all make better choices, and when we make bad choices, to seek forgiveness and healing. To be present and active in our Church. Hope and justice. We have thousands of young people in Catholic primary and secondary schools, but these people are not reflected in our church attendance. The Church needs to be more meaningful and more towards the future.

Theme 1: Evangelisation • A *Legion praesidium* (branch) comprised of local parishioners to be set up in every parish in Australia to carry out evangelisation and other apostolic works under the direction of the parish priest. Evangelisation works include but are not limited to door-to-door visitation of every home in the parish, and the setting up of a book barrow in a public area for the purpose of disseminating Catholic literature. Apostolic works include visitation of parishioner homes/nursing home with a statue of Our Lady to promote the practice of the daily Rosary; enthronement of homes to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, etc. • A Spiritual Director (either a priest or religious) to be appointed to every *praesidium* and Legion Council to provide spiritual support to legionaries.

Theme 2: The holy sacrifice of the Mass and devotional activities. • Greater reverence at Mass services. That is, no talking before the commencement of Mass and observance of silence inside churches outside of liturgical or devotional services. Modest attire, cover shoulders and breast areas by placing a shawl. • Music and singing that are liturgically uplifting, solemn and dignified during Mass. • Recitation of the Rosary daily either before or after Mass. • Promotion and/or enhancement of a love and devotion to the Mother of God. • Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration in every parish in Australia and promotion of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. • Solemn processions of the Blessed Sacrament on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi and the Solemnity of Christ the King.

Theme 3: Outreach and catechesis to young people, and Catholic school education • Junior *Legion of Mary praesidium* to be set up in every parish in Australia comprising children under the age of 18 for the purpose of spiritual formation and formation in apostolic works. • Secondary school children to be schooled in chastity, morals and sexual continence prior to marriage. • Young people to be attracted to the Catholic Church through sound, solid catechesis and social interactions. • Children at Catholic primary and secondary schools to be taught by teachers (including RE teachers) who actually profess and practise the Catholic faith with fidelity and obedience to all the Church's teachings, so that the teachers can be a positive and affirming influence on their students.

Theme 4: Holiness of priests and consecrated religious • priests and religious who are faithful to the promise/vow of chastity and celibacy. • Priests and religious who truly love the Catholic Church and Her teachings, are living holy lives, and who have the courage to publicly expound the Church's teachings on abortion, homosexuality, artificial contraception, sanctity of marriage, etc. priests and religious who are inspirational in living out their faith.

Theme 5: Support for the elderly • Elderly Catholics

in nursing homes or house-bound to be given spiritual comfort and consolation by way of devotional activities.

What is God asking of us in Australia at this time? • Respect, understanding and tolerance of each other no matter of colour and creed • Acceptance of others be it gender or disability. • Inclusion of divorced people in the ceremonies of the Church. • Hierarchy must become more open and transparent and not sweep things under the carpet. • Shared leadership; non-ordained to have a more sincere and authentic role in leadership and decisions. • The Church needs to question and address the structures that are in place, including but not limited to celibacy of priests, ordination of women, IVF, birth control. • Women to be publicly validated for their contributions. • We need to start looking to a future without ordained priests in each parish. • Give greater roles to lay people so that the Church does not fall apart.

Same as always. Love one another. Keep the commandments. Have faith in him. Pray a lot for all those who need his help. Love, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, compassion. Help those in need. These are the Catholic Church's teaching for all Christians worldwide, not just Australians. As an older Australian, I don't know what else He could ask of me at this time. I need His help more than ever. I know that He will be with me as always. I still like to go to Mass as much as I can. I am a Catholic and always will be.

To save and reform His Church. This requires following words with action. It requires thought regarding the institutional Church and its stand on different issues, such as the celibacy, the role of women, homosexuality, and a more truthful conversation about the scriptures (today there is access to a huge range of academically sound books and documentaries on the history of the Bible and the Church and contradictory information to Church teaching leads to doubts—e.g. the authors of the Gospels). Its people are intelligent and don't take kindly to discrepancies and hypocrisy. God is Love, yet the Church is still resisting paying adequate compensation to victims of sexual abuse despite its wealth. 'Sorry' is not enough. Many within the Church feel betrayed, ignored and dismissed, both laity and clergy. Many have walked away from the Church, though not necessarily their faith. Unfortunately, TRUST has been broken, trust even towards the parish priests. Trust once lost is very difficult to restore, unless genuine action occurs.

To care for the environment and to appreciate the welfare of the people of the world by treating all others as you would want them to treat you.

We are called to know love and serve God. Firstly we learn this at home but we have lost two generations to this, generation baby boomers & generation X. We are called to rectify this and stop the loss of future generations. How do we do this through education and faith formation? Even though I hear some religious nuns say no matter what they do in school if they do not get it at home it is very difficult for the school to impart the faith. This is not a true reflection of the case, I do believe if there are good religious teachers/catechists employed in the Catholic Education system this could be helpful which means there needs to be a criteria for a teacher to be hired who is well formed in and dedicated to her Catholic faith so he/she is competent in the task of faith formation. We are all called to sanctity and holiness. Homilies at Mass need to be scripture-based, this is how the adults get some formation, in the same way our dear priests need to know this and help us, in whatever ways they need to do this I believe the primary role of the

priest is to nurture us spiritually which means they need to be relieved of their administrative duties to a great extent. Infrastructure needs to be examined.

To be a guiding light in this troubled time, to be a community that reflects, to all we encounter, the face of Jesus. To be relevant and still proclaim the truth to all, especially the young. To listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and make the right decisions.

We are being asked to bring Christ to our country in a more inviting and relevant way while keeping to the truths of our faith and our traditions.

Pray more. To be more reverent at Mass. God wants us to obey God's truth in the Bible, God wants us to obey the 10 commandments. God wants us to say the rosary. God want us to love him. God wants a personal relationship with him.

To be a more inclusive community that is deeply rooted in gospel values, not organisational policies. There is so much exclusivity that is encouraged by members of the clergy and conservatives. There is a strong emphasis on 'holiness' being about ritual and vocation (which is generally always only limited to marriage or religious life), not about social justice and living in harmony with one another. The former are important, but not at the expense of the latter. Catholic means universal, but there is an increase in conservative young priests graduating from the seminaries and sent into parishes which is resulting in the term universal being morphed into more of a message reading "Conform or get out" or "All in or not in." If Jesus were to visit Australia today and hear the horrid things said to people by conservatives who live 'holy lives' (*Youth Speak* online is a prime example of this) he would be flipping the tables in the temple, to speak metaphorically. We are also a country led by people who claim to be Catholic (or Christian) and are supported by the Church, but then are deniers of some of the most basic human rights and Biblical values - specifically to do with stewardship and refugees. There is more in the Bible about these two than passages about homosexuality and yet which cause do these prominent figures wave their Captain Catholic flag for? Where are the bishops pulling them in line (publicly, not just in documents circulated to Catholics - although they are great)? Some of the most faith-filled, dedicated, spiritual, contributing, compassionate, humble and worthy people that are in the Australian Catholic Church identify as LGBTI+ but are living their lives in secret. This is the complete reversal from what the love of God and the example of Jesus set for us. Jesus came so that we can live life abundantly, and we are all made in the image of God, so how is it that the religion that these people follow, and are dedicated to in their ministries, is also the same religion that says "keep it quiet, stay celibate, otherwise this isn't the place for you." Please note that I am not referring to the sanctity of marriage here but the equality, respect and acceptance of faith-filled human beings, regardless of sexuality. Our priorities are wrong. Our culture is turning backwards, not forwards. Jesus challenged this type of religious culture that was for the rich and pious, and disregarded the outcast and the humble faithful. The time has come to do the same. What would Jesus do??

God is giving us an opportunity to revitalise the Church and to change it from one where in practice only the clerics constitute the Church and the lay people are treated as appendages, to one where lay people have genuine input into the administration but not the dogma of the Church.

That the Church be more open with their decisions and not caught up in so much pomp and ceremony. We as a Church are meant to evangelise, to pray, to praise and testify about God in our own lives.

Always the same 'follow the gospels'! A good start might be to read again and again the account of the washing of the feet. So that we really come to understand the mind of Jesus as regards leadership in the Church. Unpack and put into operation the words of Pope Francis, "I want a Church of the poor for the poor'. Where do our priorities lay? The poor, the abused, the homeless may become our 'saviours' if we had the good sense to listen to their stories and walk with them. Then, like the Good Samaritan, bind up their wounds and they might bind up our wounds.

God is asking us to believe we can still be Catholics. However, the Church needs to catch-up with its body, the people. It is so perplexing to see the congregation of male cardinals, single men singing Gregorian chants and talking about their own earthly created problems of sexual abuse; the Church investigating its own. We are being asked to hope that Pope Francis will act honourably to create a Church that allows itself to be honest; to recognize that God in creating man in 'his own image' would not have meant excluding women, half of mankind. If women were part of the Church leadership, there would not have been this abuse; this abuse of power that I witnessed in Form 4 with a Christian Brother fondling my classmate sitting next to me at our school desks. Canon laws, power laws are man-made beyond the ten commandments. We are told how to behave in our families by males who do not have mortgages; children to be nursed, cared for, educated and guided, food to acquire, transport to acquire, to work in our calling, to care for aged parents. Yet we are talked down to by ordained single men in the belief that they are above the faithful on a pedestal. As our much missed, respected, loved and the best cleric in my life, Fr [ - ] (resigned from the Church 2 years ago) appointed by Frank Little to vet men coming to the priesthood, was used to saying; priests are in trouble because they have been put on a pedestal of trust, which most kept but the bad few ruined the role and image for us.

Catholics must base their faith entirely on their relationship with Jesus Christ and not on any Church hierarchy. There is no real reason why Catholics should question their faith because of wrongness in the Church, no matter how shattered they are, and giving up practice of their faith indicates their faith is in the Church and not in God. The problem with the Catholic Church, is that it has put itself first and put God second, and got the priority wrong. Also, it has failed to teach Bible truths in schools. We need the Church structure of course to teach Christianity, or we would probably not be Christians and we would not have the Eucharist. The only criteria of what is right is how God sees it, and not people's opinions, however strongly they feel. The most important reality for everybody is that we are right with God. The Church cannot change God's laws and the Holy Spirit does not change to fit in with any human opinion. Catholics who support SSM, and clergy who wrongly bless SS relationships, obviously do not follow what Jesus said that licentiousness is against God's laws, i.e. any sexual contact outside marriage between a man and women. They do not have the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and just follow worldly standards. The meaning of Romans 1:26-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 1 Timothy 1:8-10 was clear to the early Church who had the Holy Spirit following Pentecost. The interpretation of those passages is disputed in our time by those who are in effect saying, they now know the mind of God and 2000

years of theologians and saints did not. Supposed “primacy” of conscience is not the final arbiter of truth, because if human beings could determine what is right with God, there would be no sin, and no need for the sacrifice of Jesus.

We are being asked to build a Church that will have a place for our adult children should they wish to return to the Church of their youth. If this were to happen today it is most likely that they (our children) would be asked to contribute to a new brick or Church spire or something equally irrelevant while they themselves struggle to make ends meet in modern Australian society. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church failed to engage properly with our schools and teachers in the education of students post Vatican II. The dominant thread was that parents and teachers were at fault. The Catholic Church today must look to the laity. When lay people are given their rightful place in the Church there will be the seeds to nourish the respect between laity and clergy. Bishops and priests do not necessarily have a monopoly on spirituality or knowledge but they have chosen to serve the people of God out of love and service and not superiority. The idea that ordination bestows some sort of divine right is rather mediaeval and serves no useful purpose. The Church in Australia is tempted to hold onto its power and wealth and it is seen to be strongly aligned to those with power and wealth. The future Church must reimagine itself without power and prestige to reclaim its central focus of being Jesus in the world. This must come first. We will then treasure our material wealth and it will help us rather than hinder. We have lost our way. Sadly I do not believe in the leadership of the Church. The leadership of the Catholic Church in Australia was found wanting during the so called marriage equality debate. They lead as though they were oblivious to the fact that practically every family in Australia had homosexual and lesbian members whom we loved and respected.

The old ways and reasons for coming to church are dying and a new way is rising. I wonder if many people in the past came to church through fear, pressure, superstition and habit. A fire and brimstone approach had the seats filled each Sunday. Some say we should return to this way in order to swell the numbers again ... Return to the old ways because back then the churches were full! I disagree. I am sure God does not want people sitting in the pews who do not want to be there. I believe that in this time in Australia the Spirit is urging us in a different direction. Back to one of Jesus’ original commandments. It was new when he gave it and it can bring new life to our Church today. “Love one another as I have loved you.” This commandment is so basic in its simplicity that we can be very flippant about it and ignore the absolute imperative message that it holds. If we approach everything we do and say from a position of love and respect for the ‘other’ then we can’t go far wrong. If we treat people like someone we care for very much, rather than just a number or a problem to be solved, then we are heading in the right direction. Good decisions will flow from this way of doing things. Just stop for a moment and put yourself in their shoes. Why are they doing what they are doing? What is going on in their lives to cause them to behave the way they do? What is the motive for their actions? If we try to understand people better before we make decisions about them then we will all be better off. This is the way God is. God understands each person completely and fully and loves each person for the good that is in the essence of their being. If we, in the Catholic community can introduce or remind people of the absolute loving and forgiving nature of God then maybe people will be more inclined to want

to come to church and parish community to learn more and be around people who display the qualities of Jesus.

Blessings, my name is [ - ], 71 years young, still working in the health industry, therefore my ears and eyes are my guide in my response. God is oh so speaking loudly. Yes, the Church is stuck with its male-dominated, dispassionate, and psychosexually immature, mal-developed and sexually deprived celibate priests; how can they possibly preach/assist on marriage, family issues, drugs, alcoholism, family violence, fatherless and motherless children's needs, etc. when they live in the lap of luxury in the Vatican as single men. How can priests, well intentioned, but predominantly from other CULTURES, relate to the "Aussie Spirit", and ignoring the plight of Aboriginal needs; the Church, my Church, needs reinvention, here are the points to change; We don't need dispassionate old men, deprived of intimate human touch, love, and caring, prancing around in vestments; JESUS DID NOT WEAR VESTMENTS, He was like us, simple, humble, and hard working. The good women of Australia, and the Aboriginal women of Australia, raised good children, cared for their families; INCLUDE ALL Australians, the opportunity to become LEADERS IN OUR CHURCH; not the BOYS CLUB that the Church is. Start to raise funds for mental health facilities in our local communities, open up church buildings and properties for "Jesus' work". Jesus lived in a small community, and went as far as he could WALK. Today our Church with Jesus can do the same in our community, work together towards repairing the disgusting damage the hierarchy of this Catholic Church has laid on our shoulders. I hear the disgust of the general communities in staff rooms, as I am an agency nurse. I believe that ROME owes it to us to be part of a NEW RENEWAL of the Jesus story. Let us be Jesus' followers in the true sense and allow US to be measured in our thinking in reorganising OUR CHURCH; JESUS DID NOT HAVE BISHOPS, ARCHBISHOPS, CARDINALS, nor a POPE for that matter; Get down to earth, let our Sunday Masses be a feast of faith, communion, music and humanity, kindness and a reaching out time to our parishioners. I bet if the parish priest stood up and asked each individual attendee at Mass to state 3 troublesome issues and needs, he would leave the priesthood because simply put, HE could not handle it; and precisely here lies the problem, the Hierarchy never dealt with sexual abuse nor its victims; it is too busy focusing on itself, preserving the BOYS CLUB; SOME PRIESTS have ruined it for the GOOD NUNS AND PRIESTS; they are now looked upon as deviates, cruel, and served no purpose. The NUNS were the HEROINE educators of Australian kids, they were WOMEN ... instrumental in creating great citizens. What is God asking? God wants Aboriginal and local parishioners, to have open Sunday community spirituality, Masses/services, Jesus' pathway, all-inclusive participation, creating a song-filled Church with married male and female leaders; do we need the title "priest". Let the people help an ailing Church, you owe it to Jesus and me.

I think God is asking us to re-embrace Christ's way and reinvigorate the Church to be truly Christian in humble service and love that is inclusive of all - men, women and LGTBI people. God is giving us the opportunity to broaden our governance group to benefit from the wisdom and talents of people of faith and not just ordained, (supposedly) celibate men. God is asking us to take responsibility in our Church and no longer be subservient to a 'priest class' but act in partnership with men and women of knowledge and honour in spreading the love of Christ in Australia. Just as Australia has taken leadership in the world in establishing the Royal Commission

so in response the Church can show leadership in forming a method of governance that can address the evils that have been exposed and an approach that can be emulated by others.

To get back to teaching the Catholic faith in schools and from the pulpit. No more watering down of the truth. Clean up the Church from priest and nuns who want to change the truths and dogma of the Catholic Church and start with missions. Make our Church safe for children and parishioners and for priests.

I think God is asking Australian Catholics to take back ownership of their Church, step up and show leadership in order to change the institution for the better - to focus on the teachings of Jesus and tear down the rules and structures and outdated values which are mired in institutional direction, not God's word

Q1: What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Our group thinks God is asking us to:

- Have courage and remain faithful while we work to improve and shape the Church of the future
- Have group opinions and discussions, not just be preached to
- Help the youth of today to connect/re-connect with the Church's beliefs
- Direct the Church to revive, survive, rejuvenate in Australia after the Royal Commission
- Have laity and religious work more closely together to promote the common good
- Create mutual trust for all people especially those from multi-faiths
- Call for transparent structures and strong leadership
- Promote openness to change
- Do more to welcome asylum seekers
- Encourage youth to be more involved by providing opportunities for a youth Mass (guitar Mass), youth groups, attendance at World Youth Day activities
- Be welcoming and include families for baptism in the Church that the parents choose rather than make them stay within their parish boundaries
- Assist in the preparation of Mass which is more meaningful/enjoyable music.
- Be involved in liturgy, modernise and make relevant to youth—more social, connect to real life, social justice issues
- Show and act with compassion, forgiveness, inclusion and acceptance
- Help those in need—less fortunate
- Show more compassion—globally/refugees
- Look after the planet
- Address homelessness
- Be respectful to others (be nice)
- Find peace—stop and reflect
- Break down barriers (less division)
- Support others (reduce mental health diseases)
- Repair damage—build bridges
- Persevere
- Have communities stick with the faith during the tough times
- Unite, believe and not be drawn to a secular existence
- Love and promote the importance of family
- Own our past, acknowledge it and make changes to move forward

I do not have any particular feeling for what God is asking of us. However, I do have some thoughts as to what the Church in general should be embracing to enable it to continue to exist and to be relevant to our younger generation. I am firmly of the belief that the Church should allow priests to marry and to also allow women to become priests. The Church is struggling to provide priests and I see no reason why it does not embrace both of those options. I accept that one of the main arguments against priests being allowed to marry is that they would have to share their time between their Church and family responsibilities. However, it does appear to me that a priest who did have family responsibilities would become much more in touch with the day to day issues faced by the congregation and would be better able to relate to many of the situations and problems that they have to deal with. The support of an immediate family could also be something that would help a priest deal with some of the very difficult issues that a priest is confronted with. With regard to women being allowed to become priests I cannot see any

arguments against it. A woman would be just as capable as a man in dealing with the requirements of priesthood and in many cases could be more capable. Why would the Church not look at those two options? With regard to the Church's relevance to the younger generation, I am of the view that it needs to provide a Mass that is relevant to today's society. I find most of the scriptures and readings at Mass uninteresting and meaningless to me. I accept that many of the points being made in the scripture readings are still relevant and have a strong message but they need to be reworded in a simpler format and with wording that is understood by the congregation. I also am of the opinion that the hymns that are sung at Mass could be livened up and brought into the modern era. Mass, while still being a celebration of what we believe in, should be a vibrant, inclusive and embracing experience and I do feel that on many Sundays it is not such an experience. If I am of that view as a long term attendee, what are the thoughts of the young ones who are certainly low in numbers at Mass these days? Are the young ones not attending Mass because they have difficulty in finding any relevance to them in the service? I am sure that that is the situation and I believe that the Church need to change how Mass is celebrated to encourage the younger generation to become involved. I also have a strong belief that the Church must be more inclusive and not be judgemental. Some time ago at my Sunday Mass, a couple and their baby were being presented with a children's Bible prior to the child's baptism at a later date. I realised that the couple was actually two men and our priest was welcoming them as he would any other couple. I found that inclusiveness to be a great credit to our priest and it is that type of inclusiveness that I believe the Church must adopt.

When I was praying about this question, I got the words in my heart "return to the Father's heart". I think this means that: - The Church in Australia must give God what is due to Him (fitting worship and obedience to the Magisterium that His Son founded and His Spirit speaks through). - The Church in Australia must focus on facilitating a personal relationship between its members and their Lord (for this is what the Father's heart aches for!) - The Church must become more Eucharistic!!! Eucharistic Adoration should be available many times a week in ALL parishes, remote, rural and suburban. This is how our Church will flourish and attract more people. This is how she will stand strong against all the scandal. This is the answer to all our problems!

To take God seriously. Listen to God in silence, for in silence you hear God speaking to your heart. To realise that I am created in the image of God, that I am a unique person. That God is asking me to be faithful to Him in my life, to be obedient to His Commandments. To enjoy His world, it is so beautiful, protect it. Look after the people around me, see them as other gifts of God.

I believe God is asking his people to be love and light in the world today in the places we live and work. He is calling us to be authentic and live the gospel radically. We need to individually and collectively embrace the Holy Spirit at this time and allow Him to take over in our lives and Church. We are to be attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. As a Church, we are to unite with our brothers and sisters in Christ from other tribes and work together as family for the common good. This needs to happen at all levels of Church and in all communities. I believe God is inviting all believers to be baptised in the power of His Holy Spirit so that we are able and empowered to answer His call.

I think God is asking us in Australia to consider two things: to address bundling and to be more alternative rather than mainstream. Bundling, while primarily a marketing strategy where several

products or services are combined into one product or service package, is also a way for people to manipulate others. For example, a girl's natural and good desire to dance may see dancing lessons bundled with sexual advances and pressures. A lad's desire to play football may mean that the opportunity to play is bundled with accepting a toxic club culture. An engineering project to build a freeway extension may, due to staged costing, scope the project to be a kilometre short of the off-ramps so that the next stage of the project needs to be bundled before the existing stage can be useable. For the Catholic Church in Australia, the good and natural desire to know God and the New Testament message is bundled with the evolved structures and cultures of the Church. To know God and Jesus Christ I have to accept the bundle of patriarchy, hierarchy, imperialism and esotericism. None of these are wrong—but perhaps they don't best serve the Christian message and perhaps they could be unbundled from being a Christian in Australia. Secondly is the tension between being mainstream and being alternative. The mainstream or the world reflects man's desire to create structures that deliver what he wants with minimum effort, even if that means some people are exploited, the commons privately appropriated and the environment unsustainably used. The world, just like market forces, will not pursue a life-giving agenda. Being in the world but not of the world means, for example, exploring and creating alternative systems—financial, community, labour—and presenting them as viable alternatives, offering hope. Quite rightly, the Church needs to explore money and financial models. Current financial models may be 'mainstream' yet be wrong because of the disproportionate burden placed on the vulnerable. In the world money and power are linked. Show to the world alternative (and life-giving) ways to handle money, to form community, to be in the world. Closely related to this are the psychological challenges of idealism. Quite rightly the Church presents ideals. People, ordained and lay, struggle with ideals. There are psychological costs to embracing an ideal and noticing those around you who do not share or implement the ideal. There are psychological costs in noticing one's own failure to live up to ideals. The world has mixed views towards ideals: sadly, being an 'idealist' is not a compliment, yet we look for the ideal home, the ideal partner, the ideal job. To be alternative means to be able to hold what is ideal and how things currently are inside and know how to move forward without losing hope. God has always asked us to do this. Perhaps the Australian Church could provide (and model) appropriate tools and strategies.

Maybe God is asking us: what happened to the enthusiasm, the passion, the conviction? Isn't this what we are supposed to have? We have Passionist priests in our parish and the congregation asks what happened to the passion. The priests travel all over Australia to give teachings and retreats and missions, they come back to our parish and what do we get? A 5 minute sermon on a good day! We do not get priests in from outside to give us teachings or retreats. If we want to go for Bible classes, we have to go to neighbouring parishes, or for anything else we would like to do to increase our spirituality. Our priests seem to be hard of hearing, we have to eat what they dish up rather than them working out what it is we require. But when we talk about parish priest, do we talk about a priest whose parish is as big as the whole country? Maybe that is the reason why they are so hard to catch in our parish and so seldom here. I came back to the Catholic faith 2003-2005, after 35-40 yrs absence [Vatican II]. In 2008 [August], I came into this parish. Every time I asked a serious religious question, I was in trouble. Who do you think you are? Go ask someone else, etc. There is more to it than that. First time I rang the diocese office was 17/1. Last. People

are good listeners. I am still waiting for someone to ring me back and help me. There is so much [not] going on. But that could be me as I find it very difficult to find a teacher.

I believe that God wants us to be kind to our fellow man.

We believe God is calling the official hierarchical Church and religious orders to honesty, transparency and repentance for the perpetration and cover-up of abuse of our children and for betraying the trust of God's people. Restructuring the Church - Laity must have power in decision-making not just consultative; Greater role and authority for women in the Church. Restructuring must be enduring, just, a fair go for all. Establish a Leadership Team which includes lay women and men alongside, not inferior to, clergy and religious and having an equal vote in decisions. Education—Catholic education needs to be revamped to inspire youth to know and love Christ. Needs to equip them to live peacefully in a multi-faith world. Consider raising ages for baptism and Confirmation. Educate them in evangelisation and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Priesthood - we believe the whole circumstance of priesthood needs to be re-examined. Minimum adult entry age to enable some maturity and life experience to develop; optional celibacy; restore and support married priests in ministry. Accept women as candidates for ordination and encourage them to discern this vocation. Overseas priests are not the answer to our vocation shortage. Sacraments - restore the Third Rite of Reconciliation as a pastoral step to reduce the possibility of abuse or grooming within the Individual Rite - to protect vulnerable adults as well as children. Marriage - acknowledge reality of marriage breakdown and domestic violence. Church should be place of refuge, not judgmentalism. Care for the children involved. Simplify and explain clearly the annulment process. Social justice - Church is called to be both vocal and active in responding to injustices - homelessness, refugee crisis and exploitation; recognition and support for Indigenous Australians; speak out against exploitation of our natural resources causing permanent damage and destruction to the environment; promote life issues by offering viable alternatives to abortion, voluntary euthanasia and despair. Broker a bilateral agreement with politicians to end homelessness. Willingly accommodate people with disabilities within churches and as employees within organisations. Youth - Encourage and enliven the youth who are striving to know Christ and live actively Christian lives. Act to restore and reclaim the trust of disillusioned young people; be seen addressing homelessness, drug dependency, hopelessness and despair. Reduce ceremonial pomp, divest Church of ornate riches and use proceeds for social justice needs. Church finances should be transparent. Act to prevent future corruption of Church officials and processes. Create a culture of repentance, forgiveness and healing so that we can work towards slowly rebuilding a more Christ-like Catholic Church in Australia.

God is asking for equality in the Church and have women leaders as they too, like Mary, have a huge impact on the people, inspirational and connection with the people. Way is it a male dominated organisation? In our times, at the moment our male leaders can't be trusted.

I think God is asking us to have a stronger faith in Him and our Lord Jesus Christ. To do this, I believe we need to help our Catholic community build a stronger personal relationship with Jesus/God. Without a personal relationship with Jesus/God our parishioners risk a faith that is just going through the motions. A habit that, while fulfilling and worthy, is not personal and joyful. Any relationship, first of all, needs a desire to know more about the person you are building the relationship with. I think our current situation requires us to consider how we educate and inform

our faith community, at parish and school level, about the person Jesus Christ. Many people I know do not truly know who Jesus Christ is. Or for that matter His Church. I believe that God is asking us to ensure our faith practice has substance, is relevant and sacred. I believe that when we have beauty and reverence within our Mass, it help us point to something greater than ourselves. It points us towards Jesus our Lord and builds our relationship with Him.

Sacrament of Penance A review of the Church's practice of the Sacrament of Penance is necessary. I. The Third Rite of Reconciliation and General Absolution should return. People have "voted with their feet" and moved away from the practice of the Sacrament of Penance as it is currently celebrated. II. The practice of routinely requiring all 8-year-old baptised Catholic children to celebrate the sacrament is inappropriate. The Third Rite of Reconciliation was well received in many places in Australia in the past. We practised the Third Rite in which we held a communal celebration of God's love, mercy and forgiveness. Many people participated in these liturgies which included general absolution. People gathered for the purpose of celebrating Christ's forgiveness, hearing the Word of God and a homily, performing an Examination of Conscience, making an act of contrition and making amendment. In November 1998 the practice of the Third Rite was ruled out. Now fewer people are availing themselves of individual reconciliation. I have heard priests report that although Confessions are scheduled, on most occasions no-one turns up. Therefore, the reality is that most Australian Catholics do not access any form of Penance, ever. The People of God have not accepted the teaching that the communal Rite of Penance is "illegitimate". The Third Rite of Penance and General Absolution should return. The re-establishment of the more ancient Communal Rite of Penance will hopefully mean that, people would again celebrate the sacrament of God's love, mercy and forgiveness. The spiritual benefit to people would be a greater number availing themselves of the sacrament. The practice of routinely requiring all 8-year-old Baptised Catholic children to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance is inappropriate. While children of this age are beginning to develop an understanding of right and wrong, they are not at the development stage of understanding the concept of sin. I would argue that an 8-year-old is not capable of serious sin. Intervening in a child's psychological and moral growth with a serious negative concept could be damaging if not handled competently and professionally. I argue that it is not necessary. Almost all children who celebrate their "First Reconciliation" (unless corralled in or required again by the school or parish) do not take part in the sacrament again. What else do schools put children through that they will never do again?

I think that God is asking the Church to have "the heart of Jesus" in our dealings. We would be more loving when dealing with, for example, divorcees and homosexuals. We need to examine our teaching on sexuality, celibacy, leadership and so on. We need to examine ways to promote a love of our liturgy, to make it really special and a beautiful experience.

Maybe God is asking us to re-imagine the gospel of Jesus the Christ in the light of the story of the evolving universe. We who live in the 21st century know we live in an evolutionary cosmos on planet earth, our home, where we are all inter-related, inter-connected and inter-dependent. So much is being written and articulated to excite us into the wonder and mystery of it all. Astronauts become poetic in sharing their experience of being in space and seeing Earth from outer space. "On the return trip home gazing through 240,000 miles of space toward the stars and planet from which I had come, I suddenly experienced the universe as intelligent, loving and

harmonious. My view of the planet was a glimpse of divinity.” (Edgar Mitchell USA). Photography and television allows us to view the most wonderful scenes of nature, the gift of life emerging from all types of creatures and matter. I have tried to express in a painting COSMIC LOVE what God might be asking of us ... to be aware that THE SPIRIT OF JESUS EMPOWERS US AND CREATES US ANEW WITH JOY. The dancing cross is green -- a symbol of new life and growth in all of nature. “Creatures can come into being like a shoot from a stem, only as part of an endlessly renewed process of evolution.” Green is the colour of the heart chakra which is considered responsible for all kinds of love relationships. The cross shows “no-one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” On the cross, Jesus handed over the Spirit. (John 19:30). My painting indicates “when the soldier pierces Jesus’ side and “blood and water came out.” (John 19:34) The blood and water can be symbolic of the blood and burst water of childbirth. Hence at the hour of his exaltation (his death, resurrection and ascension) Jesus’ births new life in the Spirit and we are born of God. The evangelist points out very emphatically that the testimony is true. We the readers are all birthed into the life of the Spirit (John16: 21-22) and live as sisters and brothers in mutuality and friendship. Teilhard de Chardin imagined a new Christified humanity bonded by love that would enkindle the love of the evolving cosmos ... “To raise the powers of love upward to the next stage of consciousness.” “The awakening of LOVE in the human heart is the spiritual journey of our time. Someday after mastering the winds, the tides, and gravity we shall harness for God the energies of Love. And then, for a second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire.” Teilhard de Chardin.

I believe that God is asking us to be like the Johannine community—a community of missionary disciples of equals. Like the Woman at the Well to proclaim our understanding within our local community ... asking the perfect missionary disciple question “Come and see, he cannot be the Messiah can he?” Come and see for yourselves. Pope Francis in *Joy of the Gospel* uses the Woman at the Well as the model of missionary discipleship. Can we have the same “shocking inclusiveness of Jesus” who dialogued with a Samaritan woman? This shocked the disciples but they dared not question him. Perhaps this is a call for us today to question the way Jesus related to women. He helped Martha in her struggle to articulate a fuller faith. “Yes, Lord I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God the one coming into the world.” (John11:27) These are the very words for which the gospel is written so that we, the readers might “come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing have life in his name.” (John 20:31) Today we have scientific discoveries like the evolution of the universe to contemplate and have the help of many women scripture scholars who full of the Spirit of Jesus enlighten our wonder. To love like Mary of Bethany, to go to Jesus quickly when he calls. The Jews followed her so she led them to Jesus. Because of her deep faith and love she made a symbolic gesture by anointing of Jesus’ feet. This was appreciated by Jesus who told Judas to leave her alone that she did it for the day of his burial giving the action further symbolic meaning as she wiped the oil off whereas for burial it is kept on so her action foreshadows the resurrection. Mary Magdalene moving through sorrow and loss is trusted to proclaim Jesus’ message. “Do not hold on to me ... Go to my brothers and sisters and say to them,” I am ascending to your Father and my Father to your God and my God” (John 20:17). Paul too wants, “no longer male and female” (Galatians 3:28).

I am [ - ], aged 62, teacher in a Catholic school and youth group leader. Background: • Member of [ - ] [ - ] • I teach at [ - ] College, where I hold retreats and Oblate Charism coordinator position

• I started and guide [ - ] youth group (8 years old and presently just surviving) • I co lead [ - ] junior youth group (2 years old and strong) • I am involved in cluster organisation of youth groups (West Sale Diocese and also Greater Waverley area) • I started and lead Melbourne Catholic Youth Games (150 youth competing in a day in August—7 years old). Idea: Jesus wants to use us to bring his Good News to the youth. Parishes are poor in terms of time, money and youth contact. Schools are comparatively rich in those areas. Schools should be the vehicle by which we evangelise and connect youth back to parish. The aim of the Church should be to have a teacher in every secondary (and primary?) school whose load should be 50% dedicated to this goal of connecting youth to parish. Getting faith-filled teachers who are motivated would be another challenge apart from funding. Jesus wants youth as leaders in spreading the Good News. Projects like CSYMA and RAYMAR's replacement should be offered in all Catholic Secondary Schools. The forming of faith-filled youth leadership is crucial. It appears that the CSYMA's success in the New England leading to youth leaders in schools is admirable. This should lead to courses offered in youth ministry at Catholic tertiary institutions perhaps inspired by the Perth model of the Borg's Catholic Youth Ministry and leadership. Goof ball idea: Set up a cheap, profitable Catholic funeral service in each deanery whose earnings are dedicated to funding youth. I believe Holy Spirit funerals in North Brisbane may be like this.

I feel God is asking us to go back to the basics of following his Word—not rules man has made, but the core message Jesus gave us. We need to pare back the pomp and ceremony, the arrogance of our leaders, the frills and frippery and return to the His message. Jesus abhorred the Temple in his time, and he would not be pleased with the temples we have built in his name. We need to follow humble, honest and sincere leaders on a path through life, where riches and politics play no part. We need to be more aware to the pain and suffering of our fellow men and women, in particular our Indigenous, and refugees and asylum seekers.

It would be good if World Youth Day returned to Australia so that a new generation of young people can experience it. Perhaps Melbourne would be a good location for the next World Youth Day in Australia.

I think God is asking us to make radical changes to the model of Church we are presently working with. Jesus made radical demands upon his disciples in the first century of the Common Era. With the growth of secularism in our society today, we too, as disciples of Jesus, are faced with demanding challenges. As a loyal follower of the Catholic faith, I find the task of spreading the Good News and upholding the integrity of our faith has been undermined by the present hierarchical structure or model of our Church. Some priests and bishops continue to misuse their power, exude a sense of privilege and are detached from their congregations. The dreadful situation of the sexual abuse cover ups developed and was allowed to fester under the present model of Church. Unless it changes the Catholic faith will most likely wither. All of us within the Church are bearing the brunt of this humiliating and shameful situation and radical changes to this model of Church needs to be made so that people can trust the Catholic Church again. My parish of [ - ], [ - ], is an excellent example of a vibrant community where many participate and the parish priest nurtures a team effort in running the parish. For the time I have been a parishioner at [ - ], we have been blessed with two excellent priests (Fr [ - ] and Fr [ - ]). At the end of last year (2018), whilst Fr [ - ] was seriously ill, our female Pastoral Associate and Pastoral Worker, with the help of

many parishioners, maintained the many activities and liturgies we have come to expect at our parish. This was thanks to Fr [ - ]'s ongoing encouragement and support of a wide variety of parishioners being involved in activities. We then had the confidence to step up to the challenge and keep the parish thriving when his sudden illness struck. The strong sense of community was most evident at our Advent Reconciliation Service which was developed by the liturgy team and led by the Pastoral Associate. Recently, I have been taking my elderly aunt to St Margaret's Anglican Church services in Eltham. I have been most impressed by the warmth of Vicar Keren Terpstra as she engages the congregation in the sacraments and especially encourages people to be involved with the liturgical music. On St Margaret's feast day, Bishop Kate Prowd also presided over the services. I was so impressed with her relaxed and joyful manner. Of course, I reflected upon the absurdity of women not being able to be ordained as priests in the Catholic Church. I am also insulted by the bluntness of the decree that we shouldn't even discuss the matter.

Language of liturgy: submission to change the language of the liturgy. "Either eat this soup or jump out of the window." This is the literal translation of a well-known Italian saying. The translation is not very revealing in Australian English as it fails to convey the saying's meaning. Australians may guess what the translation is getting at, but they cannot be sure. The language is unclear, it is not effective, it does not deliver. This is analogous to the effect of the current Missal translation in Australia. The language is convoluted and the word for word translation is ineffective in ensuring that the people of God can fully participate in worship. Pope Francis has called for a re-evaluation of the 2001 Vatican instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam*. We at [ - ] respectfully ask our bishops to - stop adopting the literal translation and to consider other options that are more relevant and meaningful in contemporary Australia. A starting point could be looking at the 1998 translation that was never implemented. This will enable Australian Catholics to fully participate in the liturgy. Language devoid of meaning is futile. What's a more meaningful Australian translation of the Italian saying above? "It's this way or the highway." Literal translations are ineffective. To enable full participation in the liturgy we need language that speaks to Australians and engages their mind, hearts and imagination. Inclusive language in liturgy is inclusive language in the liturgy much to do about nothing? We at [ - ] believe we shall never achieve "full, active participation in the liturgy" called for in the "constitution on the liturgy" of 2nd Vatican Council until our language in the liturgy matches lived experience in the day life of our people. Please remember that even those of middle age have long lived with newspapers, magazines and TV that use "man" to mean "male". Yet in our liturgy we are faced with any number of examples such as these we quote. 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday year B: "The whole community of the sons of Israel" ... I have heard the complaints of the sons ... " followed by "mere men ate the bread of angels". St Paul and St James in second reading often commence "my brothers". Of course, it is important to distinguish between vertical and horizontal inclusive language. We are not asking for a change to the Blessed Trinity. However, continuing to use sex exclusive titles for human beings continues to harm the Church's mission. Too many people already find such language offensive and is one of the stated reasons for men and women leaving the practice of their faith. Inclusive language is no more than a recognition of contemporary culture and changes in the English language. Without this simple change, we face the very real problem of becoming more and more out of step and irrelevant. For how much longer must women pray "for us men and our salvation"?

Anointing of the sick: We believe that a number of sacraments are in need of review. One such sacrament is “the sacrament of the sick”. Vatican II highlighted the change of this sacrament from “The Last Rites” (extreme unction). Unfortunately 60 years later, the majority of Australian Catholics still think of this beautiful, consoling and encouraging sacrament as “The Last Rites” and rush to have a priest come and anoint their relative even after the “recipient” has died. We propose a training of ministers for this sacrament. 60 years ago, only the priest distributed Holy Communion at Mass and took Communion to the elderly and “shut ins” once a month on a 1st Friday. Now, weekly, special ministers take Communion to hospitals, nursing homes, etc. They can do this because they are taking the host, consecrated by a priest at the Sunday Mass. In the same way, these special ministers would take the sacred oils, blessed by the bishop at the Annual Mass of Chrism. These ministers have a special relationship with those whom they visit. In chatting, they are in a much better position to communicate the beautiful meaning of the sacrament of the sick. At present, the priest is sometimes a stranger to the sick/elderly person and so can elicit an unfortunate fear. Sadly, to overcome this concern a lot of people wait until “Mum is comatose and doesn’t know” (or worse has died!). What a terrible image of God this projects that God only takes to heaven, those anointed before death. We strongly recommend immediate training and implementation of lay ministers, not only for a better use of the sacraments but also its more appropriate use will help to bring about the change of mindset in our people. Thus this sacrament will be seen in its true healing. It will be seen as the gentle Christ caring for the sick person. To review, renew and rethink the sacraments and the liturgy.

Submission for the students of [ - ] College: We think that God is asking the Church in Australia to be more compassionate to those who see themselves as different. To live by the example of Jesus where he included those in his Church, who the society excluded, at this time lepers, prostitutes, tax collectors and the like. We recognise those that are LGBTQI+ and gender diverse are like the lepers, prostitute and tax collectors of Jesus’ time. Jesus preached to be compassionate of them all and that they were all welcomed into God’s Kingdom because of God’s unconditional love. We feel that there is some embarrassment to go to church and to participate because of the pressure of secular society. We believe that God is asking for there to be outreach to young people in helping us to better understand how to live as Catholics in a world where it is asking us to be countercultural. Also, that God was asking the Church to modernise some traditions, making them more relevant to 21st Century life. We also think that God is calling Australia to look at priesthood and that there needs to be discussion around priests being able to marry, have children and perhaps even have female priests. We think that all young people want to be included and to be able to have a voice within the Catholic Church in Australia and the world. We believe that society has slowly turned away from Christ’s teachings and example due to materialism in recent generations and that some steps should be taken to ensure that Church is made “cool” for young people who are an important part of the Church’s legacy. God is asking for the Church to support those in the community experiencing problems and assist people with these problems with more than just prayer.

Clear and authentic teaching of the Catholic Faith. The need to overcome the confusion which has led to a divergent understanding of what is genuinely the revealed truth of God and has

subsequently undermined the unity of the Church in Australia. As well as this, effective evangelisation is seriously impaired.

[ - ] College Parent Submission to the Plenary Council: We think that we need to continue to pray and ask for guidance in these challenging times, to listen to the message of Jesus and to do our best to live and preach this message of love and forgiveness. We think the Catholic Church in Australia is called to unite with each other and become more inclusive to groups of people who feel excluded from the Church such as youth, people seeking IVF and homosexuals. We are concerned about people losing faith, particularly due to the child sexual abuse by clergy. The Church is no longer seen to be a moral authority. The Church should be a place where people seek comfort and healing and this is not the experience many people have with the Church. The Church needs to acknowledge the hurt in the world and make moves to help people to understand that no one is perfect and that the Church is there help them to seek forgiveness and to offer redemption. Chaplains in schools are now rare and this should be considered as a way in which the Church can offer healing and inclusivity. In addition to this, encouraging student in secondary school to receive all their sacraments. More targeted sacramental programs that explain the importance of the sacraments. There is a rising concern of young men not wanting to become priests and solutions to this need to be found. We think that a couple of the solutions could be that priests are allowed to get married like in some of the orthodox traditions, as well as consideration given to female priests. The disconnection of youth is a major concern for us, we believe young people want to be spiritual but do not know how to do this. They are often embarrassed of their faith and so work needs to be done to support them in being able to express their faith with confidence. Young people want to know why they do things. For example; young people want to know why they go to church. They need to understand the beliefs behind their actions. All Catholics, including young people, are encouraged to live their faith in action. The Catholic Church in Australia needs to provide opportunities for people to be able to live their faith in action as well as remind them how they can do this in their everyday lives. The Church needs to lead by example by giving of itself to others. The Church could also work with parents to remind them that they are an example for their children and that both they and the Church can work in partnership to show young people what the Catholic faith is truly about.

God is asking us to be a witness, share our stories and live our values.

I think God is asking us to be a humble and listening Church which is responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and especially open to the wisdom and experience of Indigenous Australians. I also think God would like our bishops to respond bravely to the invitation of Pope Francis to take initiatives here in Australia that are responsive to the particular situation of the Catholic Church in Australia. That includes developing a liturgy that is more invigorated and open to younger people and reflects the experience of Indigenous Australians who understand our country more than anyone else. The way our bishops present themselves needs to change, with a simple mode of dress, without a mitre, and with the main emphasis on the shepherd's crook. Francis is wanting bishops to put forward reasons for ordaining married men-- I would like Australia to take a lead on that and also on opening the diaconate to women. Canon law needs to change so that laity can share in the decision-making from parish level upwards. Ministries and authority needs a broader base so that the ordained work and ministry

alongside the non-ordained. The ongoing crisis of child abuse which has left so many damaged and wounded Australians means that the Church has to change or risk becoming unable to carry the message of Jesus to future generations. Perhaps even the structure of the Plenary itself needs to change. Much has changed since it was first announced. My understanding is that the Plenary has a canonical form that is not open to the full participation of lay people. The form of the Plenary will send a message and if the message is that bishops assemble and lay participants are carefully selected without the ability to lead or shape discussion and make recommendations then it may be a wasted process. I hope this is not so.

God is particularly asking us at this time to re-evaluate how our Church has treated those abused by clergy. We are appalled at the way this whole issue has been handled. Covering up, less than sincere apologies, casting doubt on the honesty of the victims, the arrogance displayed by some clergy in dealing with the situation are just some of the more serious complaints. We feel that far more needs to be done to repair this situation for both the victims, and us, the common parishioners who are horrified by how this has been dealt with on our behalf. There are good people in our community who are working hard to help these victims. Father Kevin Dillon and the Lighthouse Foundation are making a difference in our area. Maybe this could be a model for all parishes, under the direction of a mentor like Father Dillon. God is asking us for better governance in the Church to help us move forward. Please answer Him! Please!

Church in Australia needs to revisit Vatican II, it was an invigorating time. So many clergy today, not all, have resorted to ultra-conservatism. We need to embrace the needs of the people especially the youth, who are sadly missing from our ranks. One of these respondents has a granddaughter who has a lovely faith and is keen to attend the local Baptist Church because there is a joyfulness that attracts the young.

We think that the Church in Australia is often perceived as focused on consequences of being judgemental rather than operating by Jesus' message, to love each other. There is a perceived disconnect with the life and the teachings of Jesus and how the Church acts and behaves today. God is asking of Australia to speak up, reflect, be inclusive, to reimagine what the Church should be for the people of Australia today. This is not to say that we think that the Church should advocate for things that are in conflict with her central beliefs. However, instead to remember these central beliefs within the contradictory behaviour displayed by representatives and Church officials. The Church is called to be more inclusive of everyone in society, much like in Jesus' time. There are people in society who feel discriminated and excluded, for example those from diverse cultural backgrounds, Indigenous Australians, the LGBTIQ+ community and those from religiously diverse backgrounds including other Christians. Jesus sought to include all in the Kingdom of God and, as such the Church in Australia should seek to do this also. We feel that God is asking us to consider the attitude and role of the clergy which is seen to be above the laity (i.e. clericalism). This is a massive concern in perspective of the Royal Commission regarding child sexual abuse. We believe that there needs to be a better system to deal with such crises and that there is much to question of the Church's moral authority given these revelations. The Church may also need to put its considerable political force behind social justice issues such as gender pay gap, income inequality and domestic, sexual and physical violence. We believe that it is imperative the Church re-contextualises faith by creating a faith experience for all adherents, in particular young people

and those on the margins of society. For the Church to emphasise the importance of relating gospel teaching to modern values. It is important that the Church relates to people on an authentic, genuine and transparent platform. An open Church would result in its members being proud of all it stands for. We feel that women in the Church have traditionally been excluded from leadership roles and decision making. The Church is urged to redress this moving forward. There needs to be the opportunity for women to have executive positions so their voice is part of all decisions. Women are heavily involved in parishes that some of us belong to, including administration of parishes and volunteering. Increased female participation in the Church is an important step moving forward.

To love one another.

To be the Church that Jesus wants us to be ... as Pope John Paul said in 2006 in Alice Springs ... to learn from the Aboriginal people of this land and learn of their sacred symbols as depicted in the Message Stick and offered to Australian Catholics in 2007. I think understanding the sacred symbols of this land and what they can teach us about living in this country has more resonance than symbols from another culture and country ... namely eating bread and wine as consecrated to become Christ's body and blood. I think we should connect more explicitly with the Jewish tradition from which the Eucharist originates. I think too many people have left Catholicism because the rituals and traditions have no real resonance with their lives. I believe the experience and symbol burning back to find the seed of Christ's gifts to us in the Church has far more meaning to us in Australia today than many of the than lighting candles and bringing back rituals and practices from the fifties.

God is asking us in Australia to be saints in the middle of the world, to be the best that we can be. I am a lawyer by profession, and happily married. I attend Mass daily but it is very difficult to find a daily Mass in the Melbourne suburbs that caters for working professionals. Most Masses are at 9am when we are work. Please, bring back the 6.45am or 7am Mass. A number of parishes within very close range will often have a 9am or 9.30am Mass.

To remember what the purpose of the Church is supposed to be. To share the good news about what God has done in Christ. To protect the vulnerable and to repent of our sins. To show the public that the institutional Church is aiming to behave better, but not to do so in a defensive way. To have more diversity (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, disability status) among those who lead the rituals and decision-making of the Catholic Church.

For us all to be open to the possibility of change that can/will bring new life to the Church. We can cherish the past and learn from it rather than cling to it as if it is set in stone. To do this, we must be people of HOPE. The Plenary Council offers a wake-up call—taking account of what is happening—or not! —in the Church; to build a new Church with all taking part. This is a call to shed materialism and be more faith focused. People no longer go out of their way to go to Sunday Mass—either too lazy or because of the lack of spiritual nourishment when they are there. We need to be more inclusive rather than judgemental e.g. of those who are estranged because of separation or divorce. There is an urgent need for ongoing education in faith for all—many still don't know the teachings of Vat II—and see the Church as those in leadership—they regard the Church as 'roles' rather than all the people of God.

"Love one another as I have loved you" This is the central message of Jesus' teachings. It implies unconditional love to all people. I believe that God is asking us as the Church in Australia to evaluate how well we are doing as far as living up to this teaching. There are many people both within and outside of the Church who feel excluded including those who are LGBTIQ+, women, young people, those unable to have children, those who have been abused by clergy. This was and is not what Jesus wanted, this is not what the Kingdom of God is about. God wants us to come as we are, in whatever form. God asks for the Church to become hope for the broken, food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, the community for those who feel isolated and alone. It is asking the Church to not apologise for its beliefs but to find ways to reconnect people with it. There is a challenge here, the Church has lost its moral authority with its people, so many stories of betrayal coming from the Royal Commission, where the people who we trusted to be leaders and experts at assisting us to achieve the Kingdom of God had been undermining this for so long. God calls us to bring forth the Kingdom of God, this means redressing so much of what the Church has become because of the need to support such a large institution. This includes our treatment of the environment. We are called to be stewards of creation, yet we continue to live in a way that disrespects this through the choices that we make including the way we ignore renewable energy sources. God is calling us to recognise the human dignity of all people, in particular women. There are still so much in which society treats women unequally, this is seen in the gender pay gap, the number of women in leadership roles and the abuse suffered by many. The Church continuing to exclude women from roles of authority to serve and reinforce society's abuse of women. Jesus died for all of our sins, he represents the perfection of humanity and yet the Church still supports that only males can represent Jesus in the Church and within Eucharist. God is asking us to minister to people who are hurting, who are excluded, who are thought by society to not be worth the time. This is the example the Father gave us through the incarnation of his son Jesus, so it is time for us to live up to this example.

God is calling us to be understanding and compassionate to our fellow man. Our Australian society is in pain, people need to know what the Church stands for—a people modelled on the charism of Christ. The Church needs to also acknowledge the wrongdoings of the past and seeks forgiveness any wrongdoings e.g. paedophile priests. People need to feel like the Church listens and cares. Just like Jesus spoke to the people, the Church needs to draw its people to her and teach its people the value of prayer (i.e. the Rosary) and reading of the scriptures.

To change some of the basic structures of the Church—adopt voluntary celibacy for priests, open up priesthood to married men, gay men and women, institute checks and balances to make bishops accountable and transparent with all their decision-making, to welcome everyone within LGBTIQ community into the Church without any qualification, to rethink and adopt new understandings of human sexuality into Church teaching, to take active steps to reduce the culture of clericalism, to empower laity to take on collaborative decision-making with clergy, to stop recruiting and exploiting priests from 3rd world countries to bolster clergy numbers. For Australian bishops to lobby hard against Vatican hierarchy, and take worldwide leadership in reforming Catholic teaching and bureaucracy. To respond whole-heartedly to the final report of the Royal Commission into child abuse in Australia. For all parts of the Church to join immediately the national redress scheme for victims of child sexual abuse by clergy. To really cooperate with

police and courts to bring child abusers to justice, and allow all child abuse complaints to be fully investigated by civil authorities. To close down the Melbourne Response redress scheme. To give up the culture of covering up for past and present abusers. To give up protecting the image of the Church. To investigate the Catholic education system and look to folding the Catholic system into the State school system. How can core Christian values be reclaimed by the laity? To re-examine current liturgy practices, with a view to coming up with liturgy which is meaningful, inclusive of other faith traditions and contemporary to our world. Step up interfaith and ecumenical dialogue. Look at sharing Catholic resources (church buildings and other property) with the broader faith and non-faith communities. Remove all barriers to women playing a full and vital role in all Church operations - ecclesiastical and management. Reform formation practices for all those aspiring to live life as members of religious orders and priesthood. Introduce spiritual practices into mainstream religious service, e.g., meditation/contemplation. Become a more active player in the fight for social justice and human rights within Australia. Ban the use of any form of clerical garb for priests and religious, as a means of reducing power and authority of those people. Reimagine the Catholic faith in a way that does not make people feel bad about themselves. Reform the way the faith is taught, away from hell and damnation, to the precept of a loving God available to all.

Therefore God is asking us to: Do what Jesus would do? God is asking us to be a Church of unconditional love. Jesus is coming soon—and boy, is he pissed off.

To stay strong and hold fast to beliefs and values. Persevere patiently and bravely in face of secular pressure to change. Be a community and a place for all people to come to. Focus on what we have in common with others as a way to bring about relationship building.

We think God is asking us as the Church to ... connect in truth, be compassionate, reflect what is happening in the world, be relevant, be inclusive and accepting, demonstrate reconciliation and for the clergy to meet us as we are. The key themes from our discussion are as follows: \* the image and distrust of the Catholic Church \* Church doesn't reflect what's happening in the real world. \* faith and social justice \* relevance \* connect in truth \* for the clergy to meet us as we are \* compassion - reconciliation \* inclusion and acceptance.

I think God wants us to persevere, to not get distracted with what is going on about us. In our world the Catholic Church gets so much bad press, with the Pell affair and the paedophile priests. God wants us to persevere, to know that He is there all the time and that we acknowledge Him as our God. By persevere, I mean that we go on as we have always done, with regular worship and prayer.

I think God is asking the bishops to pay very close attention to the laity and not be closed-minded as often is the case when the bishops close ranks. The Cardinal Pell case has opened a wide-ranging discussion in the community, and the Catholic community in particular. While there is still an appeal to be heard, I think the case has provided an opportunity to provide increased momentum to Plenary 2020 as it has raised the urgency that the Church has to dramatically change. Please, please, please, the bishops MUST invite the key members of the laity, like Francis Sullivan, Christina Kenneally, and thoughtful priests like Frank Brennan. If the bishops close ranks during the Plenary Council, its credibility will be destroyed at that moment. We have a golden

opportunity to bury clericalism in Australia once and for all, and Rome must recognize that this must happen worldwide.

I believe that God is asking of us in Australia at this time to maintain the tradition of the Church particularly with the liturgy in accordance with the documents of the Second Vatican Council and to maintain the sacredness of the traditional language of the liturgy, that being Latin. I also believe that God is asking of us in Australia to be open to the spirit of God in light of the crisis and damage which has caused considerable damage to the Church and its reputation, particularly with the sexual abuse crisis.

God the Father is calling us always to be people of the truth and to love always, with compassion for each other. As teachers of the Billings Ovulation Method®, we are being called at this time, when people are confused about many things, including the truth of sexuality, relationships and marriage, to offer the truth that God planned from the beginning and what Jesus is by his very nature. The words “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” is the formula by which we strive to live and by so doing we have the opportunity to bring the Good News to all whom we teach. All men and women have the right to the knowledge of their bodies that God created and gifted to each person. Through teaching couples about their gift of fertility, Billings Ovulation Method® teachers offer couples and women this knowledge. It empowers them to take responsibility for their own reproductive and general health. Their lives are enriched simply by knowing how they can be healthy, free from any chemical or hormonal interference. So when anomalies occur a woman is alerted and so is advised by her Billings teacher to seek medical investigation. God the Son gave the new commandment to “Love one another as I have loved you”. He showed us how to love with compassion, by serving us and offering the ultimate sacrifice of his life for each one of us. Jesus loved by telling people the truth with patience and compassion. By learning the Billings Ovulation Method®, couples come to love in such a way that deepens their marriage by developing the skills of communication and co-operation. As Jesus served his family and friends, so husband and wife serve each other through commitment, self-discipline, selflessness and compassion. This total love is conducive to harmony within the family. By promoting life the Billings Ovulation Method® teacher confirms God’s plan for every created human person. An openness to life encourages couples to responsible parenthood. Planning the size of their families, while always being open to life creates a culture of life. Since the early 1960s when the contraceptive pill arrived, medical and societal trends have been relentlessly moving toward artificial birth control—resulting in an overall mentality against life, often called a “culture of death”. Alongside this development, in Australia, Drs John and Evelyn Billings investigated, theorized and then proved reliable rules for the detection and safe usage of the natural times of infertility and fertility in a woman’s ovulatory cycle, for the spacing of births. With no money behind the dissemination of such knowledge, the enlightenment offered by this natural means of fertility awareness has spread more slowly, but steadily, and has an extraordinary global outreach and uptake. God the Holy Spirit fills hearts with awe and wonder—evidenced when couples co-operate with the natural patterns of the woman’s fertility and so come to appreciate the great gift that is their combined fertility. What a privilege!

I believe that God is asking Australians to lead the Catholic Church into the 21st century. Through the grace of God, we have a land with plenty of resources, space and a climate which leads to

growth. As a young country we have the vitality to lead others and as an educated nation we understand the principles of Christianity and how these can be put into practice. We are not tied to long standing traditions and symbolism. We should accept refugees from all over the world and welcome them as Christ would have done. Our young people know the importance of caring for the environment to maintain the gifts that we have been given. It is time to cast aside the outdated rituals and symbolism of the Church and make it more relevant to the world of today. Bring people back to the Church, but to a Church that has relevance and understanding for them.

Making the gospel a 'Living Gospel'. Practising Catholics hear the word of God every week, but something I believe is how we are spreading the news of God. God wants us to live in this modern world vocalising his messages. I believe social justice and giving up time to spend with the venerable, lonely and marginalised is one way to make the gospel come alive.

I am actively involved in our parish and President of our SVDP conference. I am on the PPC and organised the listening and dialogue sessions for the Plenary Council in our parishes. My faith and the Mass are very important to me, as it is through the Eucharist that I truly experience God's loving presence, and a deep sense of peace and contentment. Unfortunately, I am becoming more and more disillusioned with the Church, and I know there will come a time when my conscious will not allow me to remain a practising Catholic. I am not sure where I will go, as I do not feel the same level of closeness in other Christian denominational services, although this may be because I am not fully participating in the service by not receiving the Eucharist equality. I believe the Catholic Church needs to be place of equality. I want to see a just, equitable and inclusive society and Church, where all members are encouraged to participate fully, and nobody is discriminated against. The majority of parishioners in our parish are female, and yet they have no voice in our patriarchal Church and will be underrepresented at the Plenary Council. If men and women are made in the image and likeness of God, we must start to ordain women. We also need to change the language we use. It needs to be inclusive, not only in scripture, but also in prayer. Catholic women must also be allowed to take effective control of their fertility. How can women achieve equality in the workplace or in society if they are unable to control their reproductive system? It is inconceivable to think this still remains part of our doctrine, and I am sure, is still used in many parts of the world to control and repress women. Mercy: I also believe in a forgiving and merciful Church which reflects our forgiving and merciful God. I look at our Church sometimes and find it hard to distinguish it from the Pharisees and priests of Jesus' time who were more concerned about rules and regulations than the people they were meant to serve. Where is the mercy and forgiveness when we deprive divorcees who have remarried commune? Clergy: Not only do I believe we should have female priests, but I also believe they should be allowed to marry and have children. We also need priests who have come from a diverse range of backgrounds, and who represent the people they administer to. I am concerned many joining the seminary come from a fundamental, conservative background. Our priests and bishops need to be accountable to the people they serve. The absolute control and power they have over our parishes and schools needs to end. They need to listen to the laity and encourage their participation in the life of the parish. This is especially true in country parishes where the laity can be used to run commune services or prayer groups to ensure the survival of the parish.

How does the Church move with the times? How do they address and ask why are so many faithful walking away from their Church, disillusioned and lost?

The current climate in Melbourne—and I suspect in many places in Australia, is the sense of the Church being very wealthy. Jesus did not mean his disciples to be destitute, but neither did he mean us to live like the rich. Blessed are the poor, He said.

I believe He is asking us to defend our faith. To stand up to secular society and show them that we will not bow to their pressure. That the one true Church will remain true no matter what.

I believe that we, as Church:

- ... are clearly being called to make truly courageous responses at this time—to reflect, to reform, to change course and move towards being more of a community that does not blindly accept the developed customs (often claimed as ‘tradition’) of the Church as necessarily being the right direction—a Church community that is prepared to openly evaluate and, if necessary, leave aside any teachings/practices that are not evident in the person and life of Jesus himself.
- ... need to truly become a community prepared to listen to all points of view and, if necessary, to change direction
- ... must, at all levels, become the accepting and inclusive people that Jesus himself exemplified and called us to in the gospels. This obviously challenges us to seriously explore, with open minds, issues such as:
  - care for the vulnerable of all ages and circumstance
  - acceptance of minority groups with the openness of Jesus himself
  - being prepared to listen to all points of view and, if necessary, to change direction
  - adopting appropriate, less hierarchical leadership structures in the Church that truly reflect our society today
  - seriously evaluating the relevance of all Church teachings and practices and not being afraid to change when needed
  - actively pursuing the rightful place and roles of women as equals in the Church

Jesus did these things, but we have lost sight of his direction through our history. We need to re-visit, re-discover and re-emphasise these aspects, as the ‘Body of Christ’, or continue to lose relevance in our world. To be able to achieve this, I believe that God is calling us to divest our Church of all that distracts us from seeing God’s own presence in all of creation. This will undoubtedly be difficult, but not impossible, for a Church that has invested itself in power and acquisition through history. God is, therefore, calling us to allow the person of Jesus to point the way, as Jesus himself did in his own society. To do this, we will need to reform—to strip away the layers of centuries of acquired distractions and seriously look to what Jesus asked of us, here and now.

More input from ordinary people not just people who have forceful, dominating opinions within parishes. More down to earth communication between the Cathedral and ordinary people. The archbishop type of letters are excluding rather than inclusive. The Catholic schools are doing wonderful practical work for the Church with positive outcomes for the wider community. Parishioners need help with ways to include and be welcoming to others. Parishioners need reminders about how their behaviour may be negatively impacting on others. The new hard working committed young priests are appreciated and valued.

-The Church to become something that can build on and follow through after the Plenary Council -  
-The Church to be inclusive -The Church to be a community of Communities with a plan, reaching out like Jesus, gathering all people of God. -The governance of the Church should be looked into

and to be governed by laity and also to challenge what have been happening. -Catholic social teachings should be lived out and be a voice in Australian society.

To be Church of the new commandment of sacrificial, unconditional love, being true witnesses of the One who loves us unto death and shall in His glory forevermore. A Church full of heart and not just head, that draws all peoples in and not push anyone away from that everlasting love of God.

The need to restore trust, evidence of listening, and making it easier in dealing with the Church.

I have already made a submission, but with the conviction of Cardinal Pell, a crisis has emerged that has placed the Church in Australia into a position where its moral authority, credibility and integrity have been irreparably shattered. No matter what the outcome will be with the appeal, the Church has been deemed by the public to be hypocritical and accepting of criminal behaviour. If the Church is to be born again after this, we have to be seen to be genuinely responsive to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Most critically, this calls for a reappraisal of the processes we use to hearing and handling of complaints of sexual abuse and providing restitution and continued care for victims, survivors and their families with an apology and financial compensation. The process is something that should be handled by an external body, and not by Church authorities. It is beholden on the Church to immediately implement a radical change of leadership that is shared with lay faithful - women and men. The celibate male leadership has displayed itself to be woefully inadequate to lead the Church into the future. The male, celibate hierarchy and the clerical culture that has upheld it, has led the Church to focus on our superiority, privilege and power and we've forgotten how to be a humble Church, faithful to the ministry of Christ with a compassion and mission for the poor, marginalised, powerless and voiceless. As a Church, we need to ask for forgiveness, but that will only be credible and seen as genuine if we seriously put into place radical changes in structures and leadership. In addition, there is a need for the reintroduction of a sacramental, communal Rite of Reconciliation. People no longer make use of the First Rite, but they come in great numbers to a Communal Rite. This is indicative of their knowing the need to celebrate God's forgiveness because they are a sinful people, but the credibility of the First Rite has been shattered. When the official Church severely restricted the use of the Third Rite, people read it as arrogance on the part of the Church which claimed that people were just avoiding individual confession. In the light of the behaviour of abusive priests, bishops and cardinals, people interpret this as obscene. I have to say that I have committed my life to the Church, which I love; I have committed myself to be an official agent of its mission to work together with parishioners to be the sacrament of Christ's presence and activity in the world, but I am hanging on by a thin thread in the belief and hope that the Church may be born again faithful to its mission. I have seen many people 'walk' - good people who have become seriously disillusioned by the Church's activity. This will continue. I attach a letter I wrote after Cardinal Pell's conviction to parents of our school children and parishioners, as well as for the community of a local Catholic secondary college, for which I am the canonical administrator.

God is asking us to include everyone in Church including most importantly the widowers, the married couples who are infertile, are there any groups for people who can't have children, where do we go? Can we feel welcome and at ease please in the Church as a whole? All men and women who have been involved in abortions, mercy forgiveness and kindness need to be shown as I do realise how grave a sin it is, abortion ... Loving the sinner not the sin too, those who don't

'fit' how do we come together and show love kindness respect for those who don't 'fit' e.g. the infertile couples, the homosexuals, the single parents, the divorced, separated couples where's the support for these people? Special needs families, those with children with special needs ... is there a place for this group too? People who have disabilities ... Thank you for listening. Kind regards.

I believe that we are being asked to be tolerant, respectful and appreciative of others' views but not necessarily to agree or adopt a viewpoint simply because it is "popular". I believe we are being asked to hold on to the Catholic Church's teachings and values at a time when these tenets are being ignored and challenged by an increasingly secular society e.g. abortion, euthanasia, same-sex "marriage". Other issues which may splinter the Church include: women priests, married priests, legislated mandatory reporting of confessions, etc.

God is asking a braver Church that is not afraid or shy to talk about Jesus and the gospel. We need a more spiritual Church that helps us nurture our spiritual life. Social justice and good deeds are great but not enough on their own. What make the Church different from a lay organisation are Jesus and his cross and his gospel? I think God would like to see a more ambitious Church keen on keeping liturgical traditions alive and not afraid to tell her communities that Mass every Sunday is an integral part of our faith. I think God wants a Church that feels legitimated to discourage a custom-made faith, where you decide what is enough for you to call yourself a Catholic person. God wants us to take full responsibility for our claims. God is also asking us to stay strong in this terrible time for Australia due to child abuse. That is not Jesus. That is not what the Church is about. The Church is the living community of people who love Jesus and his gospel and the dark sides of the human institution must not shake our deep faith. In fact, they should purify us even more to see the truth of Jesus even clearer.

I come from a large Catholic family who used to go to Mass every Sunday, where I would have to altar serve, and attended the local Catholic primary school. We baptised our two sons, although our nearest parish priest would not baptise our oldest son because we were not married. We carried on the tradition of attending Mass regularly whilst our children attended the same Catholic primary school, although my sons and I very rarely attend Mass now. I still have a strong attachment to the parishioners, as there are many good people and I realise it must be upsetting for them to see so few people, especially young people, attend Mass. I think the Church has lost touch with the people. The Mass is no longer relevant to those who attend, with its symbolism lost on the younger people. It is irrelevant to people's lives and is more concerned about its reputation than the people it is supposed to serve. The Church needs to be accountable and take responsibility for their actions, especially in regard to the victims of clerical sexual abuse who need to be adequately compensated. It needs to redistribute its wealth and be more concerned about the vulnerable and less fortunate in society. The Church in Australia also needs to be less centralised, and money needs to be made available to small regional and rural parishes. I doubt [ - ] Cathedral has buckets placed around the church for when it rains, or parishioners sit and freeze in the middle of winter because the parish can't afford to put on the heaters!!

I think that God is asking us to be open to new ideas and practices and to include all members of the Church in rituals and planning.

God is asking us to more and more closely follow the example provided by Jesus Christ. God is asking us to find him in all things and in all people. In order to grow towards God, we need to practice and participate in our faith-based communities. And various faith-based communities need to connect with each other and learn from each other. I think God is asking us to be creative in our journey home, back to God. And I think God is asking all of us to develop a deeper understanding of the scriptures, of the natural world and to take our stewardship role seriously.

I believe God is asking each individual in the Church, both clergy and laity, to repent, to seek Jesus wholeheartedly, and that through personal relationship with Him, each of us will be guided specifically in the part we are to play in the strengthening of the Church. The transformation of many individuals, which adds up to the transformation of the Church. At the centre of this transformation is love. The intentional discipline of unconditional love. The intentional recognition and holding of every single person's worth to an infinite degree, and the striving to align every single thought, word, decision, and action with that recognition. No matter how challenged and tired we are. No matter who the other person is. No matter how hugely they have sinned. No matter what characteristics they have. The unconditional love that sacrifices the self for the other, even if that other is attacking you.

I think God is asking us to live our faith deeply authentically pursuing the cross and desiring to transform the world with His grace and life which we are blessed to share in. I believe that God is asking us to root ourselves close to Him in the sacraments (particularly in the Eucharist - the Mass and confession) so that as a Church we can renew our understanding of His mercy and love. I really feel this is a very misunderstood space that leads people to a feeling that the rules are most important and guilt rather than His mercy. I believe the Lord is asking us a Church to encourage and support our brothers and sisters growing in the faith by teaching clearly and consistently the message of Christ. Teaching whether it be in schools, in the homilies and in other forums. So many of the opportunities are currently being wasting and instead of inspiring a desire and love for Christ they lead soul to lose their faith or become cold to faith. I feel more support is needed here for priests and teachers, and higher expectations of how our faith is taught in schools ensuring it is not simply a watered down teaching to be nice people without depth. In a word, formation is what many are starved of - they don't know their faith so they are confused, they cannot share it and they do not see the gift.

I believe God is asking us to stay focussed on His truth and His guide to us His children by following the Ten Commandments and practising the virtues. To truly love God with all our hearts, to put Him first and the wellbeing of our brothers and sisters as our next priority.

To be more patient and to be strong in our faith. We are called to be more tolerant in our local communities, supporting and encouraging one another because we feel that everyone goes his her own way.

What can the Church do to strengthen the faith, to grow Christ's Church, to save souls and to lead them to heaven? -For bishops and priests, our Shepherds, to make the salvation of souls their priority, rather than political issues and social justice concerns. -God is calling man back to him: the liturgy, worship and our daily lives must become Christ-centred.

What follows is a summary of our submission. In our initial conversation, we discerned four areas to take up in response to this question: to walk humbly; to act justly; to love tenderly (each from the prophet Micah); and 'to listen with attentiveness to others and to hear the voice of the loving God'. We then discerned to focus in on walking humbly and listening, both of which aid each other. In a follow up meeting, we shared about the importance of small groups in our lives - to affirm life, to nourish faith. Finally, our submission (attached later as a PDF) ends with an invitation: We believe God is asking and inviting us as Church in Australia to be present, open, listening and responsive to the Spirit in our world, in all things, times, places and people, including ourselves.

I believe God is asking us to unite together even stronger than ever before given the unfortunate scandal events that have happened in the Catholic Church. I also believe that we should be more welcoming to newcomers as well as the lay people of the Church by teaching catechesis at a parish level such that everyone can understand the formalities and traditions of the Church clearly, not just the priests.

The Legion of Mary feels God is asking the Church to teach authentic Catholic teaching especially in secondary schools where teachers should be trained in the faith and practice their faith by Sunday Mass, etc. School children are to be schooled in sex education which promotes chastity and fidelity and obedience to all the Church's teachings. In natural family planning and the horror and sin of abortion. The Catholic schools should only hire teachers who profess and practice the faith. The Church needs to train and instruct people in evangelising and not use programs like Alpha. Priests and religious who will live out their vows of chastity and celibacy. Priests to speak out on the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, artificial contraception and abortion and not remain silent on moral issues. More devotions such as Adoration, priests encourage the Rosary before and after Mass. Promote confession at Mass, one of the great sacraments of the Church, which fills us with grace and the loving forgiveness of God.

BECOME MORE WELCOMING AND INVITING TO ALL. As young people in the Church, we feel like God is asking us to create a safe environment where youth are free to express themselves no matter what stage of their faith journey they are at. We feel like it is important to recognise and embrace all people regardless of sexuality, gender, ethnicity or relationship status. For the Church and its leaders to attune to the heart of the young people and their acceptance of all and their youthful joy and enthusiasm.

Correct teaching of the faith in parishes, schools, groups so that there isn't confusion or disagreement about what the Church is teaching. Helping everyone to grow in their relationship with God. Social justice and assisting those in need in our society. More involvement in all social justice issues.

We believe a priority for the Church should be efforts to renew ways in which people can connect with the Church, and in particular, ways young people and women can feel they belong.

He is asking us to be more committed to prayer, to catechism and to involve children in the pastoral activities of the community. To integrate different ecclesial groups into the life of the parish-community instead of creating division. To take into consideration the work that can be done with children, not only limited to the activities of the school or the habitual Masses. Priority

should be given to them. God is calling us to be united to be strong in order to face our daily challenges. Maybe it is time that laity have a voice and our role may be taken into account for the decisions and enactment of pastoral guidelines. Within us, there are people with great gifts that can contribute.

To be honest with each other. To speak up and state our true feelings in our relationship with Our Creator and where it is at now. To remove what prevents us from answering God's call to live our service to God and each other to our fullest potential. To find, together, a way forward.

It is the same as it has always been: Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. The deeper and more challenging question is how is the Spirit leading us to act lovingly at this time? Each submission to the Plenary Council will be shaded by the individual's experience and personal longings. Many of these will make you uncomfortable. I suggest to you that these are the ones you should hold most closely and consider most carefully for to love most fully is to sit with the pain, hurt, mess and chaos of the human condition.

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

the ones that have brought about the molestation issues. Sacred silence in Mass and modesty should be enforced also. Bring back headscarfs and no female speakers, or altar servers. We need to start living our faith. Deus Vult.

1. That time be given during the Sunday homily for our priests to explain the reasons for the Church's teachings on such current issues as: same sex "marriage", celibate priesthood, IVF, going to Mass every Sunday, euthanasia, etc. (You can't assume that covering these topics in a pastoral letter or other forms of written works will reach all the faithful as many people just say "I don't read much these days"; many people rely on commercial TV and how they "feel" about issues often manipulated by the commercial media.) 2. There seems to me to be a need for those in authority in our Church to fully embrace what Jesus means by being "servants" of His people and to really look and live the part and to lead us in a true poverty of spirit. I know that Pope Francis tried to make changes but when I looked at pictures of the recent assembly of bishops in the Vatican they looked more like "princes" than the descendants of the apostles who were ready to follow Jesus in humbly washing the feet as an act of servitude. One gets the impression that their homes and lifestyles might be equally princely and it is vital that what we, and others outside the Church, see in our hierarchy is the love and compassion and understanding of Jesus.

To get back to basics, that is more orthodox teachings. To stand strong and not get wish-washy. To be charitable, to love and care for others.

Courage and steadfast fidelity. The secular climate in Australia is now very hostile to religious faith in general and Catholicism in particular. We need to defend the essential doctrines of the faith publicly (we depend upon courageous clergy to do that mainly) and personally through the witness of our own lives. Unfortunately, a whole generation or two of adults has missed out on being properly catechised and no longer know what it is they believe. Consequently they can mount no defence when challenged by their unbelieving friends. The Church is the last bastion of defence for the dignity of human life in all its stages, and of traditional marriage. Clearly, the dreadful legislation passed at State and Federal level last year means our beliefs are under direct attack. This is WAR - SPIRITUAL war, and we must arm ourselves with prayer (the rosary), Adoration and a thorough knowledge of doctrine and scripture. We need to defend the unborn and frail elderly from those who view them as mere inconveniences. A nation-wide Rosary crusade would be a starting point as one cannot fight a spiritual war with merely temporal tactics (such as 'married priests', 'more decision-making roles for lay people', 'being more relevant to the modern world', and all the other stuff well-meaning but dim-witted folk usually trot out. Secondly, I believe that a revival of classical liturgical music is urgent. The liturgy must be beautiful to truly honour Christ, and because we are joined to the heavenly hosts of Angels when we sing. Sadly, the American 70's style guitar and keyboard based hymns are aesthetically appalling. (I am a highly trained professional classical musician and endure the music at Mass on a Sunday through gritted teeth). The next crop of seminarians needs to be trained to sing and chant and have a working knowledge of the riches of classical liturgical music. Music can bring the transcendence within reach, but only if it is a first-rate composition, and not necessarily a difficult or showy piece to perform. Some popular idioms of music are simply inappropriate for congregational singing. A priest needs enough musical insight to be able to discern the difference. As local parishes rely on amateurs, the results are often indifferent or even execrable. This has

been a big hindrance to my personal experience of the Mass. So, I stepped up and volunteered for the local Church choir ... oh dear! At least from within the choir I can influence the choice of hymns and Mass settings. In the bigger picture, tertiary courses specifically in liturgical music are needed to train the next generation of professional Church musicians, and workshops, seminars for local amateur volunteer musos are required to enhance their musical skills and influence their choice of repertoire. Don't underestimate the value of music as a spiritual tool. The words and tune of a great hymn stay with you all week as you keep humming it to yourself. The converse is true of bad music.

- The Church must address with sensitivity and compassion the claims made against it by the victims of clerical sexual abuse. The recommendations of the Royal Commission must be seen to be acted upon publicly.

God is asking us to challenge the patriarchal hierarchy that has dominated the decisions of the Church for too long. We MUST include more women at the top of the governing body. We must include lay people as well as priests or nuns. We must challenge the notion that only men can be priests, and must be celibate. We must be part of the conversation of how to embrace the marginalised of Australia - people from refugee backgrounds, the LGBTQI community, low socio-economic areas, and women fleeing domestic violence. The voice of the Church needs to be young people. I am a young person of my parish and I don't feel I can be vocal, but I wish I could.

God wants our Church to be stronger in these times when our faith is being targeted by means of acts of faith and prayer. I would like to request more access for Mass and a place for Adoration that is within the suburban areas of Melbourne, this will play an important part with the lay community with strengthening their faith and this includes my growing family. God wants us to be more unified and more coherent. There is a great reason as to why our Mass is the way it is. It can be noticed that the various churches within Melbourne CBD and Melbourne suburbs run Masses very different to how St Patrick's Cathedral, St Francis or St Mary Star of the Sea West Melbourne. Even Catholic school Masses that involved school children should also follow the correct readings and not change the order of Mass.

1. Our homeless and most vulnerable - many of the Christian religions have similar services. It would be great if we could organise consolidated efforts to maximise the best outcomes for those who need it the most. Also, services should be targeted at supporting families to help support their loved ones who are having problems (where possible...certainly there are times when this isn't feasible). It just helps to keep families together. 2. Parish priests and duties - I really do believe that parish priests should only concentrate their day-to-day efforts on pastoral duties (e.g. Mass, baptisms, etc. etc.) leaving the administration of the parish to a centralised/regional department(s) of the Catholic Church with professionally trained parish staff.

Bearing in mind at all times the 10 Commandments and their gospel summary of love of God and love of neighbour, seek a humbler, more transparent and more inclusive way of being Church. In love and faith acknowledge the historical growth of power and wealth in our Church. Keep what was and is good while working prayerfully to become a Church which is true to gospel values and can make a meaningful difference in modern society that is become relevant again. Change leadership structures to include lay people, especially women. Women, men and children must

have a voice. Change the clericalism which distorts priestly authority in such a way that enables appalling behaviour which is the antithesis of Jesus's message. Change the way that priests are trained to include them in society, rather than placing them outside it. Consider whether reflecting the changing societal roles of men and women, the priesthood could be extended to married men and to women.

Education: To educate the next generation better, answering why there is such a huge high-school drop off rate. Encouraging theological studies, especially sacramental education is vital, not only for the youth, but for all Catholics. We cannot go on with watering down faith, or making it accessible, but teaching theology, teaching philosophy, education and preparing Catholics to be apologists and evangelists. Bringing truth and romance back into the teachings. To educate and evangelise in LOVE. Focusing on the Catholic Social Teaching principles. Promoting a bodily understanding of our faith. Church from hierarchy: To stand up for moral and bioethical issues. To promote family. Humility for the clergy, safeguarding against clericalism. To be above reproach. To live up to the truth we teach. To understand marriage, to share in our experiences theologically. Faith: To not take our faith for granted. The Church should be holy, encouraging of holy living. Be faithful. To be witnesses for Christ. To not allow fallen humanity's love for sin, to distract us from God, and peace. To keep being faithful, and doing good works. Day to day basis, faith, trusting in God. Dedicate ourselves to the Holy Eucharist, as "the source and summit" of our faith. Reverence in the presence of Jesus. Individual approach to faith is not working. More guidance on fasting and prayer. Lacking in direction, the new generations want direction and guidelines in fasting and prayer. Lay movement: creating community. Friendship and fellowship of all Christians: clergy and lay, Catholics and non-Catholic Christians. Creative lay leadership - meal trains, working bees, BBQ/potluck after Mass. Lay to stop receiving or expecting, but to start leading. "Never a see a need without doing something about it"—St Mary Mackillop. Witnessing, and sharing the faith authentically.

Catholics of Australia, you are straying off the path I have set for you. I have greatly blessed you with peace and prosperity yet you turn away from me. I command you to love God with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength. This is the greatest commandment. The second is love your neighbour as yourself. How do you rate? Are you becoming another NGO? Remember it's the MESSAGE, not the messenger and all that implies. It is critical you teach my young people and their parents who I am. Strengthen them with prayer and the sacraments. Direct them to my Blessed Mother. Listen to my Word. Invoke the Holy Spirit to show you the truth. Meet Me during the Eucharist. Beware of the gospel according to the media. Beware of bowing to public opinion. Trust Me.

Catholic school children and their education: primary and secondary school teachers need to have strong faith. A suggestion for teachers to participate in a group like Alpha. Teachers should attend annual retreats. Teachers need to support the parents in educating on the faith from as early as possible in the child's life. Children and adults at Mass: What is our response to a parent with disruptive children in Mass.? Do we correct and tell them off or do we step up and offer to support the parent who may be in need of assistance? Cf. parents that make no effort to discipline their children or stop them from disrupting others. The education on the importance and the value of Holy Communion and the rules around this. Parents should be involved when children are

being prepared for Holy Communion, Answering phone calls in church and during Mass should be banned. Support for priests and the Legion of Mary: Need people to support priests with people who can actually listen with an open heart and be there for the priest. Role of Legion of Mary should be in every parish and have a parish priest or religious appointed as a Spiritual Director. Parish life: parish retreats should be held at least once per year. Have a suggestion board that addresses the FAQs about the Catholic Church and the Faith

God is asking us to act justly, love and live tenderly and to walk humbly with God. We have reached the lowest point in our history with the conviction of Cardinal Pell. Let us accept that we follow the crucified Christ make this an opportunity to get off our arrogant perches and become an instrument of peace, reconciliation and compassion/mercy in our country and local area.

At this time I feel that God is asking the Australian Church to continue to be faithful in spite of the many upsets that have happened. Our faith is because we believe in God, and in the Church Jesus founded for us. The clergy are there to lead, minister to and help us. We also can help them by our faith, loyalty and encouragement. Where there are past wrongs brought to light, I believe God would want us to pray for and help the victims in any way such as "Lifeboat" in Geelong. We should also pray for those perpetrators that they come to their senses and renew their faith. We should thank God, He has spared us from this trauma, but be kind to those who have suffered. We should use our time and talents to help in the Church's mission and especially support the Pope, the bishops and the priests who have a hard road ahead. The Church can also be a leader in Australia again regarding the importance of moral values, to hold fast to opposition to abortion, euthanasia, etc., and to teach the people why this is so. As the young are educated, may they be given much participation in the Church and encouragement to be part of It for all their lives. For our beautiful country Australia, "Under God" - may we nurture Australia with our faith, our courage, our work for the poor, marginalised etc., and to be seen to do so: for God". May the Church uphold family life and be able to reach those who are discouraged. May all Catholic Christians in Australia work together for good government. May the Church always be welcoming to those who come - especially those with a disability, that is, we are all people of God.

To live in faithfulness; to be a saint; to love God and Mary. To live by and keep God's commandments. To listen to the Church. To believe in the Holy Spirit and to trust in God. To not wreck God's creation; to not harm anyone or anything by being faithful to God. Help others and be a good example to others.

Our beloved Mother Church would surely be asking the exact same thing of us now as she has been since her conception: for her members to strive boldly for sanctity and salvation. The common destiny of man is to be united with God in Heaven, and the Catholic Church is the vessel on earth which bestows us with God's grace in order to make our salvation a reality. Therefore, I think the Holy Spirit would be asking the Catholic Church in Australia for a total reversion to the practice of authentic, traditional Catholicism at this time, rather than encouraging itself to lapse into heresy under the guidance of the spirit of the world. Young Catholics are tired of the banal sentimentalism that has been pedalled by the "modern Church" since the horrendous post-conciliar "reforms" of the Second Vatican Council. The Holy Spirit would want us to worship in the same way that thousands of saints have worshipped before us, because the Church is universal both in space and in time. The Holy Spirit would want reverence in liturgy, and priests who

courageously proclaims the doctrines of the faith from the heavens, without fear of the judgments of the world. The Holy Spirit would want us to be exposed to the universal language of the Church, which so beautifully preserves our perennial teachings. The Holy Spirit would want reverent music in Mass which praises God, like the lost Gregorian Chant of our tradition, not pithy songs praising mankind instead. The Holy Spirit would want us to be enveloped in the sweet smell of incense, lifted on high by the bellowing of church organs, blinded by the brilliance of golden monstrance and pained by cold floors as we humbly kneel in reverence to our Lord. The Holy Spirit would want us to learn the teachings and the history of our faith, which are our stolen inheritance, and of which we have been deprived for far too long. God would want beauty in our churches, so that we might receive even a small, transcendent vision of His divinity. God would want all clergy to be bold and loving shepherds who guide and educate us in the faith, rather than cowardly and effeminate grandfathers. In essence, God is asking us to return to the practice of authentic Catholicism which has been slowly eroded over the past 70 years.

What is God asking us today in the land of the Holy Spirit.? In the land of the Holy Spirit, God is asking us today for a more caring, compassionate and loving Church and society. God is asking us today in this holy and sacred land for an end of the apartheid practiced in word, thought and deed against women. In the land of the Holy Spirit God is asking us to proclaim and celebrate an inclusive Creed that embraces the divine gifts of women. In the land of the Rainbow Serpent, the Holy Spirit is asking us to witness to the divine gifts of women through the diaconate and the ordained ministry. God is asking us in this ancient land to be accountable and responsible for the pain and suffering caused by denying that women are co-creators in Christ. God is also asking us as co-heirs in creation to be responsible and accountable for rectifying the creation of a Church that sexually abused the Church's most vulnerable members. God is asking us in the land of the Holy Spirit today, on Ash Wednesday to atone.

The succinct answer to the question of the Plenary Council is that "God wants every member of the Catholic Church both clergy and laity to sincerely bear witness to Christ". St. Pope John 23rd identified the need for radical change in many aspects of the Church. The changes that have been introduced since Vatican II have not kept pace with and have been overtaken by, rapid advances in knowledge and information dissemination, scientific and technological innovations and people's exposure to, multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-religious values and human interaction, due to the globalisation of nations. As a result, well-educated, widely-travelled, secular and multicultural Australia is posing a great challenge to the Catholic Church which does not seem to be responding adequately to the needs and aspirations of the Catholic community. The challenge is greater because it is not just one section but all cohorts of the Catholic community, the young, the old, the faithful, the radicals, the poor, the rich, the educated, the uneducated, the urbanised, the country people, the professionals, the tradies, the businessmen, the sports persons, the teachers, the students, the parents, the children, the married, the singles ... are disillusioned with the supposedly arrogant domination of the laity by the clerical minority of the Church. The community at large feels cheated by the hypocrisy of what is preached and what is practiced. The way forward therefore is to sincerely bear witness to Christ. The fundamentals of bearing witnesses to Christ is in loving God and neighbour and emulating his life with humility in the way

we live, a sincere openness in what we do and an all embracing attitude to all God's children. This is what God asks of us in Australia so he can make true disciples of us in Christ.

To try to be examples of how God would like us to live our lives with faith and trust in God and patience, humility, respect and love. Not expecting others around us to be perfect but to realise that we all fail and need each other's support. To instruct our children more in their faith. All Catholic schools should teach about the Catholic faith every day, preferably as the first subject of the day, from Prep to Year 12. This would reinforce how important our faith in God is.

' - To involve non clergy in the decisions that involve the governance of the Catholic Church. - To build a more inclusive Church. - For the Church to be more inclusive and welcoming to all. To practice Christ's teachings of unconditional love and forgiveness to all races, classes and religions. Christ came to wash away the multitude of rules and regulations that had formed in the Jewish religion. In the same way Canon Law and Catechism of the Catholic Church has become a crippling barrier to people's participation in the Church. For the Church hierarchy to come down from its self-perceived snobbish exclusiveness and embrace Christ's basic message of love of God and neighbour. Just look to the actions of Christ and the messages of the parables! Stop harping on about people's unworthiness and sins. Christ ate with tax collectors, accepted a drink of water from the Samaritan woman at the well and healed untouchable lepers.

8yo: I think God is asking us to be kind, generous and nice to the poor. 42yo: I agree with my child. I think God is asking us to be people who do their best to be non-judgemental, kind and caring and who strive to be beneficial for God's planet in a variety of ways - such as social justice, looking after the planet, helping each other to live out best lives, etc.

I think God is asking us to deeply examine our faith and live it more actively via good deeds and not just words. For many, this will involve being less passive, getting out of our comfort zones and being challenged when the right course isn't necessarily the most convenient or expedient one. As society becomes more secular, anxious and aspirational, I suspect many Catholics may struggle with balancing a necessary degree of materialism with the requirements of their spiritual lives.

1) Education in the faith. Clear instruction in what the Church teaches and what the Church requires of those who are baptised e.g. attendance at holy Mass at least once a week on Sunday. This is urgent. So parents with young children, and their children, need the Church to teach them. This is the Church's mission given by Christ himself-to go out and teach all nations. There is a crisis of belief among younger baptised Catholics so this needs to start (not end) at home. 2) Call to prayer - Prayers after Mass (5-10 minutes) so all parishioners attending can participate. At the parish school during the school day for mothers to pray for their children and their families and for all those in the parish with a particular need. An annual parish retreat advertised well ahead encouraging attendance, particular prayers/processions/devotions on feast days special to the parish e.g. of the parish's patron saint. 3) Inclusive parish communities - encourage all parishioners to be welcoming of all those in the parish. Older parishioners to be generous towards younger parishioners and families. If they show interest in the struggles of younger families they can be a great support in sharing their life experience in advice and mentoring and assistance. Younger parishioners to be generous towards older parishioners and aware of where they can help bridge the technology gap and provide assistance and comfort and practical support in times

of frailty. 4) Generosity - what parishioners can do to build up the Church. Focus on what parishioners can do to build up the Church rather than what the Church can do for them. 5) All Catholics, lay and clerics should make a united effort to love the Church and not tear Her down or seek to remake in their own image according to their particular view. The Church was instituted by Christ—we need to be faithful to the Church he founded, with all its human flaws and shortcomings, with the hierarchy of clergy (the bishops and priests and Orders under the Pope) and laity all working together, being faithful to the responsibilities of their state, to build up the Church.

To repent, to bring more people closer to God each day.

I think God is asking us now in Australia to find Him, to understand the 'real' faith and develop the true relationship with Him. People today don't seem to take serious anymore for their faith to God. Even people who go to Church attend Mass regularly does not really mean they have full understand on what they are believing. And some people who are baptised do not attend regular Mass and not seems willing to spend time with God. I think God is asking people to go back to Him and make sure they understand He should be the "Core" of life. If human is not having the solid faith with God, lives would be more 'fragile' and not having the true 'meaning' on that. Australia is a blessed land with limited natural disaster and criminal or war threat. However, the freedom people enjoying here also being a bit abuse and started to be a bit out of control. This could be seen from the discussion about same-sex marriage, Safe School program ..., etc. People do not seem to have strong moral foundation but apply their 'human right' of freedom so it causing up more confusion and distancing God from us. People focus too much on material but not on God anymore. They build their 'trust' on material, fame, authority ..., etc. and rely on them. And now is the time for us to 'tune' back our focus and bring ourselves back to our Almighty Father. Especially with the toughest time recently, I think this is a time for our Church to consolidate our faith and let God lead us to His 'The Way, the Truth and The life'.

To give or instil a sense of purpose and direction in everyone, right from childhood, e.g. go back to the catechism basics of our life's purpose and mission. I learned in childhood that God made us to know and love Him and other people, and to go to heaven someday. This has stuck in my head and heart and guided my life till now. If we love someone, we'd like to know more of them, their families and friends, what pleases them, etc. Same with loving God—we need to know Him, His values, His family (Mary, Joseph), His friends (saints), what pleases Him, what displeases Him, etc. Bring back the good points of pre Vatican II: concept of sin and conscience, Ten Commandments, eternal truths in black and white vs grey frequent confession, adoration of the Bl Sacrament, benediction, procession, school pilgrimages, student Catholic action, etc.; emphasise the meaning and value of suffering vs prosperity gospel; bring back the Catholic identity to encourage more priestly and religious vocations which are said to have declined since Vatican II; Review the implementation or interpretation of Vatican II; guard our hearts against FFPP (fame, fortune, power, pleasure); more regular fellowship, confession, and continuing professional development (cpd)/retreats among clergy, discernment guidelines\* to be included in seminary formation, cpd for clergy and pastoral associates and in retreats; \*guidelines: is it consistent with the scripture and Church's teachings?, Have I considered the consequences (if I ignore the consequences I'm ignoring the word of God), Do I have peace?, Can I honestly pray to God for it?, Will it help or

harm me and others eternally?; share Fr T Dubay's steps to becoming a discerning person: be in touch with scriptural truth and objective reality, pursue holiness, stem the tide of what is wrong and suffer well what cannot be prevented, pray often; encourage clergy to go deeper in the life of the Church and have a loving, trusting relationship with Jesus; have clear n strict guidelines in the selection of teachers in seminaries, novitiates, and schools (I learned a lot and am still guided by what the nuns taught us in primary and secondary schools; parish council and staff need to get comments and suggestions from parishioners before making major decisions affecting parishioners; they need to regard God and the archdiocese as their main employers and the parishioners as employers/stakeholders; include transparency and fairness in parish values; parish staff have to put equal priority to communication coming from the archdiocese and other parishes; establish parish mottos where possible e.g. loving God and loving people, or are we being faithful to God and His commands?; make homilies like mini Bible study as most Catholics get their Bible and Magisterium teachings only from the Mass; have separate teaching sessions as required and include praise and worship plus fellowship; make a simple guide for day to day living, like 'have I been faithful to God?.

I think that God is asking us to renew His Church. This means that we need to turn to Jesus, abide in His immense love for us and love others. We need to extend a welcome to everyone and to promote a sense of belonging. Many people are lost. We need to reach out to them. God asks us to be faithful, hopeful and loving. The world needs to see that faith, hope and love in action. To do all of this, the Church in Australia must heal and be renewed. My children offered the following thoughts: We need to be kind to others and help them. We need to remember the true meaning of Easter. We need to care for each other and not take things for granted.

I believe God is firstly calling us to live our faith more overtly by engaging young people. We must always be mindful to include young people and families in resuscitating parish membership. At the moment and for a long time, it's been haemorrhaging. For example, since Religious Education had been scrapped from the school curriculum, it's important to creatively engage young people through catechism, Sunday Schools and children's liturgy sessions. By modelling lived faith in action, i.e., through volunteer work in ministries, and regularly opening other contemporary avenues for them to grow in their faith. For example, I would take my own kids to family camps organised by Scripture Union and Baptist Church, because there is nothing organised in the Catholic Church. I used to take them to a Uniting Church Easter Mass, because there is no family Mass in our local parish. By the way, I started and organised the children's liturgy program in our local parish, and recently, pushed for the creation of choir. These are simple avenues that have attracted more participation. In the choir, there is inter-generational participation. Second, is for the Catholic Church leadership to humbly apologise for the sex abuses committed by the clergy, restore justice by providing support to survivors, and not being defensive of erring priests but instead, supportive of justice.

To educate children according to God's law and the law of the Church. To educate more the laity. There is a clear need of catechism and moments that help people to deepen their relationship with God. People need to have a personal encounter with God. For the migrant communities is really important to pray and celebrate the liturgy in our own language. The local Church should

support more this apostolate. God is asking us to be a humble Church. A Church that lives the value of poverty and gives testimony and Hope to those who are poor.

- Find ways to make our FAITH known and make more people feel committed to help and get involved in all the activities programmed by the Catholic Church. - Be more accessible and give solutions to people who come looking for help. - Avoid bureaucracy and allow people to have hearings with priests of the high hierarchy of the Church

I believe God wants us to live as he asked us to, to love our God and to love one another. This needs to be done through action, not through often boring, meaningless liturgy, prescribed by the hierarchy of the Church. • People need to feel welcome when they do come to Church. Only then will they be tempted to come again. • Homilies need to be topical and current, not just a rehash of the scriptures week after week. • Homilies need to be brief but to the point; too often priests think 'more is best' without realising their audience has lost interest. • One or two good points well delivered are much better and more effective than drawn out waffling. • Liturgies need to be planned by a team of lay people in partnership with the priest not dominated by the clergy. • Lay people need to be respected for the skills they bring to the Church then trusted to contribute their skills effectively. • We live in a technological world so new technologies should be embraced if they can enhance our liturgies. • Music needs to be varied and relevant to the various age groups. • God wants us to be welcoming and inclusive. Jesus mixed with sinners yet we ban anyone who does not conform. • Our Church needs to be more compassionate and pastoral. • Our Church needs to recognise the contribution of women in the Church and to include and welcome them into the leadership and decision-making level. • Our Church needs to put money into youth workers and leaders to encourage young people to be an active part of the Church. It is unrealistic to think that the aging church-goers can take on that challenge. • The Church needs to find ways of making stronger links with Catholic schools and parishes. • Within reason, and maintaining respect for tradition, clergy need to be more accommodating and creative when planning funeral Masses with families instead of "You can't do this or that". • Identify your audience: don't preach too long when the church is full of young children and babies (e.g. Masses to welcome Prep families or Christmas). The Church needs to be open and honest and make genuine efforts to atone for sins of the past and to rebuild trust.

To deepen our spiritual life through formation programs available in the parishes. In order to do this, prepared lay people can get involved.

To follow what Jesus did and taught to serve the poor and the marginalised and put intellectualism, egotism, clericalism and all the obstacles that prevent us winning souls for Christ out of the way. Truly trust in God and get out there and help the poor and you'll impress more by actions than words like the early missionaries did in the first centuries after Christ. Engage with the world and be realistic about where the Church needs help and be open to new ideas. Everyone in the Curia should be forced to leave Rome and work for the poor or marginalised so they are seen as genuinely following Christ. Commit to all Royal Commission recommendations apart from breaking the Confessional Seal and reintroduce the old confessional with a curtain behind the grille so the priest and confessor are physically separated and consider engaged/vacant door locks for the priest part and the confessor part. All religious should do 1 year of serving the poor directly by cooking in nursing homes feeding the homeless or similar. All clergy

are never present with children unless another non-clergy adult is also present. Keep on respecting life and fighting for it but above all, the greatest commandment is Love thy neighbour as thyself and show you do it by rejecting deference. To help vocations within Australia get real and consider ex priests married priests and women priests or you'll have relationship with the local laity if all the clergy are not from Australia. Above all, refocus on the Mass and what Calvary and ultimate love is all about. Be brave like the early Church fathers were—and seek Our Lady's intercession to rescue the Church. Pray to God and show your trust in Him—do all these things to show your sincerity and get external non-Church help where you don't know what to do such as the current scandals. Support Pope Francis and think more like St Francis than privileged Pharisees which applies to us all. Speak less on how people live their private lives and more on what Jesus actually spoke about. Be fair dinkum and brave and eschew the old slow way of doing things or else governments will reform you; however, if we serve and imitate Jesus and the Saints we show we really DO trust in God to protect us and guide our tongues. Jesus rejected no-one and we should do the same. Resolve a balance between conservatism and modernity and agree to let the Holy Father guide the way forward - pray for his courage and strength and for all of us as the gates of hell will not prevail over Christ's Church. Never lose sight of the main message of God's love for mankind. Be open to new ways of structure and process and simplify to get real. Support each other and be seen to really deal with the scandals and get professional organisational help to fix it. If you can't agree with what society now considers normal, then focus your efforts on what society does ignore like education and health needs of the poor. Consider each parish sponsoring the homeless within and refugees.

To discern the strengths and weaknesses of the Church in our time. In my life, its preaching of Jesus Christ has been a pivotal part of my life. The Mass and sacraments are essential to my being; sharing lay groups and meeting and being influenced for good. Has been a blessing. It has been. A corner stone but the last few years have been a difficult period. The largely indifference of the young and the walking away of older ones has been sad and we need to get hope and passion for Jesus and His Church back. It is a very painful time ... the role and input of the laity and women must be utilised better and the role of deacons expanded the issue of voluntary celibacy and a marriage option for priests together with better seminary formation should be undertaken It must not be a boy's club anymore. High standards of morals, life choices and actions must be expected and maintained. The Church must regain the trust of the people. I hope for an end to predators in the Church and to witch-hunters of good clerics ... New liturgy to be developed to encourage the young and older to enjoy their worship of the triune God. Finally I want the Church, to have peace, unity and the courage and wisdom to listen to the faithful and to have the peace of Christ. We must be a humbler and more compassionate Church and preach Christ strongly. Thank you for this opportunity to be part of this chance for renewal. [ - ]

From each one of us, God asks primarily to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might, and to love your neighbour as yourself. As a Church, to keep teaching, this magnificent Catholic faith and its tradition but more insistently and better in schools and from the pulpit, as it was handed down by Jesus Himself to Peter. To use the Catholic Catechism, a brilliant teaching tool in the Catholic schools. Uphold and teach the Supreme Significance of the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, and the Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood

through the consecrating words spoken by the priest at the altar. There is nothing greater for humanity than the holy gift of the Mass for us, with readings and breaking open of the Holy Scriptures and continue the Mass in its perfect entirety, as it has been handed down to us from the Apostles, it is not for entertainment, but for our salvation. It is as relevant to the young people as it is for the older generation if the reality of this daily miracle of the Holy Mass is explained and taught with greater emphasis on the magnificent sacredness and holiness of what we are receiving. Teach the Catechism of the Church in the Catholic schools. Always teaching Christ's great love for each of us of course. Not kowtowing to secular values at the cost of the sacred that we have inherited. The young are hungry for that and need earnest telling of the personal real stories of conversion in the life of their elders, from the pulpit if possible, or going into schools to tell what we elderly have learned of God in our life through and during toils, hardships and sorrows, and how God was there all along, but we did not always know it.

I think God is asking us in the first place to renew our proclamation of Jesus Christ, God the Son made man, crucified and risen for the world's salvation. (cf. Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* 36) The Plenary Council must frame everything with the reason the Church is here. The whole motive for reforming structures is that we believe the Catholic Church has the divine mission to bring Christ's saving presence to every time and place; reform is needed so as to best achieve this. 'Proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it.' (2 Tim 4:2) And while we must plant seeds of the Kingdom here and now, what needs re-emphasis is redemption, supernatural grace (especially in the sacraments) and our call to eternal happiness (which is not assured). The place where faith can be proclaimed to the most people and at most length is in Catholic schools. But for decades these have been producing few graduates firmly committed to Catholic faith and practice. The reasons include factors in society and in families; and true, faith is a gift—but is God offering this gift less than previously? Too often, these things are used to deflect criticism from the manner and content of religious education, and for not considering the radical measures required. I don't blame teachers, who do their best. But resources and training are not given to them anywhere near the extent needed, if we're serious about handing on the Catholic faith in its integrity. As for the curriculum, we must especially offer students a synthesis of faith and reason, drawing mind and heart. (cf. John Paul II *Fides et Ratio*; Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 132; 242). Religious Education is still geared to past times of less-educated laity. When religion is not taught with intellectual rigour equal to other subjects, or students are given the impression they can make it up themselves, an impression of weakness is created. And a half-hearted presentation (all most students presently get) of the reasons for believing—in God; in Christ's divinity; in the unique divine mission of the Catholic Church—can be worse than nothing, because it gets easily refuted. Rather, in the present crisis and with multiple competing worldviews, apologetics must make up a solid proportion of learning over 13 years of school. Certainly, doctrine must be explained, but this easily collapses if students are not taught the reasons Catholic doctrine is credible. (True, faith is based not on reason but trust in God's word—yet current temptations to abandon faith become too great if reason's help is neglected. This is truer still at tertiary level.) (One part of this is, keeping sensitivity to victims, to explain (in schools and parishes—maybe it's currently a lost cause in the public forum) why the abuse crisis in no way invalidates the Church's claims. We owe this to

<p>people, struggling in faith. If our message on this is just, 'Please join us, we won't abuse anymore', who would respond?)</p>
<p>*To love God and our neighbour as oneself - the Golden Rule in ALL good-will based religions. What else is there? Everything else is MAN (male)-made -primarily for the major benefit of MALE-dominated societies. (Catholic clerical hierarchy is one example of living proof of that. The people know this - so do you.) *The corporate Catholic Church will continue to bleed members if you - the clerics, from Francis down - don't stop acting like princes and get back to the ground with real people like Jesus did. Jesus did NOT wear lace and gold-threaded vestments. Just one example of many transgressions of the Jesus trust. * Get rid of the magic and superstition. The only REAL religion is to walk HUMBLY with God and treat each other JUSTLY. Golden Rule. NOTHING else matters!</p>
<p>1) To have a profound renewal of the spiritual life of all Catholics. 2) To ensure the deep and effective spiritual formation of the clergy especially those in the episcopate. 3) To urgently address the apparent widespread failure of Catholic schools to present the fullness of the Catholic faith to students.</p>
<p>Respect one another. Be Inclusive. What Jesus taught us to do. Devotion to Our Lady. Reinstate benediction as a regular part of worship. Reverence in the Mass (like it used to be). To evangelise the youth. Back to basics - centrality of the Eucharist. Better preaching so the faithful benefit. More Catholic teachers in Religious Education and a stronger emphasis on catechesis.</p>
<p>Greater roles for laity in the Church. We need to address foundational issues that reflect a Spirit-led Church as in the times of the original Christians. These foundational issues will impact on a number of topics (being considered within the parishes) and lead to fundamental changes back to an emulation of the real Church driven by Christ-like actions and apostle-like actions missioning from the local to the regional and national communities. This will go to making disciples of all nations commanded by Jesus Himself. Laity needs to be involved in a range of Church leadership that goes beyond their current more limited spiritual roles and range of important administrative roles. Laity role in mission work can and should start in local churches. It will involve youth and adults working together to enthusiastically embrace a renewed/resurrected Church. We need to seed a range of spiritual involvement roles all the way up to active deacons and married priests. It will involve dedicated people working in more alignment with the priests and taking roles such as preaching, up to leading communion liturgies, and, at deacon and married priest level involving all functions of current-day priests. God's words seek to have us use all of our talents. The Church should enhance, encourage and grow its members and their skills and services. Some Christian churches are growing in popularity (not for popularity's sake) but because they develop their people at all levels. Everyone is called. More are involved and more actively participate. Naturally there will be some checks and balances to ensure that people who undertake these roles are nurtured properly and operate within normally-accepted governance.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to have a more intimate relationship with Him through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. To see the Holy Spirit move amongst His people would please Him and excite many others.</p>

We think God is asking us to be a completely inclusive Church—true equality for all. We need a change of heart based on spirit rather than man made and somewhat arbitrary laws. The laws of the Church seem to be experienced as burdens placed on people and they stifle the Spirit. Jesus came to fulfil the law by the commandment to love. When Church laws exclude and condemn, they are not of love. Love brings freedom. Is the (Church) hierarchy afraid of freedom in the Spirit? Great strength has developed among us from all that has happened.

Be inclusive to all and look after those who are less fortunate than ourselves, and to treat all people with dignity. Serve others and be like Jesus. We are called to be Christ-like, which means to follow the teachings of Christ and to ensure that we respect and care for our neighbours. We are especially called to respectfully look after those who are marginalized. We are also called to be part of our Catholic community through regular interactions which each other and attendance at church. Be witness to Jesus Christ and His teachings by serving, aiding, protecting and educating those in need, inclusive of diverse and marginalized people. To love and accept everyone as Jesus did

I think God is asking at this time to go back to the beginnings. Where Jesus was sent to give us life to the full. What I mean by this is that currently, the Church is very quiet with modern issues or circumstances that didn't exist back in the day. I think what needs to happen is the Church to have a modern news channel that is contemporary and can shed knowledge on situations or questions unique to an individual's life. Currently, the only way to get an answer about something regarding one's faith. You probably need to be part of a church and be willing to speak to the priest. This doesn't always work as people may feel ashamed, awkward or just scared. I propose that an online forum that provides anonymity be set up and run by a group of trusted priest or laymen that can provide answers based on an individual's situation. Not just an answer that's by the book or theology but an answer that shows the Church cares.

I think God is currently asking us to think about our situation and how things have changed over time. Just like back in the Old Testament as time went by and people understood more, Jesus was sent to bring the truth about the rules and way of life that God had intended. Therefore, as life has progressed since Vatican II, I believe that there is a strong need for the Catholic Church to look at the way things are run and to potentially try and adapt it to the modern times. Currently, it is so based in tradition and outdated practices that it is so difficult for any young person to find meaning about why they should go to church. It feels like church doesn't welcome the sinners or the newly baptised, it seems like the target audience are those who have been practicing their whole lives. There is no guidance or even an explanation, I think that instead of a homily that almost no one finds interesting half the time, priest should give a short theology lesson, small bits that explain why we do something or what something is in the Catholic Church or how the Church is responding to current social issues and what we as Catholics are called to do. I feel Church needs to be changed and made more meaningful for the age and situation that we're in.

I think God is asking us at this time to review our understanding about the teachings of the Catholic Church. Particularly in the sexuality department, I believe that as we understand more and learn more about the human body, we need to adjust what is really wrong and not wrong. For example, the clear intention of a couple wanting to have kids will be evident by the fact that they will have kids, thus, having every act needing to end in sexual intercourse seems a bit restrictive.

For example, a pregnant woman cannot get more pregnant no matter how many times a man finishes in her vagina. Thus, it makes no sense why the Church has such a restrictive view on sex. The restriction only causes more strain and difficulty on relationships where people are unsure why they can or cannot do something. Thus I believe the Church needs to review its teachings about this and preferably not have a bunch of celibate priest make the decisions. But to employ a group of scientist and lay people to decide.

To pray steadfastly that our Catholic Churches will keep their faith that God is with us working untying the knots. Groups of people should pray asking the help of Mother Mary in this time of sadness, confusion and disappointment.

To remain faithful to Him, to strengthen the bonds between Christians within Australia and to be bold in presenting the Catholic and Christian faith to those who don't understand it and perhaps even oppose it on the back of negative media and crimes committed by those who represent these organisations. There is a strong need for unity, demonstrating clear acceptance and love of all people even if their lifestyle doesn't fit within Christian teaching and an open dialogue that shows Christians having nothing to hide and people have so much to gain by being open to God and Christianity.

If God was around today, He would wonder where are the people gathering in his churches? Where are the young helping in our Church, and why aren't we spreading Gods word as people previously did?

We believe we are called to participate in this Plenary process in a spirit of hope and trust. Ultimately, our hope is that the Church can be a place of empowerment, owned by the people. As religious women, we have a particular concern for the experience of women in the Church. We have deep relationships with many women, including those not involved in parishes, some of whom have become alienated from the established Church. We believe that God is asking of us in Australia at this time:

- To genuinely listen to and learn from the voice and experience of women.
- To include women at all levels of decision-making in the Church.
- To hear and respond to the pain, suffering and guilt felt by many women who grew up as faithful Christians in the Catholic Church, but have become alienated due to the Church's judgement of their lives e.g. women who have experienced marital breakdown.
- To recognise and affirm that people who no longer attend Mass for these reasons may still be seeking God, and to respond to these desires in creative ways.

Additionally, we believe that God is calling us in Australia at this time:

- To radically rethink the selection and formation of priests.
- To make celibacy an option, not a requirement, for the priesthood.
- To be open to diverse expressions of Church and faith, including those which resonate with young people, e.g. small groups which generate their own leadership.
- To address the theological education and spiritual formation of lay people. This is both a good in itself, and a way of enabling leadership to arise from within the community.
- To embrace new models of leadership, especially in light of the current situation, where priests are often trying to serve multiple parishes.

To be not just tolerant but accepting and welcoming of people who are being rejected by Christianity for reasons that are no fault of their own. To take a long hard look at ourselves for what we are allowing to happen in our own homes and churches. I think if God were paying any

attention he would be very upset to see how much damage people can do to others in his name. That people are using him as a shield for their own hate.

To be truly be the Body of Christ—a Church that serves those in need just as Christ did. Outward-focused and on mission to proclaim the Kingdom of God. To appreciate the gifts of everyone in the Church. Our parish priests and religious should not be managers but spiritual guides and leaders. We should not expect our priests to be managers, accountants, maintenance men but people who can help guide the community into greater love of God and neighbour. Calling us the Church, be renewed teachers of the faith. Bishops need primarily to be teachers of the faith not corporate spokespeople. We would like bishops available to answer people's questions and be teachers. We need bishops engaged in the world around them, not in the Church bureaucracy. To be a Church of and for the poor. All parishes should be places of service and welcome. They should look at the needs of their community and be a place and community that reaches out with Christ's hands. We have become a Church of professionals rather than a Church of servants ... we need everyone knowing that they can contribute (our organisation once volunteers are now all career people and lost some of the gentle Christian spirit). We need to be places of reconciliation—both sacramental and communal (families, across faiths, across cultures/ethnic groups). We need to be more a Church of contemplative prayer and discernment. We need to talk less and become more.

God is asking us to hold on to our faith in these difficult moments in Australia. To keep the hope alive and lift our hearts to him. To continue fighting for and defending the truth.

To listen authentically and respectfully to others. To be respectful of pluralist democracy and relationships with non-Catholics and non-practising Catholics while keeping our own faith. To avoid overreach and authoritarian imposition. To be great role models and wise in our actions, faithful to God, and in doing so to be authoritative and respected. To connect with each other in a more productive way that enhances community, while respecting diversity and extroversion/introversion, and builds our own confidence that we are not alone as practising Catholics Monday to Saturday. To treat victims of child abuse with respect instead of focussing defensively on money - sell some priceless paintings and compensate them properly with well-funded counselling, substance abuse rehabilitation where necessary, and genuinely help them restore their lives in a supported way. To tear down places where abuse occurred regularly and build new buildings of hope and community (especially in Ballarat). To promote healthy intergenerational communication and community and mutual respect. More community bush-dances at parish level! Scripture-reading groups (like book groups except for scripture?) Take the best of how American evangelists organise faith community (especially youth) and ignore the worst. To be respectful of LGBTI people. To encourage respectful and authentic relationships within faith community and in the community generally. To care about the environment and act and lead responsibly. To think long term, and bring people with us.

I believe the most important issue the Plenary Council should address is historical child sexual abuse. Cardinal George Pell, Australia's most senior Catholic and right-hand man to Pope Francis, was recently found guilty on five charges of sexual assault of two choir boys. The Church must address Pell's conviction because the Church clergy have for so long institutionally covered up, mismanaged and denied historical child sex offences. Pell is the direct antithesis of everything

Christ taught and yet the Vatican continue to drag their feet and reserve judgement pending Pell's appeal. It is a miscarriage of justice and Pell's guilty verdict is vindication for victims. There is zero tolerance for paedophiles, and no one is above the law. I'm deeply shattered at Pell's sins and grieve the victims and their families for the crimes committed against them. Archbishop Mark Coleridge said the case had shocked many Australians and around the world. To address child sex offences, the Catholic Church in Australia could recognise that it is not Catholicism that's faulty; it's clericalism and it's been dominating Catholicism since the fourth century. The clergy is obsessed with wealth and power and Pope Francis is at the head of a Church in crisis. He is pivotal in restoring the moral credibility of the Church on the world stage. The Pope is under rising international pressure prompting calls to immediately defrock Pell. He may also act to alter the Code of Canon Law regarding to clergy child sex abuse and how it is handled by bishops. For the Church to truly hold priests and bishops accountable for child sex abuse, these are important steps and will rebuild faith for many Catholics.

We believe that there are many issues facing the Catholic Church in Australia today that have to be faced as a matter of urgency. We have identified four as demanding precedence: 1. The need for adult catechesis in our parishes 2. Passing faith to the children—it is not working currently! 3. The need for the Church to preach about sin and the need for reconciliation and forgiveness. 4. The need for a national Marian shrine as a centre for pilgrimage in Australia. Please see the attached explanation.

To save more souls. Take the initiative, speak to lost souls and bring them back to the flock. To show Jesus to them in Christ like existence. To show the fruits of the Holy Spirit to those around us in our day to day life. (The rest is in attached document at the end).

I think we need to find ways to engage with the lost generations and try to provide a forum rather than a dogma. Christ's teachings are down to earth and stripped of all pretension. I believe the Church has lost touch with those teachings. I think we should focus more on God with Christ as his teacher and instructor. 1/ Open the priesthood to all Christian's of any gender or sexual leaning married or single, with the calling. 2/ Remove the closed shop men's club establishment, make it more Christ-like. 3/ Listen to the young people that are still willing to engage.

No one is listening to what the Church has to say anymore. It has become completely irrelevant. A few are still hanging on to the person of Jesus and His message, helped by random good priests. The message is sadly lost in the many man-made rules and regulations. Celibacy is not natural (for most people). It is against the will of God and nature. It inhibits the full flourishing of what it means to be fully human, fully alive. Men-power-control - have led the Church sadly to where it is now! Women need to be part of the fabric of any Church or organisation. To bring balance and wholeness to the Church, women's voices need to be heard and heeded. Bishops and cardinals need to shed their fancy dress (phylacteries) and fine houses and listen and live and move among the sheep and the market places. Why ask the people what we think? You already know in your hearts what we think, you are not stupid or blind. You know how far from the message of Jesus the Church has deviated. So stop asking for contributions about what to do, so some words in some far away document (another document) can be changed! And for God's sake, DO SOMETHING. Without immediate relevant action, we will continue to watch the total disintegration of the Church. Would that be so bad??? Maybe we should continue to kill the

Church with our inaction and give her a dignified burial so that a new way of celebrating the message of Jesus can flourish.

Jesus' final injunction to us was to "Make disciples of all nations, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". If we are failing to do this, we are failing God. Quite simply, God is asking us to make disciples. As I write this submission, it has publicly been reported that Cardinal George Pell has been found guilty in the County Court of historical sex abuse offences. The Church has not been at a lower ebb in our country's history. In this context we should approach the question of what God is asking for us, at this time in Australia. The Church in Australia is suffering an existential crisis. We are losing disciples. By most measures as to spiritual health, the Catholic Church appears to be losing significant numbers. As dire as it sounds, such is slow disappearance of the Catholic faith from the hearts and minds of families and communities, that in some generations we may be seriously asking ourselves whether the sacramental Catholic Church is facing extinction in this country. If we believe that our Church is the Church founded by Christ himself, we are failing Him, if measures are not put in place to recapture the Church as the instrument to find Christ. There should be some acceptance that the power that the Catholic Church in shaping the hearts and minds of the baptised has diminished. The 'glory days' where churches were full and vocations to priesthood and religious life were plentiful are gone forever. However, now is not the time for fatalistic despair. Nor is it the time for false optimism, that things will ever be the way that they used to be. So how do we marry the two seemingly contradictory messages, of 'making disciples' and accepting that the 'glory days' are gone forever? We must be honest with ourselves as to what solutions can reasonably be implemented and will have the desired impact of 'making disciples'. We must be honest with ourselves as to whether some of the reforms that are being called for, are reforms that can be realistically and theologically adopted by the Church and secondly whether such reforms will actually prevent the extinction of the Church. We need to recognise that many of the Catholic Church's issues are not specific to the Catholics, but are common to different denominations. To some level some of the measures that have been pushed to attempt to make these denominations more relevant (e.g.: ordination of women) have not stemmed the decline in those denominations - hence we need to be careful of what reforms we seek to effect. Changing our teaching to make the Church more popular is not going to work. Even aside from the theological considerations as to whether particular changes can be adopted or not. We should recognise what is working well - and look to nourish it. Conversely, we must recognise what is not working. I will attach further recommendations at the end of this submission.

Pray the Rosary to come to Him through Mary. Offer the Latin Mass. Support Divine Renovation. Increase education about the role of Saints to influence our youth. Identify the faithful as disciples. PRAY for the sinners. PRAY for the victims. Acknowledge that the scourges are the "bad priests" and that this is diabolical in origin. Return to Pentecost. Talk about purgatory. Acknowledge that devotion to Mary is now our way to Jesus and the Father. Mark our difference being Divine Presence. Raise the profile of Eucharistic Adoration. Raise the profile of GRACE. Our priests are not one-size-fits-all—recognise the leaders and let them use their talents. Recognise the meek—may be their role is one of prayer or pure administration of the sacraments. Our priests are human. Don't burn them out. We are a Church of disciples. Let us help our priests to

manage their diocese. Manage our priests with humanity. Keep the sacraments SACRED. Don't water down our Mass any further than it has been. Return altars. Return icons. Return us to a place of AWE in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Return us to the Upper Room but support us with the structure to take the Holy Spirit with us beyond the walls. Teach us how. Encourage our priests to ASK us to pray for them. Tell us about the GRACE we can ask for OTHERS when we pray for them. Re-Catechise us. Support your congregation to evangelise. Raise MARY as the QUEEN of HEAVEN. This may help women who long for the priesthood—Mary has THE GREATEST ROLE a woman can have. I am a woman but I don't need to be a priest. Priests must talk MORE about Mary. Please encourage a devotion to Mary with a Hail Mary at the end of Mass. Let's talk less about the scourge and more about the Holy Family. My heart breaks for the altar boys and all the children at Mass when we have to hear the words "sexual abuse" in our homilies. I cry for Jesus that this must be said in His Church and in the house of the Father. Let us bring the focus back to PRAYER and devotion to the Blessed Virgin - our great weapon against Satan. We seem to have lost our spirituality. Acknowledge Charismatic worship as a way to the Holy Spirit. Let's embrace Divine Renovation but remember that first and foremost we are protecting the "Source and Summit" let us keep the majesty of the Mass. Recognise that we are in a post-Christian world and have been charged with forging a fresh path to God for all who are baptised. Every day we are closer to God, closer to the second coming of Christ. We need to be well dressed and VISIBLE in the world. We need to understand and accept better that we can ALL be saints. Restore awe for the Brown Scapular. That devotion to the faith will heal, prayer will solve, that Christ is alive and walks among us now. Educate on the POWER of INTERCESSIONARY prayer. Show us how to PRAY in our Churches - not just attend. Don't lock doors. Please don't close any more churches.

I think God is asking us to be humble. To listen again to others, both old young and poor. To welcome the stranger and to see him in this opportunity. We can't always do the active things but we can still show kindness and humility and empathy.

Listen to the laity and engage in various ways. Connect up with all Christians to a much greater extent.

To follow Jesus in word and deed that we may be in union with God our father who is good. The betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus that has been carried out with every abuse by some of the clergy possibly amounts to an expected Judas proportion of 1/12. The betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus that has been carried out with every pride-filled cover up, and associated inadequate response to innocents makes a large proportion of the clergy, most particular those above the role of parish priest, complacent in the defilement of the holy order. It comes to me that it is simply the devil at work, achieving immense destruction from the great foundation of pride that has been established. This concept needs to be discussed for the faithful to test its validity. If this is correct and after much prayer and contemplation I think then the antidote is very clear. Humility. The course of action to achieve humility in the Catholic Church is profound and immense and can only be followed by a repentance that drives every pride-filled ambition and action out. Who is brave enough? Symbolically, it came to me that 40 years in sack cloth for the chosen is what it would take to renew the face of Jesus. We are indoctrinated with prayers that build a faulty foundation ... the creed includes "I believe in the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church", we are led to believe that the only true way to Jesus is through the Catholic Church. This is conflated with the message of

Jesus which is “the only way to the father is through me” (Jesus). Hence immediately the confusion reigns and pride is developed in the Church rather than virtuous pride begotten of humility. Then start throwing in the money changers into the temple grounds i.e. Catholic homes comes to mind, and every other political and economic aspect of the machine. As in Isaiah’s dream “woe is me, I have seen the face of God, yet I am sinful” well, God said he would leave the holy seed in a stump in the barren ground to regenerate. Mighty powerful and frightening, I am not a prophet but when God’s people went astray, many, many times destruction followed and only the remnants were able to survive. So what do the remnants look like, how do they act? I am fearful of how I can now raise my children to know God and participate in the sacrifice of the Mass when the temple cloth has been torn? Where do we go, are there humble priests who wear sack cloth somewhere to guide us? Do we the laity, those who are followers of Jesus break the bread and share the cup in our communities like the early Christians, supported by letters and occasional visits from very humble priests that remain true. 40 years in sack cloth is sure to decimate the number of priests, whilst the dismantling of the tangled web of sinful pride occurs in the institution, the faithful can gather, empowered to break the bread, share the wine and listen to the scriptures along the same script. Jesus said “do this in memory of me” so we could gather and be converted.

People need to come back to God and perhaps one way to do it is to provide programs that will educate people about the faith. We need to fight ignorance. It is a big enemy of the Church. There should be more focus on teaching the Bible and how it can be applied to our daily lives. People need to know and understand the Bible so we can all appreciate the sacraments and the Mass. More and more young people are not coming to church anymore. We need to stop this from happening by educating the parents to teach their children about God. As written in Deuteronomy 6:7 "You shall teach them to your children ..." Many parents themselves do not know and understand the Bible and the faith and so they could not pass it on to the children. We are in a generation where many of us worship other Gods and yet do not realize this. Perhaps the homily can be like a Bible study where the priests explain more on what the passage is trying to say to us. Explain in such a way that people who are ignorant can understand the message more clearly. Perhaps we can use the technology, some PowerPoint presentation or even video presentation to catch the people's attention and make them understand. The priest should take it seriously to feed the people with God's word. Let us learn from our protestant brothers on how they spread the word of God. They seem to take the Bible passages into their heart well. Although sometimes the interpretation may not be correct ... However, my idea is just to learn from how they do it and apply it to the Catholic Church so we can be a Church who really know the Bible, understand the faith and apply it to our lives.

The most prominent issues from our discussion were concerns about our care for the environment, and the lack of welcome offered to refugees and asylum seekers. Our community feels deeply the importance of these issues, and perceives a corresponding lack of action from those in power. We believe God is asking us to speak far more clearly about what the Church’s concerns are regarding these issues, and for the Church to serve as an advocate for the earth and her people. We think God is asking us to be better stewards of the environment and also better neighbours to our brothers and sisters with diverse sexual and gender identities.

To renew the Church and make it more relevant to society so that it can bring the message of Jesus to the world.

In the beautiful words from Dorothea MacKellar's poem, *My Country*: "I love a sunburnt country, A land of sweeping plains, Of ragged mountain ranges, Of droughts and flooding rains. I love her far horizons, I love her jewel-sea, Her beauty and her terror. The wide brown land for me!" Australia comprises a land area of about 7.692 million square kilometres. Although this is just five per cent of the world's land mass (149.45 million square kilometres), Australia is the planet's sixth largest country and the only one of the largest six nations that is completely surrounded by water. To put it in perspective, Australia's land mass is almost as great as that of the United States of America or about 50 per cent greater than Europe, and 32 times greater than the United Kingdom. It is the smallest of the world's continents. It is also the lowest, the flattest and apart from Antarctica the driest. Nearly 20 per cent of Australia's land mass is classified as desert. As well as having a low average annual rainfall, rainfall across Australia is also variable. Climatic zones range from tropical rainforests, deserts and cool temperature forests to snow covered mountains. Australia has always been ravaged by floods, fire, drought and climate extremes. It faces significant environmental, social and economic impacts from climate change. Decisions made today will have lasting consequences for future generations. In his *encyclical Laudato Si: Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis says: "The Earth now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed us" (LS 19). Indeed, both the title of the encyclical ("On Care for Our Common Home") and its opening quote from St. Francis's canticle establish the focus of this text. Humanity is being called to recognise the need for changes in lifestyle, production and consumption in order to combat the increasing degradation of our common home and the human causes that produce or aggravate. These include our current models of development based on the intensive use of fossil fuels as well as increased and changed uses of our soils, for example deforestation for agricultural purposes. God is asking us to form partnerships and relationships to care for Earth and one another or risk destruction of ourselves and diversity of life. *Laudato Si* states most emphatically that a truly ecological approach is also inherently social—an approach that simultaneously hears the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions and ways of living. We must realise that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. Our environmental, economic, political, social and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and through collaborative relationship development we can forge inclusive solutions.

I believe that the sacrament of reconciliation needs looking at. If the sin that is being confessed is a serious crime that has broken the law then part of the penance and provision of absolution should be to report the sin/crime to the police. Absolution should not absolve the person from the consequences of sin. If something has been stolen it should be returned, if the crime is punishable by a jail sentence then the time must be served. Do the crime, then do the time. It cannot be that a person commits serious crime then gets off scot free. Humans are capable of doing terrible things but lying about it is triple the crime. We need to have a better system for dealing with people including priests, bishops all clergy when crimes such as paedophilia are committed. A person who is committing this crime not only needs counselling but also jail term—

the consequences of being found guilty in a criminal trial. In saying this, I am also aware that trial by media is a huge problem. There is so much bad press and hatred for the faith we carry in the Catholic Church that we need to find a way to combat this. Perhaps if we are on the front foot and deal with these crimes immediately and of our own initiative, then our standing in the community will be reinstated and we will be seen as trustworthy again. For example, the way the Vatican investigated a bishop in America recently and stripped him of his priesthood.

Asking not to let the Church interfere with our relationship with God. To be strong, just, humble and gutsy representatives of Jesus' message of love and compassion in today's world. Choose spokespersons of God's message who are aware of and capable of advising people with "love one another" stance, rather than patriarchal remoteness and hierarchy-directed sets of rules. Talk about current issues e.g. homelessness, mental illness and provide hope and practical guidance. BE HEARD. Clergy (many, not all) to shed the patronizing superior manner. Allow the faith motivated and informed sharing of the pulpit, media, etc. for others to guide and help us also. E.g. Speak on marriage, violence, refugees, etc., SMILE!!!!!!!!!! Make "COME AS YOU ARE" a genuine invitation by clergy.

I have recently been involved as a referee in the Melbourne Archdiocese reaccreditation process for pastoral associates. This highlighted for me the dichotomy between this rigorous process for lay people to that for priests. For priests, following ordination, any further formation, education or supervision seems to be left up to the discretion of the individual priest. About how hard it is to be part of an organisation that overtly discriminates against women in specifically not being able to be ordained to the priesthood. I would not be part of any other organisation that had such discriminatory rules. I have stayed and worked now as a volunteer and will not be pushed out of my Church, but it is hard. Very hard. Putting my belonging to the Church against my very nature. I can't know if I was a male how I would feel but I hope I would see it as similarly unjust. I can't believe that it is the Church that Jesus would want.

God is asking us : - to be a more inclusive community. That means to include people who are divorced, LGBTQI or from other faiths. - to invite women into the priesthood. How many women already serve the faith community in their parishes who might want to serve the Lord in a more formal role. - to allow priests to marry or already be married when they enter the priesthood. In my opinion this goes toward helping stem the decline in vocations in recent times.

Consistently the people of this parish have the same answer: "love and prayer". ATTITUDE: Listening and prayer; listen to each other. Especially those "on the outside": those divorced and remarried, those who are angry for being deemed irrelevant or inconvenient, refugees, those angry about the protection of clergy who betrayed us, those who exercise their conscience. Love each other. Stay with each other and have compassion through the bad times. Pray. Persist in prayer and in faith. Deal with clericalism. Share the power appropriately. Be more open and understanding. Be virtuous when encountering others. See God in all people. Continue to reach out to the wider community with love and confidence. Balance a love of our precious tradition with words that are from our own hearts. MERCY: Be merciful, recognise the dignity of others. Listen to my conscience and form it well. Reach out to the abused. "Mercy for the victims and villains." FORMATION and INCLUSIVITY. Laity: Proper opportunities, roles and formation for the laity, including Bible study and Church history. Seek to be active and knowledgeable. The laity will

<p>proclaim the Good News in the future. Women and families: Better understanding and working with women and married people. Greater representation of women in the Church of the future. Young people to be actively engaged in the life of the Church. Clergy: Free priests from administration to focus on sacramental ministry. Visitation should be a priority. Priests should be very well supported, especially those in foreign communities.</p>
<p>The Requirement in Australia to build a Shrine of National significance to Our Lady Help of Christians.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be good people</p>
<p>A greater commitment to TRUTH. To stand up for true Catholic teaching. Increased opportunities for prayer and reception of the sacraments. Courage in the face of extreme persecution. An ability to properly respond to the challenges faced by families and young people today. To provide greater support and resources to enable Catholic families to continue to practice and pass on the Faith to their children. A clean-out of forces within the Church that are against the Church and its teachings. Support for parents in raising children in an environment that is so anti-Catholic. More apologetics, greater access to the sacraments and practices that can bring more grace and help to Catholics such as more churches offering adoration; a broader range of Mass times that suit young people (in our town, we have an 8.30am Sunday Mass only - the next Mass is 25 mins away at 10.30am). There are no Masses after 5pm on a Sunday within an hour radius from our town, so our young people who work or go out/away on a weekend have little or no opportunity to go to Mass. They are not super keen to go anyway but it would be easier if there was a Mass available after 5pm Sunday within a ½ hour radius of our town. There are not enough initiatives to support families and their young people aged between 13-17. This is when young people really start to question the faith. We need a team within the diocese that can encourage, link and support like-minded Catholic families on a regular basis such as monthly gatherings, camps, talks, social events (please see The Train Journey analogy attached) - these days there are hardly any people aged between 13-18 at Mass in each parish. But those kids and families are out there scattered across the diocese and they need support and linking up so that their kids find it easier to 'stay on the train' as they have met peers who are also 'on the train'.</p>
<p>The Catholic Church needs to actively, and as a priority, mobilise our resources in support of people seeking asylum, to communicate with our government's leaders, as well as promote compassion and a culture of encounter both in our Catholic community and in our wider society. The Catholic Church stands as a universal institution, which can use its voice and resources for welcome, for compassion, and for upholding the inherent dignity of people as no other global institution can. It is clear that what God is asking of us in Australia is multi-fold, but by making a stand for the wholeness, sanctuary and protection of people, against borders that have become tools of exploitation and discrimination rather than walls for refuge, the Catholic Church can both move herself and Australia forward to a place of joy, love and compassion.</p>
<p>God is asking the Church in Australia to "Read the sign of the times." We are living in a society in which God is becoming increasingly irrelevant. This is reflected in the traditional celebration of Christmas, Easter, etc. being overrun by commercialisation, the decline of religious practice, the legalization of abortion and euthanasia and the celebration of lifestyles counter to the sacredness</p>

of marriage. Instead of a courageous defence of Christ's teaching, we have the resounding silence of the leaders of the Church in Australia. The occasional, bland, carefully worded protestations (if made) rarely reach the secular press. It may well be, that when the Parliaments of the various states were preparing to consider the legalisation of abortion and now euthanasia, submissions were made outlining the Church's teaching; but when did the people in the pews, few as they are, hear a strong and vigorous response from the pulpit? Insipid "Prayers of the Faithful," are no substitute for the courage to proclaim the truth. The only time in recent memory I can recall the hierarchy coming out with a fighting spirit is when the finances of the Catholic Education system were under threat! Is money more important than morals? The truth is that our Church being held to ransom by secular forces. There is much talk about sowing the seeds of faith, but unless these seeds are watered by the truth they desiccate. In this regard, the Catholic Press is a disgrace. Even if secular publicity is often censored the "preaching to the converted" publications shy away from moral controversy and pontificate about the "safe subjects," such as "social justice," "equality," "the status of women," and "the environment" etc. (worthy in themselves) but what about some public censoring of Catholic politicians who support, in Parliament, legislation in support of abortion, euthanasia and now (just breaking news) taxpayer funding of abortion in Public Hospitals? (Perhaps it is these same politicians who support funding for Catholic Education?) "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." Luke 11:23 It must be admitted that the bishops and priests have been cowed into silence by the child abuse scandal but it was silence that allowed such evil to permeate the Church in the first place. ENOUGH! The Church's own research shows that the practice of the Catholic faith is in decline in Australia. It is true that all Christian churches are under siege but there seems to be no sense of alarm. We are just letting it happen! The Church needs to be a strong voice in the Australian community, proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ wherever and whenever the basic mores of our Christian society are challenged.

God is asking of us to face the very real problems that we are encountering today in the Church, to search for solutions to go forward in faith and be inclusive of all people.

I was involved in my parishioners' submission already submitted but which I attach again. This is just a small personal one. I notice with the Pell case, the press frequently showed him in all his vestment finery. And with the Vatican Summit, we saw a sea of pink caps. This all just conjures up images of "princes of the Church" and juxtaposed against what has been happening implies hypocrisy. Clergy must show themselves as "servants of the people" rather than "princes", not just in deed but also in dress.

1. Make room in the local church for existing, but often hidden or ignored talent, to participate, contribute and take responsibility (beyond taking up the collection, singing, reading or catechising the kids). Not all talent, wisdom, responsibility and leadership are vested in the priest. A smart priest/leader will acknowledge his limitations and tap into other talent. Reaching out to other talents will build a Church around the body of Christ, not the priest per se, will enrich the local church and its contribution and will ensure good traditions and practices continue regardless of changes of personnel. 2. Making homilies educational, thought-provoking, informative and inspirational i.e. treat those listening as adults, not children. Homilies that offer fibre, not pious generalisations. Homilies e.g. on how to pray (not just that we should pray), theological reflection

on local issues, homilies that are prepared together (e.g. with mothers on motherhood), that speak to universal issues such as Pope Francis recent summit, his teachings on climate, visits to particular countries. 3. Take the initiative to offer grassroots Catholics facilitated opportunities to discuss their feelings, worries, concerns and opinions about the sexual abuse crisis in the Church and how to deal with it personally and in faith terms. 4. Greater sensitivity, openness and engagement with Australia's Indigenous past and people (including the role of the Church, both negative and positive), and what the local church can learn from that history and our Indigenous people, including theologically and spiritually.

That which God is constantly asking: to know Him, to love Him and serve Him with our whole heart, intellect, will and being. To love and serve others as we do ourselves out of love for Him. To believe, uphold, live and communicate the eternal unchanging truths of the One Holy Catholic Faith which He revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, for the salvation of our souls, for which mission He founded the Catholic Church to co-operate in His redemptive work.

1. Teach CCC. 2. Restore CCC in the schools, especially on the 10 Commandments. 3. That priests preach the gospel on Sundays NOT other stories. 4. Restore modest dressing in our Churches. 5. Encourage people to go to Confession. Thank you. God bless.

It is astonishing to me that this question even needs to be discussed by a body convened by the Catholic hierarchy. The answer to the question is and always has been constant: to preach fully and truly the truth about Jesus Christ i.e. the whole authentically Catholic message about sin, repentance, worship and salvation and the striving for holiness. No if's, but's, maybe's, conditions, provisos or sub-clauses. We are currently obliged more than ever before to teach a basically Godless, culturally impoverished, hedonistic and paganised Australia that life, justice, joy and health of body and soul are derived only in doing His will, through lives of sincere worship of God and patience, self-control, decency and unselfishness toward others. It is a matter of extreme regret and shame that the Church, particularly in its preaching and liturgy at the parish level over the past 50 years (though not in all cases) has too often been mediocre and at times plainly heretical. The fruits of these failures include a Catholic school system which has been spectacularly lousy at passing on a living faith or even a Catholic culture to its students over several generations. Where do we go from here? I suggest a partial WRONG WAY GO BACK approach is called for. Please, no more can't about being "relevant to today's world"! That approach has FAILED and ALIENATED youth and potential converts.

God is asking us to live our lives according to the commandments given by Jesus. We are asked to take up our cross and live a life that is not necessarily always comfortable but bears witness to the true Church. Ultimately, we must live a life that is dedicated to ensuring we, and those we are responsible for can reach eternal life in heaven. Whilst the ultimate end is heaven, if we try to live a purposeful and truthful life, we can help others and experience great truth, beauty and love.

#1 "Us" meaning Church and individuals. Believe and trust in His word. Act accordingly in community and political world. #2 Individuals proclaim truth and counter untruth, while recognising the risks of retaliation in various ways and degree. This may require: assistance/education of speakers and writers, proof reading and advice on correctness and legal issues ... How to present logical information without being dismissed as 'homophobic' or

infringing “hate speech” regulations, e.g. Same-sex “marriage”. Some Catholics believe the Catholic Church should be “generous”, “move with the times”, accept the majority vote of Australians and amend God’s word to suit. #3 Catholic parents recognise their responsibility in bringing up children as Catholic, and to protect them. That parents communicate with their children and have a listening ear to their complaints or allegations about mistreatment/abuse, so that parents take action. The Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse of Minors seemed to overlook the lack of parental response and why there was little if none. The answer to victims’ question “Who would have believed me?”, should be: “Your parents.”

'To be a unified Catholic Church.' It has become divided between traditional and secular. With too many young Catholics branching off into almost a cult form of traditional pre-Vatican II, full of rules and elevating their beliefs that they are better than other Catholics. Taking on the staunchness of Opus Dei'ism which makes other young Catholics want to run the other way. "Well if you are calling me a sinner when I am not, then you don't love and accept me so I will leave". More and more Catholics are turning to modern day Churches such as Hillsong because they can still have a relationship with God without feeling judged. I wish the Roman Catholic Church could allow priests to marry and accept that the world has advanced. Science supports that some human behaviours are natural and therefore cannot be considered sinful such as sex, masturbation, etc. The rules the Catholic Church have in place can only have terrible effects on mental health because of the guilt placed on young people who are fighting internally as to what is a natural function of the human body and what is considered a sin in the Catholic Church.

To be beacons of God's compassionate love in our Australian community and in doing so, achieve the following: 1) heal the wounds inflicted on both the children of the Church (i.e. victims) and the community of Australia through the sexual abuse scandals 2) to help those with disabilities be valued in a society which places values first on "what you can do for it" 3) Provide guidance on complex moral issues associated with technological advances such as artificial intelligence, gene editing of embryos 4) provide a community for all people in a society plagued by loneliness.

I think God is asking the Church in Australia to be authentically Catholic. I think He is asking the Australian Church to be serious about standing up for the truth that He revealed in Scripture through His Son. I think He is asking for bishops, priests, religious and laity to be brave and speak out against the unpopular issues, as well as the popular: -abortion -euthanasia -sexual promiscuity -IVF -Safe Schools. I think He is asking the Church to return to its original mission of true charity, not social justice. The Church is not a political institution, although it exists as a member of the body politic. To fight the above issues we need to create alternatives. We need to create and run: - Safe places for women in crisis pregnancy and counselling - affordable nursing homes so people don't feel pressured into euthanasia. -offer life giving programs to people battling pornography, sex addiction and living unhealthy sexual lives. -offer real and affordable alternatives to couples looking at IVF. We need to stop pretending that we are something that we are not. Currently, the bishops and priests are like those cringe worthy parents who care more about being 'cool' and less about protecting their children. I think God wants his shepherds to be shepherds, which means risking one's life for the sake of the lost sheep. I pray that the bishops will not be blinded to the thousands of politically-driven submissions and listen to the few people who are actually Catholic. If in doubt, turn to the Scriptures.

<p>To make changes that engage all individuals young people, families and not just those who attend church.</p>
<p>For us, the ordinary people who make up the Church, to continue to follow the gospel values - to reach out to the marginalised, to treat all as equals, to give to the poor, to love one another.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to be accepting and non-judgemental (to remove the plank from our eye). With this in mind I feel the Church needs to address: Women as priests and in leadership roles Acceptance of gay marriage A supportive response to victims of clergy abuse (spiritual) Ongoing social justice and support of everyone in our community</p>
<p>I think He is asking us to be faithful to the gospel message. To be authentic witnesses to His love and to live that out with compassion but also without apology. I think we, as a Church, need to get better at articulating our beliefs, values and teachings but at the same time not back down on difficult topics such as same sex marriage, abortion, contraception and euthanasia. I would like to see stronger leadership and preaching in the homily. As a married woman in her thirties with a young family I'd like to see more pastoral support in the area of NFP.</p>
<p>Return to tradition. Focus on the sacraments which should be carried out with upmost reverence and tradition. The Church doesn't need anything new. It needs faithful clergy who love Jesus, the Church and its teachings and want to passionately live it out and teach it. We need strong leadership. We don't want wishy washy, watered down Catholicism, we need the leadership to admit the faults of the Church and the horrors of the sex abuse scandals and make concrete steps to making sure this never happens again in the history of the Church. Until all of the evil from within the Church is cleaned out and there are very real, firm, effective and well researched tactics to make sure sex abuse is eradicated from seminaries, clergy, and the whole Church, it should not be focused on anything else. The trust and reputation of the Catholic Church and hierarchy of the Church has been broken. If it is not fixed at its roots, nothing else they do really matters. Return to tradition, orthodoxy, and the sacraments.</p>
<p>To grow in a deeper relationship with God, to be prepared to give more generously (service, money, time, sharing), to be more humble, to be more courageous to evangelise, to do what we say/preach, to learn from the early Church, to revisit Vatican II, to help restore confidence of Catholics in the Church, for the Church to be more transparent and compliant with procedures in handling issues, to build a greater sense of belonging through fellowship, small groups, stronger worship, to be a light to the nations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More generous • More open to other opinions • Go to church because you believe in God, not to show that you go to church, or that you want to go to heaven. • Stay strong Catholics, hold the fort. • The system to become a priest should be more strict, better education in some places • Catholic schools and communities should not enforce being afraid, but enforce being able to speak up. • Continue our involvement, being more open in sharing our testimony in the least forceful way. Continue showing Christ-like characteristics and showing this to the younger generation. • Not to lose hope • Recognise that the Church in Australia is damaged but to not be discouraged and to move forward. • Find a balance in our faith between being too rigid and too flexible. • Engagement—parishioners and priests. Young people in Masses • Reputation - ... • Catholic schools have more Masses during the week • Schools need more of a Catholic presence,</li> </ul>

not just crosses around the school • Messages that need to be more uniformly represented • Show that we are an accepting and loving community. • Church meeting people where they are at. Bring along the encounter of Christ out of the Church building to others. • Create more opportunities of what the Catholic Church has to offer. • Create opportunities for people to come to the Church (focus on their gifts? Indirectly?). • In schools—more social justice—which then relates to Jesus’ teachings. More relatable. • Youth ministry—focus less on youth groups, more on youth groups promotion to go to church. • Church—needs something different, non-uniform. More involvement, testaments, like a TED talk. • Adding a more social/engaging aspect, less of just reciting prayers and a more lively contribution.

I believe that it is important for us as the Church in Australia and as members of the Body of Christ to become more open and welcoming to people who may traditionally feel alienated by the Church. I feel that we have forgotten to remember the dignity given to each human being by God himself, especially when discussing controversial and polarising topics within the political spectrum. Yes, it is important to protect our beliefs and traditions but it is also important to be loving to all people, no matter what their race, sexuality, gender or beliefs and opinions may be. Furthermore, I think it is fundamentally important that young people are given a greater voice in the Church and are actively involved in the discussion of Church matters at every level - diocesan, parish, ecumenical communities and orders. The young people are the Church of today AND tomorrow and it is important that their voices are heard.

- God is asking each of us to own our part in an emerging, changing Church of today, which we believe is being led by the Holy Spirit. God is asking us to be true and live according to Christ’s teachings, to live with Christ at our centre. We need to put our faith into action even to the cross.  
- Our Church needs to be relevant and consistent in today’s world. We need to interpret the world we live in and act appropriately for the times. This will need genuine repentance (self-awareness), humility and acknowledgement of the call for us to live according to the gospel of love, inclusive and just.

God is asking us to live as Jesus taught us which means • We need to reread the Bible in light of today and talk about it • Live our lives with the example Jesus set for us • Making the Church and its teachings available at a lot of levels • Need to be able to accept people which can be difficult • Be a Church that can attend to the fear and vulnerability of people • Engage with each other as individuals without judgement at every human level

That truth and love as it is relevant to all of humanity is not overtaken in Australia by falsehoods and vested interests, by the powerful who set out to deceive and those whose preoccupations do not move beyond their own. We are being asked to move back to the basics, that is to do the difficult not the easy, such as walking a mile in someone else's shoes, to be grateful for the life that we do have instead of being entitled to a better life, to speak out rather than remain silent when being wrong masquerades as right, greed as charity, and hate as love. Ultimately, we are being asked to listen to those who lack wealth, experience, status, power, and influence, to take their hopes, fears and aspirations into account when decisions are made by the wealthy, the powerful, the influential and the qualified.

• We need to follow the way of Jesus, not just believe (i.e. not faith without action) • Church needs to lead us in prayer and in living the gospel • Each person must look at themselves • Christian Churches need to move together, to take some of the confusion away • Jesus sacrificed himself to free us, not for us to be dominated; we're still oppressed, (still) seeking material things and disrespecting why Jesus died • A modern Church—not just sacrifice—teaching/explaining about the Trinity, about what Catholics believe • Need to look at forgiveness • Perhaps priests need to marry to reduce paranoia because trust has been broken • Need to respect each religion, respect the land, respect other faith traditions, respect each other • Respect our differences • Revisit "Tomorrow's Church" • We can't just keep parachuting clergy (in) from other countries • Consider married priests • We must ask why parents have changed—why they send their children to Catholic schools or why they don't (send them there) • Fear in society meaning increasing numbers in prisons. Church needs to speak out about fear and about the numbers coming into prisons • Faith in Church lost • No longer very understanding of difference • Lots of people have lost their compassion • So we need Church: o to be stronger in our faith o have greater understanding for all people o have and show greater compassion • Church needs to stay true to itself as society seems to have lost its way—become materialistic; (Church needs to) stay traditional • Need to build community in our Catholic parishes and Catholic schools • (Church) needs to be a welcoming church; to be accessible and involved in the community • Church needs to be relevant to the suburb and community where it is located, involved in sporting and charitable activities (We need a Church where) everyone is welcome • Respect for people's differences • We, as Church need to speak out about the negativity and hatred in the media. • A Church which encourages us (individually and as Church) and others to be more accountable for our actions • A Church which provides a space where people can interact with each other and be more connected to each other. • Work towards a more peaceful society. • Seriously look at how lay people participate in our Church. • So that: o Lay people lead some prayer services, including Communion services, funerals, other liturgies o Lay people have the administrative roles in parishes • For us as Church to return to Christ's teaching, i.e. the message of the gospels (for example in Luke's Gospel, a focus on: o outreach to the poor and weak, o God's mercy and forgiveness, o the importance of prayer, o the work of the Holy Spirit, and o the role of women • Allow married priests. • I want to learn more about the Bible, I want to know about the different books of the Bible, who wrote them and what they teach us about Jesus • We need to modernise the Mass, include more teaching about our Catholic faith

To walk justly (to look at exactly and in detail what that means for us as individuals and as the Catholic Church structure), to love tenderly (in detail what sacrifices this will mean individually and as the Catholic Church) and to walk humbly (to look at our history according to the truth, to the facts, and to feel true sorrow and to show this concretely). To be brave and not mind the consequences so long as we make all decisions, small and especially big decisions, to act with complete justice and compassion. In other words to have faith in God, not be limited and even corrupted by loyalty to the Catholic Church and its current structures. To act. To bring about specific actions of the changes we need.

• Catholic Education. - Bridge the disconnect between the Catholic schools and the Church. 4 • Catholic formation - Focus on the sacraments. Not enough attention on the sacraments. We need

to understand that it forms part of our faith journey. - Focus on catechism. We need to learn more about our faith. - Bring Christian values and traditions back into what is socially acceptable. • Pray hard. - We need to realise that God is the centre of our lives. - Faith was stronger in times of struggle. Nowadays, life is much easier. There is no need for God. We've missed a generation. The next generation gets even weaker. How do we fix this? Fr. [ - ] is doing his utmost in this regard. But there is a lack of vocations. What we can do is pray very hard. • Empower our parish priests and parishes. - Most of the movement in the Church starts from the bottom up and not from the top down. People like us can make a difference. We need to support our parish priest and our school so we can change the attitude in the parish into a positive one. Our tool for evangelisation is the parish. - Suggestion to the Council: Roll out mandatory Mass attendance for school children. Maybe other parish priests can take the 15 minutes or so to teach the children and parents a little about the faith - Allow the parish priest to be involved in the school particularly in the religious education of our children.

I believe God is asking us to pass on the deposit of Faith to all but particularly, the younger generations during their most impressive and formative years.  
The absolute value of the Sacrament of Confession and its availability to the people of God. Because we now have generations of people who do not avail themselves of this sacrament we have a crisis of anxiety and depression which is becoming monumental and often caused by an inability for one to forgive themselves and others when they have done wrong and hurt others. I also am concerned by the high suicide rate which again finds people with no reason to live.

In three words: Repentance, Reform and Renewal. Please see submission.

1. PRAYER At the moment, many parish churches are locked, due to security. That means our houses of prayer are not available to Catholics or any people for that matter to pray in a sacred place outside Sunday Mass times at times during the week which is convenient to them. Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and altars dedicated to Mary/Saints are real concrete sacred spaces for people to connect with God. Each parish could open their churches every day, security cameras could be installed and advertised at the door of the church to eliminate most of the risk of vandalism. The security cameras would be a small investment for all parishes in order to become once again a praying community. This would also give a sign to the whole population that we are open for business, and all people are welcome in our doors. 2. CATECHESIS FOR THE YOUNG Our Catholic schools are full of young people. The nets are bursting. Whilst it is good for the school to be a place of inclusivity and welcome, an extended focus on catechesis is needed in order to educate our young people in the truths of our faith. Catechism, YouCat and DoCat are excellent resources which can supplement the current curriculum for secondary and primary schools. Teachers also are often under equipped to teach Religious Education. A focus on providing a thorough education for teachers who teach religion is necessary. 3. RECONCILIATION The Australian Church and the global Church at the moment is wounded and bleeding. It needs healing. In practice, 1% of Australian Catholics use the Sacrament of Confession or Reconciliation. A taskforce needs to be called to find ways of re-educating the whole Catholic community on the importance of mercy, reconciliation and forgiveness which is at the heart of the gospel and can lead to deep peace. The communal aspect of reconciliation (see

<p>Joel: 2: 12-18) needs to be part and parcel of a whole review and promotion of the sacrament even if it continues in its current form as individual and priest.</p>
<p>1. Teaching the Catholic faith faithfully at all levels (parishes, schools, universities, etc.) as it has been taught always and everywhere by the Catholic Church as contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. 2. Reverend liturgical ceremonies, especially the Holy Mass, observing the rubrics. 3. Make available the Sacrament of Reconciliation in all parishes daily. Frequent preaching on this sacrament of the mercy of God and encourage all to make good use of it. 4. Guide and help all Catholics to live a good and holy life and evangelise, each one in his or her environment and personal circumstances</p>
<p>Keep the faith despite all the current difficulties.</p>
<p>To obey and respect God's Commandments. To listen to the gospel. For parishes to hold Exposition and Adoration at least once a week. Priests to preach about the Ten Commandments, the sacredness of the Mass, the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman, the necessity of availing of the Sacrament of Confession on a regular basis.</p>
<p>God is asking us to listen to his Word, to take it into our hearts and to love one another as he has loved us. Some of us think that one way to achieve this is to bring modern language to all formal prayers, thus making their meaning clearer and more accessible. Others are more forceful, believing that we, as Church, should shout aloud our belief that clericalism should be abolished and that married and women priests should be allowed, that women and men, lay and ordained should be involved at every level of Church hierarchy. There is also support for the idea that God would like us to use the wealth of the Church in support of those in need and that our Church has a responsibility to fully cooperate with the national redress system to make proper compensation for victims of clerical sexual abuse.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to be faithful Catholics. This means believing the Catholic faith and practising it in its fullness. To ensure this happens, bishops and priests must be faithful to their vocations as <i>alteri Christi</i>; as priests, prophets and rulers. Priests: put the supernatural good of souls before all other considerations. Offer a worthy sacrifice acceptable to God. Know that we must render an account to Christ for how we have treated his Body, both the Church and the Holy Eucharist. Prophets: So many of our bishops and priests are filled with cowardice if not unbelief. They have abandoned the flock to the spirit of the world. With the world, they crucify Christ and His Church. They have not taught the "little ones" the way to eternal life and they will be responsible for the countless loss of souls. Rulers: Our bishops refuse to take responsibility for the current state of the Church in Australia. Of those who identify as Catholic, 10% attend Mass every Sunday. Of those, 10% actually believe all the Catholic Church teaches. While only one Catholic in a hundred is actually Catholic, the hierarchy is oblivious to its total failure to lead the flock to Christ. In place of priests, we have ministers of sacrilege, desecration and blasphemy. In place of prophets we have charlatans and promoters of every heresy and perversion. In place of leaders, we have men who have given themselves over to the service of Satan, knowingly or otherwise. If the bishops lack the imagination to know what God is asking of the Church in Australia at this time, the Plenary Council has failed before it has begun. Repent and believe the gospel. Fr [ - ] Ash Wednesday</p>

Now more than ever, I believe that God is asking us to preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. Develop poverty as a central Catholic virtue: Just as there have been good seasons when the Church has moulded the surrounding culture, there have been hard seasons when the Church must stand against the prevailing culture. As Australian society becomes increasingly secular, traditional sympathies toward the Church will continue to decay. This may mean that we should prepare to lose the prestige, respect, influence and even material wealth that was once a certainty. To this end, the Christian virtue of poverty must take on a new centrality in Church teaching and in her presentation to the outside world. Poverty (in the theological sense) is not the absence of essential goods, but rather a holy detachment from the things that are secondary. We will do well to remember that the Church is not the health or education sector, but rather the witness to Christ. Balance the 'soft' and 'firm' sides of Catholic themes: Nowadays, someone entering a Catholic Mass, prayer group, youth group, etc. is likely to hear a good deal about 'soft' Catholicism (e.g.: kindness, forgiveness, acceptance, nurturing, welcoming, etc.) but is unlikely to hear anything about the 'firmer' side of Catholic virtue like duty, sin and virtue, leadership, self-sacrifice, courage to stand out from a crowd, etc. I would suggest that this emphasis creates a "care-bear Catholicism" that is uniquely unattractive to young men. Like many, I have watched with interest the rise of a figure like Jordan Peterson who speaks passionately about personal responsibility, discipline and courage in the face of criticism to people who report that his rather simple message has changed their lives. Young men particularly seem to resonate with this positive message and I think many Catholic priests, intellectuals and leaders could learn a great deal from Dr Peterson's approach. Level up our intellectualism and expose young people to apologetics: Catholicism enjoys a wonderful intellectual tradition that is unfortunately far from the minds of the vast majority of our number. I have found this to be a common stumbling block to many would-be-believers who cite 'science', 'reason' or 'the Enlightenment' as a barrier to their belief in the supernatural. Most tragically, even students going through the Catholic school system tend to leave it with a decent knowledge of science, mathematics, modern language, etc. but have almost no formation in Christian history, philosophy or theology. Given this imbalance, I don't ask why young people are leaving the faith. I ask why would they stay? Just an example: as a graduate of 12 straight years of Catholic education, I doubt that 1 in 100 students of my cohort could list even 5 of the 10 commandments. I doubt that 1 in 200 could even name a prominent Catholic theologian or philosopher.

- Be faithful. - Firstly, to be servants of Christ as he advised us in the Bible. Actually doing work. e.g. through charity and more people acting on their faith rather than just going through the ritual. - Be bold soldiers of our faith and carry our crosses daily despite any obstacles or objections we encounter. I often get questions such as, "Why do you go to church?" We need to be defenders of our faith.
- Prayer - Pray daily and meaningfully particularly as society is becoming more secular. Fifty years ago there were 72% practicing Catholics and this is now down to 12%. Prayer is one of the most powerful things we have but there are not enough of us doing it. The Plenary Council can help promote prayer more. We need to promote prayer so Australia can change. - We need to get people to realise the power of prayer. - Bring prayer back in families.
- Recommitment back into the Church. - We seem to have lost our way. How can we get recommitment back in the Church? How can we be alive in the Catholic faith? - We also need to

ask how we can bring the faithful back. Suggestions: Let us make the Church always available as it used to be. • Youth involvement - We need to give chance to the young. We need more young people in the Church. They are the future. • Bring our Catholic schools back to the Church - Bridge the disconnect between Catholic schools and the Catholic Church • parish priests need to be closer to the community. - The priest needs to be close to the community (for counselling, or for moral support or just to be present). - Parishioners need to be more supportive of their parish priest. We need to be a community. • Unity, peace and harmony - Be more generous in giving than receiving. Forgive one another. Be compassionate. - Australia is a multicultural Church. God wants a harmonious Church. • Reduce Church politics. - We need to let go of the past and give chance to the future. For example, in our parish, we need to help empower the young to volunteer. Help them, train them. Don't turn them away. No matter how good the parish priest is, if politics exist within parishioners/volunteers, it deters new volunteers from taking part in Church activities. Can you help us stop or reduce internal Church politics to give chance to others and make the Church more inclusive?

This is a submission from students from a Catholic primary school: Part of our dialogue was based on Catholic Social Teaching as we engaged with the online Listening and Dialogue resources. Overwhelmingly, the students feel God is asking them to look after the planet, so stewardship was a strong theme. Doing more for the sick and the homeless. To help asylum seekers. Allow more people to participate in the direction of the Church. Respect all people's differences. Protect the world's environment.

I think God is pleading with us to allow any man or woman, who feels called to ordination or its equivalent, to be considered for this state; and that celibacy be an option. I think God is pleading that the manager of the Melbourne Catholic Book Shop has the books written by Joan Chittister available to customers. I think God is pleading with me to continue my faithfulness to the Catholic Church.

To honour God in the liturgy. To take the liturgical aspects of our Catholic Christian lives more seriously—to make our liturgies as creative, beautiful and engaging as possible so that we can be primed for God to act in our lives through our experience of God in the liturgy. To bring our schools along on the journey; there is so much work to be done in that sector to help staff and students to learn what the liturgy is, how to celebrate it well, so that they can be nourished and nurtured, formed and informed by their experience of God in the liturgy. Help us to learn not to place anything in the way of God's action in the liturgy.

Our conversation concluded with a theme of bridging the gap between the reality of the lived experiences of many Australians and the institutional, clerical Church. Many of the young people we encounter now experience 'Church and faith' through their school experiences which in many cases are positive and life giving and yet this does not translate to their parish experiences. In so many ways, schools are the new 'Church'. We need to recognise that living the faith looks different to the 50s and 60s and the measure of a good Catholic or the narrative of a person of faith cannot be solely evaluated by attendance at Mass and involvement in parish life. This does not mean that liturgy, Eucharist and community are not important. We believe there are wonderful opportunities to take the lived experience of Australians and bring the contemporary culture to our liturgy however this often meets with conservative clerical opposition which

disempowers and sometimes diminishes the potential expression of faith for our younger people. The 'language of the liturgy' at times is also difficult for many to access if they are not from a 'churched' background. The Church in Australia must actively and intentionally become one the consistently invites and includes. The reality of life for many Australian Catholics or their families is one of marriage breakdown and gender diversity. At times, people experience a 'lottery' in terms of the theology of the local priest and their experience of welcome. We also believe the Church must consider the gap between priests ministering to people and offering pastoral support where they have only lived a single person's life. We are also concerned from a theological perspective that those entering the seminary appear to bring a fundamental, literal and conservative approach to theology which may make the gap wider. We acknowledge that scriptural scholarship has evolved and impacted on some of our doctrinal understanding from a positive perspective. We wonder however where the place of politics and financial decision-making rests in the reticence to re-examine some aspects of the life of the Church in Australia. Finally we see the gap for the role of women as benign one that must be addressed. In many ways, the women have remained faithful followers and yet have no voice at the highest levels of decision-making within the Church or even in the most sacred elements of ministering the sacramental life. We believe that we have an opportunity to embrace the richness that exists from our women faithful.

God is clearly calling on us to build a more Christ-like Church, much less obsessed with sin and focused on love for all.

We identify that the main problem of the Church is not the amount of people in the Church, but the fact, that people who are in the Church do not know what they believe in. Just as Jesus was rejected by his contemporaries, we must persevere faithful to our faith rather than let our practices be swayed by the surrounding culture. We suggest: - More confessions available—in too many Churches there is no confession advertised or it's available only once a week, which is not enough; - More Masses in the morning and especially in the evening on weekdays, there is little available for people who work. - Less talking about refugees, social justice, saving the planet issues which are already present in the public debate - Stay faithful to the Catholic teaching, without watering down Christian values to appease vocal lobbyists. It is not our objective to accommodate wishes of people outside the Church but to be faithful to the Catholic teaching. Our values have to be timeless, not tailor-made to the expectations of a given culture. We welcome the sinner, but not the sin - Announcements before communion or before Mass what communion and who is eligible to receive it, otherwise people are welcome to come up for a blessing - People who come up for a blessing instead of Communion should receive it from the priest, Eucharistic ministers not have the authority? - Place for silence in the liturgy after receiving Eucharist, we should have the time to reflect in silence on having received the Body of Christ. - We want to hear the bishops but also priests voice out the disapproval for the introduction of laws which oppose Catholic teaching. As JP2 said "do not be afraid". It is not understandable why the voice of the Church was not heard when the gay marriages and euthanasia bills were introduced. We do not oppose acting "behind the scenes" to support our case, but it is not enough—at least people in the church need to hear that those things are wrong. An example of an action would be that the conference of bishops would write a letter—statement which would be read out in every church

on every Mass on a given Sunday - We would like to receive Communion on the tongue. Receiving in the hands seems to be disrespectful to the Body of Christ and contributes to a lack of belief in the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. In many places, Communion is by default distributed in the hands and people don't even know there is alternative option. We would at least like certain priests to stop criticising traditional reception of Communion. - Eucharistic ministers are used too frequently. They also should have more formation. Some kind of an ongoing formation would be appropriate. There should be a national outline for the formation of extraordinary Eucharistic ministers. As the name suggests, they should remain extraordinary, not ordinary. - It is not appropriate for priests to receive communion from Eucharistic ministers. It would be appropriate for priests who are not saying Mass.

"Catholics need to work together to generate a new culture and renew the Church- to create solidarity and commitment to a culture of care." Pope Francis—Our school community resonated with this statement. We want a Church that is

- Open and inclusive
- The place to be
- We would like to see less isolation
- Increased sense of community and work on the social aspect of Church
- More inclusion of some progressive ideas and a willingness to try new ways/new ideas and new ways of doing things
- Realising that we do need to hold onto the traditions of the Church as well
- Youth groups
- Less dependency on the priest and more responsibility to lay people
- Church more involved in society
- Women's role in the Church to be reviewed
- Review of Catholic Education, specifically handing on the faith. How can we improve and plan for the future?
- How are we educating future religious educators? Nurturing, feeding, inspiring ... this needs attention.
- More ways of engaging people in the Mass, making it real and relevant to our lives, times and society. Bringing Jesus to the people.
- The Church is changing, it needs to change but are we steering the change in the right direction? Are we steering anything?
- Change is imperative and necessary
- We want a Church that is hope filled.
- We firmly believe that the Church has an organisational problem, not a faith problem although the organisational issue is causing a faith issue.
- Find multiple ways of engaging people and communicate through multiple and varied streams.
- We want to continue to say no to abuse and no to clericalism. We are living in a time of great opportunity for change. We need to market all the good things in the Church.
- We need more modern day prophets and to guide the development of the young right through to young adulthood.

In a general sense, God is asking us to 'lift our game', make a serious move to a way of being that is in line with the life and teachings of Jesus and the gospel values of mercy, love and compassion. There isn't much space outside of the Church for ritual (or quiet and reflection) to occur but they are desperately needed. The rituals and practices that the Church holds dear should be shared and nurtured because they are counter to our current society's way of being. They create the ability to properly consider justice and mission. We must maintain these spaces in order for justice, compassion and love to prevail in our society. The Church is an organisation like any other and needs to operate in line with community standards. It has perpetrated incredible harm and this cannot be ignored. The Church acting as some kind of moral police at present or in the past seems radically inappropriate. The institution of the Church cannot continue to separate itself in deed and word from the core values of the Catholic faith. The lay faithful should be able to believe in and live by both the Christian message and the Church as an institution. A change in Church

approach to ways of being or perhaps application of theologies. • Accept human frailty with grace

- Opportunities for young people to nurture their personal faith and live out gospel values.

Environments where people can be free to journey from an inherited faith to personal, adult one.

- Communities of justice and compassion that foster faith and justice as a collective, persons in the world together, not focused on self (personal salvation)
- To move from dictatorial to a place of exploration, together
- Enable inclusivity at the heart - ensure that we are bringing people from all walks and faiths together, where they are at, not on the Church's terms
- Moves to seriously implement the way Jesus lived and see his values of mercy, love, and compassion realised in the Church
- Dialogue with outliers of society, dialogue with outliers within the Church
- For the Church to stop inserting itself into the personal lives of people e.g. divorce - We should not desert those who are at their most vulnerable, but rather reach out and include
- We should be a Church that reaches out rather than closes in, from parish level to bishops

A change to the way the Church practises accountability and acknowledgement

- There is a need for the Church to openly acknowledge the pain, suffering and harm that it has both directly and indirectly been responsible for as an institution
- This acknowledgement needs to be a real, heavy, meaningful symbol —giving away of land, property, privilege e.g. doing away with certain symbols such as current garments, and creating a new dress which demonstrates humility.
- Implement processes in line with community standards e.g. child safety, accountability
- Be a humble and poor Church
- Acknowledge that morality is not a domain on which the Church has a monopoly

Transparency.

There is no doubt that one prayerful interpretation of current Church troubles, i.e. paedophilia and its covering up is an indication that the Church must change; it is no longer a body of people giving witness to the God's love on earth.

What is God asking of us in Australia today? Return to the gospel. As always God calls us to conversion of heart. This is true of all times, in all ages, and it is no different today. "Repent, and believe the Good News". The Good News is that in and through the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God has intervened 'once and for all' in human history; he has come to dwell among us; he has won the victory for us over sin and death; he has sent the Holy Spirit to be the 'down payment' for our salvation; in the power of the Spirit we can now claim victory over all that would separate us from God's love, his mercy and healing. We have the hope of eternal life with the angels and saints in the presence of God, and can choose right now to live that very life by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the life-changing truth entrusted to us in the apostolic tradition. No more "short-change". Too often we are being 'short-changed', given a 'watered-down' version of this truth, reduced to a moral code or a few pious practices. I have had the opportunity in recent months of visiting about a dozen parishes for Sunday Mass both within and outside our Archdiocese (Melbourne), and have been concerned—not to say alarmed—at how often the gospel is being preached in many parishes. So often the Christian life is presented as a list of things we have to do—caring for each other, etc.—without any reference to what God has already done for us, "while we were yet sinners". We need to be preaching repentance and change of heart in and out of season; reliance on the free gift of God's mercy rather than a list of things to do so we can 'make the grade'. So that's the overarching message I believe God has for us: "Repent and believe the good news".

1. Outreach. There is so much brokenness and division in our world. People are feeling lost, lonely, and unsupported - there is so much homelessness in a wealthy country like ours. We need to reach out to those who are suffering from addictions, depression, and anxiety. I feel that many Catholics' attend Mass on Sunday, but we don't get involved in the everyday opportunities to help others. Secondly, look at the number of women who keep our churches running behind the scenes - consider women priests, consider married priests. Also, consider priests being able to sign up for a term of service, perhaps 5 years - To prevent burnout of good people. Thirdly: Are there empty presbyteries that could be used to house homeless people? 2. Clean out the hierarchy of the Church, removing all trace of abuse of any kind. We need a strong leadership of genuine people.

The people of God are asked to be Christ like and to be guided by the life of Jesus and the beatitudes and to show God's goodness and magnanimity to the world. It's so unbelievable that we just accept odd excuses as to why women do not have a substantive role in the Catholic Church—it was able to change its views on slavery so surely it can change its position on women. I think God is asking us to lead and make these changes. Our Church life in Australia seems so impoverished. I feel if the people of God need to get on with being the people of God and be very focussed on being God's love, compassion and creativity here.

I believe that the Plenary Council is a calling from God to gather together in the faith of the Holy Spirit to address the issues which the modern Church faces. God is calling for us to solve the disagreements in the religion in order to become more open to acceptance and change to ensure no loss in faith occurs in the public. I believe that God is also calling for us to apologise and prove that we want to fix our mistakes so that the Church can be forgiven and regain the trust of the population. The question 'What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?' might mean to others that God wants to forgive us for our sins but also make us learn our lessons by becoming better people and a better religion.

Married priests, women priests or at least deacons for ministry works - More priests mean more visits to the people with more contact more people likely. Church should be more open about how/where finances are spent. Men who were priests and left to get married should be invited back to say Mass and participate in the life of the Church. Remove all convicted paedophile priests, etc. from the priesthood. Hypocrisy shown by the Catholic hierarchy in its tardy actions on paedophilia has undermined its reputation. Church to be HUMBLE. Less pompous rituals and more pastoral care - Cut out all over-the-top pageantry of the Vatican including wealthy outfits of bishops - vestments simplified. The days Of "Princes of the Church" are over - simple traditions needed - Jesus would not recognise the gold ornamentations, etc.

I think God is asking us to take action as well as praying to take the steps to make sure that children and adults again have the respect for our wonderful faith this could be making way for female priests and deacons to join with priests and parishes to create a more loving and safe place for all people and children so that the current problems never happen again.

Our Church structures must change to restore trust in the immediate post Royal Commission era. We must make true and just amends to the survivors and their loved ones and be open to all the people of God and allow lay people, especially inclusive of survivors and all those impacted by

these criminal acts—including ATSI people who were disproportional impacted by this abuse - allow them to be at the table. That all recommendations of the Royal Commission be implemented. Please revisit compulsory celibacy. Professional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, —women and lay men—must be lifted to higher structure and authority in our Church. That the unhealthy and destructive clerical structures within our Church be addressed urgently/dismantled. That lay men and women, inclusive of survivors and their families/whistle-blower, be allowed significant roles in much needed Church reforms. Many of us have theology degrees. That there be no more frustrating delays in Church responses/opting in to the National Redress. We cannot wait. The National Redress scheme has been watered down and is insufficient to meet the needs of survivors and whistle-blowers who lost much. Please open your eyes and hearts to the truth. Include us—my sister and I at the table. We are sisters of a survivor of clerical sexual abuse ([ - ] abused repeatedly by De La Salle brother) and the sisters of a victim ([ - ]) dead at 43)-our profoundly intellectually disabled sister who was sexually abused within state run institutions. We had the most loving of parents who were so involved in our lives and schools and parishes. They were not naïve—they would have been devastated had they known. We were not a vulnerable family and had the most wonderful home life and Catholic upbringing. A solicitor said to us "Your brother was vulnerable, he was a Catholic".

This is what the Holy Spirit is telling me. The rules have not changed. Media, popular culture or even a close friend or relative who has an opinion contrary to the prophets, and Jesus' teachings does not constitute a new covenant from God. We need to be welcoming all sinners, unjudged, with all manner of vices to the Church, for we are told of the delight that the Lord has for the one returned sheep, even leaving the ninety nine to fend for themselves to find the one. This is not to say any vice abhorrent to the Lord is to be tolerated. While Jesus did seek out the sinners, he did not say "just keep right on doing what you are doing". He was looking for faith within them, which could and did save them, and instructed "go and sin no more". Many of us have sins which we are guilty/indulgent of. These can be many in nature whether greed, lustful/sexual, respect/discriminative, etc., some which are popular topics currently. Though history would show that this topic popularity is ever revolving. We all face the battle of vice versus faith. This is where support is needed. We all need the faith community to help keep us in God's favour. To make the right decisions (which is ultimately the individual's). Not pandering to the sin and the individual's weakness but providing support to make the right decision and strengthen our/their faith, which can be hard at the low times of our lives. We are ambassadors for Christ. We must share his teachings faithfully, as those who speak falsely in the Lord's name will be harshly judge by the Lord. If one's vice causes them to stray outside the common law then whether lay or clergy they should answer for that by common law. But this is not God's way. God is looking for true repentance which God's highly values, and can lead to forgiveness. Render unto Caesar what is Cesare's and render unto God for what is God's. Can we look to no better example than the majority of our own clergy and sisterhood who put aside their own urges of sexual desires when they take up their vow of chastity in order to fulfil their calling of Holy Orders? Something which many of the laity would balk at, but without the calling from God, how could we understand? So for those in the public community, we need to stand strong, and hold fast to God's teaching for

souls are at risk. For our God is a jealous God and if we start to put populist ideas before the Lord's teachings, many souls will be lost.

God is asking us to get back to the basics with His message: Love God with your whole being; Love your neighbour as yourself. Focus on building the Kingdom of God instead of building our own small little kingdoms. Pray without ceasing; practise fasting with purpose; give until there is nothing left ... priests need to be shepherds instead of bosses of their people, more humane, and focus on pastoral activities, leaving the administration of parishes to a council of parishioners. Approach people with respect—we are ALL children of God. We are all EQUAL before God. Some priests have difficulty in comprehending and accepting this truth.

I have uploaded extracts from an article of mine published in the Australasian Catholic Record in 2014 in which I address questions to do with: - The Church and young people, and particularly with regard to marriage. - Parish leadership. In other words, my point of view has already been published, but I want to remind the bishops of what I had to say at that time.

I think God is asking us to review the Church as a whole and to look at how it can really bring God's message to the most vulnerable. We are being challenged to be more pastoral. The question is how have we ended up where we are where the churches are half empty? Has the Church moved with the times? Has it retained from Church history the things that give it power? Is it here to support and help everyone to live and love according to the teachings of Jesus or to condemn and exclude those that it does not find acceptable?

We believe that God is asking us to examine, in the words of Simon Sinek, what our purpose is, what our cause is and what our beliefs are (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPYeCltXpxw>). We know what we do and how we do it, but we have lost sight of why we do what we do it and the results are obvious. Widespread ignorance of the faith, despite the Catholic education system being the largest private educator in the country, plummeting Mass attendance with only 12.2% attending Church according to the most recent statistics available, and the scandalous promotion of blatantly anti-Catholic policies by supposedly Catholic politicians with no canonical penalties being imposed on them publicly by the bishops who are supposed to teach and govern. There is absolutely no point in running a supposedly Catholic education system that is obviously failing en masse to produce actual practicing Catholics who know and love their faith. Window dressing such as putting up icons and paying lip service to Catholic identity, when the majority of teachers are not living in accordance with the teachings of the Church (due to lack of formation or belief) is simply a waste of time. In today's age people respect authenticity and find it easy to spot fakes who say one thing and do another. No one respects or wants to be associated with people who don't act in accordance with their professed beliefs. We need to rebuild our education systems with teachers who either believe or at least respect and do not publicly contradict the teachings of the Church. If that means there are not enough teachers for all of our schools, it is ok to close some of them as public education is available for free. As it stands, we are either cowards or hypocrites and God is calling us to change our ways, go back to basics and proclaim the truth of the gospels and all the teachings of Christ. Most (not all) schools and parish priests sugar-coat and shy away from proclaiming the hard teachings of Christ particularly those which condemn generally accepted behaviour such as abortion, divorce and remarriage, and homosexuality for fear of "offending

people". Sin needs to be called out as such, and the existence of hell needs to be re-emphasised so that souls can be saved. The reality of the it's all about the community and how people feel approach is that any intelligent person walks away going, I'm fine just as I am, I'm a good person, I can be part of any community for fellowship (e.g. the footy club) and so I don't need the Church as it doesn't really have anything to offer me. We need to proclaim the Catholic faith in its entirety and take concrete steps to ensure that only those who take it seriously and genuinely believe in the divine aspects of the sacraments are admitted to them. Otherwise they are reduced to outdated community rituals that are easily replaced by more entertaining activities on a Sunday.

A transparent peoples' Church where clericalism is a thing of the past. Women are valued and equally part of the Church, engaging as priests. Celibacy is not a condition of priesthood. Priests are able to marry if they choose. The formality of Mass is relaxed, reverent and the Eucharistic celebration, while still focusing on transubstantiation, is not as wordy or lengthy. The people are more involved and interactive in the Mass, rather than being spoken to. The right wing of the Church, with all its pomp and ceremony, take a leaf from Pope Francis' style and become more human and relaxed in their presentations and interactions.

To demonstrate to the world how to live Jesus' message to show love to all his people, no matter from which religion or culture or country. This is not to say we need to compromise the beliefs that underpin our faith but to expand on Jesus message of love and acceptance. Whilst there are many doctrines that have been proclaimed in the Catholic Church since Jesus time on earth, it is in what he said when he was here that should underpin our approach. Many of the subsequent doctrines/proclamations have been used to judge and exclude others from our faith. I believe we need to embrace what Pope Francis is living—The role of servant leader as set down by Christ for his Apostles as the leaders of the Church. We should promote our values of the sanctity of every human life from conception to death. That there is no place for hatred or bigotry.

To confront and change the clericalism in the Church. Australia is probably the most equipped country in the world (with its youth, its bravery; even its famed irreverence,) to tackle with honesty, a universal "Catholic" culture that has slipped over generations into that of the Scribes and Pharisees that Jesus did not totally condemn (as many think) but who he implored to change their ways. OMG how long have we implored our leaders to listen! It is the last day of submissions and coming home from interviewing Yr 9 students, I thought why waste your time! I had put it off so long because of the pain I and my community are living with. A voice crying in the wilderness like so many others. I ran groups with kids last week (which I posted to your feedback site) that made me think I had to keep trying, although I am so crushed after so many years of commitment that I want to walk away! Jesus is saying - stop, stop, stop abusing my children—Oh no, I am not talking about sexual abuse—I am talking about proud, arrogant clerics who can come into a parish and destroy (because they believe they have absolute power) 40 years of work. The young people we nurtured to be the leaders of tomorrow. Our parish would stand out in all of Australia! Yes you can ring and talk to me! Moving priests around who abused kids is one thing; moving them around when they continually destroy communities is ultimately the most destructive force in the Church. Francis says the clericalism is cancer. I wonder if it is worth writing this, because my reading after the response to the Pell verdict is, you still have not learnt

humility!! People even read our Pope Francis as abrogating responsibility - they didn't do it, it was "the devil's work". My God, who advises you guys? Are you so removed? Humility, justice, openness and finally—most of all—inclusiveness. Luke wrote it best—Jesus came down from the mountain—because the message was for ALL! Maybe the only ultimate answer to your question is humility, openness and the willingness to forge a new beginning. Because that is in essence what Jesus did. He came and forged a new beginning. 2000 years later we could only say He wasted his time!

Asking to focus on mercy and also a big focus on the youth and young people of the Church as they are the future. Focus on developing faith from a young age as well as to revamp and to modernise Church teachings and understandings. The Church is so beautiful but needs to get with the times.

1. Placing our trust in God, despite our surroundings. Following in his footsteps. 2. Being more united and connected, not only at a spiritual level. 3. Faith leads to prayer which leads to action into the wider community. 4. Recognise the place of women, their story within the Church and to be represented at a greater level. Opportunities to learn, reaffirm what is core to our faith tradition. 5. Practice what the faith means - Love thy neighbour, encourage children, those who don't to Church, pray the Rosary.

Mercy, compassion and justice. God is asking all Australians to live lives of mercy, compassion and justice. Many individuals and groups are doing just that. Where it does not appear to be as fundamental to their being is in some institutions, such as the federal government, the banking industry and in some Catholic Church leadership. Where it is practised as essential, the reign of God is present bringing love, peace, joy, honesty and transparency. Without it, we have self-interest, power, secrecy, oppression, opaqueness, denial of responsibility, people's innate dignity ignored and so on. The protection of the institution becomes more important than the care of the individual. Stewardship is misplaced and economised while moral and ethical responsibilities are ignored and denied. It thus can demonise the institution in the eyes of those who would prefer to admire it or to be proud to belong to and contribute to its life. Mercy, compassion and justice derive from the Spirit of God and are life-giving, lifting the hearts of people. It grieves and depresses me greatly when my experience is of a clericalist, ideological Church leadership and bureaucracy which does not reflect the love of Christ. This has too often been my experience and I am left praying that those filling these positions will come to really fall in love with Jesus rather than appearing to be whited sepulchres. There are, and there have been, some great people in leadership roles in the churches. They are and were all capable of sin. We are all capable of missing the mark, of being less than we were created to be. It seems to me that those who are most aware of this are those who are most filled with mercy and compassion and who work for justice. These are people who will not lose sight of the individual, of the outsider, of the lepers of today, of the needs of the child and the aged, of those who speak a different language and have differing ethnicities, or of women. Within the Catholic Church, there are those who have blinkers on only showing mercy, compassion and justice to those in the inner ring of people like themselves and fail to show it to the many others who have given their lives to serving the people of God as pastoral leaders, Pastoral Associates, or in other roles within the Church. While this latter group may have felt called to give their lives in service of the Church, many have

experienced oppression, injustice and lack of respect while being treated as transient employees who can be disposed of on a whim.

God is asking us to be more Christ-like in our attitude : To be accepting and welcoming of all types of people regardless of religion, sexual orientation To be non-judgemental To be inclusive To embrace change and let go of meaningless rituals and traditions To teach our youth with clarity in our interpretations of the Bible To learn from our youth about social justice To look after the poor and marginalised

- For the Church to be more welcoming and inclusive of families and young people so they have a greater sense of connection to faith and community. Reviewing the language of the liturgy would be beneficial here. Young people require assistance to discern their vocation and listen to what God is wanting of them. - For the Church to return to an emphasis on the way of Jesus and the gospel values of justice and compassion - making the approach of Jesus and the gospel relevant to the way we live our lives. - For the Church to work more ecumenically, and to be open and welcoming to a broad demographic and a range of ethnicities.

God is asking us to look to lay people for leadership. To remember that our gospels tell us of being humble. That our Church has been run by humans, and they make mistakes.

Considering the turmoil currently experienced by the Church, especially following on from issues of clerical sexual abuse, now is the time for significant change in the way our Church is governed and the role of those who would lead. I feel there has been a deliberate move by Rome in recent years, prior to the leadership of Pope Francis, to reverse the more moderate approaches and attitudes of the practice of our faith that society now generally embraces (homosexuality, divorce, same sex marriage, etc.) and take us back to the mid-20th century and before when many followers of the Catholic faith were ruled by FEAR. Fear of retribution by God should we transgress rules predominantly set in place by clerical hierarchy. This is so contrary to a faith which believes in an eternally loving and forgiving God. Our bishops need to confront Rome about modernising our doctrines so that they are more inclusive of all people, just as Jesus would have us do. My thoughts include removing the nature of clericalism within the Church, ordination of women, the fraught issue of celibacy, and broad and open acceptance of all manner of our human condition.

To let go of the past structures that sought to control. To be the human face of Christ within the world. To recognise value and acknowledge the voice of women within ministry. God is asking us to have true faith in him and to live our lives only according to his true word and not what we think is right for our own pleasure and happiness. God is asking us to make peace with each other and teach our children to be faithful to our Lord. Pray that the Plenary Council takes the right decisions to guide the Catholics in and take bold actions to implement them. Generous towards the needy. Pray the rosary daily. Encourage the inactive believers in Christ to be active in the church community. To live a meaningful life which is according to Christ's commandments - love one another. Will the Church change according to the times? Understand without finding fault. Unity among clergy and believers. Listen with open humble heart To bring change without compromising our core traditional values and practices.

The 3 things I would like to see are: a) Female priests b) Married priests

I think Our God is asking us what he always has: -To know Him -To Love Him -To Serve Him. I think if we do this as best we can all else falls into place. God does not make it hard for us. It's a simple straight forward message. He is not out to trick us, to confuse us (we do that well enough by ourselves!). His message is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He did not leave something out, He is not talking in riddles; we don't need a theologian to explain it or interpret it for us. No, any person alive can understand it and do it. It's a choice for each of us to make. Many millenniums have passed - but the message does not change. Our God is unchanging, He was, He is and will be forevermore. The message is Him and when we do as He asks, invites of us, we live within him. We have not travelled far in these thousands of years, Cain and Able? And now we allow and do not speak out against the murder of children who will never see the light of day because of a woman's right to choose? We live in a non-Christian country, our views are looked on by the majority of Australians as outdated, bigoted, a load of old priests who terrorise our children, who scare them with tales of eating flesh and blood, imagine them!! Telling us how to live when they are not even married!!! The Catholic Church has lost its mojo! God sacrificed HIS ONLY SON for us/me. He is not JUST an all loving God, I don't believe he is the God spoken about who is sitting around in a circle singing Kum-by-ya and holding hands! He has called us to be men and women of faith. To live the truth, to be honest, valiant, honourable, to practice and live charity. To be bold and joyful in all our actions. To be militant and persistent in our endeavours. God leads us, we follow. We put our shoulder to the plough and don't dare look back! His way is narrow, the path we have been called to is long and narrow, hilly and full of uncertainty, dangers and wild beast abound, and we are answerable to Our Father for those on that path! How have we prepared them for that journey? In what ways have we strengthened them for the times of testing and trials to come? We live in a country now that will not judge Christians on pre-existing norms of law. We are a minority and our children will be persecuted for their beliefs. It is a time to be counted, how are we arming our children? In these times, as has happened all through history, we now in Australia will take our turn to be tested in the fires of faith and charity. It was good enough for Our Lord, so it is for us, I believe the call from God is back to the basics. To be a people of faith, hope and charity. A people that do and don't just listen, a people that act not just for the latest new social justice issue. As someone said "I've noticed that everyone who is for abortion has already been born" funny that! God calls us to eternal life - let's start living this life like it's not the be all and end all - just the start, let's be heroic in our love of God. Thanks.

God is asking us to live Jesus' message of unconditional love. He wants us to accept each other with all of our idiosyncrasies, peculiarities and backgrounds. His message was simple and was written in the time that he lived. This was a time of a patriarchal society which was vastly uneducated in today's terms. His message rose above the constraints of that society. Simply put, he preached unconditional love, his disciples took that message to the world as they knew it, and he left it to us to absorb his teaching and to apply it in our own lives. He did not leave us with volumes of Canon Law which prescribed in detail how we should act and think. Somehow, what was written has been successively developed into detailed theology and Canon Law by scholars. In my view, and the view of my wife and four children, is that the "black and white" view presented by these "rules" have decreasing relevance to our lives in the twenty first century. It is not what

most Catholics talk about as they gather in parishes or at home. The “rules” are of no help when a marriage breaks down irretrievably, a child declares his/her same sex orientation, a young girl becomes pregnant after being raped, an infertile married couple cannot have access to IVF, a married couple with several children cannot use artificial contraception, or, in trying to explain to a child why a priest cannot be married or a woman cannot be a priest. In my case, is it any wonder that my four children see the Church as irrelevant to their lives?

God is asking us how we can, as Catholics make a difference in the community such that together we can shape the 'Church' as an institution to be a more in tune with the times and the needs of people and to be less viewed as being archaic and aloof.

To come back to the truth, for the Church to make the people holy.

To recognise that any level of trust, respect and confidence in the bishops, archbishops (not to mention the cardinal!) has disappeared. Through the Royal Commission hearings, it became very obvious that there was a disconnect between the average, normal Catholic and the hierarchy. I am 52 years old, a married mother of 3 children (21, 18, and 16). We all still go to Church and my children are actively involved. This is mainly due to the fact we are in a Passionist parish at [ - ]. I have worked in full-time ministry in the Catholic Church since 1988 - Retreat team, missionary work (MGL Sisters for 8 years), Archdiocese of Melbourne Deanery Youth Resource Coordinator, Deanery Coordinator and Pastoral Associate (parish and school based) and now [ role ] at [ hospital ]. I AM a committed, faith filled Catholic, but I and my family are hanging in by the tips of our fingernails. It is not just the devastating extent of the abuse that has disillusioned me and others, but the lack of understanding, defensiveness, dismissiveness, protectionism, lack of cooperation with police and Royal Commission, obvious cover ups, movement of priests, ignoring, dismissing and vilifying victims who dared to speak out and finally tell their story ... As an institutional Church and a hierarchical Church, there is no credibility left. People are more dismayed and shattered by the LACK OF RESPONSE AND COVER UP, that by the actual abuse. The ill-informed and defensive response of the Church has angered and outraged people across the board. If I could have \$100 for every time someone has asked some version of 'why can't they just tell the truth of what they know' instead of just being seen as defensive and protecting old, archaic and outdated hierarchy. These comments are said through tears ... So if you want to know what God is asking of us, then I would say you NEED TO LISTEN! SIT IN THE MUD, ON THE CURB SIDE, IN THE CAFES, IN THE CARPARKS, IN THE SCHOOLS, IN THE HOSPITAL AND LISTEN!!!! PEOPLE ARE DEVASTATED, NOT SO MUCH BY THE ABUSE, BUT BY THE COVER UP, LIES, AND LACK OF HONESTY, MOVEMENT OF PRIEST AND VILIFICATION OF VICTIMS AND THE VOICE OF THE FAITHFUL. I DO believe the Catholic Church will continue, but it will be less trusting, less reliant, less believing of the priests, bishops and archbishops. Most people simply think the hierarchy are more concerned with their own political and career advancement than the people. They will and are voting with their feet. They will connect in via smaller, non-hierarchical communities if the traditional Church continues to be seen as out of touch. I do believe God is saying that we need to be honest, truthful, go with full disclosure, and be honest, humble, care for the weakest in our midst and focus on the gospel message of the healing, transformation, compassion and forgiving message: focus on Kingdom of God, not preserving a man-made hierarchy.

<p>I think God is asking us to respond to the call to care for creation, including our fellow humans and other creatures. For me, this includes acting in our role as co-creators and entering into interfaith dialogue. I believe we have a role in the world, to respond to the signs of the times and bring the light of the gospel to these complex and urgent issues.</p>
<p>-to be less judgemental -to be more inclusive of all and to embrace diversity -to be more socially active and to share our wealth -to remember the real reasons for the Church of justice and love - to modernise and adapt to these times and get more people involved -to remember to serve others and not ourselves</p>
<p>God is asking each of us in Australia at this time. 1. to be people in service of all in our community. We need to be outreaching to those vulnerable in our community such as the sick (including mentally ill), aged, disabled, poor, disadvantaged, Indigenous people, domestic violence victims, sex abuse victims, families in need, unemployed. 2. to regularly attend Mass and receive Jesus body (and blood). Ideally attend Mass each Sunday to hear God's word and hear the priest's sermon of encouragement and advice for the week ahead. 3. to pray each day. 4. to continually develop our faith, e.g. discussion groups, reading the Bible. 5. to be Christian (i.e. kind and caring) to people of all faiths and to people of no faith. 6. Australian government and Catholic agencies to give generously to countries in need of assistance, such as for clean water, quality food, accommodation, schools, clothing, sanitary products, hospitals. 7. to support and be involved in the local parish. 8. to live out the Ten Commandments. 9. to care for our environment, e.g. recycling initiatives, manage water use. 10. to welcome and care for refugees. 11. to be Christian to people including if they are LGBT. 12. every day to aim to follow Christ's example from the gospels. 13. regularly attend Confession.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to just be normal loving, humble deeply caring and considerate people. Our faith is our way of life and I think God wants us to go back to loving every day. We will need to learn trust again. We need our clergy to humble themselves and practice what they preach to us (live their faith). We need clergy to show greater RESPECT for women, women make the parish function. No parish priest should have TOTAL CONTROL over finances, schools and the parish. Parish priest should not alter things in the parish without parishioners' consent. Priests should be given the option to marry.</p>
<p>That we should be more respectful towards refugees and asylum seekers that come to our shores seeking refuge from their mother land. That the Catholic religion should welcome everyone into the religion regardless of their gender or sexuality and it should be a safe space for anyone. That women are seen as equals. That women have the right to choose what should happen to their bodies in regards to contraception or abortion. It is not up to the Church to dictate this! That the higher members of the Church need to be open and honest about sexual abuse that happens in the Church, and to take responsibility for their part in covering things up. And to admit to the facts that have already been proven!</p>
<p>We believe God is asking the institutional Catholic Church to treat gay people as any other person, with respect.</p>
<p>[ - Parish] Discussion Group Wednesday 20th Feb 2019. What do you think God is asking of us, here in Australia at this time? 1- We are a rich country, so we need to use our resources to</p>

contribute to making a better place for others - in our communities here and in the world internationally 2- to bring HOPE to our communities in Australia and in our neighbouring countries, creating peace and a sense of purpose 3- to look after the materially poor and disadvantaged; we also need to ensure the rich are cared for too, as the materially rich can be poor spiritually 4- to reach out to all age groups in their differing life-stages and needs and also to all family types; there should be no discrimination in our outreach and compassion 5- to restore trust and hope in the Church - to apologise for the wrongs and reach out with humility and caring compassion to the faithful to reassure them and uplift them 6- We recognise the mission of the Church is SERVICE so we need to encourage the faithful in this mission of providing service to the vulnerable and all those we encounter 7- We need to be a listening Church - willing to dialogue with others with discernment and to encourage all those involved to live out their faith in hope and love 8- to BUILD connections and a supportive sense of family and community to uplift and surround each other with love 9- to have the humility to invite people to dialogue and then listen carefully to others of differing faiths or opinions to try to understand and connect with them 10- we need more visible action for the survivors of abuse; more acts of prayer and reparation and opportunities for communities to pray together about this issue 11- to give more prominence to the positive and the GOOD to foster hope 12- to ensure we are a welcoming Church - in our parishes and schools and institutions, with more opportunities for connection and community building through e.g. family groups; prayer groups, small group discussions to encourage relationships across the ages 13- we need a Church that helps people to deepen and understand their faith and spirituality better through options like Bible study, adult education, retreats, pilgrimages 14- we need a Church willing to be more publicly engaged in the political discussions, talking from a faith context and speaking up for the dignity of the person, stewardship, etc. on political issues like climate change, asylum seekers etc. 15- we need to see ourselves as Church 16- we need to "step out of the boat "and walk towards Jesus in living faith.

To become saints, to live heroic lives in a post-Christian era. We think this means living in union with Christ and our fellow Christians, supporting each other and being a counter-cultural example to our fellow Australians. We think God is asking us not to be afraid to be Catholic, not to be confused about who we are or how we are to live. He is inviting us to be set free from the unhealthy social norms that are increasing in Australia, and to be freed from addictions. We think God is inviting us to unite around Jesus in the Eucharist, to embrace the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and to be informed about our faith and our history.

\* That we acknowledge the first Australians more, especially at Mass. At the start of Mass after the Sign of the Cross, the priest should pay respects to the Aboriginals whose land the Mass is being celebrated on. \* More understanding and respect of people who suffer from mental illness, especially those people who commit suicide. They should be allowed to be buried from a Catholic Church. Mental illness is becoming a big problem and the Catholic Church needs to become more compassionate.

- To be like him, kind caring and never let someone down - To ask forgiveness and be reconciled - Donate food for people who don't have any - Pray for sick people especially those who are alone and don't have anyone to pray for them - Pray for the helpless and those who are in any danger - To be faithful to the Church and our Catholic faith - To have peace in our community and respect

everyone for who they are - Encourage others to strengthen their faith and come to church more often - To use what I have learnt from church, youth group and school in my daily life and to be more like Jesus - Help the homeless and those who need help especially our farmers

We live in a world that longs for good news, for meaning and purpose, for love and forgiveness. As those who are blessed and chosen and set free, we are called to go out and live God's message through our lives. What is this message? To be more accepting of others, to provide a sense of belonging for all, to listen without judgement, to connect and be kind. God is asking us not to look at differences but to embrace the similarities. God is asking us to reflect on what is our contribution to the mess the world is in? Why in a developed country like Australia, people who live in extreme poverty with poor sanity and even poorer health outcomes? Where is our charity? Is it a world that will be around for generations, or will the environment and climate be destroyed for greed and profit? The Holy Spirit is in everything, God is in everything, but we do not respect our Earth or show that we respect our fellow human being. The question is asked of what God is asking us, but this also leads to the question of are we prepared to listen. With all the distractions and busyness of the world, do we see the person in need, do we stop to help like the Good Samaritan, do we trust each other enough to lend a helping hand or do we invite someone to the table? To live as Christians, to be identified as Christians by our actions and to be charitable as Christians to help the needs of others.

To find a new way of the people of God to all play a place in leadership of the Church. There has to be hope in the current crisis in the Catholic Church. A fractured clerical institution that does not give roles to women and other well educated and experienced lay leaders and authorities, has not been the answer to progress, nor is it going to be in the future. Catholics have been taught to say 'Yes Father'. Priests have been taught that they are the font of power and knowledge. Lay people have been taught to believe that. None of this current crisis shakes for one second my faith in God. In Christ. In the goodness of humanity. The errors of an institution, a hierarchy, a poorly designed structure cannot take away faith in God, my following of the person of Christ. The Church has a future, will rise again and will be stronger again. Good people including clerics are the Church. Good people of all ages, genders, roles together in the room are the answer. The problem is not a clerical celibate priesthood, they have their place in Church and in leadership. The problem is that decisions, processes and directions are vested only in them and their alleged infallibility. They are human, they are fallible, they are loved, they are needed, they are part of the answer to Church now and always. A future is in celibate clerics, married priests, woman, leaders of various specialities such as HR, finance, youth and all the rest. The answer is in community, in shared ownership and responsibility for the Kingdom of God. Strong lay leaders such as John Crowley, Francis Fletcher, Kristina Kenneally and a host of others across parishes in Australia can be part of the solution. Let's explore a new model of leadership. Strong lay leaders are a gift to the Church at this time. You leaders are needed when the flock is hurt and lost. Let's focus on individuals rather on defending an institution. We are all the Church.

We have a very diverse community at Christ Our Holy Redeemer and Sacred Heart, both in age and in cultural history from many countries which make us unique. We try to be more open to others Christian and Non-Christian. Our parishes work through our problems and issues, always with prayer, openness to forgiveness and with faith in God and in ourselves. As a people of the

20th and 21st centuries, we have been through many changes. The Second Vatican Council opened up so many things to us, especially to read and discuss the Bible, a gift now available to everyone. Our faith in God and the Church has allowed us to be able to question many things in our lifetime. It is our belief that the following would help us become a better faith community: tradition in the Catholic community has been knocked about in the last 50 years or so and it is our belief that teaching of these traditions (discussing) would give us more understanding and help our community to become closer to each other and to God. For example, people may ask: Why do we say the Rosary? Where does the Rosary come from? Why should we go to church weekly? Why should we pray? What does it do for me? I talk to God but he doesn't seem to hear me? How do I explain to a non-believer why I believe? Where do I go to get answers to my questions where they are not just opinions of someone, but real answers? Religious Education in Catholic primary schools: Is there a way to improve catechism teachings? For example, not just teaching the sacraments, also how to practise God's teaching in everyday life. Secondary schools could possibly increase the curriculum to include forums where teenagers can openly discuss their doubts about the Catholic faith and possibly include prayer groups for those who wish to participate. Parents and congregations could hold or receive information about their faith that they were not possibly taught when they attended school. Presentation of the Blessed sacrament for prayer in community and/or small groups. The Church needs to be more transparent in all things. Churches (parishes) to be managed by lay people (administrative) so the priest can concentrate on his role as priest. Priests need companionship. The possibility that diocesan priests within the same area could live together, so as to have each other to support each other. Most of us try to have integrity, forgiveness, tolerance, and love for all people and often find it challenging in the current climate. But with prayer and God's guidance, find a way out of any darkness we may face. We need to be witnesses to our faith and to be examples of good Catholics to others. Let's be more like Jesus.

God is asking the Catholic Church to change the institutional culture that has fostered corruption and the sexual abuse scandal. God is asking the Catholic Church to change the institutional culture that fostered a leadership that put the interests of the institution above the personal tragedies of the victims. God is asking the Catholic Church to broaden leadership and decision-making at all levels to include women of faith.

Diversity is an expression of God's divinity. To accept and listen to other religions as if they were part of God's plan. We can always learn from one another, and diversity is key to learning. Gender and sexual diversity can also be a divine teaching, so don't be judgemental.

- to individually be Christ for others; to find strength in the knowledge of God's love for us all; to be humble, open and accepting of the need to embrace others in their differences be it of faith, colour, creed, social status, sexuality, gender - especially in the wake of this latest crisis of leadership in the issue of sexual abuse and the institutional response, we need to see genuine changes in the leadership style - we need to see real repentance, genuine compassion and vigorous measures put in place to deal with victims with generosity and loving compassion; we need to see and be uplifted by honesty and integrity and the heart of Jesus in our leaders - there needs to be reform of the way priests are trained with rigorous psychological assessment and treatment where indicated, prior to being ordained, and follow up and proper resourcing of their

need for ongoing counselling; the demands on them are many and heavy - we have married priests already - should be optional for those who have that calling; consideration of roles for women in leadership - our leaders need to KNOW the good news of the Church's teachings and be able to convince others and explain, e.g. the good news of the teachings on marriage and sexuality and family planning - we, the people, need to be helped to understand and live our lives with a deep spirituality; not just following rules - we need RESOURCES - there is a need for visible "field hospitals" supported by the Church that live out the mission to proclaim all that Good News, e.g. pregnancy and marriage support; fertility awareness teaching clinics; medical clinics to help the infertile in Catholic hospitals ; bioethics clinics where advice can be given and teaching can take place on so many issues affecting our lives e.g. euthanasia, organ donation, reproductive technologies; the rise of technology; end of life care; care for disabled; the issue of same-sex orientation and the gender issues

To be a shining light of true Christian love. To take care of those that have been hurt and damaged by members of the Church. To help people form a personal relationship with Jesus and enact the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. To promote and support families and give more support to organisations that working in this area especially in marriage enrichment.

To review the Church (structure, traditions and culture) in terms of Catholic Social Teaching and gospels and make a real commitment to being an inclusive Church that is outward facing and sets a high example of how a religious organisation should behave. To be transparent in acknowledging the errors of the past in different aspects, e.g. child abuse and practices that are not inclusive or empowering (but are rather overpowering). To act on the recommendations of the Royal Commission for Child Sexual Abuse. To go back to the fundamental messages of the gospels and re-train priests and others to deliver that message in a contemporary way. To regenerate parishes through laity empowerment and look at models that are sustainable - instead of thinking there has be a priest in every parish even if they are not suitable. To monitor and review clergy performance and other religious in which laity can have a say as to how they are performing such as whether they can engage with people - have improvement goals which are known and responded by all. Renew the role of youth and music in liturgy. To allow open conversations and dialogue - stop hiding behind Canon Law when it is no longer just (it seems there are sometimes too many different interpretations) and forbidden subjects - advocate for change in the Universal Church for a modern re-contextualised approach. To work with people - not above people. To continue to provide excellent pastoral, medical social and education services - and advocacy for justice in these area.

Listening and Dialogue Response 6pm Mass (23/2/19) [ - ] [ - ] Following prayer, sharing of stories and discussion, a group of parishioners came up with the following responses to the question "What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" We believe God is asking us to ...

- Respond to loneliness
- o Especially to those in nursing homes - Reach out to the marginalised
- o Be caring of other people and look after those less fortunate and remember that we, as Catholics, need to help on another
- Be respectful and tolerant
- o Find compassion - act with kindness
- o Remember that "love" is a wonderful word
- o Remember that the little things are just as important as the big picture, small acts of kindness matter.
- o Find the small things that make a difference - Be clearer and more active in mission.
- o Recognise that it is sometime easy to get

lost in our own little worlds and lose perspective. o Be involved in the mission and ministry of the Church as lay people. We met before the 6pm Mass and prayed that the Holy Spirit would guide of hearts and minds in this dialogue. In the Mass we attended following our meeting, we heard the reading from Luke's Gospel (6:23-38) calling us to love, and this is quite strongly what we believe. If we answer the question with "God is asking us to love", then we can't go wrong.

I think God is asking of us in Australia, to bring back Mother Mary, to the Church, and to focus on the catechism being taught at Catholic schools, because I have noticed Catholic schools, don't teach the faith as deeply as they should and only teach what they know from the top of their heads. It's rare to find a school, let alone teacher, that can teach the faith properly and go to Church frequently and every Sunday. I mentioned Mother Mary before, because some churches are made 'dull' without her presence as well as God's presence there. We need Mother Mary in our Church, for I have experienced change when Mother Mary was brought to my own parish.

Connect to the young and present to all a solid Catholic faith, and emphasise the beauty of our sacraments to everyone in the modern world. The same as what we have asked before, "to love one another as I have loved you." To reach out to divorced people. Accentuate the positive. Laity should say more in the Church. Outreach by parishioners - under community. Offer consecrated rites to divorced people. Pray for courage for boldness in clericalism. Single authority on archdiocese, laity has little say. Parish bears the debt. Consultation. Become conscious presence of God's love. Church support when there is a need. We celebrate death very well - we need celebrations of life too. Lead by example. Not to be judgmental. Love brothers and sisters. Pray for unity. Share the good news. Live the good news. Use technology. Church is boring. Pray together with our children. Divorces - miserable force in the Church. Take our faith for granted. To proclaim his Word. To be the light on the hilltop. To speak out and let people hear the truth. Unite in your faith. Reach out to others who do not know Jesus. Set aside prejudices and cooperate for the good of the Church. Love one another, focus on the poor, disadvantaged. Strengthen the family. Protect religious freedom, human rights. Active participation of laity. Support good works of Catholic Church. Proclaim good news to all. Recognise the importance of the Word of God. Speak against abortion and euthanasia. Help and support the young adults. Unite in one faith, one body and one spirit. A role model for Australian society. Love one another. To do what we are able to help the disabled, the poor, the elderly, and the pregnant teenager. To realise what our politicians are saying, but more importantly, what they are not saying. To unite in our faith. To reach out to those who do not know Jesus. To come together as one in worship to God. To set aside our prejudices and cooperate for the good of the Church. To stay hopeful, continue the good work of the Church. To stand up and do our part. Continue to live a life pleasing to God. To engage, welcome and support families.

1. God is asking us to have greater fidelity to the teachings of Christ, as entrusted to the Church and communicated through the tradition, scriptures and Magisterium. 2. God is asking us to have greater fidelity to the law of the Church, especially as regards the bishops' administration of their dioceses in conformity with the Code of Canon Law and priests' celebration of the sacraments in conformity with the rubrics and principles in the GIRM. 3. God is asking us for a renewed life of prayer of all Catholics - clergy and laity. God is asking us to encounter Him in prayer. 4. God is asking for us to renew our common, public worship in the liturgy. Especially a

renewal of liturgy in conformity with the liturgical rubrics and norms, energy and resources devoted to liturgical music and beautifying the church building, and more homily preparation on the part of the priest. 5. God is asking us to get our own household within the Church in order so that we can then be a more missionary Church, evangelising and inviting non-Catholics to the great blessing of full communion with the Church and with Christ. 6. God is NOT asking us to change Church teachings or to compromise with ideas which are incompatible with the gospel and deposit of faith as preserved in scripture and tradition and enunciated by the Magisterium. God is NOT asking for the ordination of women as deaconesses or as priests, nor is He asking for optional celibacy, the ordination of *virii probati*, the (re-)introduction of Third Rite of Reconciliation, a new translation of the missal, or the approbation of LGBT ideology and unions.

God is calling his Church in Australia to Holiness, to return to the sacraments, particularly Confession and Holy Communion. To no longer compromise with the world. We are the true Church, we must be proud of the gospel. Repent, return to God. No compromise. Be confident. Love God and Mary. Teach our congregations the Catholic Catechism as from John Paul II's day. Teach the truth and do not be afraid of the world and its standards.

To reflect upon our strengths and weaknesses as a Catholic community in this 21st Century and the best way forward to practise our faith and to make our institutions relevant and acceptable, and attractive to our younger generations

I believe we are asked to live justly and to walk humbly with our God. In the interests of equality, I believe women should have equal rights to men in the Church and should be allowed to become priests. I believe we, as a Church, need to be walking in a similar path to Jesus and to share our wealth to those in need, e.g. housing for those released from prison and support for prisoners, for women's safe housing, for rehabilitation and for early intervention for children so as they don't become prisoners, or victims of crime/abuse. The wealth of the Church is embarrassing. Also, in the interests of equality/justice the Church needs to be accepting of all peoples, including those who are of different sexual orientations. The Church needs to acknowledge its demons of child sexual abuse and never ever not address the situation. They need to compensate victims of such abuse as it has been a very heavy price to pay for these people and often it has ruined their lives and those of their families. Too often, priests seem to have 'swept' child sex abuse 'under the carpet' and have been more concerned about their own position than the plight of the victims.

I think God is calling us to be authentic witnesses to our faith. While it is important that the Church remains active and involved in social and political discussions, it is pivotal that the Church remains a simple and resolute alternative in our secular society. I believe the Church's strength is in its consistency and simplicity, and in a world that demands people and institutions change based on popular whims, people have to know that that is not always the answer, or the only option. I think God is calling us to be closer to him, to show people the way through action and the sort of quiet strength that inspires rather than antagonises. We don't need to fight or preach or condemn, but rather stay strong and refuse to change when the world demands it.

RECOVER. A dual process that includes: 1. Recover our Faith, 2. Recover Creation/Environment. I believe that the crisis of sexual/other abuse by, within and of the Catholic Church is more about a lack of faith than about avoidance or cover-up. There is no doubt that cover-up did happen. But

it would NOT have if those responsible for these sins had true faith. True faith asks each of us to live out gospel values in every time and space and circumstance. That did not happen and despite a Plenary Council, it will not happen because the hierarchy as well as so many of us are more concerned about image, public perception, status, personal benefit and reward than about faith and moving towards God by becoming more holy. The recent hoo-haa about George Pell points to a backlash against the Catholic Church (in all its forms) because of the perceived arrogance of one man. Arrogance is not a crime. But for us, it harks back to that deadliest of sins = pride. The old adage of 'pride comes before a fall' seems so true at this juncture. But that arrogance/pride is not limited to G Pell. It is the habit/vestment of most priests, religious and laity in the Church. Office and role and title are irrelevant to a growth in faith. Prayer, recognising that Christ came to lead us to Our Father, following Christ as 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life', living as we should in the Kingdom of God (being salt and light and yeast), and, being stewards of creation are what matter most. In the pursuit of other values we are NO LONGER a humble Church, a faithful Church (we may be a religious mob), a holy people, the Body of Christ. We talk about SINS in the language of the secular and judicial worlds - crimes, appeals, apologies, compensation, etc. We make ourselves popular by bringing in alien cultural practices (some of which are based on superstition) and justify these by referring to enculturation - even where the origin and purpose of the custom/tradition/practice has no fit with gospel values. We look to be relevant in today's world—by its standards—while completely forgetting that we have been called to be 'in the world but not of the world'. Our pilgrim journey is wherever we are, not on the Camino. As Blessed John H Newman said, 'to live is to change - and, to become perfect is to have changed often'. The second aspect of this RECOVERY, should be that every parish, school, institution or similar that is seen to be Catholic should be on the way to 100% renewable energy use. Recycled, sustainable products should be the way forward from paper to vestments to cars and everything else. Every seminarian should go on mission to a less fortunate parish in another country or remote Australia for at least 18 months - 6 months per year for 3 years. Seminarians should be taught basic life skills so that they can be largely self-sufficient after ordination (cooking, cleaning, shopping). Life in the seminary, or as a priest, or religious must be humble and holy. God matters.

God expects us to live our lives fully at all times according to his teachings as shown in the scriptures no matter how difficult this may seem to be.

Respect all members of the Church and involve women religious and women laity in the same capacity, responsibility and decision-making of the Church as the males. The Plenary Council delegates should involve the female religious with equivalent leadership roles to the males, for the Council to be representative of the whole Church. The female religious are elders of the Church and their leadership and lifelong, living commitment are to be respected as valid for the Church.

I think God is calling our Church to radical renewal. Not renewal in the sense of a "purging" of evils from our Church, or a structural revolution designed to address some specific injustice or to carry out some ideological agenda, but rather (to use Benedict XVI's phrase) a "stable and profound ecclesial renewal" springing from the saints and spiritual leaders of our generation. I think God is calling our Church in Australia to set its gaze over and beyond the evils and injustices within and without it, and to focus on taking concrete steps to bring about the flowering of communities of

saints, the raising up of spiritual heroes, and making them visible witnesses for our generation. So, I think God is calling our Australian Church to ensure by whatever means necessary, that its priests strive for heroic sanctity, and that hopefully our Catholic faithful in the near future will be able to point to their priest's (and bishop's) reputation for heroic sanctity. I think God is calling our Church in Australia to pour more of its resources into supporting communities of faith which are already succeeding in fostering sanctity - communities which are generating religious vocations and practicing Catholic families; communities which are generating converts; and so on. And I think God is calling our Church leaders to take ruthless steps in protecting our communities of faith from those \*within\* our communities who would preach a false gospel, and sow confusion and doubt among our faithful.

God is asking us to be alert and work out our salvation in fear and trembling. God is angry with Australia for allowing abortion, same sex marriage and euthanasia (Victoria). God wants us to make reparation and include God in our lives. We need to stop allowing liturgical abuses, such as sacrilegious communion, communion in the hand, homilies that don't address sin or the last four things. We constantly hear about God's mercy but never His justice. We need to restore sacred liturgy and tradition and rid ourselves of pagan or Protestant type worship. God needs us to stand up for our religious freedoms and stand up for those whose voices can't be heard, such as the unborn and we can't allow the secular ideologies to infiltrate our Church such as homosexuality and transgenderism. We need to put pressure on media outlets that push their persecution on authentic Catholic teaching. Our Catholic schools need to actually become Catholic not in name only where teachers actually know the faith and aren't being heretical, politically correct or pushing their own agendas. Where is the teaching of Chastity and Theology of the Body? Instead they are taught what goes against Church teaching such as contraception. God wants us to address the real problem of clerical sexual abuse which is homosexuality.

Pray more and pray Rosary daily.

Get rid of the homosexuals in the priesthood, ban Catholics from being Freemasons again, bring back the Latin Mass, bring back tradition. Direct parishioners how to vote in elections and have influence again in society. Stop watering down the Church doctrine to please degenerates and enemies of the Church. Bring back headscarfs and sacred silence. No women leadership as the Bible forbids it.

We believe God is asking for more care and respect for the people of God from the clergy, many of whom are not in touch with the needs of their parishioners. The model of priesthood in Australia is paternalistic, perhaps based on our Irish ancestry, but this is out of step with society and needs to change. Many people in any parish would be able to deal with parish administration. The Church needs to go back to her roots and follow the model of Jesus, the shepherd.

The mission of the Church is to be the light, salt and leaven. God is asking us to be His witnesses. Man, created in the Image of God, has the mission to be the presence of God on the Earth: to be the master and custodian of the creation along the will of God. Christians have their mission to be "another Christ", i.e. be the manifestation of the love that God has for humanity as a whole and for each individual. Church should be educated itself and educate others and be the example in

the "Art of Living", according to God's design. For this, we need a solid, grassroots, continual re-education in faith, at the appropriate level (i.e. adult level for adults). Church needs to revisit its charisms and put them to work in the coordinated fashion. There are charisms, movements, ministries, that have developed and solidified over the years. We should use these: find the place for these in the parish and foster cooperation. Like organs in the body or instruments in the orchestra. The parish priest could have the role of "orchestra conductor", utilising different "tones and pitches", i.e. both the uniqueness and complementarities to deliver a "symphony". I do not think we need to reinvent the parish ("reinvent the wheel") but develop and evolve what is there already. Evolution is clearly a part of God's design of the world. Small evolutionary steps in the right direction produce lasting effects. Revolutions on the other hand tend not to work. The Church must be missionary; that is focused on witnessing, internally and externally. All activities and groups in the parish should have a missionary dimension in the function of evangelisation. Give parishioners opportunity to try different ministries, to get a more round-up Christians. Could be a part of a new year resolution: one year I focus my activities within St Vincent de Paul, another year in the liturgy group, or special initiatives like caring for refugees or the homeless. Run a program based on Pope Francis encyclicals? Make it applicable to general audience, even non-Catholics and even non-believers - these encyclicals contain large amount of universal truths that can help everyone. Educate Catholics about the true history of the Church (correcting the popular interpretation of topics like Crusades, "dark ages", inquisition, etc.), and the contribution of Christianity to the development of Western Civilisation. Church has been driven into retreat and silence, Catholics lose confidence in God and their heritage—but this is to large extent the result of the lack of education.

God is asking us to knock on the door, to call Him, to seek His aid, because to reach our salvation and fix the things that are affecting our Church are not easy in these times. Our Mother the Virgin Mary came back from heaven in multiple occasions asking to pray the Holy Rosary, preventing us about these difficult times, but even recognising that these apparitions are true, I don't see that the Church are really promoting to pray the Rosary or the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a mandatory matter for every church or community and it should be, because we need help beyond our strengths, alone just with our ideas of innovation we can't save the Church or convince people about the Kingdom of God, but praying all together the Holy Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet we can reach for grace what we can't get only with our will. Also praying the St Michael the Archangel pray after every single Mass as Pope Leon XIII asked to protect the Church. Why are we not doing this in every church? What else are we waiting that happens to do it? I really hope that you can hear this and do something about it.

We are still invited to proclaim the truth, goodness and richness of the faith. However, I believe to continue to engage the youth of the Church who are our future, we need to be innovative, on top of communications via new forms of technology and dynamic. Evangelisation used to be through proclaiming the truth and then inviting people into the beauty and richness of the faith. I feel in this time, with things rapidly changing around us, we are now invited to engage people in the faith initially through the invitation of beauty and then forming them in the truth. The constant visual stimulation young people receive on a daily basis, needs to be catered to through presenting them with something else, and allowing them to encounter the imagery and visual beauty of faith

through creativity. I believe a new generation of 'Catholic creatives' will be invited to step up - artists, actors, musicians, bakers, craftsman, designers, dancers, etc. Through nourishing and nurturing these gifts in the Church, I believe we will be able to outreach in a new way to the coming generations.

God is asking of us today what he has ALWAYS been asking of us ... to love one another; to be kind, compassionate, generous, understanding, inclusive. There are many good people (men AND women) in the Church who do a lot of good in the name of Jesus, however, there are many, including priests, who are a part of the Church establishment for their own importance and power-seeking egos; they lack love and compassion and behave more like (sometimes incapable) corporate businessmen. The world is continually evolving and the Church needs to adapt. She needs to be brave and embrace its relationship with young people who are not only the future of the Church but also in shaping society in years to come, the environment and the world. I feel, however, the Church is, instead, pulling away from the people.

*Random Plenary survey responses:* 1. What are some of the big questions facing young people in Australia today? I think that the big question facing young people is about their future. Teenagers are always worrying about their future jobs, so they often ask, 'Am I learning enough?', 'Will I pass my classes?', 'What do I do if I fail?' etc. 2. If Jesus came to Australia today what would he want to see? I think Jesus would want to see students learning about our Catholic religion. I think he would want to also see students spreading faith and visiting church more often. 3. Why does having faith matter to you? Having faith matters to me because I know I have something that I can believe in, and I have Jesus to talk to and look up to and teach me. 4. If you were to belong to a community of faith, what would interest you in belonging? It would interest me in belonging if they would be welcoming and care for me. 5. What do you think God and young people hope for the future of the Church? I think God and young people hope that the Church welcomes many new members and that children enjoy church more.

*Subject-Plenary survey year 8D [ - ] Plenary Survey:* 1. What are some of the big questions facing young people in Australia today? - What am I going to study for in university? - What jobs can I get that pay well? - Where am I going to live after I move out? 2. If Jesus came to Australia today what would he want to see? Jesus would want to see peace and love. He'd want to see people following in his footsteps and doing good deeds that make him proud. Jesus would want to see every religion, skin colour and gender getting along. 3. Why does having faith matter to you? Faith matters to me because I would like to have a good relationship with God and I have faith that there is always a new beginning at the end of life and up in heaven with Jesus. 4. If you were to belong to a community of faith, what would interest you in belonging? A relationship with Jesus and God and learning more about the Bible and its verses. 5. What do you think God and young people hope for the future of the Church? That more people will start believing in Jesus and God + follow in his footsteps and become a good person that helps the community.

1. What are some of the big questions facing young people in Australia today? Why do kids go to school? Why does people get paid for doing something that they don't like doing? 2. If Jesus came to Australia today what would he want to see? He would want to see everyone looking happy and smiling and the environment would look nice and clean. 3. Why does having faith matter to you? Because always having a try is the best thing to do when stressing out about

something and to always believe in yourself. 4. If you were to belong to a community of faith, what would interest you in belonging? Making the world a better place to stay in and to stop the violence and all the things.

I believe we are called in the Australian Church: + to make greater efforts to accent Scripture in the life of our Church membership at all levels + to be, and to be seen to be, a merciful mother in the spirit of Pope Francis + to facilitate the full participation of women in the life of the Church + to empower our Indigenous brothers and sisters to make their contribution to the Church and to “joyfully receive” their gift (cf Pope John Paul 2 at Alice Springs) I also identify myself with the reflections of the Australian and New Zealand Benedictine Union Annual General Meeting of 2018 (as a Cistercian monk and a member of the Union): We believe we are called: + to emphasise the practice of listening to the concerns of the young in our world + to hospitality to the other: the different, the stranger, the refugee, peoples of other faiths and women + to a way of life that honours diversity across the boundaries of gender, faith and worship practices, belief systems, culture + to engagement with the Word in life and worship including: the practice of *Lectio Divina* study of the Scriptures sharing of the Word speaking and preaching the Word + to encourage dialogue at all levels of church life and ministry, thereby honouring the principles of subsidiarity, participation and collaboration + to make the common good, rather than institutional “good name”, the principle of our decision-making + to steward wisely our land and resources + to discover a healthy model of leadership that encourages involvement at all levels so that all voices within the Church can be heard and respected + to be convinced of our need for God. Thank you, and God bless the work towards this most important moment in the life of the Australian Church.

In considering how many people have left the Church, I was reflecting on the words of Retired Bishop Pat Power. Pat reflects that disenchantment came from failure to carry out the hopes and vision of Second Vatican Council. Many told Pat, 'I have not abandoned the Church, the Church has abandoned me'. We believe that the Church in Australia faces continuing decay unless bishops understand the necessity for grassroots (men and women) Catholics to have a central role in the direction and decision-making of the Church. Particularly as it related to clericalism and governance and structure of the Church. We therefore propose that Catholic women and men have equal authority with the bishops and priests in influencing and renewing the clerical, authoritarian and governance structure of the Church. In my opinion, and from my experience for over 20 years as a Pastoral Counsellor, this is what God is asking of the Church now.

An inclusive Church, where all are welcome. Any church today must be multicultural if not in fact certainly at heart and concerns itself and reaches out to all suffering peoples of the world.  
Indigenous Australians: Every time we meet as a community, name the Indigenous country on which we stand, acknowledging their history, their Elders and what they have achieved. Mention and pray for them at Mass in the Prayers of the Faithful, placing them first out of respect for the First Peoples of this land and surely more need for respect and honouring their dignity.  
People from other lands: highlight and celebrate differences; rejoice in the otherness of cultures around the world, particularly those countries represented by our own community. Pray for what is happening in their homelands e.g. floods in Kerala; the present troubles in Venezuela, etc.  
Islam: Make contact with local Muslims. Research the possibility for Interfaith gatherings of prayer and fellowship either locally or within a deanery. A diocesan gathering might be too large for real

contact to be made preventing an experience of a 'Meet and Greet' or a feeling of 'Speed Dating'. A Church that values the past and is ready and open to follow the Holy Spirit into the 'Desert'.

What Australia needs is a Catholic Church that is honest, integral, transparent and humble: A people of God willing to trust God and follow Jesus on a journey of faith as we move into a new and blessed future. We must divest the Episcopal and priestly Orders of the Church of their many symbols of power. Identified in dress, liturgy and life remembering they are servants of the poor. Let go of Mitres, Croziers, Vestments, Soutanes, Dog Collars etc., anything that marks signs of holding office. Let go of all honorifics. Introductions use bishop, father, brother, sister, then only Christian names, as we do with our parishioners. Install more bishops and allow them the time to listen to and form the priests placed in their care, and the time to meet with and foster the life of faith in their diocese. Pastoral bishops, not desk bishops are needed. Divest priests of ownership of the parish. They are sent to serve. Let them learn what is the will of God for this parish and where the Holy Spirit is moving: let the priests listen and pray first and not immediately impose their Church view on the parishioners to whom the parish belongs. Foster and nurture love and loyalty to Jesus among the laity ... It is sad to hear now people giving away their faith because of the scandalous behaviour of some. We owe our allegiance and loyalty to God. Scandals may create waves but with Jesus we can still stay afloat. Our faith in God is what saves not the Church. Foster and nurture the Parish Council: remove the priests' Power of Veto; foster a collegial spirit in among the councillors; elections be the right of parishioners; learn and teach cooperation by fostering consensus rather than majority rule. Foster adult growth in faith e.g. built around the liturgical seasons; sacraments; RCIA, elections processes; etc., not just a homily but a well thought out program; harness the skills of local teachers, retired religious, professional people; involve the ordinary people of the parish in all decisions; have a parish bi-annually meeting. Consensus not majority rule; build education centres for adults when new churches are built, not just meeting rooms. What are we saying implicitly when we build schools for children's learning and faith development and build meeting rooms for adults? The Church needs to drastically change its attitude towards women. Even this process is lacking. It will still be men who make final decisions. The Church is like a bird with one wing. Women will not be willing to participate in patriarchal structures in the near future. This change is coming swiftly everywhere else but the Catholic Church. It can no longer be tolerated that men rule and woman serve. That is medieval and unacceptable in Australia. Bring back the Third Rite of Reconciliation. We can choose to go the First Rite when we trust the priest. JESUS, HUMILITY, INTEGRITY, GENTLENESS AND OPENNESS are what Australia needs from the Church now and in the future.

God is asking that as a multicultural society we regard each other with respect without being patronizing.

Dear Plenary Council, I work in pastoral care for Mercy Health. I decided to do a slightly modified, listen and respond session with a group from our aged care facility. Their ages ranged from 70 to 91. I explained the process to them and after one of them asked—'do you think the bishops will REALLY listen to us? I replied in the affirmative then I went round the group and asked 'What is God asking of us in Australia today'. I decided to simply list their responses, rather than go into the detailed process you describe in part three. This is because many of them have dementia or other ailments and I had to do a short and sweet version. Here is what they replied: • To be

<p>peaceful people • To live out our lives as an example • To be very, very strong • To believe in God and his power • For everyone to do the best they can and show others the right direction • To love one another • To learn to love one another; to help one another and to pray for help • To Pray • To pray for one another • To live in peace and harmony • To pray • To know God is our friend • To respect others no matter what religion From [ list of 14 respondents ].</p>
<p>Create and allocate action groups dedicated to the conservation of the environment and as a response to climate change, in order to fulfil our roles as stewards of God's creation.</p>
<p>God is probably asking Australia the same as He is asking every single person and nation. That is, to come to perfection through His Commandments AND the Beatitudes. To love Him as our neighbour, and to bring His Word to all those who have not encountered His Word. And to prepare our souls for heaven.</p>
<p>To listen to the voice of the laity. Find a leadership role for women in our Church. Challenge clericalism in our Church. Review seminaries as we have them at present. They should not be live-in facilities. Seminarians need to have life experiences and skills before being accepted into training.</p>
<p>All I want to know is why you aren't having evening sessions for working parents?</p>
<p>God is asking all those who want His name revered and honoured to live in a way that demonstrates His call on their lives by showing that we are patterning our lives on Jesus and the teaching of the Bible. He is asking all believers to live lives of integrity and if we want to see Australia impacted by the gospel we need to acknowledge and correct the evil that is going on in the Church. Sadly, the Catholic Church with its revelations of paedophilia and now of sexual activities between priests and nuns has caused the average Australian to lose trust completely in the Church and all it represents. Therefore to help Australia, there has to be a code of discipline that is applied and that reflects the standards of Jesus teachings and the Bible. Until that happens, there will be a growing and serious disinterest and rejection of the Church and all it stands for.</p>
<p>1. Recall your IDENTITY—Jesus living in you and each of us. Be grounded in that living Faith. When things get turbulent, return inwardly to your IDENTITY. Pronounce convincingly that identity in all groups of the faithful. This living faith will generate HOPE. In public, let us be courageous to assert natural justice with compassion. That the Plenary Council establish and promulgate a Catholic Australian position in relation to the care of children under our care in all institutions and their various activities e.g. sport, and in the family. That a comprehensive plan be enacted in listening to those people who have experienced various abuse and assisted until death with appropriate structures and professional help with understanding and compassion. That there be a five-yearly review of the plan to ascertain its effectiveness and make improvements where appropriate. That a process of review be undertaken every few years to ascertain what support for those in leadership positions is needed. That processes of rehabilitation be established for those re-entering society and the community of faith. That guidelines be provided on the best ways for parishioners to communicate with those who have been abused. 2. Education of clerics in the art of giving sermons that put the education of the laity centrally. That the hierarchy modify the education of the prelates by putting the education of the laity at Mass as top priority. This is to be in a context of faith and spirituality. Additional material could be included in the parish</p>

<p>newsletter. : The art of giving a researched sermon should be mastered. : That areas to be included are historical developments, Biblical theology, pastoral theology, moral and ethical principles, dogmatic theology and most importantly using the experiences of parishioners. It is our right to be informed fully about relevant guidelines. How are we to develop an informed conscience? Did anyone hear that there was a Vatican Council sometime? I read the documents. When was the last time that these documents were referred to at Mass, expounded and what differences did they make? Sometimes we are told that father is away somewhere for a few days for a retreat or gathering. Nothing more is heard. Retreats aside there is no professional accountability to the laity. That the hierarchy considers the priesthood like a professional body. Ordinary professionals have to register and attend in-services every year. An agenda is set. Reports are produced and disseminated. After an appropriate time, an evaluation is carried out on the effectiveness on what was decided. Growing in faith is achieved daily, silently through the action of the Holy Spirit in one's spirit.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to band together as an alliance, and heal the past first. And then truly, we can move forward as Christians to assure that history does not repeat itself. Show everyone in the community that the Catholic Institution is serious about accountability, and change.</p>
<p>Group 1. Bring women into the decision-making structures—first by ordaining women as deacons and placing women on diocesan major decision-making councils e.g.: Chancellors open priesthood to married men Actively welcome those who have been marginalized e.g.: the divorced, the LGBTI community, those who have experienced sexual abuse and their families A systematic process to educate the laity in scripture and theology to better enable them for service on committees Group 2. Youth/education: how can the Church attract young people? - An inviting Church to get the young people - What kinds of activities will attract young people? Schools Week—what influences can be had on the public school systems to guide young people? - Family attitude on faith development, tough for many families—parents/siblings are also alienated from the Church Materialist society—attraction to materialism How can we address this attitude in the world today? How to promote a sense of belonging to and love in the Church so that they want to stay with the Church? What do we do to bring Christ/faith to young people Media—how easy to “turn off” Goals—what do we need to do to inspire young people to dream/have high ideals, love for others/being of service?</p>
<p>Respect one another, treat everyone equally and with dignity</p>
<p>To truthfully respond to the questions of the Synod</p>
<p>To engage with God. Put him in your day and you will become more aware of his presence, guiding and helping you. Open yourself up to the Spirit. The Church is its people.</p>
<p>To remain faithful to gospel virtues and practises. To stand up for what we believe and hold very dear, where our treasure is there also will be our hearts. Do not let us be deceived by all that is in the media and the shocking violence against women, children and those who are on the margins of life, vulnerable and frail elderly and the voiceless, the unborn, those who are lonely, homeless, those without a country because of terrible violence and war. Life has been cheapened, some people don't realise how precious each of us is, how loved each of us is by God almighty. I think God is asking us to look at the bigger picture, the whole world not just our own individual</p>

circumstances, how can we make a difference. As dear Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said, start with just one person loving, caring, listening, and acknowledging their dignity and value because they exist not by what they can do or give, being present totally to each person put in your path, each and every day. Saying 'Yes' to God each day. We are our brother's keeper. Prayer and loving action, with God all things and circumstances are possible. The terrible abuse of defenceless children and vulnerable adults in the whole of our society and most sadly in our Church, the broken trust, betrayal by some of those within the Body of Christ in dealing with those horribly hurt and maimed by these abuses and those guilty of committing them. How do we show the media and others around the world the changes occurring to make sure this doesn't happen again, no more abuse, or cover ups, how the Church is moving forward acknowledging the wrong done. Yes many apologies from multiple Popes and it seems the vast majority of people seem to judge what went on within the Church far more harshly than in other parts of society. Putting this chapter behind us, by dealing up front and in a more transparent way. Bringing back our JOY, HOPE, ALWAYS LOVE and PEACE in our daily witness, let this show on our faces what is in our hearts and minds and in our actions as we go about our day to day living. That we are not just bottoms on pew Catholics, duty bound to go to Mass every Sunday and being there doesn't change us or influence how we live, or draws us into a more intimate, personal relationship with our Loving, Triune God.

To love God with all our being, and our neighbour as ourselves. To stay faithful to the teachings of Jesus, doing so with the love Jesus taught us.

In Australia at this time and into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, God is asking of us the Catholic Church (that is all of us people, including clergy, hierarchy, leadership, Pope) to take the lead and act as a united community of strong faith to make strong clear statements and take actions as a united group on current social issues and situations that are causing great suffering and despair. In a fast changing world, that seems to have lost its direction our faith needs to be articulated and communicated to Australian society. It needs to be visibly seen to be taking positive consistent clear decisive actions on social issues such as homelessness, domestic violence, the needs of the mentally ill, inequality and disadvantage, the baby trade, the Indigenous people, LGBT, environment, paedophiles, drug use, address root causes of refugee crisis. We need strong decisive articulated leadership to unite us to bring the encounter of Christ to people in our society by providing a united Catholic Christian response to address these issues as an empowered group.

I would consider myself an orthodox Catholic. Prior to submitting this and praying, myself and my prayer group did a Novena to the Holy Spirit. The reason being is that the Plenary Council has asked for Catholic's to submit their opinions based on the Spirit but if there are 4 different opinions on LGBTQAQ, or 4 different opinions on cohabitation for example, whose opinion do you deem is correct? This is why we did the Novena. I wanted to be guided by the One True God. There is only One Truth, God's Truth, not my truth or anyone else's. With this in mind, these are the matters of importance I believe are guided by the Holy Spirit to keep within the Holy Catholic Church : 1) Celibate, unmarried, male priests. (renounce marriage for the sake of the Kingdom Matt 19:12, 19:27), (Judges 17 7-13, Mark 11:10, Luke 20:41-44). 2) It is imperative to keep the current order of the Holy Mass including the Eucharistic prayers. 3) LGBTQAQ are to be welcomed. Our Lord would say love the sinner not the sin but with a stipulation and to be made

abundantly clear by the clergy that the homosexual lifestyle is a mortal sin. It is mentioned in the Bible many, many times that homosexuals cannot inherit the kingdom of God. If they choose to engage in this lifestyle, they must be denied Holy Communion. To save their soul for eternity, they need to be counselled to repent, go to Confession and live a life of celibacy and offer it up to The Lord as a sacrifice for the salvation of souls. 4) Cohabitation/divorce: countless times in the Holy Bible, the Book of Truth it is mentioned, fornication, sex outside of marriage. How it grieves God that so many people live in sin. Therefore, these people cannot receive Holy Communion, they are in mortal sin, unless they repent, go to Confession and stop what they are doing. Likewise a divorced person goes against what our Lord teaches unless an annulment is granted. What must change in the Holy Catholic Church which I believe is guided by the Holy Spirit: 1) More reverence for the Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. Holy Communion needs to be distributed by consecrated hands only in Mass. It should not matter how long it takes. There are many Church approved mystics (Maria Simma for example) and visionaries who have been told by our Lord how it hurts Him very much when He is received in the hand not on the tongue, and where possible whilst kneeling. This is the King of Kings. How much more reverence do we give to the Queen of England. This is not right. Also Our Lord has said He does not want to be distributed by the laity, un-consecrated hands. We need to bring back kneeling pews/rails. 2) There needs to be more done to promote natural fertility such as Billing's method, chastity and purity in secondary Catholic schools to our teenagers. Instead it is assumed that our teenagers are going to have sex before marriage and use contraception. All mortal sins that go against Christ's teachings in the Catechism.

It seems that the hierarchical Church has moved away from the teachings of Jesus—the dignity of each human person, and their right to be heard—to a clerical model where priests, bishops and the Roman Church are of increasingly higher status and value compared with the laity, both men and women. Because of this exalted and insular state, sexual abuse has been allowed to occur and be concealed as the reputation of the Church was seen to be of more importance than the lifelong harm to children and vulnerable people. The failure of the hierarchical Church to actively acknowledge its moral failure continues to fester and can only be addressed by the following means: truthful acknowledgement of all facilitation and concealment of sexual abuse, acknowledgement that complaints by lay people to bishops and others were ignored, real concern for the welfare of those abused and whistle-blowers, including lifelong financial support, entrenched clericalism elevates the priestly state above the laity, rather than seeing the priesthood as a life of service to others. Seminary life reinforces this view. Entry age for seminarians should be raised to 25, after a period of studying, training or working in a chosen field or trade. Seminarians should live in non-institutional settings, demonstrate financial independence, and independent living. Catholic understanding of sexual morality has been determined by male, celibate clergy. A new reformulated theology of sexuality is needed that is transformational, liberating and inclusive, and recognises that we are made in the image of a loving God. Acceptance of LGBTI people is intrinsic to this view. Lay people, both men and women, from a wide variety of backgrounds, should be actively involved in Church decision making. Canon Law needs reform to reflect 21st century understandings and be accessible to all, not just some exclusive group. The current secrecy around Canon Law needs to change so that it is open to scrutiny and if necessary criticism. The structure of the Plenary Council with minimal lay people

and priests is of concern and symptomatic of entrenched clericalism. An inclusive Church would not operate in this way.

I believe that God is asking us to be more accepting of others. God sent us his Messiah to spread a message of love and I feel that the Catholic Church in Australia has often neglected this. The Church still does not fully accept and welcome those of the LGBTQI community, nowhere in the Bible does it explicitly say that homosexuality is wrong. The basis of the Biblical arguments against it rest only in mistranslations and misinterpretations. If you are willing to follow vague, passages that by chance might slightly reference homosexuality in the old testament, then you should also carry the same unacceptance of people who shave their facial hair and eat ham which are two things which the Bible concretely does condemn in the Old Testament. And even still rejecting those who are only looking for love and acceptance is to openly go against the message Jesus came to tell us. Things that the Bible actually does explicitly condemn are paedophilia and sexual harassment, and those who are paedophiles/sex offenders or have covered up for paedophiles within the Catholic Church are those who see it as acceptable to destroy the lives and hurt other people. This is the opposite of what Catholicism is about, and all of these people should be removed from the Church and punished accordingly. Another group as well as the LGBTQI community who need the Catholic Church's support and compassion are women who have had/need to have an abortion. The whole basis for discouraging against abortion is that the Catholic Church values every human life, but this argument is a contradiction. To believe in the welfare of a not yet developed foetus over a woman whose life experiences aren't considered is unacceptable, whether she was raped, cannot mentally, physically or financially afford to give birth to this baby and provide for it. Nobody actively wants to kill a baby, women who choose to have an abortion are not murderers, they have just been through such a hard life that they are pushed to make the hardest decision that they may ever have to make. They need our support and acceptance, they do not need condemnation, they most likely are already condemning themselves. Also this pro-life stance doesn't take into account how the child fares after birth, you do not value a life you seem to only value a body. That child may not be able to live five seconds after birth and may die painfully as its lungs struggle to breathe as they are underdeveloped, the child would die painfully and the mother would have to watch that. It also doesn't take into account that this child may be born into poverty or into an abusive home, where all it will know its whole life is suffering. Our religion boils down to compassion and I would like the Catholic Church to consider how much more they could be giving.

1. That the Church authorities have a more listening ear to the sense of the ordinary faithful—not just during the Plenary Council, but in an ongoing way. 2. That the Church, including bishops, clergy and laity be prepared to proclaim the gospel message of Jesus, despite the difficulties, and because of the difficulties, of the times. 3. That Catholic parishioners identify the needs of their own people and community and try to meet these needs at parish level, especially those of the poor (e.g. with food and clothing). 4. That parishes begin to address the basic needs of religious instruction, through such courses as Alpha, Life in the Spirit seminars, and parish-based missions leading to conversion and spiritual transformation.

We are being confronted in our society with horrific revelations about the failure of the clergy to protect children and to manage aberrant behaviours by its members. Other secular institutions

also struggle with establishing responses to abuses e.g. of women. I wish to concentrate only on the leadership provided by the Catholic clergy. I believe God is showing us that the model we have is broken beyond repair. We have allowed innocent boys to devote their lives to the Church from a very young age when they have not come to terms with their sexual natures. No thinking person can be surprised that in some cases as they grow into men their subsequent psycho-sexual development is deviant. History tells us over and over that a dominant and unchallenged class will demonise and damage those whom they see as inferior or unworthy (e.g. white British Protestant treatment of Irish Catholics in Australia in the 19th century). I am afraid that this is also the case with a significant number of male clergy. Since the second world war we have made great strides across society. First, we started listening to the voices of women, about their treatment in relationships and employment. Then we started listening to the voices of the LGBTI community and the impact on them of social exclusion and derision. Finally we have started to listen to the voices of children who grow up and tell us powerfully about the damage to their lives by the gross betrayal of trust and experience of abuse beyond their comprehension when young and vulnerable. God is showing all of us that it is time for fundamental change.

God is asking us to be inclusive not exclusive.

To become a Church for all the people as we are all priests—to respect each other's views, beliefs and entitlements irrespective of status, gender, intellect, power within the Church - not just the clerical to be the holders and distributors of God's will here on earth. The Catechism needs to be revised to be more contemporary with Vatican II thinking. Priests need to be taught to be pastoral, not clerical in our seminaries and reflect Vatican II thinking.

Humility. Honesty. Be prepared to walk away from established positions. For the people who can ordain to be willing to ordain. It is not a lack of people willing to be ordained that is causing the lack of pastoral priests. It is the unwillingness of people to ordain. Really care for those who have been abused. Where is the visible ministry to the abused and their families? Support existing priests, especially those who are not in orders and those who live alone. Make professional development for priests compulsory. Don't be sneaky. The Ellis Defence has caused so much harm. To listen to the people of God - all the people! To be guided by the Holy Spirit. To be humble. To understand that, if we want to help others hear the gospel, we must live out the gospel. Reduce clericalism. Have married priests. Listen to women. Have women in key positions in every diocese, e.g. as chancellors. Where ordination is not a prerequisite, and that is most situations, have 50/50 women. Provide financial reports to the people at all levels e.g. each diocese to provide an annual financial report, just like public companies do.

God is asking us to stop disrespecting each other and disregarding each other's basic rights as humans.

GOD is offering us trust in support, grace, trust that we are not deserted/cut-off, unwanted, even when barriers and doubts are perceived by the people of God. WE are Church, we wish to be heard, and our views respected ... increasingly, lay people simply are disappearing from active participation / belief has been shattered / confidence diminished / participation minimised / massive hurt across communities / and ... in family structures.

I believe God is wanting us to get back to basics with expression of faith and ministry. The undemocratic, self-preserving, secretive and authoritative structure of our Church has all but destroyed our Church. The saving grace has been those humble, pastoral and true-to-their-vocation parish priests who keep the faith strong on a local level. I identify as Catholic but am disgusted by what has since emerged about the extent of the insidious sex abuse and cover ups across Australia. It has gotten to the point where I am considering whether revolutionary change in the Catholic Church is futile, and whether I should join another Christian community altogether.

We should look at ways that every Catholic has had an experience of the Holy Spirit. How many people sitting in pews have personal relationship with Jesus? Renewal of the Church will start when priests are renewed and want "New Evangelisation" in their parish. Good work being done with Proclaim Conference. 1. RCIA candidates - weekend to do "Life in Spirit course" 2. Our youth - more youth groups, spiritual focus 3. Families - what can we do so they experience Holy Spirit 4. Priests—more priest to experience CCR retreats, e.g. "National retreat for priests and religious"

The Australian Church needs to acknowledge the hurt and loss of trust experienced by many, many people as a result of the misgivings of so many clergy.

Greater participation by laity in planning and administration of the Church. An apex-style administration is not working. A cooperative style at all levels will enhance ownership and be more honest from an organisation whose social teaching advocates this style.

God would expect us to obey the Ten Commandments and at the same time treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.

To focus more on our personal faith—our relationship with and in Jesus as Son of God and Son of Man in His love of God the Father in the love of God the Holy Spirit: one God in three persons—to start again building God's community in its fullest here on earth, the Roman Catholic Church. Only when we allow God's grace in the prayer of the thanksgiving sacrifice of the Eucharist and the other sacraments to illuminate and power our inner, spiritual life will we see more clearly what God wants of us in the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit. Only then will our evangelising—bringing non-believers to salvation in Jesus—bear fruit, and our work for social justice will take its proper place in evangelising: as the cart behind the horse, and not as at present the cart trying to pull the horse. The illumination and power of God's grace, in its most certain and complete manner, also comes to us in the teaching of the Church understood according to its own Spirit-guided lights of 2000 years and not those of personal opinion and those outside of the Church. The Catholic Church in Australia has been suffering a crisis of belief for decades and a massive catechesis of Catholics, according to the Church's own lights, is needed. Even Sunday, and weekday, Mass-attending Australian Catholics are deeply ignorant of the Church's actual teaching (no one in the public square has denied that the majority of Catholics voted for legalising same-sex—up to 70 per cent). This catechesis especially must explain that Catholic faith is reality itself, intelligent and wise, and thus does not allow for any vague or half-hearted attempt to attract non-practising Catholics or non-believers. Anything less will bear no fruit.

I want my Church to be one that: brings hope, exudes love and creates joy. This should be the test of Christian fellowship—not adherence to a strict dogma based upon questionable theology. We

should be cradled in the love of Christ not excluded from it because of our differences: sexuality, marital status, race or other difference. Many people have been oppressed by the Church and this has promoted hatred towards it, and reasonably so. The Church has excluded, rather than included. Admonished, rather than extolled. My hope is for a Church that promotes diversity, proudly acclaims inclusivity. A Church that doesn't judge. Our Church should be a trailblazer in promoting the rights of all and in particular minorities, the voiceless and forgotten—of women, of the LGBT communities, refugees, racial minorities, it should dialogue with other faiths. It has dragged the chain on too many issues and been bogged down by a theology that is too heavily based in dogma, rather than based on love and openness. It needs to loosen the shackles of conservatism. To open the doors. Take the gates off the hinges. The Church should and can embrace all. We need a pastoral Church that reflects the life of Christ (not dogma) and a liturgy that reflects its community (and even specific communities). Questions for the Plenary Council to consider: can celibacy be made a choice? Allow married priests, allow female deacons and eventually, female priests, celebrate the commitment of same-sex couples, celebrate and acknowledge the life of parishioners and clergy that identify as LGBT and no more closeted clergy. The Plenary Council is a chance for the hierarchy to listen and act. There has already been a revolt by the congregation as evidenced by the lack of seats on pews. I'm sure this revolt will only escalate if this council does not result in substantive change—a change where Christ is at the centre and not the clergy. The clergy should be in a role of support, leadership needs to come from the laity (albeit a well-trained and informed laity). The theology, the liturgy and structure all need to be up-ended and evaluated through a different lens. One with Christ at the centre, tradition and dogma need to come second, or further down the hierarchy. The views and the responses of the outsider need to be considered in preference to the insiders. What's happening in the Church now isn't working and won't until there is a different vision. A Christ-centred vision from which ALL decisions are marked against how we serve God and pray to how the organisation of the Church is administered—these must all reflect and be centred in Christ. The lens that change is viewed through should belong to the laity, not the clergy. Even the concept of the clergy should be reviewed and re-evaluated.

God is asking us to fund our rituals so they are beautiful and attractive to people, especially in these times of trial for the Church. People must have the chance to be supported and resourced by highly qualified and pastoral specialists in their fields. Many of our Diocesan Liturgical Commissions have been disbanded or are dysfunctional, understaffed or operating in name only. There has been no functional Liturgical Commission in the Melbourne Archdiocese since 2004. There is no specialist liturgist or liturgical music specialist on staff at the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation. Our rituals hold us together. We need to support our people on the ground. It astonishes me that music isn't an integral part of our worship, as this is what is mandated by our Vatican II documents. Other countries, especially the US, provide for the formation of their people. There's no one on permanent staff to do this in Melbourne. Talking more at people will not be the answer. Music allows people to join together in a healthy, joyful way and bonds people like nothing else. Where is the provision for this in our schools and churches now that the nuns and brothers are not there to do it for free? Music is integral to who we are, not a luxury if you can afford it. The Protestant churches know this. People do not just want Fr Rob Galea style music, either. They want depth and a connection to the best of the past. There is a tendency to

think that Praise and Worship style music is what everyone wants. It isn't. "Me and Jesus" is great for certain contexts but not everywhere. If the Mass is the source and summit, let's take that seriously and fund inclusive and ongoing training in the ministries that make the Mass come alive. This includes training priests and seminarians in their own liturgy. We have a terrific priest in our parish who sits in the centre and animates the baptismal gifts of the people. He empowers, encourages and offers training opportunities for people. Mass seems to be a burden to many people I see because it's celebrated so poorly. If we want our young people to come we need structures to receive and feed them. There should be a paid and skilled liturgical musician in every parish where possible so they can train and empower the volunteers. If we could have the branches of the tree of formation revitalised in liturgical training, regeneration would flow from that. If you have no recognised specialists, unreasonably limited paid roles for specialist formation, and no functional DLC's, how is this going to happen? Catholic Education Offices, especially large ones like the Melbourne CEO, must also employ at least one specialist liturgist and liturgical musician. There is no qualified specialist at the Melbourne CEO, despite there being a role in liturgy. The CEOs seem to have money for everything but our ecclesial glue of liturgy and liturgical music. We must also train our Youth Ministers in liturgy. Every level needs support to flourish.

To get more involved in the Church. But I don't know where to start.

Continue the work of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in its entirety including the historically traditional, biblical and magisterial teachings. Not to change any of the dogmatic teachings of the Church. We need to retain the beauty of the pre-Vatican II liturgy including all its music and chants.

We need to return to the Jesus message—to repent and believe in God's Kingdom, to love and serve:

- the Church belongs to the people, not the clergy
- the Church is present in our daily living and with the people we encounter
- the church at St Vincent's is caring for and supporting our community with love, patience, compassion in times of joy, suffering and fear. We need a Church that speaks boldly and listens with a humble heart. Attention to the voice of the laity has to be more than tokenistic. We look to be:
- a Church that is hope-fuelled and therefore hope-filled
- a Church that recognises the face of God in the encounter with the other
- a Church that is inclusive, transparent and compassionate in practice from within. Our Church opens the doors to all:
- boundaries or exclusion should not be applied to people but only to behaviours
- we should be places of hospitality and celebration
- a Church that is assertive and proactive in its looking outside of itself and its service of the poor and marginalised, and
- promotes the Pope's teaching in *Laudate Si*. We need to have the courage to shine a light on power and control evident in the institutional Church, to transform it into one with humility and love and servant leadership. We need to involve women at all levels of discernment and decision making. There is a cry for the legitimate inclusion of women at all levels of the Church. Hear their voice with respect. Allow priests who wish to get married. Married priests in our diocese now are accepted. Seminary training has to change. Seminarians need to have more experience of real life concerns of the ordinary person in the pew. They need to see themselves as members of the people of God, rather than being from a different, higher class. We may need to use different language for and about God so that our young people see and experience the spirit of Jesus alive and active in our

<p>world. The language of the liturgy sometimes hinders people's experience of the Spirit in their lives. We need to be inspired when we go to Sunday Mass to go and bring about God's kingdom. The Church has changed from the 50 years ago in that now we have very active cultural groups in our churches with some more traditional than others, but with many of the Australian born parishioners not present. So we need a Church which is flexible and responsive enough to allow all to worship in their own appropriate ways. Who will be in the church on a Sunday in the future? We need space and time for meditation and opportunities to help in the formation of people in contemplation in action.</p>
<p>God is asking us Australians to be more active and visually present in our protest against abortion and euthanasia. Make a stand. Political correctness is stifling freedom of speech. Speech is what formed all of creation. See Genesis.</p>
<p>The Holy Spirit wants Catholic schools to run religious education classes during school hours AND no exemptions from those classes. If you are of another persuasion, you are welcome to join us (and you know what you are getting: knowledge and understanding about God) or if that does not suit, then move to where you are comfortable. So NO exemptions and NO watering down of our beliefs.</p>
<p>God is asking us to encourage priests to have more altar servers, children's Masses, youth Masses, 'jobs' for youth in any Mass and to encourage priest and schools to have more children's choirs. God loves music, particularly in praise of Him. I was in our school Mass choir and I find that singing hymns anytime uplifts me through the day and is an acceptable alternative to pray. I still remember and enjoy those songs. It keeps you connected.</p>
<p>God would like His priest to face the tabernacle. The priest is leading God's people, NOT hindering them.</p>
<p>God would like individual confessions (First Rite of Reconciliation) to remain. This is because the confessor shows full responsibility for their sin. Whereas in the Second Rite of Reconciliation (group confession), there is the avenue for diminishing responsibility. Keep the Second Rite of Reconciliation for emergencies and for situations during war.</p>
<p>-To be inclusive -To be authentic -To bring hope</p>
<p>God is asking for reform of the Catholic Church, such as inclusion of women in leadership positions and the end of celibacy, so that it is in line with our world today, is more inclusive and will attract more people rather than repel them. Let us not be afraid of reform. And let us not forget that Christianity started by Jesus reforming the traditional Church of his time, that he showed the establishment that it was "all words and no action". We should follow Jesus' ideas more.</p>
<p>- To come together as one and face bigger issues - To treat people the way you want to be treated - To get along and be united - Be loving and kind to one another</p>
<p>I think God is very disappointed with how his clergy have gone away from his teachings. Suffering little children to come unto him. It surely is not the laity but the clergy who have to admit their shortcomings.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be brave and make real changes.</p>

To reconcile with our First Nations people. To create an inclusive and equitable society. To care for and steward the earth by responding to climate change. To challenge capitalism and its inequity. To create a more gender equal society.

Be a fearless but compassionate witness to the gospel, to Catholic doctrine, to universal truth. Don't hedge your bets and try to placate the secular world, which either hates, pities or ignores the faith. We must be humble at this time, with everything the Church has been accused of, but we must not take this as a sign to be silent, to renounce our right to be a prophetic voice. We must witness fearlessly, and teach the faith authentically, in parishes, in schools, in universities, everywhere. Be less concerned with protecting the worldly aspects of the institutional Church - the land, the buildings, the schools, the bureaucracy, etc. - but focus on the Church as the people of God.

To be strong witnesses to the faith in a time when it is not popular to be Catholic. Catholics need to be confident and feel resourced to defend their beliefs in amongst the wider community. Many protestant groups do this well. Many Catholics still don't understand the Church teachings very well despite attending Mass regularly. It would be incredible for more emphasis on Catholic Social Teachings as many people do not know much about these and they really help people to know how to put their faith into action in the modern day.

God wants everyone in the Church to have a personal relationship with him. This requires humility from the hierarchy to accept that clericalism is not the way to go.

God is asking us to have a Church in the mind of Pope Francis: one that is inclusive, and welcoming to all, and true to the fundamental message of Jesus. In our opinion and experience "The Church" as distinct from the "People of God" is, to put it mildly, on the nose, bearing little resemblance to what Christ instigated and, no doubt, wished it to be. His love was inclusive, unconditional, not confined by doctrine or the precepts of ritual. A modern hymn captures this in the first two lines: "Come as you are, that's how I love you". The institutionalised Church could have these lines: "Come as you should be, then I will love you". This is starkly shown by the non-welcoming to the table of the Lord, of homosexuals, divorced couples and believers in Christ of other Christian denominations. Clericalism cuts across all the issues to be addressed. The present structures within "The Church" are hierarchical, opaque and remote from the "People of God". This has led to the observed disaffection of many Catholics and contributed to the institutional Church's lack of relevance and accountability in today's society. The concentration of power within a hierarchical elite, with its associated practice of honorifics and superfluous regalia, has emphasised the impression of a superior class. This needs to change with a view to our pastors resembling Christ; being of and for the people, not over them. It is obvious that the training of priests in a monastic bubble away from a distracting society breeds clericalism that sets them apart from, rather than being with, the people whom they minister. The aspirants to priesthood should live within parishes, be enrolled in tertiary institutions and receive erudite scripture training that leads to a more mature exegesis and vital application of the messages contained within the scripture and its relevance to today's challenges. Celibacy, introduced in the twelfth century, should not be compulsory. The present practice elevates celibacy above marriage and should be changed. Women in the Church require its own considerations as a matter of immediate and unconstrained consideration. The exclusion of women from the structures and

processes of governance and management has contributed to a not-so-subtle pseudo-machismo “we know God better” approach to critical discussions that affect the whole Church. The problems in the Church addressed in this submission have been building for centuries and have been brought into stark reality by the Royal Commission. We are reminded of the words of Dag Hammarskjöld: “Let everything be consumed by the fire in the hope that something of value may be left which can be riddled out of the ashes”. Let us continue to hope that the Plenary Council will prove to be a purifying fire and not a producer of smoke that screens what needs to be done for the rebirth of our Church.

I would like to see the day when a female could be a bishop or archbishop, a cardinal or a pope, I think priests should marry. It’s a healthier lifestyle for them. I think priests from overseas don’t understand the Australian way of life, or our view of religion. Their views are not always the same as our views and so they need to let go of where they have come from and adapt to our Australian way. They need to also improve their English language and comprehension skills. However, English language and comprehension skills are still not enough. The religious culture that overseas priests and others, like [priest name] are damaging to the Australian Church. So the clerical culture that is fostered in the seminary is also a big concern.

We feel that God is calling the baptised to have a greater say in the Australian Church. We are called to develop our Australian Church to be truly inclusive of the laity and of women. Our Church needs to have appropriately formed and educated lay people, especially women, in authentic leadership roles within all levels of the structure of the Church. We, the People of God, need to undertake an examination of the rules, laws and structure of the Church in order to discern what is appropriate and relevant in the Church today and into the future. We need to be prepared to change and to adapt so that our Church is a growing and vibrant one.

I would like the Church to take an honest look at itself; publicly ask forgiveness from the whole community for its lack of care on many levels, especially for its abuse of minors. I also criticise the Church for its lack of education of the community in the pews most of whom have not been taught anything since their catechism days. This is an appalling lack of care - people have been left in darkness and it appears even Vatican II has not entered into their consciousness. From my experience talking to the community, most people believe there really were an Adam and Eve; Because they supposedly ate an apple in the famous garden we are all born in sin! People have asked me if the Church now believes in evolution. I could say so much more about people been left in darkness! What about the wonderful evolving Universe Story - The first of God's incarnations? How can we deprive the people of God of the full story and deliberately leave them in darkness? It horrifies me! I could almost call it all a conspiracy but I'm more inclined to think the Church just doesn't bother and perhaps the clerics have not updated their Theology since seminary days. Or, do they really care? The Church must educate people about the use of metaphor as distinct from a literal history. God is asking the Church in Australia to awaken from its slumber and to be true followers of Jesus. We read the gospel every day but how much of it is applied when it comes to creating a community of committed people willing to follow Jesus. God is asking the Church to step down from the power model and be servants willing to give up their comforts when the community is in need. Jesus said the first shall be last and the last first. God is asking the Church to protect the weak and the needy. God is asking the Church to fully

acknowledge women not just in a condescending manner but as totally equal to men with the exact same rights. The Church, more than any other organisation should show leadership on that front. Instead it stands out as being the biggest organisation in the world which denies women a role similar to men. It's really embarrassing as a woman to be seen to be part of an organisation which is supposed to follow Jesus and treats women as second class citizens. How blind is the Church! Women are the ones who give birth - what a wonderful Church we could have been part of if through the centuries, women were give a role. They would have given birth every day to Jesus and what effect that would have had now in our time. But we have a sterile Church!

God is asking us to be, act, love, welcome and respond—like Jesus did. Genuine acceptance, belief and passion rather than man (not woman) made rules, regulations and judgements is what God us imploring us to be guided by.

I think the time has come for the Church to allow married priests and women priests. Think of how the ordination of women priests, or priests with a wife and children would blow a blast of fresh air through the Church. It would dispel the idea, held by many, that the Church is currently run by a group of creepy old men. There is surely no doctrinal reason why this could not be brought about. I wrote to Cardinal Pell on this some years ago. The response was that the ordination of married and women priests was "not authorised by Christ." This is surely nonsense. The profession of nuclear physics was not authorised by Christ in the gospels either. The Church must move with the times unless there is a solid doctrinal reason why it should not do so.

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? God asks us to make use of the sacraments as instituted by his Church: • Baptism • Eucharist • Reconciliation • Confirmation • Matrimony • Holy orders • Healing of the sick. We believe that the social sacraments together, marriage and priesthood are at the core of family life and of the Church. These sacraments need our Australian Church's attention. God is asking us to live our sacraments according to gospel values. How can I be a better wife/husband/priest/bishop/lay person/religious, in my family/parish/community life? God is asking Australians to: • Live unconditional love; Love one another, in our family/parish/community relationships. Teaching please, thank you, sorry and role modelling it. • take gospel values to the workplace. • be inclusive—finding the face of God in every person. • develop acceptance of diversity. • be empathic and to build upon our understanding of Christ's teaching • find ways to help our young people find relevance in the Church • become involved with political and social issues concerned with life issues, abortion and euthanasia • marriage, family • supporting our Indigenous people • our ability to express religious freedom • strongly defending marriage without compromise of our Christian understanding. • domestic violence • alcoholism/drug addiction/gambling/pornographic material/use of social media. • be active participants within of his Church. • employ the servant leadership model within Church ministry. • encourage, to love, to support, to build relationship with our local ordained ministers. • continue to encourage women to participate in the life of the Church in leadership roles, where appropriate. • ethical use of the environment • be courageous with evangelising our Catholic faith.

Christ taught us that we must love our God and love our neighbour. Our Church must be seen to be a Church of love. We must distinguish between what Christ taught us and what are man-made rules. These man-made rules which have been introduced over the centuries have driven people

away from the Church. We were taught that it was a mortal sin to eat meat on a Friday or to miss Mass on a holy day of obligation. It needs to be made quite clear what are matters of infallibility and what are optional extras. Christ was not one for pomp and ceremony and he is asking us to get back to the basics. We must recognise that for the Church to continue and prosper, we must attract people back to Sunday Mass. If we continue along the path, we are currently on it will not be too far into the future before numbers attending Sunday Mass and been actively involved in parish life have dropped to the extent that Churches will be closed and sold off. While we were taught that it was a mortal sin to miss Sunday Mass, we now realise that that is not the case; however for the Church to continue to have relevance, we must find ways to draw people back to active involvement in the Church. People must realise that the Church is their Church and they need to be actively involved. The Church does not belong to the bishops and priests. They are our servants, not our masters. Our Church must be one of compassion, not passing judgement on people, but encouraging people to seek God's forgiveness for their failings. The old teaching that we must attend confession at least once a year seems to be a thing of the past. Repentance is not a once a year thing. We should be preaching that repentance is a daily thing, that each night we should review our day and seek the Lords forgiveness for our failings of the day. This is matter between the person and his/her God. We should be preaching the necessity of seeking the Lord's forgiveness of our failings through a variety of means including communal Reconciliation services, Anointing Masses, confession and nightly reviewing one's conscience and seeking the Lord's forgiveness. God is asking us to accept the necessity for married priests. The majority of apostles chosen by Christ were married men. Christ obviously did not carry the burdens of our current hierarchy on this issue. God is asking us to put aside the terrible prejudice that has existed against women for centuries and welcome women into the priesthood.

The spiritual writings of French philosopher, Simone Weil (1909-1943) deeply impressed Pope John xxiii, and Pope Paul vi counted her one of the three most important influences on his intellectual development. (Simone Weil, Fount Christian Thinkers, Stephen Plant p.xvi) Simone's mystical experience of Christ, and of Monastic Catholic Liturgy, transformed Simone, an avowed atheist. Her subsequent writings in 'Waiting on God 'are worthy of being included in the reflective process, discernment, and prayer, as we try to seek answers to 'what is Christ asking of the Catholic Church in Australia today. Some of Simone's views are implicit in this response. Australian Catholics come from many countries, and speak a variety of languages, and some if, not many, do not understand English well. More silence in liturgy, with celebrants praying slowly, shorter Eucharistic prayers, with times of silence during the prayer, may help grow a more contemplative spirit, in everyone. Jesus did guide us to take care not to multiply words, when praying. (Matt. t6:7) For the same reason, homilies need to be shorter, and as the celebrant breaks open the Word, more use can be made of gospel scenes projected on screens and of music. While the current maximum attention span for listening to a talk is said by researchers to be 20 minutes, there are many variables at typical parish weekend Masses. Less is more, whether in word, pictures or music. Multi-culturalism may have a wonderful by-product of helping more deeply prayerful celebrations. There needs to be more opportunity for educating the parish laity about their faith, beyond the weekend Masses. Wide consultation, including with Australian Aboriginal Catholic Ministries, would be helpful in creating an Australian inclusive Lectionary and Missal. Many of the weekday readings include less than inspiring readings. And how wonderful if

we had a Eucharistic prayer written by Aboriginal Catholics, or at least giving thanks for First Peoples and our beautiful country.

I think God is calling us, especially the leadership, to listen to what the laity are saying; to listen to our hearts and to recall Jesus' words about laws being made for man and not man being made for law. The bishops need to listen to their hearts and to their people and to stop following the PARTY LINE OUT OF FEAR.

- To be a Church that is a visible and attractive sign of the joy of the gospel; to be a community of faith communities that are characterised by hospitality, welcome, inclusion, fellowship, mutual support, mercy, outreach
- To be a humble Church of pilgrims, searchers, questioners, companions—people who are prepared to take the risk of faith—not a Church of the dutiful, the moralising, the dogmatic or the judgmental—a Church in which the necessary bureaucracy and institutional works (education, health, welfare, justice, mission) are at the service of the gospel and of human flourishing
- To be a Church in which women are engaged at every level of the Church's life, mission and decision-making and are seen and heard as such
- To be a Church that is an authentic voice for the disadvantaged and the marginalised and engages young people in their passion for social justice
- To be a collegial Church in which decisions are made by a fully representational body of believers
- To be a Church that “lives justly, loves tenderly and walks humbly with God” (Micah 6:8).

To give full effect to the declaration of the Second Vatican Council that liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed [and] the fount from which all the Church's power flows (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 10) and that the enduring aim of the reform and renewal of the liturgy remains the full, conscious and active participation of the people (CSL 14). Given that the primary liturgy in which Catholics still take part (even in dwindling numbers) is Sunday parish Eucharist, this needs to be the focus of a concerted effort at renewal. All the other regular liturgical rites (baptism, confirmation, marriage, funerals, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, prayer of the Church) would benefit as a result.

I think God is asking the laity to make the bishops accountable to their 'flock' with Cdl Pell being found guilty of sex offenses, although having the amazing Robert Richter not able to knock out the allegations. My daughter and I were in Sydney a few years ago, and went to a local pub, which turned out to be a gay bar. There I noticed a priest whom I'd seen in Melbourne, with his boyfriend sitting on his knee, kissing him. It was then I realised for the clergy celibate means not with a woman! What a double standard ... God is asking up to sort this out because the bishops have no interest in sorting out the seminary. When I was studying theology, some of the lecturers behaved very strangely in the classes. It seemed odd at the time. The Cdl McKerrick story in the news clarified what I was witnessing, a number of young men left, who in later conversations talked about being chatted up. I think God is calling the laity to demand fidelity to Jesus from the clergy. What drives me most of all is that my daughters will not get their little ones baptised because of the terrible abuse of power in the Church. I don't blame them, I feel very disappointed. They have discontinued going to Mass in protest. Their idea is that diminished numbers will affect the finances of the Church ... then with a broke Church, holy people may arise. I hope that's the case.

To have a Church where the talents of the lay members are better recognised, used and appreciated, especially those of the female members. To have the lay members more involved in the conduct of liturgies.

To create broader training for seminarians to help reduce clericalism and the possibility of child sexual abuse.

As a lay person, I like to be a responsible person. I invite and encourage other people including my family to understand that the Catholic Church needs help.

To consider:

- How do we reach/welcome all people to be in relationship with God and all people to feel they belong to our Church?
- God is asking us why you have forgotten 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.'
- To trust in God, to develop a relationship with God, to show joyful witness to family and community by example.
- Acknowledgement and removal of priests from priesthood for those found guilty of paedophilia—bishops to take responsibility including at Vatican level - OWN the MISTAKES
- That Church funds are not used to support the legal costs of paedophiles within the clergy
- Transparency in hierarchy, in accountability, in decision-making—the Church is not above the law—structures are too rigid—boys club false piety that alienates and is seen as deception
- Optional celibacy—with a significant need for married priests
- Inclusive of women in leadership role in Church within decision-making and with voting rights so that gender balance is significantly addressed
- Deaconate of women / priesthood for women
- Lay people should a greater role so that all power is not in the hierarchy
- Recognition of climate change and the urgency for real action - advocacy and awareness
- Fair distribution of wealth and advocacy for justice—to equate to the gospel message of Jesus - Love one another as I have loved you
- More inclusive stance for marginalised— Divorced / LGBT / IVF / Contraception / mental illness / elderly
- The structure [the buildings] need to change—more spiritual hubs for daily gatherings .
- The main Church will be like a 'fire station'—it will act when needed e.g.: sacraments / funerals / weddings
- Gender fluidity and how it will be addressed within church and schools
- Re- evaluate structures and teaching of priests for their psychological and emotional maturity—priests must be at least 5 years out of schooling before entering the seminary - Study for priests should occur at least 50% in co-ed open universities
- Reconnecting to Jesus' teaching and finding more relevant ways to share the gospel through both genders in leadership
- Renewed understanding of what is prayer—actions connecting us with God... not necessarily formal prayer
- No blocking of the language of women becoming priests/popes/ leadership as this blocks hope for change

Contemporise / modernise

1. Liturgy What to do: To truly understand the importance of Liturgy of Word and learn God's words. Current problems: A. Many parishioners don't seem to understand or recognize the importance of the Readings in the Mass. How many really listen to the Readings and can follow them? B. Parishioners may not pre-read the Readings for the next week's Mass for various reasons, such as too busy with taking care of families. C. Some parishioners go to Mass because they want to receive the Holy Communion (which is excellent!), or it is an obligation or both, but they probably haven't given sufficient importance to the Readings.

2. Peaceful and caring society What to do: To be cooperative and contributing to one another in the society, respect one another, whether they are Christians or not or belong to another religion. Current problems: A. parishioners have no interest to know each other—after they walk out of the Church, they

don't know each other anymore. B. People in general nowadays have become more selfish and care less about each other. 3. Stronger Catholic Church What to do: Actively support the Church in various ways, follow God's teachings and the Church's guidance and live out our daily accordingly, recognize and stay alert about relativism. Have more positive publicity about the Church. Lift the spirit of the Church and bring in more people to the Church. Current problems: A. The media has been keeping on putting out negative publicities about the Church. It acts as if it is normal to criticize regularly (almost a form of subtle bully) and it rarely mentions many good things the Church has done for the society. B. The Church seems too polite or soft, or do not want to offend anybody, when expressing its views and stance on important social matters. C. Some Christians don't see any problems with relativism. D. Some priests are seen not to wear the standard black cloths with white collar.

Spread the word, be present and be seen: I believe the Church in Australia (and Catholic organisations) does very good work at different levels, but it is not very visible. All of us need to work harder in bringing people closer to the Church, and making that "roadmap" clearer, by focusing in the core message, and providing easy ways to start with the basics. When someone who has been away from the Church, or maybe someone who does not know much because they may have a different or no religious background at all, I believe it is difficult for them to take a first step on their own to get closer to the Church. From having no involvement whatsoever with the Church, the next step normally is talking to a priest in a parish and committing to RCIA: it is too much for someone who may have many doubts and has no relation with Jesus. If there were initiatives (like Alpha in Catholic context) when one can get a little involvement with little commitment and avoiding the "hard" first step where people could feel embarrassed or doubtful. These "first step" options should be visible and easily available, using modern technologies and known to all of us, so we can recommend people who we may ask us. They need to be able to suited for people with little or no faith, and focusing on communicating the joy of the love of God for each one of us, regardless of our past actions: we need to convey the message that being part of the Catholic Church is not just following a set of rules and conventions; it is our response for the joy we feel for of God's love for us.

To be a light for the people in Australia who have no knowledge of God or of a life shaped by Christian values. To promote the dignity of the human person. To actively challenge the false ideologies shaping our culture

1. A radical change is needed in our identity, organisation and public face. We need to be missionary in everything we do. So many of our organisations, including schools, hospitals and other institutions - even Catholic agencies - are not missionary. They are run or influenced by people who do not know or like Jesus Christ, or they give him lip service in order to keep their jobs, thus watering down the faith so at to make it powerless and unattractive. This MUST stop. If need be, root out anything that's not genuinely Catholic, Christian, focused on Jesus as the Lord. 2. Following the first point, God, we believe, is asking us to radically change the way we use our resources. With our wealth, why do we not have a radio station, a TV station, a massive, exciting, entertaining, informative social media presence? Why do we spend so much money on buildings and useless programmes, instead of pour money into the ministries of individual missionaries, missionary groups and communities that are genuinely Catholic, groups that are living out their

Christian faith? Why do we not pour money into Catholic businesses, Catholic musicians, writers, speakers, evangelists, politicians? 3. When we look at the Catholic Church in Australia, we see a lazy, rich organisation that props up its identity through the infrastructures of the past, presenting a boring, irrelevant message to the wider community because its leaders are too ashamed to say who Jesus is and what he's done for them, its leaders and members are not empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to the truth. 4. We believe the Holy Spirit is saying the Catholic Church in Australia today - the community of faith, the Body of Christ, the disciples of Jesus - needs to snap out of its laziness and indifference by boldly witnessing to the truth, and rid itself of the 'false prophets' who act, work and are employed in its name. 5. Joy, witness, laughter, helping out people in need "in the name of Jesus" is what is needed. 6. Wrapping up these points, as the Catholic Church moves forward, in order to fulfil its mission, the one Jesus gave and gives it, we need to be prepared to cut loose the dead wood, even the buildings it owns, and make sure that the message of Jesus is preached and lived as best as we can. One consequence of pouring resources into the right things and being missionary will be the transformation of our liturgies, which will both encourage and inspire Catholics (rather than bore them), and draw others into the community of believers. Everything and anything that invites the Holy Spirit into our Church needs to be encouraged, and we need to cast off the fear of what changes that may bring.

As a young person, I found many of my questions of why we do what we do in the Catholic Church, and the meanings of truths of the faith were things that those I looked to were unable to explain readily. I believe we are being called to unite reason more strongly with our faith, and make an effort to educate not just on what we do or believe, but why, so that all Catholics would be able to give account for the hope they have in Jesus. I have been exploring other Christian services, just as a way of seeing what it is like to enter their community for the first time. I have been so struck by their emphasis on welcome, hospitality, and encounter. If Pope Francis is calling us to accompaniment, I believe the step before this is encounter. How can we accompany those we have not yet encountered? I don't know what this looks like, but I know what it feels like. Parishes that are transformed into families of outreach. We live in an age where there is a large intergenerational gap. When there is so much disconnection in families and social circles, I see an opportunity for the Church to offer discipleship and accompaniment to the young. And in this, that they would know themselves as loved.

Quality pastors (bishops, priests, deacons and religious. If they lead an authentic life there will be change in the people. The present crisis in the Church is mainly due to the sex scandal in the Church. Priests must remember of the sacrifice of Christ whom they promise to follow. Be at the service of the people rather than going after enjoyment. Devotion in the celebration of Holy Mass and sacraments always keeping time. Some priests cancel Mass very often without any prior information. They go to the doors of the Church and find it closed and return home go to other Church. Though there is assigned time for Reconciliation, priests never show up. (There are also instances that some go to confession even twice a week if the priest is there.) Many priests have a very poor spirituality. They do not even go to the annual retreat which I have heard as mandated by the canon law. The bishops never seem to implement it. The day off seems as the Church is shut off. There is no harm for the priest to offer a Mass on his day off. A priest is 24/7. The number of staff and expenses of the dioceses and parishes must be brought down. The dioceses

are like corporations and parishes, its branches. The worldly way is followed and not of Christ. John XXIII, when asked "How many people work in the Vatican?" replied, "Probably about half". It is much the same in our dioceses. The dioceses make the people lazy. They feed and pay them with money that is squeezed from the parishes. They are the most inefficient people and offices one after another are created by bifurcating or quadrupling departments. So in the place of one office, e.g. mission (one facility), there are so many, and each has a head, staff and office materials. Since no work, they keep on sending emails, mails and other materials, thinking priests, secretaries and other personnel are fools. Too many staff is one cause of inefficiency. Please stop this and stop squeezing the parishes. Take just enough from the parishes by quota system and not be greedy. And if it continues, the time is not far away that you don't get anything. Please be proactive. But I must admit that the legal, HR, finance, IT, etc., help should be well appreciated.

"A family that prays together, stays together." This is altogether lost in Australia. The family prayer must be got back.

A return to the gospel. Sometimes Jesus' message seems too simple to be believed, and there is an attempt to over fill the gaps with more laws and regulations, which just do not fit with Jesus' simple message of love. More prayers and devotions seem to override the liturgy, which becomes lost in sermons based on sin, guilt and unworthiness. The Mass becomes "my Mass" for the priest, and the people are encouraged to kneel and receive the sacrament on the tongue. Communion under both species is denied and Communion is the reserved sacrament. No elements are consecrated for the people. Parish priests are usually appointed for 6 years, and in that time seem to remove all previous trappings that the people have been used to and set up their own, a great waste of resources. There suddenly appear more books, leaflets, more gold and brocade and adornments! When do we learn? Catholic education does not seem to bring young people to a relationship with the Risen Christ. They have learnt belief—dogma and doctrine, but have no knowledge of Jesus. This is very evident if sitting behind them at Mass, be it a school Mass, family celebration, or funeral. They do not understand what it is all about, just a boring show! What is our future if these young people do not have faith in who Jesus is, and what his mission of love entailed?

The responses to this question focused mainly on the outward presence of the Church in the world, with a secondary focus on internal renewal. Main themes included: 1. Engagement: A Church that is interested in engaging with different audiences in a loving way, with some focus on works of mercy but mainly around meeting people where they are. 2. Evangelisation: Renewed efforts to proclaim the faith and bring people to faith. 3. Faith renewal: A sense of a need for individuals and the Church to re-commit to God.

I think God is asking us most importantly, to grow in true holiness. I think God wants a Holy Church. It may be a small Church, but I think God wants a true, loyal, steadfast and HOLY Church. The Church has and is still going through a period of immensely humbling and painful cleansing. The sins of the Church are shared by all of us and we all carry the pain. It is crucial that we become a truly holy Church, not a lukewarm Church. Priests need to go back to the fundamental teachings. Bring back sacramentals. Strongly encourage regular, monthly confession and remind the congregation of what the state of Grace is! If the members of the Church body grow in holiness, surely we will have holy priests and a good strong Holy Church. One that doesn't bend to the

whims of the world. Also we need strong masculine role models in the Church. Priests need to preach a masculine faith for men, for leaders in the community. In an increasingly mixed up secular world, the Church needs to be a relentless voice of truth and an example of strength for men. The men will in turn lead their families and the women in their lives. Let us not forget whom Christ chose as His disciples. 12 men. Young men are crying out for role models. We need strong true and masculine priests to show men the strength of God as it is shown in the Bible and throughout history. Holiness, as the ultimate battle. Let's not focus on quantity over quality. It's not the numbers in the pews that matter, but the holiness of those present! 1 saint is enough to save and uphold an entire Church. Let's rid the Church of politics as much as it is possible! Let Christ be at the centre of the Church - neither right nor left but a Christ-centred Church! My hope is that bishops encourage specific tasks towards holiness. Less vague, political and careful sermons. LEAD like MEN! Towards holiness. Don't be afraid to upset people! Christ upset everyone! Even the disciples left Him when He needed them most. But He was strong and steadfast. He was not afraid to speak the truth! So please bishops: preach the truths of the Church! Listen and read the work of Bishop Fulton Sheen, to holy priests such as St John Vianney. Encourage Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and make it freely and easily available. Encourage regular Confession and make it easily available. Repeat the simple truths over and over. We need a Holy, Eucharistic Church whose members are in a state of Grace. I'm certain that if this starts to happen and the Church grows in TRUE holiness, God will do the rest. God will work miracles in Australia. Australia needs the Catholic Church more than ever. But it needs a Holy Church so it's time to toughen up and rise to the challenge. It will become increasingly difficult to be a true Catholic in the world. Without holiness, it will be almost impossible. God bless the Australian Catholic Church! Thank you.

We are being asked by God to: 1. Make the intellectual case for God's existence. No belief in God means there is no real point to life. My observation is that most Catholic year 12 students are leaving the Catholic school system as atheist or agnostics. 2. Defend our Church, traditions and beliefs. By teaching the commandments of Moses and the teachings of Jesus. My observation is that our Church is increasingly straying into politics, political correctness, social justice and environmentalism. If we wanted this then we can just join a left wing party like the Greens. 3. Be virtuous, not Virtue Signallers, example: "Acknowledging the traditional owners and elders", does nothing to help Aboriginals, it just creates more divisiveness, resentment and victimhood and make the world worse. 4. Focus on personal responsibility and less on charity. We are ruining our society and creating more "poor" with our level of welfare and charity. "The more you give, the less they will have!" Our empathy is nice, but our charity sends a message to the recipients that they are suffering victims, and that they cannot help themselves. That the giver is the only one who can help them. 5. Stand for justice, not "Social Justice". Social Justice actually breaks two of God's Commandments. "Do not covet" and "Do not steal".

God is asking us to live our lives according to the gospel, but as it relates to the 21st century. We believe that God is asking that the Church is an inclusive community; that all are accepted as God's people, that women and the laity play a more fundamental role. We believe God is asking that the teachings of Christ should be central to all decision-making by the hierarchy of the Church but that this has not been evident over many years, particularly regarding sexual abuse and

inequality. We have concerns about how doctrine, the sacraments and liturgies are presented and received. We look to declining attendance and participation, by the young and the mature, in all aspects of Church as evidence that action and change is needed.

Having been to many parishes and noting the decline of priests, and the fewer Masses available, as well as the dwindling numbers of parishioners, I believe the solution is simple. Allowing Australian female priests would fill the seminaries and bring women, children and teenagers back to the Church. It's worked for other religions!

Within the framework of accountability and consultation, transparency (openness and honesty), being a missionary and truly inclusive and not maintenance only Church, we believe God is calling us to: 1. a renewal of the celebration of the Eucharist (including language) which is more simple, engaging and welcoming to all irrespective of perceived worthiness; 2. a mandated implementation of diocesan and parish councils in all dioceses accompanied by comprehensive professional development; 3. mandated professional and spiritual development for the ordained and people in ministry generally; 4. a strong and practical and systematic approach to education in faith; 5. be truly missionary including a practical missionary approach in our local communities; 6. urgently reinstate Third-Rite Reconciliation; 7. recommit urgently and comprehensively to ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, and shared faith development and initiatives; 8. the comprehensive transformation of the model of priesthood and ordained ministry, to include: a) the acceptance of the charisms and gifts of women as appropriate and needed in ordained ministry, b) both married and celibate persons, c) the acceptance that celibacy should be optional and not a pre-determinant to a vocation to the priesthood; 9. a total transformation in our relationships with our earth, our fellow human beings and all creation and to see this work of transformation as the basis of social justice which demands action globally and which must be at the core of action locally.

After 68 years as a Catholic, it was only this year that my faith suddenly became the priority of my life that it should be. It was a small comment made by my parish priest Fr [ - ] at [ - ] [ - ] Victoria in his homily in March that inspired me. Frankly, it's changed my life. I'm reading and studying the Bible, reading Catholic writers. Having a much greater appreciation of the Mass and it has changed my outlook on life and relationships. Having said that, I was already a rather happy, optimistic person, attending Mass almost every Sunday and involved from time to time in parish ministries. And very active in the community for a substantial time. About 25% of Australians say they are Catholic. An estimated 10% of them attend Mass regularly = 2.5% of Australians. A high proportion of Mass attendees are 60+ years of age. Probably only about 5% of Catholics aged 16-50 attend Mass. There is a high proportion of women. Those that do attend Mass would not all be strongly engaged in their faith. This is just an opinion, but I know I often let my mind wander and did not really appreciate the sacred sacrifice of the Eucharist until recently. Pope Saint John Paul II said "I sense the moment has come to commit all of the Church energies to a new evangelisation. No believer in Christ, no institution, can avoid this supreme duty; to proclaim Christ to all peoples." I've been doing a bit of research and cannot find much evidence to show our Church is committing much energy at all to evangelisation, let alone "all" its energies. We need to evangelise to non-believers, other Christians, and to non-practising Catholics and even those who attend Mass. Pope St John Paul II was speaking to all of us. RCIA is a program designed for new

Catholics, but it does nothing for the baptised Catholics who have effectively deserted the Church. And it is not marketed much at all, in my experience, in the parishes I have worshipped in. At my previous parish, I suggested we use the church/school fete to distribute evangelical materials and was told by members of the parish council that it would upset the school community. They were probably right. But that should not have stopped us. I think we need an Australian Catholic program to evangelise to atheists, agnostics, other Christians, non-practising and practising Catholics.

God is asking us to be more like Jesus and to practice what we preach. God is also asking us to apologise for the wrongs of the past and to work towards redress and reconciliation for the future.

The group of young professionals raised the following reflections: 1. To help us be good we need more formation, and effective catechesis on making the most of the sacraments. 2. There was a strong sentiment to do whatever we have to, to fix Catholic schooling. Most have come from the Catholic schooling system and they believe it is important that school and local parish are integrated more effectively so that the priest and sacraments are available. They feel that if effective formation is to be given through schools that we need to offer better spiritual care and support to religion teachers. 3. Availability of sacraments in parishes needs focus. Often, it is difficult for working people to get to Mass because the great majority of Masses in Melbourne seem to be after workers have left for work. If they don't work in the city, Mass then is impossible. Could parishes coordinate their efforts to neighbouring parishes have Masses at differing times, or alternating times? Priests could preach about confession more in the homilies. In parishes where this happens, there are queues for confession. 'Night fever' prayer in the Church? Times of adoration? Can we do more to foster marriage preparation at senior school level? 4. We are soft as a people. Can we be encouraged to more fasting and penance? Can there be a higher bottom bar in Lent? 5. There was a feeling that more needs to be done to foster evangelisation at the parish level. 6. One participant raised the issue of preservation of our cultural patrimony ... ensuring Churches are kept beautiful.

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? God is asking us to create loving communities based on Christ's teachings, where trusting relationships are paramount, and children are reared within the sanctity of family life. While respecting secular law and other religious persuasions, we must resist attempts by the secular state to intrude into the practice of our faith.

Focus on the essence of the Mass more irrespective of how the Mass is carried out e.g. singing or solemn. In some cases, in between Masses, there are announcements re. Church governance...leave this to the end. Make homilies an explanation of gospel re how we relate to God or vice-versa now in this age. Let us not go back to pre-Vatican days. Priests seem distant from congregation and definitely not Latin. Youth are going away from Church...pre Vatican will drive them away more.

Leaders of the Church at all levels to reach out to in dialogue to all parts of the Church, and all sections of society. All parts of the Church respond fully and with conviction to the cry for protection of children and vulnerable people generally, and to the needs of those who have

suffered from abuse by Church personnel and from the way that abuse was responded to. That our Church:

- be an open, welcoming society, and resist any temptation to act as a club;
- truly be the People of God in Australia, a society where all identify with their Church, where lay people feel equally at home
- ensure the equal participation of women in all aspects of Church;
- respect the role of Aboriginal people in all aspects of society, be open to them, learn from them, and joyfully receives their contribution to all aspects of the Church.

For our Church to achieve this vision, we need to:

- embrace young people, and speak to their needs and interests;
- support our priests and religious as colleagues in the Body of Christ; invite them to be co-ministers with us as servant leaders in the work of the Church; and foster a culture where clergy are pastors, not administrators
- embrace and make a place for all people of good will, especially the many thousands who work in our various agencies, which will so richly allow the Spirit to work in them and in us and in the people we serve.
- be open, merciful and loving
- be informed of our rich tradition
- be boldly Catholic—to speak the truth; to be always ready to give an account for the hope that we hold.

At the Plenary Council itself:

- There needs to be the voices of all who are marginalised, and those working in service and work for justice. Many of our member organisations would make a very positive contribution at that level.
- There can always be more scope for participation, even if voting rights are limited.
- The role of loving service is so central to the Church that, if effective representation at the Council itself is not feasible, then a parallel gathering might be needed
- All submissions to the Council should be readily available to the interested public, unless there is a special reason not to make them public

Bring people back, not drive people away from the Church.

God is asking us to uphold the sacredness of the Church - the quality of having the utmost respect and devotion to the Christian truths communicated by our 2000-year old Catholic traditions and practices. As a developed, post-industrial country, the malaise of the modern world is experienced quite profoundly here in Australia. Like other Anglo-Saxon countries, Australia is where the enlightenment project was realised and where liberalism was practiced to its fullest extent. This country is where the attitudes of 'do whatever you feel like (as long as it doesn't hurt anyone)' and 'each to their own' thrived, and where the natural institutions of tradition, family, community, marriage and religion are fading faster than other places in the world. This fetishism for individual freedom has only created an increasingly pathological society; a society plagued by broken families, drug abuse, mental illness and suicide. No amount of cheaper material goods, technological advances or pleasurable activities will heal this anxiety. The sicknesses of this country are signs God providentially revealed to us. God is calling us to make the Church a sanctuary—a place to transcend the capriciousness of modern society through spiritual convalescence, and a place to authentically experience the glory of God. To attain this, we must ensure that the Church is sacred. At the most immediate level, our edifices must be kept sacred. They must command reverence and show value to the highest truths - the passion of Christ, the sacraments and eternal salvation. Some churches in Australia are doing the exact opposite. Our country is dotted with uninspiring churches that are indistinguishable from Pentecostal gather halls; devoid of ornamentation, art or any sign of care or devotion. These churches are ultimately functional in appearance, new for the sake of new, easily blending in with the utilitarian world it ought to stand out from. For this reason, we are called to protect the sacredness of our buildings

by enforcing restrictions on how churches are to be built or rebuilt in a rejection of modern architecture. We are also called to restore the physical elements which made our Catholic edifices deeply meaningful places of worship—stained glass icons, altar rails and kneelers. Perhaps more importantly than buildings, we must keep our liturgy sacred. Unfortunately, some churches in Australia practice the liturgy in a manner that is disrespectful to God, often with soft rock band music that sound like a rip-off of the Seekers, ad-lib homilies, spontaneous dancing, clapping and so much more. We are called to expand our rejection of such elements to uphold the sacredness of the liturgy. We are also called to restore the things that make our liturgy beautiful: moments of silence, incense, chant, natural lighting and candles. With the help of Our Lady, our return to sacredness will be a weapon against vulgarity, and a medicine to heal Australian society.

The Spirit is asking the post Royal Commission Church to address clericalism. 1. The Spirit is asking clerics firstly to consult the community, taking note of the “*sensus fidei*” around important issues, and secondly to be guided by it. He must trust that he and his people together have an inalienable sense of faith, not he alone. A priest/bishop needs not only to consult his people, but also to involve them in decision-making processes. 2. The Spirit is reminding the Church, through Pope Francis, that we are all equal in the Church by virtue of our baptism, and that the essence of the ordained minister is not to be separate from but to serve the community of the baptised. This means a priest must know his people by name, be one with them, and know their needs. As Francis said, he must “smell of the sheep”. 3. The Spirit is saying to our Church, post Royal Commission, that we can explore and try other pathways to raise up local ministers. If there are insufficient local applicants who can accept the rule of celibacy, then we must accept other candidates who may be married, or men who are able to do it for a short while, say at the end of their working lives, or for a short period in their working lives. 4. That the Spirit is saying it is time to treat women as equals in ministry, as they are in all other facets of life. Having women as ministers may also start to break down the male clerical mindset that dominates our structure and decision-making at present.

- The group should make decisions and not just one person. Decisions should be consultative and inclusive
- Prioritise funding in ministries to embrace people on the margins. If we say we are a Church of sinners and poor.
  - We need to be resourced to respond to these needs
  - Resources to be made available
- Provide opportunities to know people. Community building on the ground level. Café conversations should be encouraged.
- LISTEN and to be open to what the spirit is saying to EACH individual
- God is asking us to include those in the margins, to include them in our Churches.
- To reach out, to be a companion to those who need help and healing to come back to Church.
- DOING rather than preaching - show the young people that we are serious
- A culture change—it is very male dominated at the administrative level.
- Being a Trinitarian Church- equality, respect and reverence - the gift of each and the function of each is appreciated and learned
- Accountability and transparency in decisions made
- Re-branding of the Church. To get young people involved more, matching the story of Jesus
- An AUTHENTIC Church - embrace everybody. Based on giftedness of each
- parish leadership and pastoral staff need to undertake regular pastoral supervision
- Ongoing faith formation for young people and adults
- A Church that is relational - the need to be connected. Gifts of each other are different but what we bring along should be listened to and be a listening person to each of us- being empty of our own ideas

to be able to listen. At its centre and core is JESUS. An AUTHENTIC gospel Church • Catholic rituals are rich and should be celebrated and claimed • Communication and ways to inform people about our rituals should be examined. It should be congruent - matching our actions to our words • A healing and forgiving Church • An approach and look at third rite of reconciliation that is more related to people's real life. One-on-one confession for mortal sin or deliberate act of transgression, therefore a healing Church can come back • Inclusion and welcome of our migrant population from other countries • Energy and money should be put in training and encouraging future leaders; and supporting ongoing faith development

God is asking of his people, fidelity to the truths of the Catholic Church. We have to fight against relativism and luke-warmness as these are the insidious tools of the devil. The Church has to speak out on sin, judgement, heaven and hell. It must be instrumental in developing the conscience of the young in the truths of the Church so as to give them an understanding of the beauty and treasures contained in the faith. The faith is being diluted as we are taking the focus of the faith of the sacraments away from putting Christ at the centre, and putting ourselves at the centre. The Mass is a classic example where we have turned it into an evangelical feel good celebration, instead of a Solemn liturgy that is sacrament and sacrifice. The Mass is a true sacrifice, that is offered to God alone; this sacrifice is offered for the praise and adoration of God in three Persons as thanksgiving, impetration, and above all as propitiation for our daily sins. He, as High Priest of the New Covenant, accomplishes this Sacrifice through human priests and by means of the services of the Church. Priests need to be priests, servants of God that have a solid formation and take seriously the task of saving souls. Priests need to have back bone and not just say what he thinks people want to hear but what they need to hear to be saved. The truths of our faith are contained in the catechism and we need this to be taught in our schools

God is asking us to deal with the extreme problems in the Church at the present time. The major problem is that young people are turning away from the Church in droves and will continue to do so until the hierarchy rid of paedophiles in its midst. My faith has been tested many times in recent years when bad clergy are assisted by the Church in fighting serious charges against child abuse. The Christian Brothers are a perfect example as well as bad parish priests that were moved from parish to parish thus allowing them to continue abusing children. The Church is not paying proper compensation to any person that was abused in the past.

That on special occasions when people of other faiths attend Mass in a Catholic Church, e.g. Christmas, Easter, funerals, weddings, baptisms, all baptised Christians be invited to partake of Holy Communion. After all during the consecration the words, "All of you" are invited to partake of the body and blood of Christ, not "just those of you who are Catholic". It has come to my notice recently that priests have refused Communion to people of other faiths. I believe it is outrageous for a priest to be so judgmental as to consider such people unworthy. This attitude takes us back to the days when we were brainwashed into believing that none but Catholics would enter the kingdom of heaven.

I think God is asking us in Australia at this time to live the gospel!

Need to follow the Bible. People should respect one another and help one another. If someone needs something people should give if they can. Priests should be able to get married. There

<p>should be punishment from the law for crimes of sexual abuse. People should treat each other well. It is very good to meet in groups for discussions and prayers. This helps people to find God. Respect for one another is so important. Trust in God—He doesn't always answer immediately. Parish priests should be given enough time to visit families who need help and support.</p>
<p>I think that God is asking us to treat everyone equally, no matter what race, gender, or sexual orientation.</p>
<p>To strive to truly live as a Church that trusts in the Spirit at work in all, one that listens and is responsive, that is open and inclusive, where authority functions as service, working in these ways both among its own as well as in its engagement with the world. In this way, and by its fruits, the Australian Catholic Church would credibly be Christ's witness to a people desperately wanting the same in its political, business and public media spheres. A standard worthy to be lifted up among Australians. Even among our faithful and committed active parishioners, the overwhelming response met when people are asked to contribute to the Plenary Council and its processes, is one of scepticism: no one has listened in the past or is really listening now, nothing that matters will change. As Ian Chubb recently said of our Federal politicians*, 'they know what we want but they will not do it'. Active and open intra-Church communication; lay giftedness called forth and empowered and fed by whole-of-life faith formation; priests as pastors, not managers... The Plenary Council offers an important and very visible opportunity to be and become a Church that listens and is responsive, one that is open and inclusive, a Church in which a collective sense of common purpose in all aspects of Church has been regained. But that opportunity will be lost if, when the Council sessions themselves arrive in 2020-2021, our Church is still unchanged in these ways. Preparation for the sessions will not be genuine or effective unless our Church conspicuously engages in renewal on the way. As key to that preparation. <i>Duc in altum</i>. Now. * AC, Chief Scientist of Australia 2011 to 2016, speaking at a recent Press Club session in Canberra (ABC broadcast).</p>
<p>God is asking us to be accepting, tolerant and in dialogue with all people in our community, regardless of colour, code or creed. To welcome the stranger, to be community and a visible face of the Catholic Church in our world for others.</p>
<p>What He has always asked of us: faithfulness, integrity, to walk with each other, see beyond ourselves, service, love of the gospel, community (within the parish and outreach), support our clergy, support the poor and marginalised, LISTEN to each other, stand by our values and in these days of post Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse to make sure that, moving forward, all children and vulnerable people are treated with dignity, respect and love.</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us to be inclusive and non-judgemental. To treat others as we wish to be treated. To follow Jesus' steps and to put others before ourselves.</p>
<p>Grassroots groups/communities (neighbours) that are apostolic, well-taught on the faith and living the faith To be well-taught, please create catechism materials that small well-meant Catholic communities can pick up and teach themselves basics of our faith. And provide ways to ask questions online easily, who is answered by a person of authority e.g. like quora-style</p>

To be open to change in the governance of the Catholic Church in Australia and beyond. The current model is broken. The Catholic Church in Melbourne and in Australia, and especially its model of governance, is in desperate need of reform. It is clear, based on the evidence, that the current male, clerical, celibate, hierarchical governance model is not fit for purpose. It has failed because of the undue deference and submissiveness of the Church community towards their leaders. Compounding that failure is the inadequacy of those leaders in dealing with the actions and presence of depraved, evil or simply weak colleagues, sometimes out of a belief that these individuals were special, sacred, separate and superior in holiness. This view of the special and extraordinary nature of the ordained priesthood, “superior in holiness and knowledge” was rejected by the Second Vatican Council. That gave priority to baptism as “the most fundamental Christian calling”. (See “Realising the dream of Vatican II” by Fr Noel Connolly SSC, Plenary Post Edition 10, Nov. 2018). Vatican II recognised that all Christians have the sense of faith and have a role in the leadership of the Church. Moreover, Pope Francis has called for bishops to lead a “resolute process of discernment, purification and reform” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, #30) in their local communities. He has urged them to not only “encourage and develop the means of participation proposed in the Code of Canon Law”, but to encourage and develop other forms of dialogue, and to listen to everyone, “not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear” (E.g., #31). Indeed, the Pope suggests at times the bishop’s role is to learn from, and follow, his people.

God is calling us all to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God and to live joyfully in the Lord. To be more aware of the poor in our world and reach out when or where possible. In loving and forgiving oneself one can extend that to all. We need to find time in prayer and meditation. Church buildings need to be open; welcome is the priority—into our buildings, into our hearts and into our Eucharist. Church as convenience store. Evangelisation is an archdiocesan priority, but is not visible from the pews—people’s call and gifts are not encouraged or sought. Many are inactive because they are not encouraged, let alone empowered. We need to honour and empower the giftedness of all, especially our women and, importantly, also our priests and religious who chose to leave, whether to marry or otherwise. God is calling us to be a ‘listening’ Church. Listening to and within the world, but firstly, critically, within our Church—accessible, present, two-way, open, hearing, responsive, active, cooperative, and accountable. One in which issues and matters and tasks of importance are able to surface, be owned and dealt with by us all. We are not. Our world badly needs our witness in this regard.

I submit that there are two issues that God might be drawing our attention to in Australia at this time. Firstly, public penance for the sins and crimes of sexual abuse. Secondly, establishing ways we can catechise our children, and our people in general, about the Catholic faith. If a Catholic does not know what the Church teaches, then he/she will easily walk away when times get tough, either in one's personal life or in the ever-increasing conflict between society and the Church.

To be a credible witness to the love of Jesus for the world. There are two 'arms' to this - the external and the internal.

**The external arm** is that the amazing work done by Catholic Christians in social welfare, development, disaster relief, advocacy for the poor, spiritual care, health, aged care, disability support and education needs to be continued, extended, and better advertised in the community. How many Australians realise how much work the Church does for all Australians, and for the

world? We need to 'blow our own trumpet' more effectively. In our advocacy for the poor, the Church needs to make clear how much of our human and material resources goes into work for others, be open about our 'wealth', and welcome fair audits that can help us better accomplish our vocation to be a beacon of hope and comfort for the needy. While being open about abuses, acknowledging how they have harmed many people, and that we should provide generous redress to those who were harmed, we should also be willing to point out how much wonderful work was done, and continues.

**Internally**, we need to change our decision-making processes. Laity, particularly women, need to be in positions of real power when it comes to setting policy, allocating human and material resources, appointing clergy and others to various ministries, and evaluating pastoral effectiveness. All who work for the Church, including clergy at all levels, need to be accountable for their actions to open forums that include laity - particularly women. The day of the imperial cleric, religious or indeed layman/woman, whether parish priest, diocesan official, bishop or 'boss' of a Catholic institution, should be well and truly over. All, particularly clergy, need to be willing to sign up to this new vision, or be barred from pastoral ministry or any work where they represent the Church - too much damage can be done otherwise. I believe this is essential for the Church to be a witness of Jesus Christ, and to properly respond to the systemic failures that the abuse crisis revealed. Although not within the competence of the Australian Church, the issue of the ordination of women to the diaconate needs to be seriously evaluated and if authorised should be a high priority. Women need to be seen as an ordinary part of the Church's liturgical leadership. The issue of priestly ordination for women also needs to be opened for serious debate. I stated above that I believe God is asking us to be a credible witness of the love of Jesus - at present for most Australians the Church's structures, and the subordinate place of women in them, are literally 'in-credible' and the theological justifications for them do not ring true while women are perceived, with mostly good cause, to be powerless.

Finally, I believe God is calling us to be a sign of the wonder and beauty of our wounded, crucified and resurrected Lord, who came to serve and gave totally of himself for the world.

I believe God is asking for inclusive leadership of the Australian Church. In light of the way the sexual abuse issue has been handled over the last fifty years by the hierarchy, I believe that structures need to be put in place where lay people deal with any future accusations against priests and Church workers, and Church leaders are not involved in the process of justice. I believe that history has shown that priests cannot deal with cases of sexual abuse within their own group. This issue has done so much damage to the integrity of the Church in Australia. Therefore I believe God is asking us to work together as lay members of the Church to find a way to heal and bring closure to what will be seen in history as one of the most damaging and destructive period in Church history.

To stay faithful to the Magisterium. To pray more intensely for the Holy Father and the bishops around the world. For lay men and women to recognise their call to be saints in the middle of the world through the service they render in their family, social and professional lives. To assist the youth to discern their vocation in life.

1. In store as a core strategy sanctity. Avoid novelty or entertainment within worship and liturgical practices. 2. Young People (i) Preparing young people (16—30 years) with Catechism classes at parish level. (ii) Youth programs centred around the sacraments and adoration. 3. Parents (i) Offering parents (especially young parents/newly married) ongoing formation. (ii) When parents do sacramental programs provide ongoing formation at a parish level. 4. Daily Masses: (i) increased Monday Masses. (ii) daily Mass times are coordinated between local parishes so that there are a range of times e.g. 6.30am, 9am etc. as this would allow for workers to come to the sacraments. (iii) Update parish websites so that Mass times are always up to date. If a priest is away a replacement is found so the sacraments can still be administered. 5. Schools (i) Improve the way formation is provided in schools, e.g. using the Catechism of the Catholic Church. (ii) Catholic Education Office—employ practicing Catholics who are well formed in the Catholic faith. 6. Teachers (i) Catechisms and doctrinal formation should be the backbone of religious instruction in schools. Help teachers by providing high quality materials and ongoing resources. 7. Priesthood (i) Ongoing formation for the ordained priesthood. This includes a list of doctrinal and moral topics that priests are required to study and include in their homilies. Additionally, making the list of the topics and supplementary reading available to parishioners for their ongoing formation. 8. Communication (ii) Communicate the message of the beauty of the faith by highlighting the tremendous good the Church does. Improve the messaging of the Church. (iii) Improved communication of the Churches teaching on divorced parents, e.g. how we can encourage them and their families to attend Mass. 9. Sacraments and liturgy (i) Increase opportunity for Adoration of the Blessed sacrament in parishes. (ii) More opportunities for confession (before, during and after Mass) by coordinating local parish priests to assist with the confessions during Masses. 10. Apologetics (i) Run courses at a parish level on apologetics. Have some training for parishioners on how to better explain Church teachings. 11. Improving Church appearance e.g. following the guidelines outlined in the Church’s Magisterium about sacred art and music.

We cannot see the mind of God, nor do we have a clear picture of the future. So all we can say is what we want for the Church. In considering its future direction, the Church needs to ponder deeply on St Paul’s words: ‘There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus’. We think the Church needs to open every role to baptised members trusting the Spirit to inspire people as needed.

**Liturgy** We want the liturgy updated with good English:—simple, preferably elegant, inclusive language—easily understood—easily spoken by people as a community—crafted by wordsmiths. As an interim step, we suggest reverting to the Vatican II English liturgy, agreed upon with and still used by the Anglicans. This immediately avoids such clangers as 'consubstantial with' and 'for us men...' Ceremony does not need to be pompous to be meaningful. We value a rigorous structure but need some flexibility to suit local celebrations.

**Hierarchy** We think the Church needs less top down management, more transparency, fewer fine robes and courtly titles. Subsidiarity is an existing principle that could be built on. We want significant change in culture to a less imperial model of Church sharing power and responsibility with the laity. Build on the good work of Vatican II. Women need to be included in decision-making at all levels; equally, the Church needs women to be there. In fact, open up all responsible positions in the Church and remove all restrictions on who qualifies to hold them. Build a culture

that encourages and empowers the laity to contribute significantly to the life of the Church in all ways. In caring for their dioceses, local bishops should call on the expertise of their local people.

**Attitude to Human Sexuality** We think priestly celibacy should be optional. We want the abuse crisis to be acknowledged and dealt with wholeheartedly, not grudgingly. Currently the Church has no credibility in the community. Wholehearted restitution' means not only unreserved acknowledgement of failures and generous compensation to those harmed but also a commitment to change the whole organisational culture that hid the abuse, from Rome down.

**The question of gender** Given the fast pace of change in scientific understanding of human sexuality, the Church would do well not to rule on sexuality at all. Remember Galileo. If the Church must speak, let it speak with the breadth of God in mind, knowing that: —God is good, God created all, the same spirit is at work in the heart of all people, and—the followers of Jesus are meant to be the yeast in the world, not the whole loaf.

**Ecumenism** We want engagement with other Christian Churches and other religious groups to be resumed, as per Vatican II. “No more us and them, just we”.

**Reconciliation** We need the return of the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation where the community together contritely presents itself to joyfully receive God’s mercy.

For our country, Australia - To have more compassion, outreach and global responsibility to help those in need internationally and at home - To develop a sustainable energy and climate change policy - For the Catholic Church to be true to and live the values of Christ - To be honest and completely bear responsibility for its past and present failures re abuse - To completely overhaul its traditional male-centric top down power structure. For us - To love God and love our neighbour as ourselves

For Catholic schools, especially secondary, to teach the true faith preferably by specialised religious people. Most teachers do not practise their faith and know very little about it. Having gone through both primary and secondary schools I was very disappointed with what was taught if any. The children are not encouraged to go to Reconciliation. They don't even know that it is a sin not to go to Mass every Sunday.

God is asking us to be honest. Honest about the abuse that people have suffered at the hands of the clergy. Priests need to acknowledge the pain and change that is happening right now. The Church needs to take ownership of its own sacraments. Remove them from schools where they have to be done. If someone wants a sacrament they should do it in their own time because they want to, not because they are forced to at school. Women need to become priests in the Catholic Church. We are treated like second class citizens and not acknowledged. The Church we have today is far removed from the message of Jesus.

God IS asking us to declare our commitment to our faith. Is it growing or gone stale? Do I believe in God, the Creator, in his son Jesus Christ, his crucifixion and ascension into heaven? Do I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church, saints, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? We see a declining Church, but an ascendancy of devoted migrants. Many Western Christians don't see the need to be in communion with others. Perhaps they have been hurt by members of the Church, perhaps it is just a change in society, perhaps they see the faith so

watered down and eroded away that they feel it doesn't matter. Whatever it has been, we need to address it. I became a Catholic at 35, through adult initiation of baptism, confirmation and receiving the sacraments. But it was treated as a private reception of the rituals, rather than as a moment when the parish could be involved. I was a person hungry for more. Afterwards, I started to participate in learning about the Holy Spirit. Participated in movements like Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, Stewardship. I became involved in the RCIA for other people searching; and in Church ministries. I wanted to know more about similarities and differences between Catholicism and other faiths, Christian, Jewish and Muslim. And all the while learning and expanding my understanding of what it meant for me to be a Catholic Christian—continual spiritual conversion. I read books, attended lectures, but always wondering, "why was I just one of the few?" Times of great challenge and difficulty often bring opportunities for renewal and growth. We read of the excitement of the first Pentecost, the personal stories of the Apostles. The power of the Holy Spirit coming to rest on people. We need to be continually evangelising to everyone—including Catholics—increasing our depth of knowledge of faith, witnessing to the power of the Spirit. We need to learn inclusion, so that we always involve others. Not just at a directed "sign of peace" or "newsletter!", but in a way that makes people comfortable in the Church, in faith, in the kingdom. Inclusion is welcoming in a ministry way. Parish faith programs need to be run continually by knowledgeable parishioners or invited speakers including programs like Divine Renovation and Alpha, should be included too. Creating an environment where faith and understanding are hungered and thirsted for, and the Mass becoming the gathering and high point of the faith, not the only part of faith.

The key ideas that emerged from our 3 Listening and Dialogue sessions were: 1. to develop a more rigorous role for women in our Church. 2. The do away with clericalism and increase a spiritual Church 3. Reconstruct the rules of the priesthood - celibacy, female. Make training connected to the lives of 21<sup>st</sup> century parishioners. 4. Take responsibility for the mistakes of sexual abuse and put in place rigorous responses to avoid future repeats.

People have lost the reverence of God and his creation. God is asking us to respect the dignity and differences of all mankind regardless of creed and to let go of our inward, dualistic thinking that has steered us towards attitudes that are self-serving and undisciplined. Priests very rarely teach of the personal experience of Confession so the practice of acting in the light of the gospel and the moral and social teaching of the Church is a thing of the past. The work of justice and peace is left to political party promises that panda to our fear and ignorance. Solutions to problems are clearly laid out in '*Laudato Si*' by Pope Francis. We need to acknowledge that religion has been the problem and God is asking us to rediscover our roots that go back to Abraham. The Abrahamic faith is the one story that Jews, Christians and Muslims hold in common. Breaking open the scripture verses in Genesis and learning about creation and humanity will give us a fresh approach to God's covenant he made with all his people. Listening to scripture and tradition, and letting God's word speak will empower us on the road to tolerance and co-existence in our world. Genesis begins the narrative and our own personal stories shared with others will build strong and supportive communities. The Church today is a Church without the personal faith stories that built the early Church community. Their need to connect came from the exact centre of their purpose and passion to worship God and to love others. Today, people say: What's in it for me? Or,

evangelising is what the Jehovah Witness people do. Sadly, parishioners are fearful to speak out their faith to others. Churches are no longer seen as places of prayer other than places for weekend and daily Mass. The Church needs to challenge parishioners as to why they are Catholic and that their primary reason for evangelizing is the love of Jesus. We are all disciples and belong to the body of Christ. We all have the gifts to evangelising with love. Being Catholic on a Sunday is not enough. We need to be living God's love 24/7. Finding who we are and what gifts and talents we have will strengthen and build our faith communities.

To follow countries that stand for the truth. To hold our own Godly values and not be swayed by power, greed. To influence through Godly actions. To love without tolerating sin. Be the light that continues to shine when others are in chaos.

We think God is asking to put the formation and accompanying of young people in the Church as a priority. Young people are the future of our Church and it would be great if we could help them strengthen and love their faith.

To love everyone. This is at the core of Catholicism and many religions. But to love everyone we must also acknowledge, and not only tolerate but accept the beliefs and lifestyles of all people. If their beliefs and lifestyles do not negatively influence others or the world, we should accept them, welcome them and celebrate them. The world is changing, and the Catholic Church needs to move with it. There is much more diversity in today's world, which is beautiful and I believe present because so many people are celebrating diversity. The Catholic Church must also accept diversity and change. Namely, the acceptance of others' sexual preferences and gender identities. Love everyone, accept, welcome and celebrate diversity which has a positive influence on the world. Positive because this acceptance makes people happier, healthier and more involved in our community.

God is asking us to be humble, generous and loving. God would want a Church that values each person who wants to join. He would want everyone to be fully appreciated for who they are. He would have a Church where each person's gifts are identified, nurtured and nourished into ministries to serve the mission the Church has been given. God wants a Church which is free of barriers and encourages and welcomes all. God would have a Church where lay leadership is encouraged and promoted for all members of the laity.

To be tolerant, caring and respectful of one another. To be non-judgmental. To follow his path and be involved. To love God and our neighbour. To engage more with our fellow parishioners and the wider community. To be more welcoming as all made in God's image. To seek justice for the poor and marginalised. To be honest about the abuse and to take steps to ensure that victims are treated with respect and receive appropriate compensation promptly. That we acknowledge how badly the Church has handled the situation. No more cover ups. That the good works of the Church be publicised better. That we examine the role of women in the Church. That we look at the wealth of the Church to see if our resources could be better used to assist the poor and disadvantaged. To look at how the laity can be more involved in the life of the Church so as to allow priests to spend more time carrying out their priestly duties and less time on administration. To look at what is working, i.e. some church congregations are more enthusiastic in their celebrations, membership and church attendances. Can we look at these parishes and see if we

can learn from them? To look at how the Church is structured. We have built up a Church which is run like a business with too many managers and priests engaged in matters not directly related to ministering to the members. To look at the Catholic school system. This is perceived to provide a better education when compared to the state school system but not necessarily a Catholic education. No longer a great deal of interaction between school and parish. To find a way to engage with the young people and encourage them back to the Church. Young people seen as basically very caring and sympathetic to the needs of those who are different, e.g. refugees, people with mental health problems, the homeless and people with gender issues however the general feeling being conveyed to their parents and grandparents is that church services are boring and not relevant to their lives. That the Church has too many rules and regulations which they see to be outdated. They felt it was not natural for priests to be celibate, that women were discriminated against and people who didn't fit into the "normal" genders of male or female were not actively welcomed into the Church as full members.

To be tolerant of all. To be more joyous and vibrant in our celebration and participation of the liturgy and practice of our religion. To reach out to one another. To let the world know the good that we in the Catholic Church do. To take time to pray and read the Bible so we can know and love God better. By having God's love in our lives, we may be better able to love ourselves and our neighbours. To take the example of Pope Francis and make the Church less showy and pretentious and refocus on a more simple way of doing things. To look at the rules and regulations, e.g. in relation to marriage divorce and remarriage, to see if people can be treated more sympathetically, especially where they are not the one at fault in the marriage breakdown. To take care of our priests and religious by looking for ways to assist them in their work. To find a way of reaching out to our young people, who live in a country which is trying to be fair to those who are different and to stamp out discrimination and abuse, and who feel that the Church is out of step with these principles. To review our Catholic school system to see if there can be better cooperation between church and school communities. To be better informed about how the Church is governed and who decides how and why we do things the way we do. To provide more information to Catholics and the outside world in relation to the Church's teaching, especially on controversial subjects, e.g. the role of women. Who can be deacons? Under what circumstances can priests marry? Are gay and transgender people welcomed into the Church? Contraception and family planning. Divorce and annulment. To review rules and regulations to see if there can be a more sympathetic and simpler approach. To look at the workload of our priests and the people who assist them. The average person would have no idea how the priest spends his time and what work is carried out by deacons and pastoral associates. As there is a shortage of priests, could more duties be undertaken by the laity e.g. administration, church and school building renovations and refurbishments, and bereavement group?

Without life all other rights are meaningless ... In most Australian States, pre-born children who are unwanted by their mothers have been stripped of their legal right to life with the result that millions of the most defenceless of our brothers and sisters are being slaughtered in abortion mills throughout our country. Jesus said "whatever you do to the least of my little ones that you do unto me". How Jesus must be weeping at the current day slaughter of the innocents which dwarfs the number slaughtered by Herod. Saint Teresa of Calcutta said when accepting the Nobel Peace

Prize. "If we as a society can legally allow a mother to kill even her own child in her own womb how can we tell other people not to kill each other? Any society which permits abortion is not teaching its people to love but to use any violence to get what they want". The abortion issue dwarfs all others in terms of its significance for our society and our Catholic faith. If we are killed before birth, then this Plenary Council has no relevance whatsoever for us. Sadly from my observation, many in our society now view the killing of our unborn to be an acceptable and normal part of life. So seldom do we even hear a Prayer of the Faithful said for the defenceless unborn at our daily or Sunday Masses. Yet, nearly every other category of disadvantaged or suffering person is prayed for. Imagine the outcry if 100 born children were being massacred every day in killing centres in Melbourne. I doubt there would a Sunday that there would not be prayers at our Masses for an end to this slaughter. Why the blatant discrimination and conspiracy of silence when it comes to the unborn? I maintain that God is asking us as His Church in Australia to be serious about striving to restore a culture of life in our society. A good start would be for there to be always prayers at our Masses for an end to abortion and for full legal protection for the unborn. Further, we should be praying that more and more people be prepared to make the abortion issue their highest priority when voting at elections. Any candidate for public office who supports the killing of the unborn is unworthy of being elected, no matter how qualified he or she is in other areas such as the economy. In 1980, the Conference of Australian Catholic Bishops issued a statement entitled 'Greatest Human Rights Issue of the 1980's' which included the following: "Every human being has an inviolable right to life. Rich or poor, strong or weak, young or old, born or unborn, every human life is sacred. The directly intended killing of any innocent human being whatsoever is always wrong. Nothing can ever justify it. It is urgent to proclaim this truth IN SEASON OR OUT OF SEASON, WELCOME OR UNWELCOME. But words are not enough. This human right, under threat as it is, needs to be fully recognised and protected by the law. We applaud those groups who are using their rights as citizens of a democracy to organise support for this great cause".

Personal holiness of priests and people. Catechism for children. Rosary before/after Holy Mass. Greater reverence at Holy Mass. Eucharistic Adoration. Procession on feast of Corpus Christi and Christ the King. Promote/enhance devotion to Mary. Secondary school children to be taught/promote chastity and moral behaviour. Young people to be attracted to the Catholic Church through sound, solid catechesis and social interactions. Children at Catholic schools to be taught by teachers who actually profess and practise the Catholic faith. Priests and religious who are faithful to the promise/vow of celibacy and chastity. Priests who have the courage to publicly expound the Church's teachings. Elderly Catholics in nursing homes or house-bound to be given spiritual comfort by way of devotional activities. Spiritual Director for lay groups in the parish e.g. Legion of Mary. A Legion of Mary Praesidium (group) comprised of local parishioners to be set up in each parish to carry out evangelisation and other apostolic works under the direction of the parish priest.

To maintain focus on the message of Jesus and try and include and live this in our lives. This simple message is all encompassing. I think God would be wondering how we get this message through. God would be wondering where his message got lost and why? Wondering how this giant (Catholic Church) has managed to self-destruct in many ways, and wanting us to identify this

<p>and look to contemporary ways to address same. Asking us not to be bogged down by tradition and man-made rules, but to "drag" the Catholic Church into the 21C. Where issues can be identified and rectified by contemporary thinking (in line with the message of Jesus).</p>
<p>Our forgiveness and response to the hurt and negative feelings encountered by so many people. I think we should also see that the hierarchy need to be more humble.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to create a Church that is inclusive of all people, especially divorced and gay people. I believe God would like a Church that truly follows the teachings of Jesus and accepts all those who are seen as sinful and welcomes them into the Church. I believe that God is asking us to see women treated as equals within his Church.</p>
<p>To show acceptance of diversity to be a Church of Welcome</p>
<p>* Work with youth * Repair relationship * Understand and accept all and embrace similarities and differences * Openness, honesty and transparency * Reconnect with faith and the Church</p>
<p>Our small team met on retreat to discuss feedback to the Plenary Council. The following is a range of thoughts that our discussion covered: • We need to 'take hold' of the technological revolution and engage in the tension of the pace of change to support those in the community who are left behind. • The Church in Australia needs to go against the tide as indicated by Pope Francis, become more relatable, and listen to the voices of the vulnerable. • We need to make sure we don't let the most important treasure be the budget. • We need to be courageous in showing that a 'revolution of tenderness' looks like and the Church can lead this. • We need to place the vulnerable at the centre of everything we do as a mission of the Church. • We need to practically journey with those with lived experience of vulnerability. • We need to revolutionise Catholic healthcare by not simply following government funding models and respond to the needs of the poor on our local communities. • We and the wider Church need to be bold and be prepared to be vulnerable. We need to connect solidarity to structural change. We need to show we understand the concerns of the community by undertaking concrete actions. • As a healthcare organisation, we are a mission of the Church and are called to use our voice, our power and our unique insights in the service of the common good and to influence change for those most in need.</p>
<p>+Cultivate youth back to the Church. +More training for teachers to teach religion, presently teachers are ill equipped and not following the faith. +More Church programs to bring children and families together, by launching a CFC-Catholic Family Community. +Establish more youth groups that are vibrant and promote friendship and comradery. +Induction programs run by experts (e.g. PP, RE Coordinators or Faith Community Leaders) to assist parents in making a commitment and work in partnership with their schools to raise children of faith. +More testimonies from community members who a spirit filled and who have overcome adversities. +Train up more lay people to work in schools.</p>
<p>To have a think about how we gather as Catholics.</p>
<p>to show the world that we acknowledge the wrongs of the past in relation to child abuse and that we will do everything in our power to ensure it does not happen again</p>

Topic: Accepting all and being inclusive. The Church being against accepting of gay people and refusing to allow them to marry in the Catholic setting. Until the Church shows a willingness to move on from certain beliefs and past traditions, then it is very difficult for people to listen to the positives and great things about the Church because it seems like the Church is against homosexuality. The Royal Commission and the history of sexual abuse means that many people can't move past the trauma and what occurred. The cover-up and the number of people impacted is unforgivable for so many. The pain. We need to accept everyone and understand we all are different. No one should be turned away because of their personal beliefs.

To protect our children and the future generations, to protect their innocence.

To be accepting of others regardless of race, religion or sexuality.

The Catholic Church needs to rebuild its brand which has been tainted by the sexual abuse case. There has also been financial abuse by the Church with staff being underpaid and the industrial award not being honoured. Further, there has been workplace bullying in Catholic workplaces which has not been justly resolved. Just as we are moving towards healing and transparency in the sexual abuse area—now the cloak needs to be lifted on workplace bullying and financial abuse. The Church needs to be more proactive in the community—as Pope Francis promotes—we need to be with the people. Like shepherds—we need to know our communities, our sheepfold and love and care for them tenderly. We need to move away from clericalism, intellectual pride, and insensitivity towards the needs of others. The clergy need to be more aware of social issues, and particularly the needs of families. The Church needs to uphold the values of traditional Christian marriage and not be swayed by secular models of gay marriage, gender fluidity and other confused and damaging thinking. Clergy and lay people need to be trained in a new social and theological way to address the complex secular theories which are undermining traditional marriage and the beauty and dignity of our God-given gender. In addition, more attention needs to be paid to the sexualisation of culture. Our men, and boys, need to be warned about the dangers of consuming pornography - and infidelity in their relationships. This is epidemic. It's hidden and it's corrosive. Many women and children are suffering neglect and trauma because of men's poor formation in this area and the ease of access to smutty materials on the TV, internet and likewise. God is asking our bishops and leaders to be more 'hands on' and to be more shepherd-like. We need bishops and leaders to be more servant heart. We desperately need to see courage—like Oscar Romeo—who spoke out boldly, repeatedly and bravely against the people and forces which were throwing injustice at 'his people'. And yes, Oscar Romeo, like Christ, died for his faith—and is remembered always as a dignified leader and role model. We need our priests to start talking about the social issues at the pulpit. Our priests need to stop trying to impart dense theology and intellectualism, and rather, like Jesus—use story, narrative and everyday examples to engage with their people. People in the modern world are tired, stressed and aching for spirituality. Our priests, religious and Church leaders - more than ever—need to provide us with Christ's living water. They need to die to self—to their own selfish egos—so that we can be formed, fed and nourished. Only then, will a new People of God be raised up—and once formed, refreshed and inspired by the encounter with their priests, religious and communities—will go out and spread the light and love of Christ to all that they encounter. And we will pray for our leaders in turn that they can remain faithful.

I feel God would like us to stand up for the Church and come back to the Church. We have been extremely weak and complacent with our faith. We are not fighting for the Church and to be Catholic. We have shut God out of our lives. Our priests need to be a bit more consistent with what they teach. Schools need to be teaching God's commandments and the teachings of the Church. Very, very little is taught in class rooms, from primary to complete secondary. Children know very little of the teachings of God and the Church. Parents know very little of the teachings of God and the Church. We need to get back to the fundamentals of proper Catholic teachings. God wants us to do His will. He expects us to do His will. We are here to know Him, love Him and to do His will. People will come back more to the "fold" if we are firm in our beliefs and the teachings of the Church.

1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Vatican II tells us that God speaks to us through the signs of the times, so these for us are the signs of our times and what we believe they are asking of us:

- Shortage of priests... therefore what we believe God is asking of us is ...
- ∅ Optional celibacy
- ∅ That all Eucharistic roles within the Church be open to women and lay men.
- Royal Commission's concern about the First Rite of Confession
- ∅ Return to the Third Rite of Confession which was such a great pastoral success
- Clericalism... identified by the Royal Commission as the major cause of the sexual abuse of children.
- ∅ Seminary formation be parish-based
- ∅ Lay people, especially women, have a greater involvement in their assessment as suitable candidates and their training.
- ∅ All priests, like any professional, be required to have annual on-going professional development and pastoral supervision.
- People felt alienation in liturgy.
- ∅ A greater integration and connection of ritual with the reality of people's lives
- ∅ Reinstate the former English language liturgical translation, including inclusive language for human beings and God.
- ∅ A revitalisation of the liturgical arts in all their forms. This would include various forms of the visual arts, music and composition, and the financial support to enable and encourage young people's involvement.
- Mass exodus of people, young and old from the institutional Church and its practices, with Catholics from overseas apparently filling the shortfall. The uncertainty of the viability of this for the future generations given their immersion in a secular society.
- ∅ Help people develop a deep, personal spirituality rather than an over-focus on sacraments.
- ∅ A pastoral approach that is much more inclusive and welcoming of the diversity of human experience without moralising and without judgement.
- ∅ A structure be put in place that allows their voices to be heard so that they have an influence on decision-making and shaping the institution.
- An appalling lack of leadership in the Bishop's Conference... present system of nomination is crippling the Church.
- ∅ The process for the nomination of bishops needs to be more open, transparent with consultations from the parishes on suggested names.
- ∅ There needs to be mechanisms that hold bishops accountable to the people.
- ∅ Changes made in Canon Law that limits the power of bishops
- ∅ The Bishops Conference needs to be transformed into a Conference of bishops, priests and Laity, each group having voting rights.
- ∅ Regular Diocesan Synods (each three years) that welcome the voices of the people of the diocese to formulate visions and pastoral plans. These Synods would be opportunities to prepare for regular Plenary Councils (each six years)
- ∅ That there would be a serious effort to have gender balance at all levels of diocesan and parish councils.

I am attaching a submission developed by [names of husband and wife] of the Catholic parish of [parish name]. [Husband name] converted to Catholicism in 1984 and has been an active member of the Church ever since. [Wife name] was born to a Catholic family and has been involved with the Church all her life. We have a deep love of the Church but have been much dismayed with the terrible scandals that have recently plagued the Church and the behaviour, and lack of action by those in authority. We are also concerned that women have been sidelined by the Church and would like to see a more welcoming attitude to them, particularly young women who should be the future mothers of the next generation of Catholics.

God is asking of us in Australia at this time to recommit to the core tenant of Jesus' message to love one another and to treat everyone as you would want to be treated. This means to practice our faith without prejudice, be mindful of those who have suffered at the hands of our Church and return to the true message of Jesus to seek God and shine out God's love into the world.

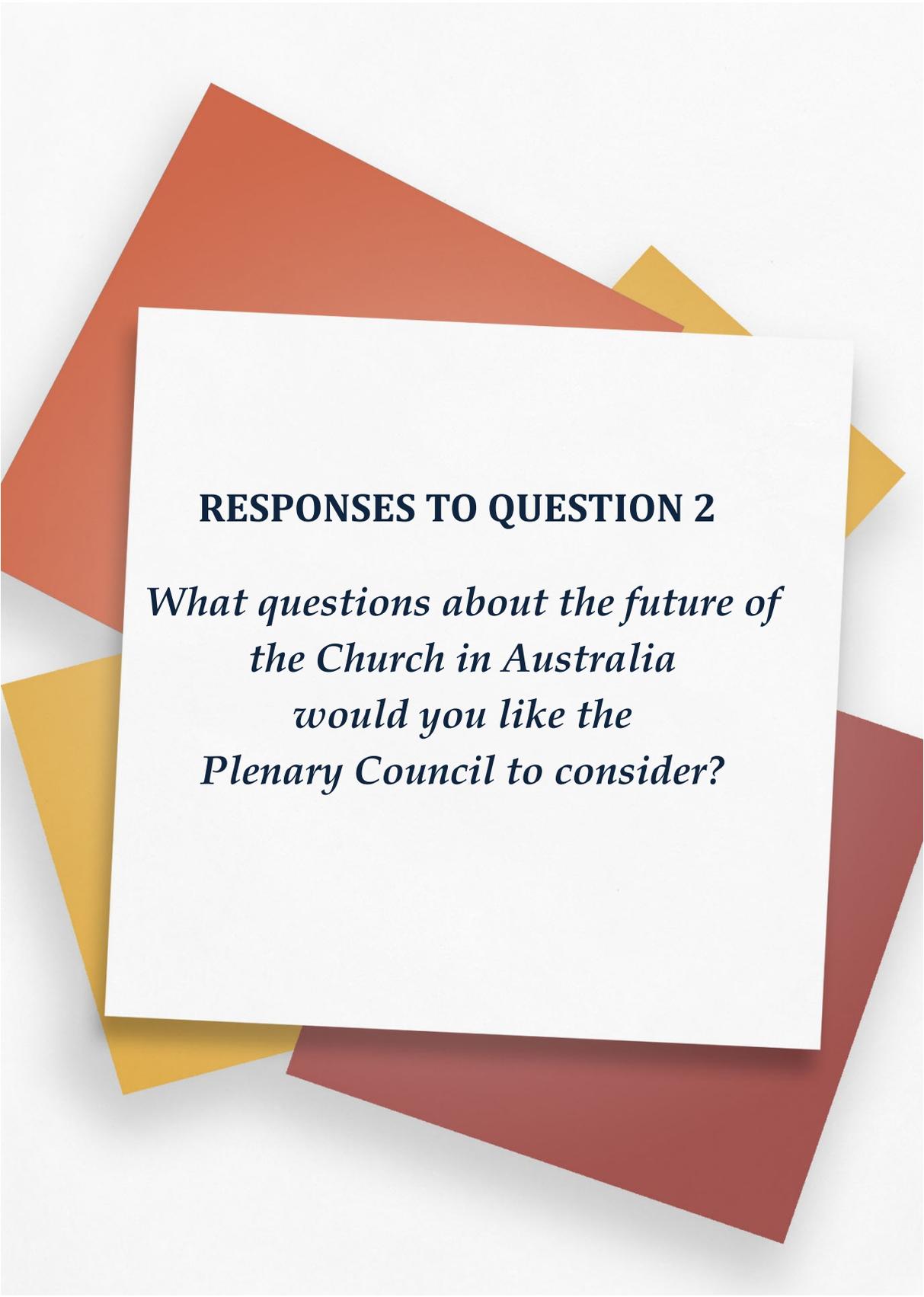
Child abuse has highlighted a range of issues within the Catholic Church that need addressing. This goes right to the core of Church values and a need to understand child development resulting in a theology of the child. It also calls for the Church to look at itself and protect the rights of people, especially children, not those within its brotherhood who have caused this damage. It demands that Church inaction cease and policy reform begin. We need leaders of vision who are prepared to courageously implement radical change.

- For radical change that is measured, purposeful and better reflects the gospel values.
- More open and transparent governance, accountability and oversight within the hierarchy of the clergy that includes the addition of laity on these boards/groups/committees.
- We need to measure our success and our failures. Implementation of on-going processes of quality improvement within the Church.
- Greater support for priests in their noviciate. All priests to have monthly supervision as well as a mentor priest for all new priests in parishes. The implementation of a Centre for Excellence in Clerical Supervision be created and shared across all denominations. Better training for priests to understand parish life and engage with community. The option of marriage for those who find the commitment of celibacy too difficult. The human condition requires others for true fulfilment and fewer mental health issues.
- Mass is core but needs to be more youth-friendly and open to greater cultural diversity and engagement of laity.
- Youth and their parents are the future of our Church. More is needed to attract and welcome them. Offer opportunities for involvement that are of interest to young people. Focus on music ministry. Learn from other denominations how and what they do to engage their young people. Support young parents to remain within the Church.
- Laity needs to be more involved in all aspects of the Church, especially on oversight boards and committees. Lay people on church boards and in influential, higher level decision-making groups and leadership positions. Adult education to be offered and improved.
- Church needs to reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community and to do more to support refugees and migrants.
- We need women leaders (not just participation) to be included in all levels of leadership within the Church hierarchy. Their contribution needs to be recognised with far more engagement of women in Church decision-making roles. We recommend the ordination of women as a positive way forward.
- Mission/outreach/social justice: The Church speaks more publicly on these issues and operates as a moral compass in the community, influencing government and beyond. Local parishes to meet people where they are at, in their communities.
- Increase the opportunities for

ecumenical encounters that reflect true dialogue and learnings from each other. • Acknowledge the role of the sacraments in Church

God is asking us to live our lives as faith filled. To go out and bring others back to church. To get back to the 'basics of the Commandments'. We believe God is asking that when decisions are made by the hierarchy of the Church that the bishops reflect on what 'would their mothers' say to such decisions. God has shown us as a result of the child abuse that we need to divest power away from the clergy. We need better education for the youth and a reform of Canon Law which has too many rules and regulations especially rules concerning the marriage annulment process.

I am very pleased to be a Catholic but, like many, I want the Church to be transparent and accountable. The Church needs to concentrate more on the gospel instead of clericalism (both laity and clergy). The Church in my opinion is more intent on rules which promote fear instead of allowing freedom to explore a healthy relationship with God. It is too keen on making people feel guilty, blamed or to have hang-ups.



**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. Will the Plenary sessions be streaming on line?
2. What will happen to parishes if merges and closures continue?
3. How will roles be created for women that will lead to equal participation in the decision-making processes of the Church?
4. Why are women excluded from the diaconate?
5. Are we going to digress from the model Christ gave us?
6. How do we encourage and support adults in accepting the responsibility of their baptism?
7. When will the Church ordain women?
8. How do we discourage decision-making based often on misguided feelings or understanding (e.g. "gay people deserve the same rights as us straight people and so gay marriage should be allowed") and back to hard-nosed gospel-focused decision making?
9. How can we commence a discussion about a shared parish model that sees the priest as the servant, rather than the 'superman' who does it all?
10. How can a model of lay leadership be encouraged, whereby people are empowered to take more responsibility in parish life?
11. Will clericalism be honestly addressed?
12. How have and when will the bishops and priests really show remorse for the "mistakes" of the past?
13. Why do we persist with a rite of reconciliation that is not being used, and yet banning the 3rd rite of reconciliation that is very attractive?
14. How are you going to attract people back to the Church?
15. How can the Church be relevant for this and future generations?
16. How can the Church be open and show the mercy of God?
17. Is there some way the general churchgoer can be educated in the ways and practices of the Church? e.g. one piece of information each Sunday as part of general notices "
18. Why are not all people invited to the table of the Lord?
19. Are we going to really embrace all people as they are?
20. Are we going to change our Mass language?
21. How is the Church going to welcome back those Catholics who have been denied access to the sacraments because of divorce or separation from their partners, as many have drifted away feeling unwelcome in God's House.

22. How will the Church help to alleviate the plight of the homeless and vulnerable people, in answer to the document, 'A Place to Call home', (published by the Australian Bishops for Social Justice)?
23. How can the Church guide young people to find their vocation and be holy?
24. Are you as a council willing to change long held, manmade, rules to become more of a Christ-like community/organisation?
25. Are you willing to embrace women & the laity into senior roles to lighten the load of our dwindling priest community?
26. How does the Church plan to engage with young Australians going forward?
27. In order for the Church to remain relevant, will the teachings and promotion of certain doctrines be altered, if they are how so?
28. Does the hierarchy intend to do to introduce married priests?
29. What is the Church doing to engage with young people?
30. How will the Church spiritually fight the pressures of the world among her people?
31. How can adult Catholic members have their rightful say?
32. Can we have the 3rd Rite of reconciliation?
33. Would the Church of Australia be able to get rid of homosexual priests?
34. Can church be less about traditions and pompous ceremony and more about a personal relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
35. How are you going to address the Royal Commission into sexual abuse?
36. Will people who are gay ever be allowed to get married in the Church?
37. How can you as a Church support and involve publicly the LGBT community?
38. Can the bishops fully represent and understand the issues and experiences of such a diverse group of Australians?
39. Why is tradition more important than the people?
40. Why does the Catholic Church hold so much wealth?
41. Why do we not hear the Church leaders condemning late term abortions, the euthanasia bill, the fact that over 80% of the abuse cases were homosexual in nature?
42. How can the Church shift the focus from the negatives on our religion to the positives?
43. Will priests be permitted to marry in the future?
44. How do we achieve ongoing catechesis in our parishes?
45. How do we interest Catholics in learning more about their religion?
46. How can the Church better promote its religious communities and movements?
47. How can the Church reach the people that can't come to the services on Sunday in a more efficient way to?
48. Review the Catholic school system and its links with the Church. What is being taught in our schools?
49. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls us to action. What program/s or action/s could be implemented within parishes, schools, workplaces and other organisations to make a real difference to the issue of climate change?
50. How can we create more acceptance and unity in the Church?
51. What are you doing to create a safer place for young people in the Church?
52. How does the Church adapt to the ever-changing society?
53. Why are there no female leaders in the Church?
54. Did God get it wrong when he created homosexuals?
55. Will the Church allow for lay and female priests?
56. How much of our rich traditions and deep-down solid beliefs are we going to keep and how much are we willing to water it all down just to be popular?

57. Should priests/bishops be obliged to attend the sick/poor regularly to help them remain grounded?
58. How will the Church work with the large number of priests and religious who are being brought to serve in Australia from overseas?
59. Can every Catholic primary school provide the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program?
60. What will the Church implement now to ensure that Catholics of the future have every opportunity to know and live their faith?
61. When will the Church allow married men to be ordained?
62. Are prayers, such as the Holy Rosary, included in everyday activities of the school and the Church?
63. Can daily Mass be included in the activities of Catholic schools?
64. Why don't we have that many Catholic youth groups in Australia?
65. Why do some Churches not celebrate Mass on Mondays?
66. Will the Church value and serve the needs of our time?
67. How can Catholics work together with other Christians and worship with them?
68. How are we going to move forward after the Royal Commission?
69. Why do we have so few days of obligation compared to other countries?
70. How will the Church organisation address the child sexual abuse scandal so that it doesn't happen again?
71. When will the Church establish a framework of governance in our parish communities which better reflects the ethos of Christ?
72. With fewer clergy and religious, how can lay people be given a greater role in both the spiritual and administrative life of the Church?
73. How will the Church attract more men and women to religious life?
74. Are we determined to provide sound and complete formation to seminarians?
75. How can we encourage youth to be more involved?
76. Are the Church's assets being used in the way Jesus intended, are we being humble and serving others?
77. Are we flogging a dead horse with our Catholic education system? If so, what is our next move?
78. How does the Church remain relevant in our contemporary Australian society?
79. How can we actively challenge the false ideologies shaping our culture?
80. How will the Church adapt to allow for greater awareness of and participation in today's modern world (including adapting to technology, and showing awareness and acceptance and/or addressing of contemporary societal values in line with Church teaching)?
81. How much of us in Australia know enough about the faith to practice it well?
82. How do we rescind bad Church regulations such as the requirement for priests to be celibate and the processes of annulment?
83. When will Catholic schools be audited by priests or bishops?
84. When will priests acknowledge the long-lasting damage caused by the abuse?
85. How can the laity overturn years of clericalism and build a Church that is bottom up rather than top down?
86. Why do few people really understand the need for a personal relationship with God?
87. How will you protect members of the Church against discrimination from others within the Church?

88. Those who have taken part in the discussions have a genuine desire to see reform of outdated rules and more compassion for those who suffer. Will our input be heard & acted upon?
89. How do we invigorate the community to believe in Christ and the Church?
90. How can we deploy more lay people in the Church and in schools?
91. How can we improve our image after all the negative publicity we have had in the media?
92. How can we change ignorance and prejudice?
93. Does the current leadership in the Church really understand the urgency to seize the moment to restore faith and trust in being Catholic in Australia today?
94. How much consideration will be given to our requests/ recommendations in the end?
95. What can we do for the many who have walked away from their faith?
96. What is going to be done about Catholic Education in our schools, to improve it?
97. How will the church ensure Catholic Education will be ethically reliable, accessible and equally academically challenging while representing and working in co-ordination with our local parish churches for our children in the future?
98. How is the Church going to win the “hearts and minds” of the children who are the future when the Church seems to be losing out to the mindlessness of today’s world?
99. How is the Church going to change the perception of ‘losing out’ and how is the Church going to make itself more accessible to all, but especially to the young?
100. How can the Church support the extension of Catholic School education into a whole parish experience?
101. How do parents regain their faith community and establish an encounter personally with Jesus?
102. How will the Plenary Council make the Church be more like people’s favourite sporting club? – in motivation, allegiance, aspirations, longing to succeed, identity, faithfulness.
103. What can the Plenary Council do to modernise the Church: its practices, its marketing messages, its liturgy, its clerics and the role of laity in bringing Jesus’ messages via the Church?
104. Can we have the return of Reconciliation in the third Rite to encourage many to return to this Sacrament?



**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 33 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 am a priest of the [ - ] Archdiocese and have had many wonderful experiences by being open to my fellow baptised.

I love and value my Catholic faith and belonging to the Church community. I feel deep sorrow for the many people who want to belong and are locked out.

I am awaiting a response to what I have already submitted.

I am a 74-year-old committed woman of the Church. I still dream of a Church of equality. I am hoping the Plenary Council 2020 can fulfil my hopes and the hopes of the people of God and Jesus Christ.

I grew up going to Novus Ordo Masses and it was always obvious to me that the priests I usually encountered didn't believe in the true presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. I knew that there was more to the Church than felt banners and tacky folk songs. The traditions and examples of the saints were my lifeline that kept me in the Church, knowing there was something seriously beautiful, good and true behind the "shows" I saw everywhere. I thank God that I found the traditional Latin Mass and there saw the glory of the bride of Christ, the sense of the sacred, the seriousness, the place for young men, the timelessness of our faith.

I have recently joined a group of the Blessed Is She Catholic women's movement, and this has been such a blessing for my faith journey. I believe that such community groups are absolutely essential if Australian Catholics are to unite and to be able to live out their faith more effectively.

Faith, Catholic or other Christian tradition, need to be promoted as a lifestyle choice commencing at baptism. Christ needs to be placed front and centre as our Lord and Saviour. It's not about, whether you like or hate the local parish priest! It's about your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Since becoming a Catholic, I have encountered many poor priests and only a few good priests. I have cautiously attended Novus Ordo Masses. Cautiously, because one would never know what to expect by way of poor Catholicism. I have tried the Latin Mass and found it comforting but, sadly, there seems to be a belligerence toward promoting orthodox teachings and methods by Australia's Church authorities. They would rather hang onto to priests who no longer adhere to the Church teachings than fully support the Tridentine rite. The Church congregation is ageing and

this is not due to the Tridentine rite. Time to get the rudder back on the ship like Our Lord expects. Having seen all this across numerous parishes (poor lost [state]) I have been shaped into believing that Our Lord was correct in asking; "Will there be any of the faith left upon my return?" The Australian Church can make sure, going forward, that there is a resounding yes by changing its mentality. Yes! I have been shaped by the Australia Church, but not for the better. I have come to believe that the Church cares little for saving souls or for setting a solid foundation for future generations.

I decided to study theology as an older student. I was looking for 'truth'. I had read the Bible and had many questions. Why, if God made us equal and in his image and he liked what he had done (Gen. 1), did the Church insist on women having a lowly role with no say in anything let alone governance? I identify my faith with the Canaanite woman who accosted Jesus, who was willing, like the dogs, to eat the crumbs from his table (Mt. 15: 21-28). I decided to study Koine Greek as this was the lingua franca of the Roman Empire at the Time of Christ. When I read Romans 16:1-12 I was very surprised to learn that the early Church had so many female leaders. I was astounded to read that Phoebe was a 'διακονος' (minister/deacon) the masculine form. At first I said, 'Oh.' Then, "how come the Church won't recognise women in this day and age as worthy enough to be ordained even as a Permanent Deacon?" I decided to follow up by reading, everything I could on women who served in governance roles throughout the history of the Church being involved in further study. I found that there were even liturgies for ordaining women as deacons and abbesses had diaconal powers right up to the middle of the 19th. C. Jesus had influential women followers who provided for him out of their own resources, as well as the 12 disciples (Mk. 8:1-3). Jesus was not too proud to call upon women for support. I am like the widow who searched for the lost coin (Lk. 15:8-10). I searched and I studied to find the truth about women as leaders in the Church and I found them. Mary Magdalene – Apostle to the Apostles (Mk. 16:9-11), Phoebe and other prominent women in the Roman Christian community (Romans 16:1-12). There are many other women written about in the New Testament as leaders in the Church. I was once asked if there were any women leaders in the early Church. There was Mary the mother of Jesus, Elizabeth, Mary's cousin (Lk. 1:39-45), Anna the prophetess (Lk. 2:36-38), Mary Magdalene; Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, Chuza, and Susanna, and many others (Lk. 8:1-3); Tabitha, a disciple (Acts 9:30-43); Lydia the head of her household (Acts 16:13-15); the 4 daughters of Philip the Evangelist, who had the gift of prophecy (Acts 21:8-9); Phoebe, deacon to the Roman Christian community (Rom. 16:1); Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena & Tryphosa, Rufus' mother, Julia, workers in the Roman Christian community (Acts 16:2-16); Nympha, (Col. 4:15), Euodia and Syntyche house Church leaders (Phil. 4:21), etc. The terms episkopol and diakonol were used in Philippi for a mixed group of house Church leaders including Phoebe, Euodia and Syntyche. It seems that the early Christian communities among the gentiles had strong, women leaders in the Christian faith.

I am greatly inspired by the relationship of Bishop [ - ] with the Indigenous brothers and sisters living in his diocese; his warm and humble approach reaching out to our first peoples.

My reflections on the gospel lead me to believe in a poor and simple Good News.

Faith is a personal journey—I have had my ups and downs. In the end, it is the journey that counts.

I came to this country with a set of beliefs. The Christian sees the mystery of God and his grace and seeks to know and become obedient to God. To a Christian, faith is not static but causes one to learn more of God and to grow; Christian faith has its origin in God. However, that belief has been shaken lately following the disclosures of the Royal Commission in institutions and the arrogant, offhand disregard, dismissive attitude toward the suffering of the abused children. Refusing to take action about paedophile priests renders the authorities as guilty as the culprits.

I had to sit down and listen to some inane homilies delivered by a parish priest for a number of years. Very often, the first words at the pulpit were to comment about the win or loss of his football team! I go to Church to reflect and hope to go home with something mentally stimulating not to listen to drivel. This particular priest may have entered the seminary at 18 years old and completed his formation at (say) 24. Then without much life experience, he is in charge of a parish. That may have been the model of former years. To give him credit he may have been a sincere man but not competent to lead a parish. Many people have actually left and gone to an adjoining parish. That says it all.

In so many ways, I have been called back to the fold. The strongest call is from the Word itself—by that I mean scripture. The Spirit led me to be curious and I haven't looked back. I strongly believe that if scripture is a reasonable part of a person's life, they cannot look away. To me that is the way to people's hearts—understanding God's Word. If they really understood scripture (as much as possible without formal learning) then they would grow to truly love God—that is the key—to love Him. Everything else follows. I go to Bible discussions regularly—it has changed me for the better and forever. I now know what people mean when they say that the Spirit changes you from within. It took a long time for me to finally know what I wanted but once I knew and I had a taste of looking at the scriptures there was no going back.

There are a number of things that I could draw on now about whether or not religion is relevant, using my own personal experience. Personally, religion has very little impact on my life. I was baptised Catholic but I do not associate with any of the practices, I am a 'cultural Catholic', I do however have my faith in God. Whether that be because it is what I was taught or whether it is what I truly believe I am not sure. Religion is mostly seen in the media now at its extremes rather than for its good. Religion is far less publicly accepted in Australia than it once was, and to me, I can't see how you can make it relevant again.

I would like to but trust me it is wise for me not to do so hence I am not ready and will not but ... my experience growing in the Church from a child to adult to senior has many parts similar to Des Connolly. His story in the autumn issue of *The Swag* resonates closely to mine. It is worth reading.

I am forever in debt to the Roman Catholic Church for laying the foundations of my Christian faith through baptism and the Eucharist. I have always had a very monastic-Jesuit approach to my life of faith, and this was nurtured further thanks to my life-changing experience at Catholic Theological College, even though I chose to nurture this faith further in the (Antiochian) Orthodox

Church for many years now, when it became clear to me that the Roman liturgy, in many places, could no longer communicate the richness of Liturgical life, crowned by the Eucharist, in the same manner that the Orthodox liturgy does. This has not diminished my love for the Catholic Church, as I still have Catholic spiritual directors in my closest circle of Church community. I only began to see how much closer our two Churches actually are when at CTC, I was introduced to Catholic theologians such as Congar, de Lubac, Küng, Ratzinger, and (because my focus is on ecclesiology), Paul McPartlan. Thanks in part to my education at CTC and my inner drive for unity, I have also assumed a nascent role at my parish ([an Orthodox parish]) which is geared towards issues of unity between our two Churches. My education at CTC surprised me in that I discovered that the Catholic Church has such a rich theological base, which was very rarely ever communicated to me when I was in the Catholic Church. Acquaintance with the writings of these figures has made me see that there is very little that divides us. I do however lament what the Catholic Church has lost over the last 50 years. What I am looking for in the Catholic Church—Gregorian Chant (in English and maybe with a bit of Latin) in a liturgy universalised according to the principles stipulated by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, much like what we have in the Orthodox Church—seems to no longer exist. Gregorian Chant (and Ambrosian Chant) need not harken back to the dark old days of the pre-Conciliar Church or neo-conservatism. It is a treasure that reaches across generations, across other traditions (e.g. Orthodox) and its appeal is, I believe, undervalued. I say this as someone who continues to be shaped by the chant of the Roman Rite through my own training and vast collection (... and my Russian-born wife LOVES it).

I was bought up by the Sisters of St Joseph. While I am considered one of the “Forgotten Australians” being born prior to 1989 but lived in Institutional Care—I was never forgotten! My faith in the Gospel is steadfast. I believe strongly in leadership and the importance of the ordination of women. While I practice my Catholic Faith every Sunday, I do wonder why I still remain committed. So, I struggle but I still firmly believe in hope!

I was bought up by women of faith. I owe my childhood development to the Sisters of St Joseph ([ - ] and [ - ]) I have a lived experience of Institutional Care and the Church has been a very influential part of my life.

At university, I was mentored by priests and laity in Opus Dei. I still love what they do and find them an inspiration. I have begun getting my children involved in their formation.

The example of good priests and their explaining of the faith, the same example from parents and family and teachers. You cannot beat good example.

Good example.

At the beginning of this year I started attending daily Mass, with the fear of being judged by my friends outside of Church because ‘only old people go’, as I started to go daily I did not feel welcomed I felt everyone would stare at me because I am young and I stand out from the ‘daily Mass goer’. As I continued to go I slowly felt welcomed, and at this stage I am known by many and feel this overwhelming love and joy at daily Mass because of Jesus and because of the parishioners.

My experience of the Church in Australia is limited to one parish as I have only been here for nine years. I am blest to have a very multi-cultural experience of church but I am also aware that some cultures put the priest on a pedestal and do not use their own skills and intelligence to challenge. I am aware that in some cultures pious devotions are very important but people are not always challenged to grow and reflect on their faith and discern how God is speaking in their lives and there is a challenge to move people gently beyond their comfort zones to take on justice issues and integrate faith and life so as to come to a mature faith.

I have been in so many conversations among Catholic people whose ideas and opinions are founded on secular values and reasoning with little consideration of Jesus' teaching. Misguided concepts of "equality", "personal rights" and "choose what's good for me" do not lead us to God or to good moral decision-making. What leads us to leave Jesus' teaching in the Church and have a separate set of values outside the Church?

Many times in my life I have suggested to the particular authority at the time (usually the parish priest) how I may contribute my talents and resources to the Church and this has not been taken up; probably because it has not been of suitable interest to the priest, perhaps they doubted my abilities to perform the job, or maybe because there was a preference to maintain the status quo. If this has just happened to me I can accept it but if this happens to many individuals with new ideas this is a tragedy.

I was brought up in a very strong Catholic family and was educated in Catholic schools up to year 9 (I gained a tertiary education and ran a very fruitful consulting engineering practice). I was very devoted to my faith and the Church. We had 4 children who we all sent to Catholic schools. I wish to note that I went to the [ - ] school in [ - ]—before the horrendous criminality occurred there. My children fortunately went there after these crimes were committed there. My deep faith in the Church started to unravel when [ - ] was convicted—and all his legal fees was paid for by the diocese of [ - ]. From that time and then after the most despicable revelations from the Royal Commission my faith in the Church has sadly faded. My children have not continued with their faith. When questioned, they responded that could not practice their faith in a Church that has lied and deceived us.

Attending Catholic school (both primary and secondary) and now working in a Catholic school has consistently made me aware of how welcome and generous a functioning Catholic community can be. When people are accepting of others, being involved with faith and Church gives people the opportunity to share and trust others. The idea of being Catholic has changed dramatically throughout the last 20 years, however the one thing, I believe that has remained the same is the positive feel that Catholic schools have and the way they are inclusive and welcoming to all. Welcoming people from other countries, other backgrounds and other beliefs if something that Catholic schools do so well. It is important that the outside community do the same. Continue to remember that people come to the Church to feel empowered and welcomed by others.

Two stories:

1. A parishioner: grew up as a Catholic, sectarianism meant he stopped participating in a Catholic congregation and joined an Anglican one so he could marry the woman God was calling him to, then much later became an active Catholic again in order to accompany his daughter in her faith

journey. He sees this, and we agreed, as being a man of faith throughout his life. He remains an active, loving, welcoming parishioner sitting at the door to the worship space welcoming others. Are we seeing welcoming becoming real in our parish because we are now looking to be evangelisers? Yes!

2. We were moving our worship area from one part of the school to another. The task of moving seemed insurmountable to the two (+60) ladies feeling charged to make the move. They stood looking at the door to the new worship space, took a breath, opened the door and 95% of the move had already been done: teachers in the school heard of the need and got their classes to do the work; the children did so willingly and still months later talk about how it makes it their space. How blessed did those ladies feel then and now. Are we seeing evidence of that love and ownership of 'the Church' in children that we see needed? Yes!

Have been disturbed by the arrogance and abuse of power of some bishops and the treatment that has been meted out to their fellow bishops who wish to take more positive and contemporary approaches to real life questions the faithful face today—especially to Bishop [ - ], Bishop [ - ], Bishop [ - ], Bishop [ - ]. I was appalled by the weak responses made by most bishops at the Royal Commission, and the outright arrogance again by some. The one exception was Bishop [ - ].

A committed lifelong Catholic I interacted with a dysfunctional priest who (among other things) humiliated me on the altar one day when I was a special minister. Appeals to more senior clergy by myself and others were ignored or dealt with by platitudes. The priest in question continued to have the "support" of most of the congregation because they were imbued with priest worship (better known as clericalism). With eyes now well open I see self-proclaimed Catholic and other Christian men in national leadership positions denying climate change and locking up families in immigration detention camps seemingly forever, while leading Catholic laymen (the KSC) invite the likes of Andrew Bolt to entertain them with nary a squeak from our religious leaders.

My story about my experience of faith in Australia is a sad one. I come from Europe. Since I came here, I have experienced racial discrimination from members of the Catholic Church. I have also been bullied by two priests. I never experienced what I have been through here in my family or own country. I have been badly scarred. One church caused me to lose my sight in one eye and the other church nearly killed me.

It has been most disappointing to experience to see parish priests who cannot relate to children at their parish school. Will not allow children's songs in the Mass and consequently speak on an adult level in their presence. Where is that faith experience then for children in these parish schools? In 2018, here in Australia our faith needs to be relevant to our present lives.

My time at university has allowed me to encounter many homeless people. I have often stopped by to have a chat and buy them some coffee and it left me feeling really good, both mentally and spiritually. I think a lot of youth can learn to serve others if the Church provides them a platform to do so.

As a Catholic born in the late 1950s it is only in recent years that I have realised my faith has been 'in the past' w.r.t. modern prayer methods, pilgrimage-type activities, the key issue of our environment and creation (as per our Pope's encyclical) and other aspects of being a modern

Christian and believer in God. Being with God in nature retreats and partaking in the Eucharist and prayer in the open/nature, have been a revelation to me ... I feel on a pilgrim-like journey towards a stronger and more practical faith.

I grew up in a traditional Catholic family attending Church every week and it was not forced on us but there was an unspoken way of life that we were Catholic and we practiced this by being involved in our parish. My siblings and I all still regularly attend Church with our children but we are a minority now as many of the parishioners are older people. I think our parents did not force religion on us in a structured and righteous way, it was just part of our life. I have attended World Youth Days and seen people who have very deep faith and express this openly—that is great, but just because you do not sit in the front pew or do grand gestures it does not mean that you do not have a strong faith. I would say I do have a strong faith and it has supported me in times of need, and this is the same for my parents and siblings, and we all have strong values of justice, equality and the religious teachings but we do not push it onto others. In county areas, the parishes are dwindling in numbers but the schools are rising, so we need to use this to encourage school families to be part of the parish. If kids could see their friends at church on a Sunday then they would want to come and if parents viewed it not as an obligation but an enjoyable group they were a part of then they would get involved, like they do for their sport groups.

I was brought up and educated in the Catholic system and have been and continue to be willingly involved in some of its activities, essentially because I support some of the underlying values. However, increasingly the “man-made dogma” frustrates me, as I believe it frustrates most of the next generations. So many so called “good church-going Catholic families” find that their children see the Church in the form that they mostly observe and experience, as irrelevant.

A story of a deeply committed transgender Catholic who felt too alienated to continue going to the church. Story of a whole family of young people turning away from the Church because they saw no mercy of God there. Story of young people finding no nourishment in parish liturgy.

I was brought up in a Catholic family and attended Catholic schools. This upbringing has given me the basics values and standards that I still adhere to today. However, during my early years when I was about 12 years old I was subjected to some unwanted attention by the then parish priest. It was an uncomfortable situation which I told no-one about until such time as this priest was subsequently brought to justice. Fortunately, it has not adversely affected me emotionally but it certainly tainted my views of the Church and its clergy. It was eventually publicly known that this priest had defiled many young people in a number of parishes over the years. I am saddened and ashamed that the Church to which I proudly belonged had knowledge of this behaviour and continued to allow this priest to remain in the fold. Being a Catholic is now something that I find myself defending!

Brought up in the hothouse Church of the 50's, I have recently been opened up new ways of seeing "God" and Jesus—new ways of relating to the universe—uncovered so dramatically over the past century. Inspired authors have challenged me—men and women, some risking the ire of "Church" by moving beyond time trapped notions of God, heaven, creed, morality. It has been so refreshing to journey along this path so late in life.

At a weekday Communion Service recently the Communion Minister asked the class present if they knew how to tell when they entered a church anywhere in the world if it was Catholic. He pointed to the red light indicating the presence of Jesus. We all learnt, or relearnt, something.

The experience of World Youth Day in Sydney 2008 had a profound effect in my vocational discernment. Experiencing a youthful and vibrant Faith that was unashamedly Catholic, coming together in prayer, focusing not on ourselves or any particular person or even people but on Christ!

My faith journey has been deepening for 76 years. I was always a committed Catholic. After my bankrupted husband and father of our 4 children chose to leave us in 1980, I have fed my faith with morning Mass, prolific spiritual reading, Christian meditation. Forever grateful for all my life. Amen!

I am from the Chaldean Catholic background and have been Catholic all my life. The Church is my world and my everything. I love it dearly. I was a youth leader for almost 14 years. But the Church pushed me away or perhaps I left it in a sense because it was becoming more and more exclusive, more and more sexist and it no longer nourished faith in others but rather it became more about building more buildings and organizations, forgetting the real human person. I started prison ministry 4 years ago and that changed my desire for what the real Church should be like. A Church for marginalized and the unwanted, why are we searching for those people. Why is the Church so stuck on its liturgy and symbols that it's forgotten how to really connect with the human person. How can we celebrate Mass using gold plated tools when we are talking about the poor? I want the Catholic Church to be how God intends it to be. I want every person to feel welcomed and loved when they walk in the church and not feel like they are sinners. I have now expressed my interest in a religious order and would like to really do something so that the Church of today and tomorrow is a home for all.

My experience of faith comes not directly from our Church but that of the combined ecumenical church group in my area who meet each year to celebrate World Day of Prayer. We work together for several months before hand to organise and implement the day and take it in turns between our seven member churches to host the event. It was truly wonderful to see a lady from the Baptist Church read in our church, the Genesis story and others participated in reading prayers of the faithful together. I look forward to this experience of 'Church' every year with a wonderful group of faith people and am uplifted by this sharing of our own faith with others through the respect we share while planning the next service in each other's churches.

I have really enjoyed singing in a church choir for over thirty years, and being part of the community in my church. I would like to see an annual choir 'congress' for Catholic choirs around Australia, so that people can get together and sing and build a broader community. Music-making is good for both physical and mental well-being, so it is something that is good to promote.

Faith is and has always been important to me but the Catholic Church has lost its way and remains so far behind the times that if it wasn't so serious it would be laughable. I now consider myself to be more Christian than Catholic and find it harder and harder to defend the Church. My children have all been raised in the Church and all are Christian in their attitudes but they have become disillusioned and have lost all trust in the institution that is the Catholic Church. They can't

comprehend how the Church as managed to escape the scrutiny of transparency and equality that they have had to adhere to in their own working and personal life. The only reason that is keeping me attending Mass and participating in the Plenary Council and parish activities is to do my part in resurrecting the Church to make it more viable for my grandchildren. My generation on the whole and my children's generation are lost from the Church and nothing short of a miracle will make them return. I would like the Plenary Council to be very forward in its thinking and radical in its decisions. It will be the last straw for many of us if there is 'listening' to those who have examined their conscience and responded in good faith but no serious 'action' taken. I do commend the bishops who have answered God's call to establish this Plenary Council and hope that by our responses to your questions that you find the courage and support necessary for change.

St [ - ]'s [parish] in [ - ] has an order of priests that really turn you off attending Mass, so after a long non-attendance I go to St [ - ]'s where most of my grandchildren attend, young priests there are pleasant and offer a community atmosphere that applies to me, but my husband has been so turn off by St [ - ] he will not come with me only for grandchildren's Mass.

During my youth and earlier adulthood, God/Church was looked on as a punisher, not forgiving.

On the wall of St [ - ]'s [ - ] (a substantially Aboriginal parish) is written: "For thousands of years, you—the Aboriginal people—have lived in this land, with a culture that endures to this day, with an endurance that your ancient ceremonies have taught you ... Always, the spirit of God has been with you. Your Dreaming is your own way of touching the mystery in you and in creation ..." Pope John Paul II, Alice Springs 1986.

My faith has been shaped by my love of Scripture. When I was about 10 years old, my mother, from whom I received my faith, gave me a daily missal. I was in boarding school at the time and we attended Mass every day before breakfast. I read the first and Gospel readings from my Missal and took it all in to my mind and heart. When I went to university, I was faced, for the first time in my life, with a largely non-Christian environment. I decided that I would rely on Scripture as my foundation in facing this new environment and I have continued with that guiding principle all my life. After I retired, I took the opportunity to do a theology course at [ - ]. I majored in Scripture and Church History. I learned a new and far deeper understanding of Scripture and was continually inspired more and more as my studies continued. Another subject I did during the course was The Sacraments of Initiation, which deepened my other love: The Eucharist. There were many other influences for good from people I love and respect but the above I record as being particularly relevant to my view of the Church and what it needs to do now.

After 30 years of following the Church guidelines (rules actually) I have reached out to other Catholics and those of different faiths who see the bigger picture of my faith. I remain a Catholic but have been working with others for change, rejuvenation, refurbishment, renewal for many years.

I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour through a Bible study and I would like to see the study of God's Word take priority in all churches.

A powerful story was shared relating to a couple with one divorced member married outside the Church and feeling alienated and rejected for many years. This notwithstanding the wife over time influenced the husband to be reconciled with his four children, return to the practice of his

childhood Catholic faith and together they made a joyful married life of over 40 years. All present were convinced that our Church needs to revise its current thinking of the place of divorced people.

I was born in war-torn [ - ], Ireland in 1972. I came to Australia 20 years ago and brought my faith. I came to understand how hurt I had been by my religion and how it had hurt others but grow strong in my Faith and knew God would reveal Himself to me and show me where He wanted me to go and what He wanted me to know. I moved to a new area and found myself going to a Catholic service on a Sunday 20 minutes away and going to an Anglican service on a Wednesday for Communion which was 2 minutes away. I felt completely at home in both places however to this day have always felt I have to choose which one I was going to give me 'allegiance' to. My God was in both of these places and I was completely torn. Then I was introduced to God's word. I had tried to study the Bible myself a times throughout my life however found it difficult to read and thought only priests could know the Bible and was put off easily by a lack of understanding. God knew my heart and my yearning to know His word more and guided me through the invitation of a stranger at the Anglican Church to the [Bible Study] class where I live in [ - ]. I was truly nervous and felt really inadequate sitting among people who had a firm knowledge of the Bible and could articulate well what it meant to them. However, I trusted God had brought me here and He would not abandon me so I put my trust in Him. He wanted me to know His word and He wanted to speak to me through His word. I was thrilled that Genesis was the book they were studying that year. This was my first Bible study class and Genesis is the first book off the Bible I was already starting to feel at ease. It took me a few weeks to discipline myself with the study however when I did it was amazing to see the changes with my confidence in the Bible. I was also more aware of why this holy book was just as relevant in my life today as it was back when it was written. I was not just listening to God's word every Sunday at Mass, I was engaged in it. I was able to have a serious understanding of each passage and talk confidently about it with fellow Christians and non-believers. I came to the belief if I was going to say I was a Christian and live by the Bible's word then it was my responsibility to know and understand God's word. I am now into my 4th year with this class and it is an integral part of my life. With God's help I have introduced [Bible Study] classes into my Church at [ - ] parish at [ - ] with over 40 people studying the Bible weekly. The first Catholic church to take up the study in Australia. This week [ - ] in [ - ] became the 2nd with close to 100 people signed up. God is clearly asking us to study His Word, all of us and I am excited to see how He will do this. Romans 15:4 "For Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope". I have hope.

When my father was ill in a hospice it was impossible to get a priest to see him and when he died my mother was asked if she was a paid up member of the church. My family have given weekly for over 70 years; it was a disgrace.

I was born a Catholic, went to church every Sunday, left church every Sunday HUNGRY for the truth. My spirit was asking questions, I wanted to know the MIND of God, not his hands. So off I went to discover God's mind. It's been the last five years where God has open up to me and people I talk to about the POWER of prayer. Man should always be praying. Without God, man cannot; but without man, God will not.

My encounter with a Jesuit priest has shaped me as a Christian. He is like Jesus to me.

I became Catholic through the RCIA program 27 yrs ago. I was blessed to have a wonderful team support me through the program. There were hiccups along the way and with the team help and support I finally was received into the Church. Since that time, I have spent many years on team and feel there are many rules that could be relaxed to make it less stressful for newcomers. The candidates are already participating because of their faith and love of God.

I am committed in my faith because of the people I encountered of faith. The institution is part of the story, but I am animated in faith due to encounters with others.

I was brought up in a Catholic household, but have since lapsed. I would now consider myself agnostic, but I also believe that my upbringing in a Christian household has shaped many of my values and beliefs today. My experiences of the Church during my upbringing were largely positive, though I found it difficult to connect to the Church community, as a young person, particularly later in my teenage years. More recently, stories about the horrible experiences of others within the Church community in Australia have left me questioning the Church's processes and power structures. My experience of the Church, growing up in a Catholic family, was of an institution which provided a moral framework to guide your lived experience outside the four walls of the Church. The Church was a place that preached that all were welcome, that being giving and kind to others was a fundamental tenet of Christian life, and that the Church was a sanctuary for all. Today, I'm not convinced that the Church is this place—its stance on Marriage Equality, its response to the sexual assault and harassment cases and its inability to move forward and lead in our modern society have led me to this conclusion.

As a child, I went to Mass with my parents and to my local country town Catholic schools because that was what 'everyone' did. However, I was quite scared of the priests I knew—I saw my altar boy brother hit over the head with the big missals regularly for being too slow or in the wrong spot. I heard grumpy priests shout at parents in the middle of Mass to take their crying child outside. I knew my friend's parents were not allowed to attend Mass as one parent had been previously married/divorced. The parish priests for much of my teenage years were very biased as to which parishioners were most 'important' and it went hand in hand with which families were most able to financially assist the parish, i.e. were wealthiest. My parents were not in that group. The nuns at the school were no fairer. There was a lot of physical punishment given, by the parish priest and by the nuns, and parents rarely dared complain. As a young adult, I stopped going to Mass, as I felt it had nothing to offer me. However, quite a few years down the track, I found myself as a new mother in a new city and went along to the local church one week more for something to do than anything else. Wow, I heard a different kind of priest! This one didn't shout or threaten hellfire and brimstone. So, I went to Mass more often. I moved quite a lot over the next 20 years or so, and while in some places the priests were dull, unfriendly or unwelcoming in other places I met caring, inclusive, friendly, enthusiastic priests who delivered thought-provoking sermons and were fully involved with their parish community. My kids all went to Catholic schools, mostly in [ - ]. Most of the priests they knew were great, until one came along who single-handedly undid decades of good work by discriminating strongly against the girls, removing them from the altar server roster and criticising their school uniforms etc. as too short, too distracting. He also removed adult women from the altar where they had been helping serve Communion.

That man put all three of my daughters off going to Mass. In my most recent parish, in rural [ - ], we have been blessed to have two wonderful priests in succession. These priests have been active community members in their parish and both developed strong, healthy relationships with we parishioners. Although both men have been quite different to each other in their ages, backgrounds and personalities, both have given their all to build a strong faith community. The current priest in particular has been quite inspirational. He has proven himself to be a caring, thoughtful man who was very supportive to me when I needed that support-my husband was very sick, but has since recovered. This priest, like his predecessor, has a strong social conscience and has bravely stood up to be counted in what are difficult times both in the Church and in our country as a whole. His honesty has not always been appreciated. [confused emoji].

While I grew-up in a Catholic family, having the benefit of a parochial education, it was only later in life that I witnessed true family practice of our faith and understood what this means. As such, I clearly see the importance of Catholic youth experiencing this as they are growing-up. This has inspired me, as a former teacher, to contribute of my time and the talents with which I have been blessed, in support of the parish Children's Liturgy Program.

My girlfriend was brought up by the nuns at school and she has guided me on the right path. Priest also had a lot of patience and didn't judge me and his sermons were wonderful because he spoke of relevant things relating to the way we should live as well as other things.

I come from generations of Catholics. My Mum and Dad could not afford to send their children to Catholic school in Australia so my siblings and I were raised in the faith by our parents, supplemented with Sacramental classes by faithful priests, brothers, sisters and lay people. Today we have happily stuck with our Catholic Church and have a strong faith in God as shown through the love and example of the other faithful Catholics as mentioned previously. This has shaped me to see that God is real in my life, my weekly attendance at Mass is important as it nourishes that faith I have in Him and in the constancy of His love, we worship Him as a community of Catholics. All of my friends who attended Catholic school gave up the faith immediately after going through the Catholic education system (they proudly declare themselves as atheists) and we need to ask why that has happened.

The NAIDOC Mass at St [ - ] church in [ - ] is by far the most positive experience I have ever had. It is something I look forward to every year. This is what our liturgy should be like on every occasion. Something we can fully participate in and enjoy and look forward to coming to. We could learn a lot from our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. The NAIDOC Mass shows how our rich tradition can be complimented by the contribution of our Aboriginal Catholics and how they come together so well.

I am still a practicing Catholic because the nuns instilled in me the Truth, with explanations about the Truth, sin and the 4 last things. My younger sisters went to a Catholic school without nuns and they boasted about their loss of virginity which they considered a negative label. My daughter went to a Catholic Ladies College; she came out as neither! Instead, she learnt about contraception despite my offering to teach the girls NFP which was rejected! I was told by the Head teacher that the school was preparing them for life!!!! My husband and I and my parents struggled to send our children to Catholic schools; to pay the extra money for good sound Catholic

instruction. We want our money back!!!!!!! As a teacher in the Catholic system for around 40 years, I have seen how RE has become a feel-good subject, diluted and shallow. Most students will not know the basic prayers nor the commandments, much less about Hell. Many of our teachers are non-practicing, not Catholic, atheistic and there is no shame in being the REC co-ordinator, pregnant and unmarried. If this teacher was taught in my generation, it may not have occurred. Please bring back solid Catholic teaching by practicing teachers well-formed in their faith! Bring back the nuns!

I had a conversation with a priest I greatly admired, and knew very well in which I asked him how he coped with celibacy and his sexual urges. He told me his primary focus was on serving others and witnessing to his faith as a priest and that he could do this best a single man, without the distraction and responsibilities that come with fatherhood as a married man. But he went on to say that when sexual tension became a distraction to his focus as a priest he had to acknowledge that he had a dilemma: be driven crazy with sexual tension and lose his focus as a priest; or vent the tension through masturbation, and get on with serving others as best he could. He told me he saw masturbation as a release valve, and although he didn't feel comfortable with it, he also knew he lost his ability to pray and serve others when sexual tension became too great. I think the Church needs to acknowledge that much of its attitude to sexuality has been an over-reaction to the sexual profligacy in paganism at time of birth of the Church. I think the Church acquired a degree of Gnosticism: that the spirit is pure, but the body corrupt. We need to respect our bodies and acknowledge that we cannot repress natural urges without unhealthy behaviours developing as a result - e.g. mean, nasty nuns/sisters venting their frustration on children in their care.

Experiences working with St Vincent de Paul conference has helped shape me and also having a strong faith.

I grew up in a Church that expected everyone to do as they were told and not ask questions. Even the findings of Vatican II seemed to be somewhat ignored. In my early adult days, this began to feel wrong; it ignored God's gift of conscience for example. I went searching. I simplified my faith with the Trinity at the Centre, the teaching of Christ as my guide and the Mass as my avenue for reaching out to God. The community and love of neighbour and creation became more important than the Church hierarchy and dogma. My last discovery and salvation of my "Catholic" faith has been to be part of a parish run by the order of [ - ]. What joy! God bless them.

My faith is strong as I was born into a Catholic family, but I am disappointed in myself that I didn't speak up when Bishops and Priest changed things when not required, some words in the Mass are not words the average person uses and the removal of the 3rd Rite in Reconciliation.

I think the Church community has been a wonderful support in every way when our family has experienced hardship e.g. illness, death, and that is the strength of the community of faith. Small Christian Communities, Passionist Family Groups, St Vincent de Paul have all been major positive influences on our family. The regular Sunday Mass is the place where we come to experience community though in extensive travels to remote parts of Australia, Communion services have done the same job. The light of the Church will keep burning but will shrink. We have had truly holy, serving-people kind of priests who are aging priests now, and the young ones seem to have reverted to traditional pre-Vatican II types and we, the people, are going to either vote with our

feet and leave as many have, or like me, will hang in there but may be affected by the priests who try to control not serve. People who come to Mass are questioning people, seekers of truth and doing our best to be true to the spirit of Jesus by the way we live our lives.

I am a religious sister, and it was the Second Vatican Council that inspired me in so many ways to explore my faith and take it to a deeper and deeper level. I have gone on from there, and shall explore what it means to live in Christ for the rest of my life. At present, that involves exploring the connections between the 13.8 billion-year old universe and theology/expanding ideas of faith. What is the role of the Church in this time? How are we progressing God's evolutionary ideas and the consciousness that we all have a role to play to bring about loving order and creativity rather than chaos in our world? This is a momentous time in the history of the world: my understanding is that God is calling us, in the Church, into and from the future. We must evolve, not be part of devolution.

I grew up in an enormous, extensive Catholic family and went to Catholic schools all my life. The example modelled by my mother and my aunts in particular was very important in my development as a Catholic who wanted to actively live out her faith. But what was equally important was that I was encouraged, as a young secondary school teacher, to gain formal qualifications in Scripture and Theology. This opened my mind and gave me a far deeper understanding of Catholicism. Despite the best intentions and hard work of my RE teachers at school, their own understanding of Christianity was very limited. Without deeper study of Scripture and Theology, I am very sure I would not have stayed with the Church.

I am a woman brought up in the faith and the Catholic education system. The positives were the belonging and community. The negatives were A) The fundamental artificial "gendering" of people into 2 lots male and female and then making one (female) less valuable is a huge mistake. This mistake affected me powerfully as a young girl. 1. You can't be on the altar. 2. Girls have to become nuns if they want a holy life which means to teach, help in hospitals, etc. 3. The boys get to be the priests. This affected my self-image. 4. Showing that horrific video of an abortion to girls is abusive. I can remember that day and how tortured and traumatised we all were. 5. The outlawing of contraception and abortion, making women unable to work and participate in the world's decision-making. Its effect on my parents in particular my mother was considerable. She suffered greatly with unwanted and preventable pregnancies. She felt judged and guilty for her feelings and hamstrung to do anything about it. My parents were overstretched as a result. 5 kids in a small house. Ridiculous and preventable. 5. The story of Adam and Eve with the view that women are unclean and temptresses is DAMAGING to children's view of humanity. 6. The anti-divorce sentiment has meant that women financially have been unable to leave violent husbands. All this has fundamentally damaged my childhood self-image and my relationship with the individuals and the Church that pedalled the abuse. I have processed this a lot. I still hold this anger towards the Catholic Church. Luckily, my education meant that I can afford counselling to improve my self-image towards being as an equal, free, sexual, powerful person. Those of you reading this may never be able to fully understand how abhorrent this treatment of young girls is because cultural programming is deep. Once I could see this as deliberate and preventable programming, I could become my full person. B) The contradictions between Catholicism and the message of love, tolerance and equality from Jesus is in stark contrast to 1. Shunning of gay

marriage and female priests. 2. The emotional (above) and physical abuse allowed in schools when I was a child. I was repeatedly struck with a feather duster handle on my 7-yr-old leg by a nun. No recourse! No apology that she lost control of her temper. 3. And now the condoning, protecting, denying, defending, covering up, bribing, victim blaming of child torture. To my astonishment, it appears nothing has been learnt as you are refusing to change confessional. Defending your right to different standards of behaviour still. Sadly, despite Jesus' intentions my impression of the Catholic Church is that you continue abuse children in particular girls with cultural inferiority programming whilst proclaiming to be experts in love and the human condition. In the words of my 11-year-old you also spread myths about sky fairies.

My own personal experience in ministry has awakened me to how many experience the Church—irrelevant, cruel, harsh, legalistic and for the rich not the vulnerable. I feel sad that the Church is far from the vision of a compassionate Jesus who challenged the cult of clerics in his time rather focusing on those on the margins.

Working with victims of clerical sexual abuse has been unnecessarily frustrating and difficult.

I was born into a Catholic (staunch) family and was brought up in the Catholic way of life. I am 1 in 6 children and attended weekly Masses as a minimum, and daily Masses. I observed weekly fasting and seasonal fasting, confessions and every day of obligation for 40 years. I was married ... because I was the last and fifth daughter of my parents to be married to a violent and socially abnormal man. It should never have taken place and we are now divorced. After that, I was very confused with my sexuality and was in relationships with people of my same gender. I went into deep depression and was suicidal and had a serious attempt after I was discriminated by every one of my Catholic family members. I reached out only to receive criticism of how I should just hang in there and pray. I did that for years and nothing improved. I was helpless and felt hopeless and went to speak to various Catholic priests whom never were able to help or provided loose and impractical advice, helplines and all dead ends. Desperately I went from one church to another to seek help and after dozens, I finally found a priest who is filled with the Spirit and preached the message of love and salvation. I was touched by how I saw Jesus in him and without judgement, he reached out with words of love. He referred me to a spiritual director and went through regular counselling and I found my heart turning back to my faith again. Revolutionary for me and I never knew what love is. I felt a veil was lifted off my eyes and I can see again. I have never felt so much love in my heart and I now live my life courageously, and show everyone the love that touched my heart and soul. My life transformed like never before and I finally understood the meaning of love and life. I am still very much a practicing Catholic though my sisters and their families believe I will burn in hell. I am a successful professional in an executive director position in a major industry and a few of my sisters have banned my girlfriend and I from their homes. I struggle to see their Catholic ways of life and how this is what Jesus would have preached. I have finally found myself and have inner peace. I found hope and faith and feel I have been reborn. I can now see, and people around me reportedly make observations that I am more approachable, open, happier, calm and empathetic. All this happened while I am still living a life I never dreamed of living contrary to the Catholic Church upbringing. I could have died at the railway crossing after giving up on my life that night and never live to tell this story. The views of the Church and its people are now questionable.

I have begun to feel alienated from the Church and Catholic community I love because I believe the gifts and skills of women are NOT effectively used for the mission of Christ in today's world.

I have loved being a Catholic. Born into a family where my father was a devoted Catholic and my mother converted only to get married, not because of conviction, but because her mother said it was the right thing to do. I went to a State school until Grade 4, when I transferred to a Catholic school in the next suburb. It felt like a “coming home”—taught by the Josephine Sisters in [ - ], I loved every moment. They inspired me, and fostered in me, a deep love of the Mass, an understanding of the value of the sacraments and through the Ten Commandments, an awareness of good and evil. I am thankful for the excellent all round education they gave me. I married a Catholic, but one who was born in Holland and damaged by the Catholic education he received. It has caused many times of angst for us both that we don't see eye to eye with my faith, but I continue as a practising Catholic whilst he doesn't. However, we have just celebrated our 50th Anniversary and remain committed to and in love with each other. Without my faith and parish family support, I doubt I would have managed. When I was 32, I took part in a Renewal of Faith program and it was then that I went from being a happy Catholic, to one who was “Baptised in the Spirit” and received a deep and abiding gift of Joy. I underwent a crisis of faith, when I saw the machinations myself of the Church hierarchy 20 years ago within our own parish. So the ensuing child abuse issues and the Royal Commission only confirmed for me what I had personally experienced within my own Archdiocese. However, after going to another parish for a year, It wasn't home for me. I am glad to say, the new parish priest welcomed me back warmly. Healing has taken place gradually. Having lost my 99-yr-old father and faith soulmate, three years ago, I have gone through something of a “dark night of the soul” but have just kept on keeping on and have only recently begun to feel that gift of Joy once again. I have a sense of hope when all seems so hopeless. It is within the Catholic Church that my Christian faith was fostered and nurtured and therefore I know how it can enrich others' lives in the future.

My faith has been shaped through the Charismatic renewal. Praying openly in the Holy Spirit and praising the Lord is liberating and life-giving. I believe what nurtured me is when I experience the power of the Holy Spirit and saying yes to Jesus. It is all about the basic Gospel message; we need to go back to basics. Learn the book of Luke and understand the evangelist sharing the gospel and living it, this brings Jesus Christ to others. Jesus needs to be the forefront in the Church not hidden away in the closet. When I am in a church and experience a priest being controlling and he is not open to Charismatic renewal, I find this stifles the Holy Spirit in the church community. Some priests behave as though they own the parish; this saddens the Lord. I have a struggle in my own parish when the parish priest only believes in baptism by water does not understand that baptism in the Holy Spirit is continually renewed since the day we are baptized by water and Spirit.

We are both now in our senior years and have been committed Catholics for all our lives, despite many challenges. We have seen many friends leave the Catholic Church. We will just high light three events which we think have contributed to this departure. • *Humanae Vitae*. As very young married Catholics, we were not expecting Pope (St) Paul VI 's decision on the pill, and more generally artificial birth control, to go the way it did. His specially appointed committee to examine the issue was largely made up of married couples who were living the Sacrament of Marriage. The Pope rejected the advice from this part of the Body of Christ! After the births of our

children we did use Natural Family Planning for many, many years. We did not find this enhanced our marriage at all, and indeed its use caused us much stress! In Teams, in the 1990s, we took part in a worldwide study, called 'Evangelising Sexuality', which required a lot of courage and sensitivity from the participants. As far as we know there has never been any comment about this report from the Vatican. Indeed, when the Leading Couple from the Teams' Movement presented it to Pope John Paul II, he smiled and shrugged his shoulders! What a waste of input from 'The Body of Christ' throughout the world!

- The Banning of the Third Rite of Reconciliation. In the 1990s our elderly parish priest was not strong and found the First Rite of Reconciliation very trying for his health! When he held the 'Third Rite' ceremonies on a couple of occasions each year, the Church was 'packed to the gills'. These were real community celebrations and when the ban came, the parishioners (and priest!) were stunned. Now nobody goes to Reconciliation! There was no consultation with the laity about the removal of this important aspect of their spiritual lives!
- The Sexual Abuse Crisis. Enough has been said about this but it has had a huge impact in the exodus of friends from the Catholic Church.

I have three sons. The only one who spent his entire education in Catholic schools is the only one who is not a worshipping Catholic. In the school he went to, it was definitely not acceptable for the boys to be known to attend Sunday Mass, nor to profess belief in Jesus Christ. The second one spent some time in Europe on an exchange program aged 18, where he met the Focolare movement, in which—in his forties—he and his family are still actively involved. He also attended a government high school for his year 12, where the pastoral care he received was very impressive. The third went to a private school with an Anglican ethos, where on Mondays his friendship group discussed what had happened in their respective churches the previous day. He looks after the music ministry in his parish. I have not encountered a Catholic secondary school which has earned a reputation for Christian "see-how-they-love-one-another" values. There well may be some, but they seem generally to produce students which behave very similarly to any other non-Christian school ... I wonder how the many millions invested in them might have been more valuably spent ...

1. I am a Catholic, married to a Greek Orthodox. Easter is a particularly poignant reminder of disunity between two branches of Christianity that would appear to be almost identical. 2. When I was a young man, I moved to a small town where I joined a non-denominational Bible Study Group. Here I learned that generally Catholics are not as well educated in Bible studies as our non-Catholic brothers and sisters. 3. When I was young, my family did not eat meat on Fridays. Then the Church rules on fast and abstinence changed. I learned that Church traditions and laws can change.

Clericalism Pope Francis has spoken of his grave concerns about clericalism, that lack of accountability of ordained priests. An example: My daughter and son in-law advise me that their local parish priest has vociferously declared that no eligible child will receive the sacrament of the Eucharist unless they have attended Sunday Mass on at least ten consecutive occasions prior to the scheduled 'first Communion' day. Such Mass attendance will be recorded. This is offensive, non-sensical and often impractical.

My early education from sisters of St Joseph shaped some of my views. Example from my parents was the major influence. My education as a teacher in Catholic parish schools has helped. I cannot recall any particular sermons which have influenced me.

I was a girl, nurse, woman, wife, mother, grandmother, Church involved all my life. Ran engaged couple programs, involved in the social running of parish, played tennis at local parish, sent 7 children to Catholic Schools and involved with the schools, tuck shop, assisted Year 7 and 8 Italian boys with their reading etc., etc. I am an ordinary woman and so are my friends whose stories are all similar. We are not second people. Get some respect for women.

I was a Sunday Catholic, When I retired I decided to do something about understanding what the Church was about and increasing my religious knowledge. I completed a Bachelor of Theology and Master of Theological Studies. I am now involved with a number of volunteering projects.

Over the years my faith has gone up and down. By taking on a search to understand my faith, I have come to the conclusion that it is not about me but it is how my life can draw others to come and know Jesus. People should be encouraged to go on a journey and as they do their faith will grow.

As a 22-year-old, I don't get much out of the Mass part of Church. People say that they go to church to get closer to God but as they say God is all around as anywhere we go I don't feel the need to be present for the Mass. I feel like Mass is more of a community, where people can come together and feel good about themselves and create a community support network that involves every age and not just retirees.

Coming from a Catholic family, faith has always been an important part of my life and so keeping and maintaining that is important to me. Even though at times I question my religion and faith, it makes me want to find answers.

Faith is alive and well in our church. People are actively engaged in a range of ministries and live out their faith in all sorts of ways. Many people have stepped away from attending church regularly but find ways of praying and being with others. Meditation and centering prayer groups for example are ways that people who are uncomfortable with aspects of formal religion come together to pray and reflect. I contrast two experiences of church. In my late thirties, I was seeking God after a couple of decades estranged from formalised religion. Experience in a Christian meditation group led me back to the church doors but what I found there was something that I struggled to relate to. I didn't find it a particularly welcoming or inclusive environment. I was shocked by the patriarchal language. I found my way in the end, through the grace of God, to the community of the [ - ] in [ - ] which was a pastoral and spiritual centre in which a faith community flourished. I was taught ways of prayer, given to opportunity for spiritual direction, taught some basic theology, had access to an amazing library of spiritual works, and had the opportunity to spend time with other seekers of spiritual truth. Without this [ - ] ministry I doubt I'd have attended Church again. In contrast to this—some twenty years down the track—is the situation in our local parish. The long-term priest retired and was replaced by someone who immediately made significant changes without consultation. The altar was zipped back as far away from the people as could be managed, special ministers were no longer offered the chalice, prayers that I had never heard of were introduced at the end of Mass. It was like stepping back into the 1950s.

<p>Young assistant priest wandering around everywhere in his cassock ... One experience is of openness, energy, joy and growth. The other is of clerical power and rigidity. I know which church I want to be part of. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Plenary Council and see that this period facing the Church offers great opportunity for renewal and revitalisation.</p>
<p>I haven't really got a story. In my case our parents were role models and I think me and my siblings learnt from them.</p>
<p>I have kept my faith because of strong teaching from the Opus Dei priests and their availability every day before and after Mass for confession and spiritual direction. The liturgy is authentic and spoken as per the rubrics of the Mass and their utter devotion to the priesthood is palpable. If all priests believed in transubstantiation, prayed the Mass without modernistic diversions from the rubrics, such as a glass wine jar for the chalice, improvising the words of the Consecration, and lived their calling 'apart' from the world but still in it, we may have more vocations!</p>
<p>My parents would always bring me to church every Sunday. It helped shaped my perception of the Church in being a place of community and guidance when everything else in life may be hard.</p>
<p>I am a member of the International Teams Movement. Through valuable discussion, reading and contemplation through my participation in this group I have decided that my faith is more a direct relationship between myself and my God, rather than through strict observance of the man-made doctrines, rules and observances imposed on me by an out of touch Church hierarchy. I still attend Sunday Mass and I value the satisfaction that participation in my Catholic community has provided for me and my family.</p>
<p>I was raised a Roman Catholic, in Sri Lanka. Looking back, it was a great upbringing in a Catholic family. However, it seems that those Catholics in our ranks had no qualms about moving to other Christian faiths—predominantly Pentecostal after enjoying a Catholic schooling. This was confronting but made my faith stronger. I am now a much better individual and a devout Catholic.</p>
<p>Church has taught me to be more kind, so I try to go out of my way and help a stranger at least once a day.</p>
<p>Being a Catholic.</p>
<p>The Mass has been experienced by some to be source and summit of faith, but it has generally been when they feel part of a small community. Most in the group find private prayer and meditation to be the source of their spiritual nourishment, and moments of solitude, particularly in a natural environment.</p>
<p>I think it is helpful to look at other large institutions which have failed fundamentally to live out their mission, and see what lessons may be learned for the Church. The Church was subject to the Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse. Australia's banks and insurance companies are currently subject to investigation by a Royal Commission. There are very clear and disturbing similarities between the behaviour of the Church and the Banks/Insurance Companies. We know the Church behaviour was in total contradiction to its stated fundamental beliefs, that it lied, that it betrayed the trust of the weakest members of the community, and that it strongly resisted external scrutiny of its behaviour. That is exactly what the banks/insurance companies have done. They have ignored their fundamental principle of serving customers, and chased profit (both corporately and</p>

also at the individual executive level), they have lied (sold services and not provided them) and they have betrayed the trust of customers (sold services to people they knew could not afford them). Fifty years ago, the Church and banks/insurance companies were among the most trusted organisations in the nation. Today, because of their behaviour, the reputation of both is shredded. Why? The answers are simple: 1. Power—both organisations are organised on the basis of, and give deference to and reward power. The Church and the banks/insurance companies' role is to serve others, not serve their own self interests. 2 Secrecy. Both the Church and the banks refuse to make documents public and/or fight against requests to do so. If there is nothing to hide, why hide it? Both structures resist external review of their operations. In the case of the Church it simply does not allow it. In the case of banks/insurance companies, they use influence to effectively neutralise the power of the regulators. There is no transparency or effective accountability. 3. Both structures are "boys clubs". They are not inclusive in terms of valuing women in their decision-making processes.

In Australia, male clergy numbers are diminishing. As such, priests are being brought here from overseas. Cultural differences between these priests and parish communities are resulting in negative experiences for parishioners. Clergy should come from local communities to minister more fully and effectively. This poses the question in our minds and conversations about when non-gender specific and married clergy will be considered, so that local community members can consider the call towards being ordained members of their faith community—beyond the small pool of young men who are committed to remaining celibate. Our parish priest suddenly needed a serious procedure and while he was in hospital and subsequent months recovering, it was mainly the female parishioners who stepped up to minister to the parish. This included leading Liturgy of the Word, keeping the parish informed and included and just running the parish in general. It has been impossible to find replacement priests for each one of the many liturgies and pastoral needs of a busy parish. In addition to not giving more of the faithful the opportunity to take up their priestly call in a more formally recognised way, the Catholic Church is losing good people who are called to witness Christ but are not able to do this within our current structure. A personal experience is of a male pastoral associate who married an Anglican female Reverend. Because they could not live their faith fully in the Catholic Church, he moved to the Anglican Church where he could be both ordained and married. Another area where a need for radical change towards inclusiveness of all is experienced relates to the currently used readings in the Lectionary, Church doctrine and many parts of Canon Law. These are many times not inclusive of people's lived reality. Rather, they alienate people instead of helping them feel included in our Church. For example, we have witnessed members of our congregation in tears and visibly distressed as they listen to the readings from the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)—on divorce. They may not have chosen divorce but such readings leave them feeling that they have done something wrong and are not living according to God's plan. Other examples include the alienation of people who struggle with gender identity and attraction, and those dealing with infertility issues and considering IVF options.

Our parish has an extraordinary gift of hospitality. We know this to be true because we have all experienced it in some way: during bereavement, illness, loneliness, and through many forms of suffering, we know that our parish will care for us in very practical and prayerful ways. Our hospitality is active and includes welcoming and engaging with people. Strangers are welcomed

and our youth are celebrated, the sacraments are happy and inclusive celebrations, and the church is bursting at funerals. Neither the smallest nor the oldest are forgotten by our care group, pastoral associate, deacon and priest. Our hospitality extends to our families, school and town, and even wider. Our prayer group has remembered one particular event that helped this grace to take root in our parish. After a crisis of abuse a priest came to our people and told them “you people are the Church.” In a deeply symbolic move he took down the fence that encircled the presbytery. Those who remember this time say that “everyone did something”. It was a hard time, and it still is as we struggle with our past and with how to walk with those who remain hurt, but the Spirit has flourished in the people and parish of St [-]'s [-]—and we thank God.

My faith has allowed me to see the goodness in people and to be there for my family and to help those who are disadvantaged.

My faith has been shaped firstly by my parents—including my mother who stopped going to church as a new convert, due to a priest back in the 1940s who expected her to fast to go to Mass when breast feeding her 2nd child while managing her young family during the war. She stopped going to Mass! But I inherited her strong faith in a loving God. I have been supported in many ways as a young mother myself by a small caring Christian community. The community is what makes still going to Mass worthwhile—and the sometimes caring/pastoral priests. I could have been turned off completely many times by hypocrisy of some of the hierarchy who do not practice what they preach.

During the sharing and listening time during the charismatic parish meeting at St [-]'s, [-] shared her faith story, her involvement in the Church and she shared her struggles in her late teens. She shared her deep sorrow in making the wrong choice of partner and the consequences this involved. She eventually made a decision for the Lord and married a fellow that she should have accepted. They married and had seven children together, almost one each year. Being a mother craft nurse she could handle this situation and her plumber husband was a good bread winner. Since he died a few years ago, she spends most of her free time apart from family (including grandchildren) as a prayer warrior. A Maltese lady called [-] shared her life as a young person growing up in Malta. The close knit Catholic family, the influence of the Christian Doctrine apostolic mission of (St) Father Preca in her youth, outside the Catholic school hours. Her decision to become a teacher and then migrate to Australia and starting a family. She reflected her experience of parish life in [-] and her involvement in the Catholic Charismatic Movement that Fr [-] R.I.P. promoted in the diocese.

When I first came to Australia (over 20 years ago), I was not a practising Catholic. After a while, I felt a strong urge to reconcile with our Lord. I started a journey of searching, even went to an Assembly of God Church for a while until I found a Latin Rite Mass. Today I cannot imagine a life without it. My children, 8 and 10, always prefer the Latin Rite Mass. They are always very disappointed, if, for some reason, we have to attend a Novus Ordo Mass. They always tell me the Novus Ordo Mass is not the real thing!

Some areas of faith development. One that had a major impact was the 'Renew' program. Being a member of 'Teams of Our Lady', which is our small Church community Our Team of 12 have been a major influence in my faith development, which has led to me being more tolerant of different

<p>ways of following The Lord, as well as offering regular study to deepen our faith and unfailing support in both joyous and troubled times. Encounters with simple priests and other religious, who just wanted to be pastors to their people—humble men and women.</p>
<p>The revelations of sexual abuse in the worldwide Church have been ongoing since the 1990s and I suspect there will be more to come. The continual publication of material relating to court cases and new exposures has made me examine whether I should belong to an institution which clericalism has so deformed. At times I become embarrassed and sometimes depressed with the enormity of it all. In my calmer and more reflective moments I know that my faith in Jesus does not depend on the institution and its failures. Working through this process has helped me focus my faith on Jesus and the Gospel imperatives as well as my attachments to my local Catholic communities from which I draw strength.</p>
<p>I found that as an adult I was lost and then found by an individual who by her example led me to the faith through various stages which led me to baptism in the Holy Spirit—a life-saving experience for me.</p>
<p>I watched a good priest, orthodox and faithful, get thrown under a bus by a cowardly bishop.</p>
<p>I'm a Catholic convert. The Church attracted me because it provided a rock to which I could hold fast when I was being buffeted by all kinds of doubts and insecurities. I love Her traditions and timeless teachings.</p>
<p>My husband and I have developed this submission. We are long-term active members of the Church. [ - ] converted to Catholicism in 1984 and has been an active member of the Church ever since. [ - ] was born to a Catholic family and has been involved with the Church all her life. We have a deep love of the Church but have been much dismayed with the terrible scandals that have recently plagued the Church and the behaviour, and lack of action by those in authority. We are also concerned that women have been sidelined by the Church and would like to see a more welcoming attitude to them, particularly young women who should be the future mothers of the next generation of Catholics.</p>
<p>My concern is the dwindling numbers of practicing Catholics, if left unresolved, there will be no Catholic community left.</p>
<p>We are part of the International Teams Movement. Our Team meets regularly and provides an enriched environment nurturing each other in relation to our faith, family and community. We meet monthly have a liturgy, share a meal, have a sharing time and a discussion re issues relating to our faith. We are concerned for the future of our Church and support the 2020 Plenary Council and expect it to be transparent in all its workings and outcomes. We see the need for the Church in Australia to be much more inclusive and have a greater role of the laity, both men and women at all levels of our Church in Australia.</p>
<p>As a young person I was a faithful adherent to all that the Church taught me but as I have matured I have become increasingly aware of the inequalities within the Church. To see the introduction of deacons as male only hurts me considerably. Why are women excluded from such recognition?</p>
<p>Unfortunately I am very cynical of the Church. I have had to look around quite a few parishes to find one where the parish priest respects the laity, empowers the laity to be fully involved in</p>

the running of the parish. The Church lacks sensitive clergy. In my experience too many parish priests think the parish is theirs and they make all the decisions.

I have loved being part of the Church all my life and committed my working life to Catholic Education. I think that we need to continue to be a community that is spiritual and meaningful. We need to walk the talk and be people of integrity. I still think that the people need a formal apology from the clergy for the mistakes of the past in relation to child abuse. There is no place now for hierarchy.

I migrated to Australia due to the communal violence in my homeland. The situation started to get worse and people were suffering due to injustice and poverty. We few ladies joined and organized a whole prayer day. We invited all from morning 8.00am to 5.00pm, said the Infant Jesus' Novena for nine hours and spent time in praying, singing, reading from the Bible. Our community people came prayed, told their stories. We continued this every first Sunday of the month for few years. God answered our prayers. The situation changed. Other countries intervened and the fighting stopped. People started to regain their lifestyle back. It took a long time but we knew that with God anything is possible. We need to ask him.

When I was 25 years old I had tried all the world has to offer and it gave me nothing but heartache. It was then that I heard about the apparitions of Our Lady and realized that God is real, he loves us and has a plan for our life. This gave me hope and dramatically changed my life for the better. Our Lady spoke plainly of God's existence and the life he expects us to lead, this also affected the life of my parents, siblings, wife and children. Many priests and even bishops told me it was not a serious thing to transgress Gods laws, we don't have to pay for our sins? I only despised them as I had already done this and come to experience the truth that "the wages of sin is death". Wake up clergy the hour is late! Priests need to preach the full gospel, not a lukewarm, watered-down version.

My church has never helped me with my faith and have always treated me as an outsider. I have never felt at home and didn't matter what parish I went to.

Participants shared examples of the detrimental effects of how the unaccountable decisions of a priest influenced people negatively.

I have taught in Catholic primary schools for over 35 years in Melbourne and RE instruction is not a priority, there is no accountability and most teachers do not know Church doctrine. In secondary schools students go in believing in Jesus Christ and they come out not believing at all. School is failing them miserably because SCIENCE is telling them that if you can't prove it, it doesn't exist.

I attended the Christus Rex pilgrimage and whilst there I was touched by the Holy Spirit through the beauty of the music and was given the grace to understand something of the immensity and perfection of God. Through the excellent work of my father in particular I was very well-formed intellectually at this point, but I lacked the conversion of heart which God gave. Through the choir, priests, congregation and servers' attentiveness to God and reverence for the sacramental presence of Jesus I have become a person who tries to follow Jesus, rather than just hearing about Him!

<p>Many people in our group have found it hard to share their Catholic beliefs with others. They have found that there is a lot of hostility and misunderstandings of Catholic teachings. It also difficult to stand up for the faith when we are sometimes isolated from other Catholics in our society. But some have found that being open and truthful, and simply living the faith, makes people more receptive and allows for open peaceful conversations.</p>
<p>Finding the Tridentine Mass has truly helped me realise what devotion and focusing on God can be like. Once in focus, I can live my life working for God, doing acts of charity daily.</p>
<p>I attend Mass weekly because I absolutely love the sacrament, Other than Jesus standing up there saying Mass. I could not care if it was any gender or leaning. MY TIME at Mass is MY TIME. I listen to the message sure, but ... It is my one hour or so of the week where I can be me. Why? Because I cannot fool the Holy Father. I can totally relax and be comfortable knowing that the Holy Father is not judging me. Nor is he pressuring me, the message is clear. He gave me and continues to give me the exceptional gift that he gives everyone The gift of Free Will. Something I thank him for each and every day.</p>
<p>Differing religions, family, school, faith in action—volunteering, finding yourself.</p>
<p>As a volunteer, I participated in a Thailand outreach program where we built a facility for a school and interacted with the orphans that lived on the property. I became very close with a 15 year old girl named Tang Mo. I found out eventually that she was there because she had 7 siblings and the family could not afford to have her. This has inspired me to work harder in my personal life so I will have more opportunities to give, as well as go back to the orphanage.</p>
<p>It is positive.</p>
<p>Some of us don't connect well with Mass while others find meaning, some feel Mass is not as spiritually experiences. Music really helps us to feel connected to Mass and part of it.</p>
<p>Going to Mass every Sunday, involvement in youth group, social justice initiatives.</p>
<p>ACYF was an experience that allowed young individuals to open their hearts to the message of God and accept the Holy Spirit, we were able to relate to other individuals who were experiencing the same struggles in terms of our faith and how to live it out in our secular society.</p>
<p>In recent years I have been blessed to be touched by God in that the spiritual side of my life is now blossoming. Am lucky to have undertaken a few 'Being with God in Nature' walks (Jesuits) as well similar as Carmelite experiences. Have realised that God lives in me rather than 'at church'... a humbling and wonderful awakening and feeling like a journey or pilgrimage has commenced ... much to look forward to and sharing with others. As a result, my prayer is now far more personal and enriching than ever before.</p>
<p>By the grace of God I got orthodox Catholic teaching from home and from the priests in my parish, mostly of Irish stock, 1970-1990ish. Well Ireland has truly gone to the dogs now ... My Catholic schools were a mix of good and bad Catholic teaching. Apart from all that since then I have had an ongoing wakeup call from God. I'm not there yet ...</p>
<p>I have always been aware of THE PRESENCE, as a young girl. God has led me here to Australia 39 years ago as a young bride from the USA. Now, a middle-aged woman, who God has led to answer</p>

a call to Pastoral Care, and now here I am a Pastoral Assoc. And I know with certainty, God—my love for my Jesus—has brought me about to be who God has intended. So I ask you ... please sustain, listen, be brave, LEAD, with generosity of Spirit, with the Love of Jesus before you, above you, beneath you, and bring His Peace to this very troubled world. LET US—ALLOW US to truly HELP our Church move into a place of true PRESENCE with God's people—where THEY ARE—not where doctrine dictates. My experience of faith is best summed up in the document I have attached at the end of my submission.

Adoration, regular Mass and reconciliation have helped me through some very trying and hard times.

I have been extremely fortunate that God has put many outstanding and saintly people across my path. People such as, Drs, John and Lyn Billings, Dr Nicholas Tontl Philippini, Mr Christopher West, Archbishop Anthony Fisher, Mr Germain Grisez, Fr Maurice Catherinich, Fr Joseph Hattie OMI (Canada), Fr Tom Daly SJ. All these people have nurtured my faith and belief that using the Billings Ovulation Method is a wonderful way of life and leads to happiness in marriage and closer relationship to God's love, wisdom and plan for the human race. When I was first married, I thought then that using natural family planning was the second best option compared to using "The Pill". It only took me about 6 months of marriage to realise how wrong I was and that my desire to obey what the Church taught regarding sexual behaviour had indeed led me to a far better option of living my marriage in true love than contraception would have. I learnt this also from the attitudes of many of my friends who were using contraception. The way they talked about their own marriages, was so different (disrespectful, unhappy and unfulfilled) from the way my husband and I were living ours. I continually thank God for 'directing' me to this happy, healthy and spiritually uplifting way of life!

• Many of us have been heavily involved in parish life, whether as pastoral associates or liturgical ministers and have seen and experienced the damage done when a new parish priest arrives, dismantle the liturgy team and/or Pastoral Council or rides roughshod over the decisions that have been made carefully for the life of this particular community. Women have been banned from the sanctuary, particular styles of music have been dismissed or introduced, and the opportunity for parishioners to design aspects of their own celebrations have been stopped. Clericalism has wrought havoc, whether from overseas imports or home-grown conservative priest who think they can implement their particular theology and liturgical style. • One of our group has shared this story with us and now with you: As a pastoral associate in the Church for over thirty years, and especially as one responsible for parish liturgy, I have conscientiously worked to make sure inclusive language was an ordinary and accepted aspect of all our services. Through education of the ministers, the use of inclusive translations of the lectionary, and in our own publications, our community was exposed to this as a matter of course, with the aim of recognizing that ALL women are part of God's creation, God's humanity, all made in the image and likeness of God, and all deserve the justice and courtesy of being named and honoured equally. For the most part, the priests I worked with shared this commitment to equality, through their language and their attitude and indeed their ministry. Despite all my efforts though, it would be excruciating, and demoralizing, to be a part of a liturgy, whether through a visiting priest in my parish, or at a diocesan event at the cathedral, and have to listen to non-inclusive language in the

prayer and in the proclamation of the scriptures, where the terms ‘man’, ‘brothers’, ‘he’ etc., in reference to all the faithful, would be used seemingly without thought or reference to the feelings of the women and men present. And then of course, God named as ‘Father’ etc., even though we in the Church know and recognize that God has no gender. It was as if we women didn’t count, our feelings didn’t matter, we were/are nothing. It seemed to reflect the position of women in our Church in general—useful perhaps, needed for the day to day work, but not worthy enough to be considered as important, equal, necessary in leadership, with a right as God’s creation to an equal place.

- Positive schooling experience.
- Living the values and instilling them into our children.
- Practicing the faith by assisting others (e.g. meals on wheels).

I believe there is great potential and there are lots of good people that can do great things in the Church—the Church needs to allow people to be part of the Church in different ways to what was done in the past.

Stories from four group members:

1. As a young child, church was rigid. Now experience of church (in context of school) is kind compassionate and supportive. Local parish has a lovely priest, very real. He challenges people to think. Church equals social justice, people working together to support others. Praise and worship is enhanced through music.
2. Church was always school. Understanding was from the classroom rather than Mass as the homily was directed to adults. Church community was nurturing and caring, especially when experiencing death in the family. Passionate RE teachers who had deep faith and intellectual understanding of Catholic religion helped faith grow but some RE teachers were not passionate and RE class was considered a chance to catch up on homework or we were told to do colouring in. I sent my own children to a Catholic school because they will have love, care and a community of understanding and Catholic culture. Unfortunately it comes at the sacrifice of education, the local government schools are much better resourced for education. Children are much less engaged in church services than they are in school. Grandparents were Uniting church and as a child, I felt they did a better job of including us in services than the Catholic Church did. Many parents at our primary school feel alienated by the priest who is very dictatorial and traditional. In schools, clergy are often peripheral, could they be involved more?
3. Grew up in a good Catholic family/parish. Church was just something you had to do, was disengaged as a teenager but when went to study education later in life, ACU was first choice. No real support during family tragedy because had disengaged from church at that time but found that local footy club took on the community role that church would usually take. Still felt that the only choice for my own children was a Catholic education but didn’t like the local Catholic primary school so she does Sunday school at parish.
4. Went to a Catholic secondary school in 70s and 80s which was very harsh and nuns were vindictive. The Catholic school I teach in now has exhibited joy in service to others. If this is indicative of the growth of the Church, this is change in a positive direction.

People in this group felt they belonged to the Church when they were accepted for who they were not their beliefs. Community was very important and Church leaders had a large part to play

in ensuring that community was created well. Church leaders have, in the past, largely been male priests. All people are capable of creating community but it is often created by a person leading the group. The experience of the group was based largely on the actions of leaders within the Church. Open up this leadership and perhaps a greater sense of community can be created.

- Involvement in music and choirs / very involved in parish life, considered religious life, but all roles were for males at the time.
- Traditional Catholic upbringing for most in the group—challenge to bring up our own children in the same world/experience of our generation. Most are 'Catholic' but not practicing.

My story of faith must be based on the kindness I received as a child from family members who were committed to 'the faith', taught me prayers and who supported me throughout my life until their death. As an older person, I look back on my childhood and now value how the Mercy nuns in [ - ] treated me with the deepest respect and kindness. This was their greatest gift to me. Of course, core subjects were taught well, but I was also taught music, textiles and sport, which have helped me find resilience throughout my life, as well as employment. Some of these kind women reached out again later to me in my grief. I also experienced support from a parish priest while going through difficult times. He was a very good man. These people are the faith to me, because they acted out lives based on the gospel.

I went to Church as a child until I was 12 and confirmed. After that, it was Christmas and Easter until recently when, in my late 30's, I felt a yearning for a place in my life where I could go and think about something other than myself and sing and feel welcome. That time in Communion with something bigger than myself is what I get out of Mass.

Some years ago a member of our group wanted an appointment with our Archbishop to express some concerns they had about "our" Church. The person had been involved in the mission of the Church one way or another for more than 35 years. They explained that they wanted only about 15 mins of the Archbishop's time in the next calendar year and that they would come at a time that suited him. The person's employer agreed to let them go at whatever time, which was very much appreciated as their work at the time was across Australia. Sad to say, that Archbishop did not have 15 mins available across the entire calendar year. Whose church is it??

Currently my faith in the Church is diminishing, rapidly. I fear that unless some clear, prompt, relevant and transparent renewal comes from the Plenary Council (at which I have no vote) I will look elsewhere for a life-giving Christian community that lives and fosters authentic discipleship.

Music has always been the part of any service that has drawn me towards the Church. I pity the young people today as there [are] no contemporary sounds from church. When I was young, we use to change the words of the top songs to suit Mass on a Sunday and we took over the church with our voices.

Is it that simple to just welcome a priest or his team into our home and into our lives? Maybe that's the switch needed to be turned on in order to connect to; just like a phone line. We need to connect in person. Opening a talk line, engaging in friendship and reinforcing a connection to support and participate in fellowship for all around us. All parties need to commit to the connection and to continue to extend the line in parish life. Building the network in various parish

life activities could include parish Family Groups, Young Mothers Groups, Single Parent Groups, Dads Groups, Grand Parents groups, Young Workers Groups, Young Teens Group, and [ - ] Care Group (Emergency aid e.g. Temporary meals support or home laundry, or child care). An immediate lifeline bridging aid until community aid takes over. Friendship groups e.g. Ladies of the parish, Men of the parish etc. Remember the days when the priest would visit your home and participate in a family game of backyard cricket or talk with you about getting things done at the church. The experience in one of the priest visits to my family, when I was about eleven years of age; after hearing a sermon he gave that morning about God's love I asked the priest, "What is love?". The response he gave will stay with me all my days. He said "Love is not a feeling; it is that special feeling that's what love is". Jesus showed that feeling in his love even in death. He went on to say "that in that love, it's the little things that make it grow or destroy it". I don't remember the visits ever mentioning God. In fact I remember the priest asking more often for donations and for jobs to be done in the parish church. That's how he got the family to connect with the Church and with Christ in the other parishioners. God has befriended me to tell my story.

My husband and I spend a lot of time travelling around Australia with our caravan. I love attending Mass in the various towns/places that we visit (when possible). It is very interesting to me that the biggest crowds are always where the Mass is more "traditional", some older prayers are sometimes used and Our Lady is mentioned.

I have worked in parishes for over 40 years in primary schools and as a pastoral associate. Some priests I have worked with have had great vision, been very pastoral, have encouraged parishioners to be active participants in the life and decision-making of their communities and have shared their "enthusiasm" as they reached out to those in any sort of need in their area or beyond. I have also been heart-broken watching actively-involved parishioners walk away when clerical ideologues have come in and closed down the type of parish life that has been flourishing there. One such ideologue gave such a fire and brimstone homily on Christmas Eve that the 'Christmas and Easter' attenders and some of the regulars never returned. It has been dispiriting when parishioners have felt that only the priest could answer their questions or when they only would agree to do something if the priest asked them to do so. There still seem to be many in a childlike dependency on the priest. This can be accentuated among some immigrant groups and is difficult to challenge and could take generations to change. Catholic education also has something to answer for in this regard as teachers pass on outdated understandings that they may have grown up with. The Church is also importing clericalism with priests from overseas who somewhat naturally think the way that things were done at home were right and that differences here are aberrations. It is very difficult being in a parish, where, with good reason, I have known I could do a better job than the incumbent, but I differ in the way I was formed in the womb.

Well I don't have a parish I call my own, if that's what [is] call[ed] experience—it wasn't that long ago the churches were full, people going to confession on Saturdays—amazing!! Let's get rid of the statues, get into the spirit of Vatican II, [there is] no such thing it was meant to evangelise, modern music—songs not hymns, drums, etc., talking before, during and after Mass—noise, noise—the louder the music, the easier to talk, never mind about those who would like to pray. Receiving Holy Communion on the hand, hosts found on pews, in toilets and even stepped on, do I need to go on? I have seen Buddhists who have more reverence for their faith that would put us

Catholics to shame. I have been and still go to Masses where priests have a great devotion to Our Lord and the Holy Mass and encourage Holy Hours, interesting these churches have a lot more people attending. I have attended Divine Mercy Sunday for the last eighteen years (and the churches have been packed), Holy Rosary, Confession, Divine Mercy Chaplet and Holy Mass with great reverence. This is our faith come alive—the people are thirsting for the real faith. If you want to have a real live faith in Australia then don't be afraid to teach it. If you are leaders, then lead. If you are teachers, then teach. If you love the Catholic Church and have faith then don't be afraid to suffer for it. Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for us so we could have this faith; it is his Church.

I have been coming to church all my life. My parents were religious. I did not attend Catholic school and I am very grateful for that because some of the people I have met in my Catholic community with Catholic school education do not practice Christian values. They don't go to Mass but use the Catholic education system to send their children there and think they are above parents who send their children to public schools. And the Church wonders why there are few people coming to church. The Church needs to look at what is happening in the secondary school system.

A story I am sure we know all too well is the story of suicide. That story began with paedophile priests and ended with the suicide of many victims of that paedophilia. The story does not end with the death of these innocents. Their families and friends have been forced to cope as best as they can. Some can't cope and with lies from the Archdiocese and the Church in Australia ringing in their ears they too commit suicide. The lack of empathy for these victims forms the basis of the story I want the Council to consider. I want each and every member of the council to go on retreat and reflect on my words. I want that retreat to hear the story of each and every victim of Catholic priests and religious and I want each and every member of the council after attending that retreat to look me in the eye and say "Sorry! I really do know what the Church in Australia needs to do as a first step into the future."

Communion under both species was discontinued during weekend Masses, without any consultation with the Congregation.

The South Sudanese remember the Italian bishop in the past who was generous and welcoming. The Church has given us life!

When I was young, I had a very high temperature. I stopped breathing for a while and my family thought that I was dead. The doctors also found that I was dead. My father was very sad and held me close. My uncle told him not to, to put me down. But my father held me and prayed and prayed. After a while I breathed again and came back to life. I have had some remaining injuries from this, but I am still alive and well. When I escaped from Vietnam on a boat there was a big fish that was in front of the boat, which led us to a safe place. At that time we were lost and there were no other boats around to help. But people kept praying and our lives were saved. So now I believe that God has kept me safe as I could have died many times. So now, to show my gratitude for all God's blessings, I live a life of service and helping other people.

Around 8 years ago, I had an experience with the Catholic Church ([ - ] parish in [ - ]) which changed my life forever. I had been asked to organise to earth-fill some Church property for a

football ground for the schoolkids which I did—as a volunteer, (I had a long history of volunteering my time and money for the school and Church), over several months—at very considerable personal expense and urged on by the parish priest and Principal of the school. After several months of this work, a local property developer took umbrage at what we were doing for the kids as it was a prime real estate development opportunity. Subsequently, I received a letter from the parish priest asking me to stop work as 'I have grave concerns with what you are doing on our land at [ - ]'. This is the same priest who had visited the site several times checking progress and had been urging we do more. Following this, I received absolutely NO support from either the priest or the Principal and indeed received letters from solicitors representing the Church suggesting they would likely be taking action against me to and urging that I should engage a lawyer. I subsequently had a nervous breakdown and ended on a Mental Health Care Plan—to which I consider I have not yet fully recovered. I believe the statute of limitations has now expired so hopefully that means I can no longer be sued. The priest remains the parish priest—the Principal has moved on and the developer has gone on to massive new projects on church land. When in business, I have occasionally been taken for large sums of money by unscrupulous people or organisations, I have always been able to handle it emotionally, the difference here is that I was a volunteer to the church and school trying my best to do something good for the local children. (My own boys had attended the school many years earlier). This has taken me 8 years and much therapy to be able to discuss this with anyone and has scarred me for life. So, in answer to the previous two questions I would suggest God would say to the Church to uphold what you espouse and have a good hard look at yourself and your practices and the potentially devastating effect the actions can have on others. [ - ].

In 1962/1963 I was in the seminary at the start of my training for the priesthood. [ - ] SJ gave a series of lectures on Gen 1-11. As an 18/19 year old from a strong Catholic family and having been schooled in the Catholic education system I was familiar with a little of the Bible (not a lot of course because Catholics did not have to know the Bible a lot as the Church would interpret it for us and we could end up like Protestants if we followed the Bible too closely). [The lecturer] literally blew all of that nonsense away as he revealed four different sources that made up these chapters and that they came from four different mindsets and experiences. His breaking open of Gen 1-11 was the start of a life time enjoyment of Scripture. Here was not a story of history but poetic expressions and epic narratives of a people in exile telling us that love created the world and that we are essentially good. Then to learn that Adam and Eve were not real people and that this was a story of how humans, despite being created in the image and likeness of God, can fail; this made so much sense. During our seminary training we had many wonderful scripture teachers that I came alive to the fact that scripture was not just stories from the past but were living expressions of our journey into self and God. Perhaps the most enlightening experience in the seminary was the story of the great Jesuit Scripture Scholar John L McKenzie. He was in Japan in the late 50s presenting emerging insights from Scripture scholarship to mainly ex-pat clergy from Australia, England, Ireland, and The USA. After one talk a testy American Monsignor put up his hand and commented, “Father if what you have said is true then you have just destroyed the whole basis of my faith.” McKenzie replied “Price of progress, next question please”. While it may seem harsh, Mackenzie said to others afterwards “All he had to say was, Father I find this hard and I will need time to process it. Then we could have explored further.” This story from the 50s

highlights David Tacey's concern in his recent book *Beyond Literal Belief* when he says, "My hope is that faith will be reignited by the realisation that we need to read scripture nonliterally, as stories of soul and spirit." These two seminary experiences helped me to get out of a literalist approach to Scriptures and set me up to explore scripture as living texts and not moribund stories that belonged to a bygone era.

I have too many frustrations with the bureaucracy of the Church. My positive experiences have been grass-roots, being positive contributing community members with my peers, often in defiance or contrariness to Church dictates.

The only faith I have been taught in the last 50+ years has been 'outside' the church (building). I have (especially in the past 20 years) taught myself—by reading the Vatican II documents, by reading the Pope's encyclicals, by holding onto the faith (through all circumstances)—sometimes with just sheer willpower—and repeating "Jesus, I Trust in You", the Faith taught to me by my parents, grandparents and by the Catholic school system from 1950-1959. The seed of faith was planted in my soul and watered by the St. Joseph Nuns. All the rest has been learnt by myself. I now have a prayer-centred day—with morning prayer, then daily Mass, Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet (at 3 pm) and daily chores dispersed between devotional reading. It should be noted that I do not have TV.

Earlier this year, I went on the Christus Rex Pilgrimage from Ballarat to Bendigo. In all my life, I don't think I have experienced such an intimate and personal encounter with Christ. This was the first time in my life I saw multitudes of young laity and clergy being authentically Catholic. The sheer goodness of those I met still remains with me today. The truth that was proclaimed and preached left me on the edge of my pew and inspired to make a difference and the otherworldly beauty of the Tridentine liturgy left me in tears and gave me a glimpse of the glories of eternity. I wish every parish in Australia could inspire such holy affections and genuine piety, but too often all we young people get is a Church trying to pretend it is something it is not. The Church is the divine instrument of salvation established by God Himself to charter His Grace throughout the world to create saints and heroes as salt of the earth and light to the world! Why are we pretending we're just another social group?

I was raised and educated as a Catholic. I left the Church for some time, but have returned to the Church as my faith in God is strong, and helps me make sense of so much inhumanity in a rapidly-changing world. I don't balk at the challenge of identifying myself as Catholic, as I am able to confidently state that the actions of mainly men, in the name of the Church, were and are abhorrent, and the suffering they caused and continue to cause cannot be erased, but being open and willing to address these issues is important to the ongoing viability of the Church. I also support the Rainbow principles and dislike that men arbitrarily decide not to share Communion with any openly gay Catholics. I have lost a family member to AIDS, and he was a better Catholic, than many priests of his generation. I think the hierarchy needs to understand that in the 21st Century, it will be important to include parishioners in the decision-making processes, or you will lose more and more and the Catholic Church will become less relevant. Tolerance has many guises. Love one another as I have loved you.

My faith continues to be tested so I look forward to the Mass to refresh my faith. I'm often disappointed.

I was married by a priest who was a great friend to me, he was nurturing and compassionate, he did leave the priesthood and did eventually marry. He still is a compassionate, wonderful human who works with the disadvantaged and isolated. He would make a wonderful parish priest and has great sense of family and a great love of God.

I love the church I worship at, [ - ]. There are all different types of people in it and our priest (and the one before) has always made everyone welcome. I am divorced and take Communion in the Church and am allowed to do other jobs, like reading, I'm the [ - ] of the Nativity Crib being set up, Minister for serving Communion. I have sponsored people becoming Catholic and feel I have been very involved in the life of my parish. If I ever were to marry, it would be lovely to think that I could marry in the Church. There seem to be a lot of people that don't fit the "traditional" Catholic mould yet here we all are, at Mass and engaging in the life of our parish, divorced, gay, etc. We are missing out on good people. I think the Church would prefer gay men rather than women as priests. Our Pope is a breath of fresh air but the windows need to be opened with the rest of the Church and attract more young people to a vibrant Church that is moving with the times, still the champion for underdog, welcoming all. I love the liturgy of the Mass.

I have attended several churches with "imported" priests, and in the main have found them difficult to understand with homilies not all that relevant to Australians. I have also attended several Anglican services with female presiders and found them very good.

When I go down to church by myself to prepare the PowerPoint presentation for Mass or edit some recorded music or fix the PA or computer system, I usually say (usually in my thoughts but sometimes out loud, making sure no one else is around) "G'day Lord. How's it going?" Why do I say that? Because that is what I normally say to friends I meet them. We are taught that Jesus is our brother and thus we should greet him and talk to him like a brother. As for the Hail Mary I think it should be Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is your Son, Jesus. etc. And the Aboriginal Our Father is really good, especially when sung, and should be allowed to be used anytime at the discretion of the priest (who knows those attending the liturgy).

In our parish, 3 or 4 times a year, we have had lay homilists for the past few years. I have found their homilies excellent, presenting a slightly different view on the readings and sharing wider faith stories related to the readings. I hope the Plenary Council will approve the wider use of lay homilists, of course, at the discretion of the parish priest and provided suitable lay people are available.

What's also disappointing is that while Synagogue-going Jews are exempted from paying interest on their mortgages, thus ensuring they pay off their fine dwellings in 10 years instead of our 30, the priests never ever address this ongoing wound in our psyches, viz; that we pay interest to their banks—the very, very thing Christ railed against in the temple, and for which they crucified

<p>him. The Church has betrayed their flock and sided with the money changers. Was it ever different?</p>
<p>I am a gay man who sees myself as excluded from a Church of which I was once an active part by its nauseating "teaching" about human sexuality. The teaching is not only discriminatory, but also just plain wrong! It emerged in times when we had no understanding of the diversity of human sex, gender and gender identity, sexual attraction and sexual behaviour. This ignorance can no longer be allowed to underpin Church theory or praxis.</p>
<p>I live in [ - ] in an area where I am able to attend Mass at 6.45 am every day prior to going to work. Many of my friends live in parts of [ - ] where there is no such provision within a 30-40 minute drive from their homes. So they cannot both go to daily Mass and get to work on time.</p>
<p>At the daily Mass I attend, the priest will give a short 3-5 minute homily directly relevant to the gospel and which aims to teach the faithful some key component of living Christian life and challenges us to live the faith better. The best homilies get to the point quickly and are not afraid of speaking clearly about the demands and rigor of living the Catholic faith to the fullest.</p>
<p>Recently I had two lady visitors on my doorstep. They were Jehovah's Witnesses. I had a chat with them, they did most of the talking. Their main focus was to attack and attempt to discredit my Catholic beliefs, albeit in a friendly manner. I pointed out one line which their religion had changed in the Bible. "In the beginning there was God" which they had changed to "... there was a God" Their response "... we changed it to better reflect our beliefs". Let us Catholics not be guilty of changing what God in His great providence has made known to us, to better reflect our own personal beliefs, as though the sheep should lead the shepherd!</p>
<p>I am a product of a Catholic family, Catholic education and Catholic sporting clubs, etc. I lived in the northern suburbs of [ - ] where many people lived in housing commission houses. Our social lives revolved around the parish, football, tennis, dances, etc. These activities are rarely available in parishes today.</p>
<p>I arrived in Australia when I was 9 years old. I lived most of my life here wanting to find God. I did not understand the Church teachings therefore, my life was a mess until I met my husband. Through his family I began to hear and to see what the Catholic Church wanted me to know. During the last 3 years (thanks to the internet and the sermons given by priests overseas) I have studied Catholicism like never before and I am in love with God because of this. I no longer go to Masses where the faith is watered down. I now follow Christ and learn through good faithful priests. I am thankful to God.</p>
<p>My family is Catholic but I never knew what it meant until now. Since praying in our prayer group every Friday, I have experienced the presence of Jesus, The Holy Spirit and Mary and so have my children and husband. My children have seen Them and we live through their visions, especially my son who has autism. My 5-year-old daughter has seen Our Mother Mary crying because we do not pray enough. My 11-year-old has seen the Heavens open up and Jesus open his arms with Archangel Michael ready for battle. My 13-year-old with autism sees Jesus when we pray. My house that for many years has been plagued with weird things happening that followed my parents from just before they were married in Chile, were cleared by us praying with devotion. The Holy Rosary and The Divine Mercy Chaplet—we felt the Holy Spirit shake the house not once</p>

but twice. I now know so much more and see the changes that slowly are being changed in our Mass—subtle so no one can see them. We need to have the courage to stand up for the true teachings of Jesus as this is what is asked of the Church in order to save ourselves. Do not lead the sheep into condemnation.

My parents are normal educated people who always questioned everything they heard and read. I have followed suit. I am not a non-believer but I don't like non-truths, lack of transparency and accountability. My faith journey can only be enhanced, by hearing the truth.

Yes, I am a convert to the faith. I entered the Church as a 20-year-old after searching for meaning and being introduced to Catholicism by the witness of a classmate. That classmate himself had been converted by the witness of the [ - ] in [ - ]. There are so many signs of life and growth in the Australian Church - growing religious orders such as the Capuchins or Dominican sisters of St Cecilia, Catholic Schools Youth Ministry Australia, the excellent campus ministry at University of Sydney. We don't need to re-invent the wheel - look at what these groups are doing and have in common. These are the kinds of groups that attract people who are searching for meaning - just like I was. The human search for meaning, community and God hasn't changed. The longings of the human heart are still the same as they were two thousand years ago; it's just that sadly the Church has so often offered stones rather than bread. Please see where there are already pockets of vibrancy, growth and life in the Church and spread them across Australia.

Listening to sermons at Mass I feel is often not worthwhile. I have listened to many different priests and some are better than others especially if language is difficult. I have over the past two years been going to a liturgy service now and again because there are not enough priests in this particular holiday town. The reading which the layperson reads I find very easy to listen to and relevant—it leaves me with several thoughts which I think is good unlike some of the sermons which are often based on the readings and have been reiterated over the years.

Looking for God everywhere since I was a 15-year-old. I have been in spiritism as well. Thank God, He opened my eyes and showed me He was not there. Immediately, I left. I have been through exorcisms and growing strong in faith ever since. About 36 years ago, I met some charismatic renewal people and ever since I am there and I focus on Jesus and the Holy Spirit only. I have been listening to God and serving Him as He asked. We created the first Spanish-speaking Charism Group in [ - ] 36 Years ago. Today, there are seven of them. Catholics must be aware of the Holy Spirit. Most Churches and priests are against this group and so much in their comfort zone that they only promote the Rosary and the Novenas instead of an encounter with our Saviour. It is pitiful.

- Receiving the faith through the incredible devoutness and practice of parents, grandparents and relations; and attending Mass in different country parishes to meet the faith-filled locals
- A conversion story from Anglicanism – Attending a traditional, liturgical Catholic Mass which gave her a greater appreciation of the truth and history of the faith.
- Serving at Mass brought me to a greater awareness of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament
- Comparing the faith journey of my younger siblings who went to modern “Catholic schools” and my older siblings who went to schools run by religious orders. The later still practise their faith whereas the younger have no idea! Bring back religious orders in schools!

It is evident that the Holy Spirit is active in our children and this can be seen in the way that they make a difference in the world. They have a foundation but don't seek to be connected to the Church. They do not realise that they can be nourished spiritually through the Church, but the Church needs to reform to the Gospel values in order to be credible. Many practicing Catholic parents have a deep sense of this evaluation as being correct. At the same time it is our experience that society has changed and our children have not had to struggle in the same way that has been the experience of previous generations. Therefore they think they don't need to depend on the Church. The departure of our children and many adults, challenges us to ask why they have left and what is missing in our formation of children and adults so that a relationship with Jesus, through Word and Eucharist, is not sought. It also leaves us asking why is it that we stay and perhaps for some there is a feeling of confusion and the thought that perhaps we have not been free, because of what we have been taught. We are there because we have always thought this is what you do. In considering what we have been taught, there were differences of opinion in the group, with one person believing that families do not teach Christian values, whereas as another spoke of the family being the first place that children learn values. The issue of gender equality was raised with one participant recalling that 10 – 12 years ago, his thirty-year-old daughter stated after Mass that she "was sorry but was giving it all away. It is all so unbearably masculine." God, Spirit and Priest all male. Face of Church is presented as male. This father replied that he respected his daughter's decision. Shared in the group was the belief that to fully appreciate the notion of God, we need to have male and female representations in Church that demonstrate a strong relationship with spirituality. In contrast, one person thought that ambiguous language concerning God—e.g. He or She, Wisdom/Sophia confuses people. This person is challenged by friends about his commitment to his faith and he replies that if they understood Church teaching they too would be committed. In relation to Mass it was considered that some young people may find Mass to be boring.

I have only been here for twelve years, but I find encouragement in the experiences of the Catholic community here. Some communities have a great youthful following and are all inclusive. The joy shines within our Church.

I had a mother who had great faith which she received from her mother. Their faith was sustained by Mass and the family Rosary. They attended state schools as they lived in a remote area. Mum could argue intelligently with any trained theologian as she had received a deep understanding of her faith from her mother. I witnessed the power of prayer and how often it is answered even when you think that there is no hope - almost miraculous, definitely astounding and very impressive. Mum used to say that the Rosary will sustain your faith. I gave up the daily Rosary eventually. I then realised that my life just wasn't working. I went back to it and I have noticed an enormous improvement in almost every area. I suspect the Rosary requires things like faith, hope, trust, humility, self-sacrifice and contemplation on the core moments of Gospels.

I was raised by an aunt and my grandparents who worked on their farm seven days a week so they couldn't get me to the church on Sunday. There was a peasant lady in the village who used to get teased by people. This lady would come to the farm for handouts. She would take me by the hand and take me to Church and then the people wouldn't tease her. One day, the procession for Corpus Christi was passing and my grandfather wanted me to go home, but I said, "No, I have to

follow the Lord.” My parents worked on a farm. Christmas time was always special and all the children went to the Novena and Benediction at night. Since then, I have never stopped praying the Rosary at Church.

Whenever a Homily or the Gospel is said, the following week I would always do something or have an encounter where that speech can help work through it.

When I grew up our parish involved us all. It was central to our lives. It seemed to me that we all knew one another. Can the parish and the local people spend much more energy on building bonds between us?

My most faith enriching experience within the Church was when my young son died of cancer (he was 10 years old) and the school community, the parish priest and the parish community all rallied to help us.

I was very involved in the Church in my younger years. I was a Youth Minister, partook in Youth Groups, went to the World Youth Day and built a family with parishioners. The moment I came out, those friends disappeared from my life and I felt ashamed to go to Church. It took me a long time to accept that my faith was mine and mine alone. It was personal. But the hurt of those who turned their back on me will always be there. This can be avoided.

Teaching catechesis to children has been a richly rewarding experience for me. I prepare children for Confession and First Holy Communion.

I have worked in youth ministry for a number of years, and remain involved in local parish life. I believe young people and the Church in general desire a closer relationship with God, through His sacraments and through a deeper understanding of the truth. As a young person I believe we can often lack depth and reality in our lives. We live in an instant and perfected world. Think of Instagram, the rise of the influencer, the lack of stable family life, etc. We desire to know God, deeply and truly. While this relationship comes at a personal cost and requires sacrifice, it is real, it is true and it is something we can rely on for the rest of our lives. I have personally spoken to hundreds of young people, shared my story of encounter with God through the sacraments and seen teenagers flock to confession, embrace adoration, and I have journeyed with those young people as they embrace a life of faith. The devastating thing is that these young people have often never had the opportunity to experience the full life of the Church through the sacraments, an orthodox catechesis and an invitation to the deepness of faith, hope and love that is in the Church. It is unpopular, but why have these people never experienced their faith before? They come to Mass, they go to Catholic schools, but no one has ever given them an opportunity to actually know, love and serve God!! So, that is my experience, and my plea. The Church does not need to be popular, we need to be authentic. When we are authentic, that is when we can breathe a sigh and say with St Augustine ‘Every heart is restless until it rests in you, Oh Lord’.

I was fortunate enough to attend Mass in [ - ] while on holidays and the Mass was said by another holiday-maker, namely Archbishop [ - ]. The Archbishop gave his sermon on the meaning of marriage for Catholics and how this fitted in with the then controversial issue of same sex marriage. It was a clear, concise statement of the position of the Church on this issue. As a member of both the [ - ] and [ - ] dioceses, it saddened me immensely that I had to chance upon such a sermon instead of getting from either of my home dioceses. The Church is capable of

generating a clear statement on moral matters (e.g. the various encyclicals) but why does it fail to transmit this position and provide the leadership it is uniquely positioned to do so.

We are a small Church community in a parish in [ - ]. We formed in 1996 with about 14 people. After 22 years we have 8 participants who are still meeting in prayer and care for each other. Over the time we have welcomed a couple who have married, and now have 3 children all engaged in their faith. We have had two members die. We have supported each other through times of suffering. All this has occurred with our faith journey together, centred in the Gospel. All of us have been active in our parish life as well. We have taken candidates through RCIA in our small Church community. The small Church community has enriched our faith journeys and our lives. We recommend the Church encourage different models of small Church communities within our parish.

My faith has always been strong however being in the charismatic renewal has made me more aware of the power of The Holy Spirit and so been able to participate in many ministries in the parish.

The parish priest at [ - ] refuses to allow other priests to perform baptisms, lead funerals and conduct marriage ceremonies. This has been a source of pain, frustration, anger and sadness. He stands in the foyer after Mass wearing his black soutane, insisting on being called 'Father' rather than [ - ]. What century are we in!!!

I am about to turn 73 and have been married for 49 years. At aged 38, with four children, I had a tubal ligation without discussing this with a priest. With the eventual support of my husband who in his earlier years had spent 6 years in a Marist seminary, I had a moment of 'maturing'. Returning after receiving Communion the next Sunday after the operation, I experienced a freedom moment. 'God' had not struck me down; I would not be 'going to hell.' A couple of years later, we shared this moment at a Teams, married couples movement meeting. 4 other couples had made such decisions but had never shared the story. At that moment, the shackles of blind obedience and fear cracked and broke. After years of obedience, support for and involvement in parish life, I no longer sit in a [ - ] parish pew, forced to recite the (unexplained) Nicene Creed and to accept the moves of the parish priest to take parishioners back to the 50's. Recently, without discussion, the overhead projector was removed and replaced by heavy hymnals. This is a minor point but indicative of the mindset of the parish priest. Over the years, I have been appalled that George Pell and Archbishop [ - ] have had the ability (power) to refuse permission for leading Catholic academics and religious to speak on 'Catholic property'. The fear that leading Catholics have experienced here in [ - ] has at times been crippling.

The context of my thoughts is Gaudete et Exultate - Rejoice and Exult. Apostolic Exhortation on the call to holiness in today's world. By Pope Francis. ©2018 Libreria Editrice Vatican, Citta del Vaticano ISBN: 9781925494310 Pub 2018 St PAULS PUBLICATIONS, www.stpauls.com.au

My husband and I are the only practising Catholics remaining in the Church. It is a lonely and alienating place to inhabit. The new open, diverse inclusive gentler Church seems possible but we have almost lost hope. We pray that hope will be restored and heal the betrayal we deeply feel.

May the council listen to all the comments from the laity and treat us respectfully as colleagues and partners in sharing the “Joy of the Gospel” for all, no matter their circumstances in life.

The members of our submission group all share memories of a Church that in the past was at the centre of our lives. Parish life offered opportunities for people to come together as a community for liturgy, for significant moments in life and to mix socially. While that seemingly ideal age ended some decades ago, it was not a given that Catholics should lose opportunities for shared and transformational liturgies. For our group, the story of the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation typifies this loss. We understand that this Rite was a post Vatican II attempt to offer Australian Catholics a sacrament that was necessary, relevant and transformative. It was well received and well attended, giving people an experience that reflected the very nature of the sacrament. Catholics understand what is conscience and the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on our lives using our social and communal conscience. It did not damage the solemnity of the sacrament in people’s eyes, rather it offered comfort and hope that individually and as a community we could live more authentically as the people of our God who is love. The loss of this Rite of Reconciliation diminishes us. It has affected adversely us all and many Catholics no longer receive this sacrament. This is a serious loss, damaging us both individually and communally. We become a people adrift, less accepting of ‘the other’ and more isolated. We believe this is indicative of how many Australian Catholics feel. We pray for the members of the 2020 Plenary Council that they have listening hearts and the courage to act for the good of the Australian Church.

The Catholic Religion in India unusually seems to be stronger than Australian Catholic Religion practice because it supports their local Catholic Television channels i.e. Shalom T.V., Catholic retreat centres, Sunday catechism class and Catholic Church lifestyles. Even there Saint celebrations like Saint Sebastian are celebrated better than Halloween Day is in Australia. The Catholic Church in India has to thank the Apostle Saint Thomas for their soundness in religion even today when there are so many other worldly influences and so many other religions in India that are practiced. The Apostle Thomas came to India and was martyred in India. I do not know why Australian Catholics are so naïve, ignorant, scared to voice up and group-up as one and stop supporting cult like practices like Halloween celebrations and its media advertisements and start celebrating, learning and admiring Catholic lifestyles in their own life and they could start with imitating modern day Catholic saints. By doing this, we might just uphold the number of Catholics in Australia till Jesus’ second coming and save more Australians from going to Hell at the time of judgement.

The YCW (Young Christian Workers) shaped me. As I grew in my understanding of the scriptures I came to know that God is only Love. And I am able to make a distinction between the hierarchy and the Church—The body of Christ.

Sharing a story via internet is a symptom of disease. Unfortunately many people are sick these days. While experience of faith can be easily shared, the faith experience remains private and exclusive. One bishop in family and now nephew in a seminary. I must be in critical opposition, just for the balance.

As a synopsis and that my confidentiality is honoured. Growing in life in the 1950 and 1960 era I was exposed to a faith of mixed messages in which the positive vibes came from the stories from Jesus in the Gospels and from the goodness of my parents and other significant people in my life at these early times; this sat alongside the fear of a God who would cut me off from Himself and who would punish me in hell forever for the smallest of 'sins': impure thoughts, missing Mass on a Sunday ...—the then teachings of the Catholic Church. In my adult 30's, 40's ... till now, I have a rich belief in a God and in myself and the world. This has come to be through a number of ways. A changed understanding from spiritual writers, my prayer in which I am given insights related to these writers and I believe humbly God revealing to me individually. Spiritual direction has played a most significant part. I call this grace, gift. I could write more but I know this is the 'end.'

1. I attend to the Ministry to the Sick in our parish and see many elderly Catholics who often wish to see the priest rather than myself. As an administrator the priest is rarely available for Mass with these people let alone visitation. At the same time, I see the parish actively involved in pursuing some fashionable social justice cause while they forget their own—often the people who have built their churches and schools. The aged also reflect this in their remarks to me. 2. After many years of teaching in both Catholic primary and secondary schools and in the role of RE Co-ordinator in two secondary schools I am now well resolved that Catholic Education no longer achieves its stated aims in terms of treatment of staff or the development of religious ethos. As a teacher I was asked to work with the unchurched, disinterested and at times hostile students and parents. I was also asked to carry an enormous workload and to work with colleagues who lacked any relevant training in the area of RE and who were unsupportive and at times hostile to the religious ethos of the school. My question is, what does this achieve? What can it achieve? and quite frankly why claim to be so different to the local High School if this is the modus operandi? 3. Synodal consultation has not been my experience in any Church meetings I have attended. For this reason, I chose not to take part in a parish Plenary session as I felt that my concerns and wishes for an Australian Church of the future would be diluted at best or deleted at worst.

I came into the Church as a teenager in the 1980s, where the community was large and active. Many of my best friends now, and formative experiences, were direct results of the local Catholic Community.

I was at the funeral of an elderly woman who had seven children and served her community and family and Church for over 90 years, who was buried beside her husband. The prayers asked God to forgive her sins. What a joke. Her faithfulness was not mentioned ... just her sins. How demeaning.

When I was young I was an altar boy. The priest was a wonderful man who used to explain the Christian Calendar to me and guide me through the year. My faith has not always been strong but without his teachings I would not be in the best place right now.

I had dislocated disc in my spine. Before that I did not pray for years but was focused on working long hours. Because of the dislocated disc I could not work for 6 months. I could not sleep on my back. One night I prayed the Rosary, mostly Our Father. And fell asleep while praying. In my dream I saw light and felt big love towards me. And the words were said: "You did not believe in me". Ended there. Since then I am a regular church-goer. And my faith is growing.

My experience of the Catholic Church has left me spiritually starved. Whilst I continue teaching Children's Liturgy and being a Music Leader once each a month. The other weeks I must attend a Baptist based or Pentecostal where I can be fed from The Pastor who is teaching directly from God's Church Blessed Word.

Like many people I know a friend who hadn't been to Mass in a while, plucked up the courage to visit her nearby cathedral. The Bishop made her feel stupid, by insisting on his title. She hasn't been back to Mass since. I am putting in my own submission because a group that I am part of, is very conservative and straight laced. They still believe everything they were taught as children and haven't developed their faith. I have great faith in God. I also have faith in the Church that the bishops will move it on instead of being stuck in medieval times.

I worship at a Baptist church which has been actively involved in supporting true marriage and fighting gay marriage. Over the last couple of years my admiration for the Catholic Church has grown as it has stood for marriage and family and the value of every life. I am concerned now though, that the Church is beginning to pander to the gay activists and gradually drawing closer to accepting their immorality instead of calling it out as sin and explaining from God's Word why it is sin.

The background to this submission: On [ - ], my girlfriend [ - ] and I attended a listening/dialogue session at [ - ] in [ - ] (advertised in the parish bulletin). As members of the Helpers of God's Precious Infants ([www.coexistaustralia.org](http://www.coexistaustralia.org)) we are well aware of the devastation of the culture of death caused by abortion (and euthanasia) and the fact that it is spreading to other states and territories of Australia (Queensland being the most recent when it passed an Abortion law in 2018). As such, it is clearly a matter of vital importance to be considered and addressed by the Bishops in the Plenary Council. Who are the Helpers of God's Precious Infants? ... They are people who have dedicated themselves to defending the human dignity of God's precious unborn infants. A central part of their work towards building a Culture of Life is providing a loving and prayerful presence outside or near abortion clinics. Pray-ers provide spiritual and moral support on the streets as Life Advocates try to encourage parents to reconsider their decision, offering them whatever help they need to accept and care for their child. Spiritual Supporters, although not physically present, unite themselves to this invaluable work through prayer, service and sacrifice. The [ - ] based Helpers group (with other members based in locations such as [ - ], [ - ] etc) have saved the lives of over 300 unborn children (these are the ones that are known of) with support offered at many different levels, for example, see our webpage: [www.coexistaustralia.org/how-can-we-help-you/](http://www.coexistaustralia.org/how-can-we-help-you/). This is over a remarkable period of nearly 25 years of service to the community. There would be many others who turned away from abortion due to the presence of the Helpers outside abortion clinics. Their stories are known to God and the parents of these children. The Helpers made a submission (in June 2017) to the Vic Parliamentary Inquiry into Perinatal Services. Its final report was tabled in June 2018. Our submission #7 gives insight into the approach the Helpers take when caring for those experiencing unplanned or crisis pregnancy. The link to the report is here: [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/fcdc/article/2820](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/fcdc/article/2820) (at this webpage there are also tabs showing the Committee's Report and the Government Response). I am also attaching a flyer that the Helpers use. An additional point I would like the Bishops / the Plenary Council to consider (Question 2) is: Can social media resources (e.g. YouTube, Instagram,

Facebook, etc) and campaigns be undertaken? This is how the younger generations access information when it comes to decision-making and especially in challenging/difficult personal circumstances. I request both a confirmation of receipt of my submission and a considered response to my submission. Please make my submission public. Thank you.

As a parishioner for over 45 years and 3 times on the parish council I was told by the deacon that my name had been removed from the readers list as the priest has said he could not say Mass if I was on the altar. We have changed parishes.

I returned to the practice of my faith through the prayers of friends involved in a Rosary Group. Being a member of a Charismatic Prayer Group for over 25 years has been a great source of education in Faith and a vibrant caring community.

A lot of my faith was through my parents and it was based on respect I had for priests. I have lost faith in our priests.

A story of an experience of the Church in Australia that has shaped me. In 1997 after 11 years of teaching in [ - ] Catholic schools and 4 years of parish Ministry as a Pastoral Associate, I had the opportunity, through my Congregation [ - ], to begin ministry as a School Liaison Person in the [ - ] town of [ - ]. [ - ] School in [ - ] had and still has, a high percentage of Aboriginal students. It is Congregational policy that before taking up a cross or intercultural position some training and preparation is needed. I headed to [ - ] in [ - ] and the Centre for [ - ] to do their course "Ministry With Aboriginal People". It was auspiced by the Christian Brothers and they were an important part of the planning and shaping of the course but they worked very closely with and trusted a number of Aboriginal people, qualified religious, lay members, Catholic and other, male and female who delivered the course content. This was a very transforming experience of Church for me. An experience of community, inclusiveness, diversity, subsidiarity and collaboration. The Aboriginal History explained and told to me by Aboriginal men and women who had or whose families had experienced and lived through the dispossession and oppression that is such a big but hidden part of our Australian story had a profound impact. It absolutely blew me away to learn that in 1972 at age 17 when I had been offered two bursaries, a state and a Catholic one, and I was free to choose whichever appealed, and free to stay in private board or shared accommodation in [ - ] 225 kms from my home, this would not have been so if I had been a 17 year old Aboriginal girl living in Woorabinda Aboriginal Mission/Community. I would have needed the permission of the white Manager to accept the bursary and I would have to be granted Leave to live away from the Mission and apply for a permit when I came home for holidays. These permissions were often withheld and were at the discretion of the manager. (Aboriginal Regulations of 1972 QLD). This is why I believe it is time to take up this challenge of truth telling. I truly believe along with Pope Francis that [Truth Telling], "Recognition and dialogue will be the best way to transform the relationships [with Australia's First Peoples] whose history is marked by exclusion and discrimination" (Puerto Maldonado Peru Friday, 19 January 2018).

Our participants range in age from 60-80. We are members of a small church community in the inner suburbs of [ - ]. We are doctors, teachers, musicians, nurses, psychologists, theologians and engineers. We are parents of families. We were adults at the time of Vatican II, rejoicing in its promise and saddened by the abandonment of its tenets. Some of us had parents who adhered, in

fearful faith, to every rule. Vatican II, to one participant's mother, meant "not having to be afraid of God again." Others were raised to identify their faith with social justice. We are concerned that the community and the bishops are debating how many angels dance on the head of a pin instead of grappling with underlying issues. For example, the whole debate over whether priests must report sexual abuse if they learn of it in the confessional. The reality is that fewer and fewer people attend Reconciliation, and that paedophiles will simply avoid the confessional rather than risk being reported. We have all lived to some degree or another with the impact of sexual abuse, abuse of power, sexism, fear of sexuality, and clericalism. We are concerned that Catholics will be expected to forego the sacraments, including Eucharist, before Bishops accept that sexuality per se, in the persons of married male or women priests, does not defile the altar. As our priests retire or die before our eyes, we call for communities to be able to elect their leaders. Such leaders could be appointed Civil Celebrants by the Church. Maybe our understanding of Eucharist has to change. If we define Christ by His humanity, not His biological sex, there is no reason women cannot stand in persona Christi. We are concerned that Church wealth is not spent wisely or appropriately. Australian Catholics do not need a luxury guest house in Rome. We need better funding of social services, better aged care, better provision for the homeless. We are concerned with the lack of models of authentic faith. To us, this is a faith marked our original call to action: one who "lives justly, loves tenderly and walks humbly with God." We believe that consideration must be given to the function of the Catholic primary school system, which grew out of Irish Nationalism. The United States manages perfectly well with CCD programs for Catholic school children, most of whom attend government schools. We are done with hypocrisy. We yearn to be heard. We long for a revitalized Australian Catholicism that sets its light upon the hilltop.

I grew up in a young vibrant parish 50 years ago. A parish that was people-centred. A parish where all people were important. A parish where the priest was a man with and for the people. A parish where the priest lived by the Gospels. It was the people's Church not an institutional Church controlled by men wanting to be little or important gods/kings. The Church is a rich and powerful institution and our bishops are self-professed kings/gods. The people of God, the Church are well educated men and Women who will not accept the crap of the controlling men.

We re-located to [ - ] 13 years ago after living in several Asian countries. The Churches in Asia are vibrant and well attended, despite the absence of Catholic schools in some Asian countries. It was disappointing to note, on our arriving here, the poor attendance in the churches despite all the Catholic schools affiliated to most Catholic churches in the country. I feel more needs to be done in schools—therein lies the future of the Catholic Church. I was a cradle Catholic and was raised by my parents to have strong Christian values throughout life - it was a normal way of life for most families in that time. It was a simple life but rich in values. I'm saddened with the current trend of moral relativism brought on by the soft approach to disciplinary issues in the formative years of children in Australia.

I was born into a Catholic family. I went to Catholic schools and was taught the true faith by teachers who knew and practiced the faith. The text books in those days were sound and were faithful to the teachings of Christ and the Church. When I attended Mass on a Sunday the Mass and the homilies were consistent in their message and contained Catholic truth. The Catholic Church in Australia spoke out on all issues of religious importance with courage and conviction.

Unfortunately, the Church in Australia has few champions today who are willing to speak up for what is right. Catholics today are weak and have little commitment. They serve themselves from a banquet buffet picking and choosing aspects of the faith suit them and their lifestyle. The message I have to this Council is to return to the foundations and teachings of Jesus Christ and not try to make it what it can never be.

My Catholic upbringing was the foundation of my faith albeit based on fear of hellfire most. It was not until I reached middle age and acquired tertiary qualifications that I questioned the Church and its chequered history that I believe I came to a more mature understanding of faith as opposed to certainty and the very great love of God in the person of Jesus Christ. I also continue to have great devotion to Mary and many saints.

Our Hope for the Plenary Council. We valued the opportunity to gather, reflect, listen and speak from our hearts to share our concerns for the Church. We also have gained valuable feedback for the future directions for our parish under the leadership of our parish priest and stewardship team. The process was time limited for us but we hope there will be a genuine listening by ALL Bishops and those who gather in October next year. We felt all participants at that session should have a vote and the only deliberative vote is taken by the bishops at the concluding session in May 2021, in order to abide by canon law requirements. We should all be fully apprised of the agenda, have access to the working documents and made aware of the voting outcomes. This is a real opportunity for the Australian Church to adopt a process of open transparency in the deliberations and decision-making for our future.

I would like to share an observation about how Australia seems to be slowly losing its soul over the last few decades when affluence seems to have risen and compassion seems to have declined in the observables, such as how we treat refugees, responding to scandals, the glacial improvement of the treatment of women in organisations, and not just political parties. The Church has the next challenge of confronting the exclusion on women from leadership roles post Constantine. Renewing female leadership as in the first three centuries will enliven the Church in its mission and to right the corruption of child abuse and re-orientate pastoral leadership to the outcast and those in need of support and consolation.

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I have always been a Catholic but have learnt more about what that means in recent years due in a large part to my father-in-law. He has seen the "Pearly Gates" (twice), has felt the presence of

Mother Mary, and has lived to tell the tale. The three children of Fatima, and the miracle there, have also been a big influence.

Since I was baptised last Easter vigil, I have been surrounded by amazing spiritual directors. Both the Somascan Fathers religious order and the Benedict Monks. Now that I have relocated and find myself at a normal parish, I truly miss the support from those orders. Now I am just a number in the crowd for priests who are super busy. In my short experience, those of religious orders, due to greater numbers provide a very personal spiritual direction and take the time to help people grow in faith.

I am a 46-year-old single male person, brought up as a Roman Catholic in suburban [ - ]. At 14 years of age, I really felt a strong identification with my Catholic faith, and would describe myself as devout from that age onwards. This was around the time of the visit of St John Paul II to Australia in 1986. I was an altar server in my adolescence and older years. I understood from an early age that the aspiration of sanctity is the goal of the Church, for us to try to follow in the footsteps of the saints. Chastity is a challenge for all, whether single, married or celibate. During my life I have seen the rise of movements outside the Church challenge its teachings openly. In particular the rise of the LGBT activist movements. It seems to me that this movement, with its rainbow flag, represents pride in its sins. I feel that the true Catholic feels only a sense of shame in their personal sins. There may be many devout Catholics who carry the cross of homosexuality, but who affirm with full clarity that God's law only permits sexual relations within marriage between a man and a woman. These people do not have a voice, as they likely don't identify themselves in the same way as the LGBT movement does, and share nothing in common with campaigns for gay rights and same sex marriage. I feel like the Church is in a scary position for the future. We will not be properly protected by religious liberty laws. The LGBT movements will flex their muscles and attempt through the courts to force the Catholic Church to allow things like same sex weddings. Governments may do the same thing with the sacrament of Confession.

I used to attend Reconciliation regularly as a child and young adult. I valued the opportunity to seek guidance from the priest, sharing many of my troubles as a young wife. One day I found out our parish priest had been a child abuser and was relocated elsewhere. I felt deeply sad but also outraged that I had shared some of my deepest feelings with a man who held himself out to be 'cleaner' than me, but had evil within. I've never attended Reconciliation since. In any event, seems most people don't attend Reconciliation these days for their own reasons. Maybe we could consider how to go about it differently??

At Mass and in schools the Catholic faith needs to be tangible and particular. More doing and less listing.

The Church has lost me. Sorry but a one-hour Mass preaching the same crap as was preached 20 years ago, but now by a foreign priest with a thick accent and poor English isn't helping. My upbringing and education within a Catholic school (independent, not part of Catholic education board) has shown me to try and see the best in people, along with the power of forgiveness. If you can forgive others and release yourself from the stress of hatred and seeking revenge then it will not be able to drive you to distraction.

It is very hard for people who are working to attend morning Mass as they would be late for work. It would really help if Mass was available at 7 am or even earlier or offer evening Masses for people after work.

I have been a Catholic for 69 years and can't see why I should continue if more courage, compassion and honesty is not shown by the Church hierarchy. The Church of Australia should show more leadership, follow the footsteps of Christ more. My view of the future for the Catholic Church is dismal, if Bishops don't bite the bullet and stop covering past mistakes. The light of Christ's Resurrection needs to shine from the Australian Catholic Church in 2020.

I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s and attended Catholic schools during this time. I then taught at Catholic schools in the 1980-1990s, including RE. I always went to Mass on Sundays as I was taught and rarely missed a Mass. Yet through the 1970s-1980s, looking back as a reflection now, even though I generally practiced the faith, I was only paying lip service to the faith. Bit by bit, so many things started to become watered down for me. From contraception, to going to Mass every Sunday, to fasting before Communion, to not worrying about going to confession etc. Based on what I was hearing the priest talk about on Sunday, it did not really matter, it was up to your conscience, and anyway, all that mattered about being a good Catholic was 'social justice', help your fellow man etc. Don't worry too much if you sin, Christ is so loving, he will forgive you. And so, in [ - ] College, same thing, and so as a teacher I taught the same thing in RE. How wrong was I! It is only just now, in the last 3-4 years, that I have started to read and learn so much more about the faith, through the saints and Church Fathers' writings, through attending Catholic churches and seeking priests that take their faith seriously that I have woken from a dream. And then, in traveling to Europe, visiting holy sites, where Catholics lived and died, where miracles have been performed, it all brought it home to me. My faith became alive. And I was so lucky I kept hanging in there over the 1970-1990s, going to Mass every Sunday, praying etc. because I could have easily gone the way of my friends and family where they no longer see the faith as relevant. I now go to confession, I now realize that many things that I was told on Sunday were either plainly wrong, or simply a watered-down faith that did not want to hurt anyone. Now I realize, it is no wonder people leave the faith, it's because it's been watered down so much, to conform to people's feelings and to not offend. I have no doubt whatsoever, that if the Australian Catholic Church makes changes to make everyone feel welcome ... it will only lead to more of the same, less faithful, because in the end, everything is relative. We will need to keep making changes, until the whole Truth is lost. For me now, in 2019, all I care about is the Truth. Christ and the saints over the centuries died for the Truth. They did not die for lies. They did not die to appease people, fashions, norms, trends, the media etc. The Church in Australia needs to go back to its very core and not only live the truth but also preach it, both in churches but also in schools where today, young people are searching for something other than what they find in the world every minute of the day.

I am 43 years old and grew up in a conservative Catholic family. I currently teach in a Catholic secondary school. A few years ago, my faith was waning and I found myself going through the motions. This was highlighted as I began to listen to evangelising Christians on YouTube. I found so many amazing conversions stories and miracles which were so inspiring to me. I was jealous that I was not experiencing the same level of relationship with God that these people were. Even so the

sharing of their stories began to enliven my faith once again. However, there is among these videos online an undercurrent of resentment towards the Catholic Church. I found that whilst my faith was growing my identity as a Catholic suffered greatly. I began to question if the Church was really helping me in my faith and wondering if I should attend a non-Catholic Christian church. I did in fact attend a local Baptist church and found the experience so different from regular Mass. I attended the Alpha course at an Anglican church and it was there that I realised that I didn't need to change churches for God. What I wanted to do was to change my Church. I want Catholic Mass to be the place where I can have an authentic encounter with God, where I can feel the power of the Holy Spirit as it embraces me and lets me know that I am protected. I really want this plenary council to lead the Church into a new era of action and purposeful interaction. I want my children to grow up knowing that God is close and active in their lives. I want their religion (Catholic) to permeate their spaces including their online social media feeds. God is truly alive in the world and we need to wake up from our slumber and teach the next generation about the great and many gifts sharing our life with him has to offer. Thanks for all the work which you do to listen to the feedback of regular people like me. I look to the authority of the Church to show humility and peace as Jesus did. I seek the change that you can bring to the world.

I would like the Plenary Council to consider the Catholic Church's stance on the Sacrament of Marriage and treatment of Divorcees. 1. Marriage for ALL Catholics - My husband and I are both Catholic, but we were not able to marry in the Church as my husband had previously been married in the Greek Orthodox Church. He went to the Catholic Tribunal to ask permission but was told we would have to go through the lengthy and costly process of an annulment. I did not wish him to revisit his past in such an invasive way and have his ex-wife involved in the process when she was the one to have cheated on him and ended the marriage. She was not even religious—as is often the case, marrying in the Greek Church is more of a cultural thing. Also, we had time against us and wanted to go ahead and get married whilst we still had the chance of having children. I feel it is completely unfair that people who get divorced after a "civil" marriage can go ahead and marry in the Catholic Church, whereas my husband and I could not. We decided to go ahead and marry in a civil ceremony. 2. Treatment of divorcees - My husband was told at the Catholic Tribunal that he would no longer be able to receive Communion and I wonder if that would be the case now for me as well given our marriage is not recognised by the Catholic Church. I feel the hierarchy of the Church and all the "rules and regulations" have made us feel excluded, like we no longer belong and that we are lepers. You don't want us. But you know what, I refuse to leave the Church. I am Catholic and God loves me. I don't believe Jesus would have excluded us. He would have embraced us. If we feel, in our hearts, that we have done the right thing in being together, uniting in marriage and having children, then I don't feel the Catholic Church has the right to deny us Communion and our right to practise our faith. It is our personal relationship with God.

The Church and my faith have helped me to get through some tough times. It's helped me as being an outlet in which I can communicate with God, and ask for strength and courage. It's helped me to heal and to become the person that I am today.

A Catholic priest visited me whilst in hospital, and told me that God would always be there for me whenever I needed him, regardless of when I had been to Mass last. This has always stayed with

me, and has kept my relationship with God strong. Another experience was my parish priest returning from [ - ] and sharing his experience and photos. This also deepened my faith.

A member of staff has included: there has been a significant shift in people's perspective on the life and the meaning of life in recent times. As such, the big questions include: 1. Why do I need religion? 2. How can I trust the Church? Catholics wavering faith would ask this. 3. Believing 'we' (Church) need to accept people of all sexual orientations and welcome them with open arms. Fair, open and just compensation for survivors of child abuse. 4. Transparency as to whether money that parishioners give is used to support accused paedophiles in their legal defence. 5. Scope for a continuum of beliefs re: conscience regarding abortion. 6. Violence within families that are part of our parishes and clear preaching/homilies against violence. 7. Feel a 'sense of comfort' that our youth and next generation have a voice. More people need to become involved to engage our youth. 8. Maintain a level of respect for tradition that is not negatively affected because others do it differently/are unsure/or want a change. 9. A Church that made huge mistakes but fails to acknowledge them. 10. Leaders who represent Jesus in words yet not in action. Jesus was a servant leader which many people who serve the Church are, yet many of its leaders refuse to act like. 11. The role of teachers in Catholic school is paramount when it comes to the recontextualization of Scripture to address our contemporary classrooms. This is vital to the success of the Post Critical Belief stance however, shifting the parents, other adults or elderly in the congregation is a huge challenge.

As a young, married couple we had the enormous privilege of being a part of the leadership team of a Roman Catholic parish Church, responsible for liturgical music and various parts of the Mass, as well as other community gatherings. As young adults, we were able to bring a perspective to the various facets of the Mass, particularly the music, as well as prayer meetings, that promoted greater relevance to young people, provided a more visceral experience and allowed young people to better engage with the teachings and prayer. Consequently, Church participation by young people soared. This being open to the movement of the Holy Spirit was a witness to us on how the Catholic Church could be relevant to our young people in today's modern age.

I attended three different Catholic schools from primary through to secondary school. We scarcely read from Scriptures. We were hardly taught what was going on during the Mass. In our Eucharistic preparation, we were told that the sacrament was a 'symbol' and that we were not really eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of Our Lord, contrary to proper Catholic teaching. I attended Mass all my life, hearing little more than that God was Love, that all my sins would be forgiven, and that they could not have been that bad anyway. It was only when I chose to do a dedicated subject to reading the Scriptures that I actually learned what Christ had taught, and could see that it was so much more than simply that God was Love—God was also Mercy, God was also Justice, God was also instructing all to repentance. It became clear that the church/es—(we attended a few whilst I was growing up) I was attending were missing out on a lot of what Christ taught in the Gospels. I was also growing sick of certain attitudes I noticed creeping in to the communities I was involved with. Lots of young people I was around were focused on amassing as much wealth as possible, there was a strange attitude of hatred towards refugees, and there was a surprising hatred for gay people based not on the teachings of the Church but on the idea that it was 'gross'. Due to the lack of conviction from priests and my negative experiences with young

people, I began to seek what I was looking for in other Christian denominations, only to find that the Catholic churches I attended were closer to Protestant worship than I would like to hope, and that the only denomination that would get me close to Christ's teachings was the Catholic Church, but in its traditional form. I nearly lost my faith in Catholicism entirely when I noticed how far we had collectively strayed from the teachings of the early Church, and only ask that the current Church try its best to stand its ground, because only in doing so can we represent Christ most strongly. I know for sure that many young people are turning away from the Church because they can sense that something is missing, so to truly retain young people we need to provide them with what is lost.

Stranger Movement in the late 1970s - faith alive.

Due to my working life I attend several churches across [ - ] to fulfil my Christian duty. I believe the varying opening times and times of services enable me to fulfil my Christian duties.

I pray daily, attend Mass regularly and read broadly on a range of issues theological, spiritual and of contemporary relevance. I regularly attend Mass where the Priest tries his best but clearly lacks the gifts to deliver all that is asked of him, and this with a congregation full of people well equipped by life experience, depth of knowledge and wisdom to bring the experience alive. For example, I could not count the number of homilies I have heard delivered on Mother's Day, where the priest, who lacks psychological training, is unaware that the glorified view of motherhood that he speaks of reflects little of the complex attachment issues present in every child-mother relationship, and that mothers often fail their children, families are complex and diverse and many children experience very poor parenting. Our prisons are full of such people. It is embarrassing to listen to the idealised drivel that is preached by someone who has little insight into the dynamics of their own mother-son relationship let alone the rest of the people present. Why do I still go? I experience the Divine presence in the liturgy, the Readings and the simple acts I regularly witness in the congregation.

I have worked with youth for the last 34 years and it has been quite a journey. As a woman of Asian descent and now 57 years old, I would have liked more encouragement and support in my endeavours. Most of my work has been in parishes, youth groups, young adults' groups, singles groups and theatre groups. The Catholic Church has found it hard to support groups who did not fit in the parish model or school model. Thus, most of my ministries have been funded by friends, fundraisers, and myself. I now work with the mentally ill and run a theatre group. I feel that within the creative arts there is an opportunity for the Church to give the Catholic message but there has not been much support from it. I hope that in the future there will be more support. Currently I also support drug addicts and alcoholics to recover. I hope that I can get more support in the future. I house them in my dad's house who founded the [ - ] theatre group. I have experienced God most of all in the Charismatic renewal through prayer ministry, healing and music ministry. Through camps, retreats away it has been great opportunity to share your faith. I have found through prayer groups, dynamics in youth ministry, creative arts, such as dance, drama workshop. Mentoring and sharing I have felt close to God. I hope that the church will facilitate that in the future. The Disciples of Jesus and Missionaries of God's Love give me hope that the Church will continue so I hope the bishops continue to support them.

A priest brought me back to the Church, and unfortunately another one nearly took me away from the Church ...
My faith has been a rough journey. The thing that helped me turn to faith was losing my daughter at 22 weeks. The only thing that kept me going was knowing God took her back for a reason and in turn he thanked me by giving me another baby girl.
I am thankful that my parents raised me in the Catholic faith and sent me to Catholic schools. I was fortunate enough to go overseas and meet a girl with similar values to mine. We married and raised our children to be faithful to God. I feel blessed that God allowed me to be born into a Catholic family.
We are so privileged to have students in our school who have one parent Catholic and one who is Buddhist. They are able to embrace the traditions and values of both religions and share these experiences with their peers. Our youth are so open today to understand and embrace all religions. We need that message to be spread across all parishes so that our priests have that same respect, empathy and inclusiveness of all religions in the Catholic Church.
My experience of faith is simple: I remain a committed and devout Catholic notwithstanding the horrible atrocities committed by the Church clergy and especially by its bishops and cardinals. I remain so due to the grace of God and my faith in God. All who remain devoted to the Church participate in this miracle, as Church leadership is in a state of failure.
As a child, Mass was unengaging even though we attended Catholic schools and Sunday Mass, participated in sacraments and were involved in the Mass, it was always uninteresting and unmemorable. This needs to change.
We have experienced our education at Catholic schools.
The experience has been very welcoming and each Church allows everyone to be accepted within society.
1. Catholic primary schools. 2. Sacraments. 3. Catholic based families.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't believe or trust in faith and church experiences 'sucked'.</li> <li>• Forced to do Catholic stuff when not Catholic.</li> <li>• Youth isn't involved as much.</li> <li>• Belief in a higher power but not Jesus.</li> <li>• Belief is forced upon us Educate, not enforce.</li> </ul>
Different religions coming together in our group - Attending Church every Sunday and for a whole week during Easter (Greek) - Family get-togethers every month to say the Rosary - Visiting Lourdes and Fatima.
We have all been through Catholic education, some of us Catholic and some not, some been through as many sacraments as appropriate for our age.
I have been a teacher of music and RE for 35 years—very much a nurturer—in pastoral care in education and within my own family life. Last year I undertook 3 units of CPE at [ - ] hospital. This really expanded my understanding of God as a source of relational love and care. I really experienced incarnational pastoral care—or encountering God and Jesus in other people through attendant human experiences and being God-like to others and as a starting point for much

theological reflection. Much inspiration came from a focus on Jesus' parables - especially the Parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21) and the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-4) and focusing on God's inclusive love while ministering to those affected by a cancer diagnosis and their family and friends. I really experienced first-hand that every human has value and honour irrespective of a human being's gender or sexual preferences, socio-economic status, ability or disability, level of human functionality, race, culture or creed. And being God's agent or minister to the dying was very emotional and precious. The role of pastoral care very much involves being an active listening presence and connecting with people to let them explore and find meaning and purpose in their lives and at [this hospital], particularly as they face terminal illness or death and are stripped of functionality and lose consciousness. I very much focused on affirming their patients' relationships of love and care and just being there with them in tough times—sometimes just holding their hands in silence. What an incredible privilege it is to be a source of strength, healing and hope to the sick. Spiritually, I have witnessed people's self-emptying in dying. St Paul's paradox of finding strength through weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9) held true time and time again. Above all, I learned about loving neighbour as self, with an emphasis on self-care and much spiritual and self-reflection, meditation and meaning-making and focusing on my feelings and perceiving the God of love being in me while being enlightened by spiritual supervision. I had never encountered the concept of self-care or understood loving neighbour as one cares for self to involve self-reflection, self-compassion, self-love or time with self as a model for pastoral care in teaching or education. My pastoral care experience also enlightened me to know God through other faiths—not just Christianity. I learned so much about Buddhism and Hinduism and meditation practices in this course. I am very grateful for this new vocational phase in my life although in Richard Rohr parlance, I am very much aware that I am at the stage in life of "falling upwards" but finding many occasions of grace or connectedness with God's love in my life.

The greatest experience for me in my Christian life has been finding the World Christian Meditation Community. I love its ecumenism and inclusiveness and it doesn't surprise me that it was in meeting the monks of the Egyptian desert that John Cassian finally found people living with a true Christian spirit. Somehow, we have to adopt simplicity, real prayer, humility and, essentially, love, to lead people, including myself, back to Christ.

I receive strength from God at all times to continue my daily journey. My students in my class once had a debate as to why they don't like going to church any more. Both the girls and boys feel that the Church needs to meet their modern needs in today's busy and progressive society. Many attended church as young children and 2 out of 25 attend regularly or not at all. My story is I pray to the Lord and learn not to try and sort it out by myself. When I pray I trust and most of the time my prayers are answered. I come to church to be a part of the community.

- There is a tension between praying to and praying through Mary or the saints. Sometimes devotion to Mary is seen as more important than praying to Jesus.
- When I was in primary school, I prayed the Novena at night, but one day I was sick, but thought, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." I prayed the Novena and in the morning, I was better.
- When I was in college, our religion teacher told us that when we are in danger to pray: "O Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to thee" three times. I did it when I was in danger and I was

rescued. Thank you very much. • I truly believe in God and that he is watching over us all the time. One day, a long time ago, a priest did wrong by me and I took it against the Church by not going to church at all for 2 years. But then I realised that it was this one priest that did wrong to me, not the Church! And I slowly went back to what I am today. Thank God! • When I went to confession at one Church, 10 or more years ago, there was no response from the priest at all and there was no absolution. I felt very let down and upset. Can we upset God so badly that he doesn't forgive our sins? Sometimes I feel I am possessed by the devil even though I attend Mass every week. • My mother passed away when I was young. I was 11 years old. As I got older there was a break away from the Church. Some years later I had a vision of my mum walking towards me in a white dress and veil when we both stopped face to face. She then told me to go to Mass every Sunday. This inspired me to start going to Church again. • I enjoyed growing up in a vibrant, young, growing community where many attended Mass and there were many people involved and who contributed to the Mass, e.g. choir with guitars, altar boys and a youth group. The Brigidine Nuns were involved and made more of an impact (and support). Time changes things, however, and the demographics have changed.

• [My parish] church is an experience of faith to me. Every week I thank Jesus for being part of the parish and for the parishioners. I was welcomed into the parish when I came the first time and now sometimes I even have a kiss or hug from a parishioner. I have phone calls or messages if I am unwell or in hospital. I even am taken out for coffee on my birthday. Parishioners really care at [my parish]. • Change members from consumers to participants. Just as schools have changed their approach from sitting in rows to sitting in groups and actively participating to the class, so members of the community should be able to have an equal contribution to the weekly gathering.

Our experience with the Church in Australia over many decades has been very good overall. However, we understand that priests are human and some of them have faults and personalities that are not quite in consonance with priestly life ... we refer to humility, not bad actions. We intend to pray for our priests and religious.

I was born into a family of 9 children. My father was not a Catholic while my Mother was a devout Catholic. As children we were used to our Irish parish priest knocking on the backdoor some Friday afternoons, just to have a cuppa and a chat. He was a truly lovely man. At primary school I was educated by the [ - ] nuns, I was given love, security, guidance and a really great education. For my secondary school education, I went to the [ - ] nuns who were strong women much ahead of their time, great educators and passionate about social justice. Having become a teacher, I also had the opportunity to teach in a Catholic school and know first-hand the dedication of teachers to the students at an inner-city school, (often referred to as a Mission school). My husband and I married when we were very young and had 5 children, all educated in Catholic schools. My husband's family were also Catholic. Our children all married in the Catholic Church and we have 5 grandchildren at Catholic schools. We are involved in our local Catholic church and have been since we married in 1978. Many of our friends and our children's friends are from this connection. For our part we have been some of the lucky ones, our experiences have been positive, our clergy, teachers and friends loving and supportive. The role models in our Catholic parish and School community, especially when we were young parents, has given our family so much more than we could ever give back.

I thank and bless my parents for my Catholic faith for which I am so grateful now living in these current-world crises. I was taught by Loreto nuns in India who were quite strict in discipline. We were always surrounded by priests and nuns throughout our life, as my mum welcomed them to our home. We also had a grand aunt who was a nun and in charge of a nursing home, who was a kind and holy person. Mum was also friends with a Carmelite nun who went to school with her and remained lifelong friend of the family. Mum also helped all the kids' schools with donations for their school fetes from her employer. My parents made sure we said our night prayers every night, most times we said the Rosary and sang a little hymn. Most Sunday evenings we went to Benediction in the afternoons as was the custom in our country. My mother followed and observed many Catholic traditions, especially during Lent, Holy Week, Advent and feast days. My parents were hospitable to anyone who came to our home, whether it was a beggar or someone in need. They never turned anyone away without food or shelter or advice. Whenever we had a life challenge, mum turned to God for help in prayers and her prayers were always answered. When I first arrived in Australia, I found it was quite different to my country I immigrated from, as our community and churches there were crowded and very active. I found the churches here half-empty even at Christmas. That was in the early 1970s, during the peak hippy/rock and roll and liberal society was emerging. You could very easily be enticed into following that fashionable lifestyle if you were weak or had no guidance from your parents. A Catholic priest helped our family to settle into this new country, with accommodation, schools for the kids and jobs for the adults and always visited us to see if we were okay. I became weak in my faith because there was not the same type of close community or any programs for spiritual growth. Being new to a country, we didn't find church services to go to and only attended Sunday Mass, but many times there was no confessionals open. Plus, all around us people mocked our faith. Even with all that, our parents' faith never floundered. We had a family crisis when my dad was diagnosed with a terminal illness and passed away. I started questioning life and my faith and since then God has been helping me to learn and grow deeper in my faith through many life challenges. I have been blessed to live in close proximity to many churches I can attend, to attend daily Mass, receive the Eucharist, Confession, Eucharistic Adoration, Novenas or to just have a quiet time with Our Lord. Plus, I was introduced to watching EWTN on television and watching their programs has really helped me to understand my faith deeper.

My Catholic faith is strong because of my family upbringing in India, surrounded by a strong Catholic family, teachers, friends, and community. Our Churches were always open, filled with people walking in and out any time, continuous prayers any time, the parish priest always available in his office to talk to. The confessional is always open. Happy community events planned all year. We saw conversions regularly. We had school retreats annually. Our family was friends with many priests and nuns, even Mother Theresa's sisters would visit our home and take the kids to Sunday School to help my mother out to have a break. We joined the Legion of Mary and helped with charitable works for the Church. Our parents lived their faith by always reaching out to the poor, homeless, hungry, unemployed, always sharing their faith openly and following the traditions of the Catholic Church. We experienced many miracles of daily challenging life situations through the faith of our parents and so we always have hope and trust in God.

As a Catholic School community, we are made up of members of many faith communities. We see it is important to respect everyone in it. Many of us have had the sacraments and see our life as being important to tell Jesus's message.

[ - ] have been happily married to [ - ] for almost sixty-two years. I was born in [ - ] on the [ - ] to an Italian father [ - ] and a Greek mother [ - ]. When England entered the War in 1940 our family was taken as civilian prisoners-of-war interned initially in Palestine and then transported to Australia and interned in [Camp] for the duration of the War. My parents chose to remain in Australia and make this our new home. I will be forever grateful to them. We were blessed with five children, eighteen grandchildren and now four great grandchildren all of whom we love dearly and are so proud of. Our faith has always been at the centre of our lives. We belonged to the parish of [ - ] in [ - ] for fifty years and during that time we were actively involved with all aspects of parish life. The parishioners became our extended family. We are now living in a [ - ] Retirement Village in [ - ] and belong to the parish of [ - ] in [ - ] where we were welcomed by Father, staff and parishioners with warmth and friendliness. We were made to feel at home, we are happy.

The world was great at keeping my faith superficial. [ - ] parish in [ - ] introduced great tools of Catechesis on the faith: The Anawim Way (daily readings with meditation) is brilliant Catechesis and meditation on the Word. The Catholic Weekly (Sydney newspaper) is great to hear Catholic news and perspectives. These help keep me out of the saturation of secular and anti-Catholic news and ideals. With the Holy Mass, these tools help me keep my gaze fixed on Jesus.

A priest touched upon stories of refugees and diseases, which made me feel more privileged and grateful for what I have.

I believe my Catholic primary school education has taught me a good set of morals to live my life by.

No one in our group has a parish priest who has supported the 2020 process. Our parish priests have remained disengaged at best and non-supportive.

My parents became JW's because the priest could not, or would not, provide answers to their questions! My own faith in the Catholic Church has lessened because of what the Church fails to provide.

I was born into a Catholic family and went to two Catholic primary schools until the age of 9. My parents then took the step of homeschooling me and my siblings, a decision made largely in order to give us a better chance to embrace our faith as we weren't receiving spiritual nourishment within our classrooms. We were a part of a diverse group of Catholics who socialised and shared our experiences while taking the avenues available to home educators. This has been a very positive experience in my life. At 18, I made the conscious decision to take ownership of my faith as an adult. I have encountered the various charisms and liturgical practices within the Australian Church. From the diversity of parishes' Sunday and weekday Masses across [ - ], Marian prayer groups, parish council meetings, youth groups, youth camps, young adult groups, leading a parish youth choir, ministering to the youth of my community, attending silent retreats, youth ministry formation retreats, Extraordinary Form Liturgy, to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal gatherings and Masses across [ - ], Eucharist Adoration in various ministries, youth festivals, Social Justice ministries, Ecumenical Conferences, and two World Youth Days. I am also a designer who has

aided various communities within the Australian Church, to promote and visually convey their identity. I am passionate about helping the Church bringing real and authentic experiences of Christ's love into reality in the lives of the people of Australia and the world.

My faith is deep and strong. There have been many times of need in my life, requiring me to dig deep and "soldier on". Interestingly, I have always looked for and seen 'signs' of God at work in my life, often represented by the Cross. When my baby daughter was admitted to hospital for an operation I stayed with her. My husband was at home caring for our other children. I felt terribly alone and helpless but looked out of the hospital window only to see a Cross on the top of a nearby Church. I knew then that God was with me and watching over us. Our daughter has grown up to be a strong and healthy woman! Again, when I delivered the eulogy at my mother's funeral I felt the sun on my back through the Church stain glass windows and an immediate strength that I know was God given. I've never forgotten that moment. And when another baby was born but died the following day I know God helped me through that challenge and although I didn't understand why, I accepted it was best for our daughter that she goes back to Heaven. I know she watches over us all and we have had many fortunate events in life. Perhaps the most moving times for me have been when each of our children were presented for baptism; I felt so grateful and close to God that He would entrust those little lives to me. It's very powerful stuff indeed. And it keeps me going each and every day. But not everyone has that gift. A while ago when I was living in another parish, our priest was asking parishioners for donations for church renovations. At a parish council meeting he admitted his disappointment at the lack of response. He was visibly shocked and saddened when I told him "people aren't going to give you money, Father, because they're angry. They're not angry at you they're angry at the Church!" So, whilst I have the ability to separate my faith and the desire to attend Mass and receive the Holy Eucharist, many Catholics do not. My faith is strong but my patience with the Church has waned. I was confirmed by the former Archbishop [ - ] whom I believed to be a wonderful man - and yet in more recent times it's been revealed he knowingly ignored the paedophile priests in the Church. My father told me he was referred to as '[nickname]' by other priests!!! (and that's a quote from a priest!). So that's very disappointing to me and in no way can I accept it or defend it (and I know you are not asking people to do that). The future of the Church depends now on how the hierarchy fix the problems within and redevelop the Church as an institution that embodies kindness, honesty, acceptance, generosity and love. And equally important is how it will support those who are brave enough to embark on a life in the priesthood!

I am currently a 19-year-old young man. My dad always took me to Mass every Sunday, although I wasn't always too keen. Thanks be to God he did that. I at least thought God and the Church was important. Yet, I didn't know my faith. I didn't know the Eucharist was Jesus. I never went to confession. Even though I went to Mass, I was not fed truths that would change my heart to Christ. That all changed when I was about 13. I had started doing the wrong things in my life. But then, I started reading some things on the internet about the Catholic Faith. I learnt that a certain sin I was committing was a mortal sin (I always felt guilty anyway, so I knew the Church was right!) and that I had to Confess it. Finally, I mustered up the courage and I did. I actually had a conversion to Christ. Now I understood who Jesus was, and why His death on the Cross mattered. I learnt why the Mass mattered, why the Eucharist mattered. A few years later, I started taking my faith more seriously. Although I had the initial first confession in a while, I was still lukewarm, not

really praying much and going to Confession every few months. In year 10, I started going to confession every week, and reading more about the Catholic Faith. Eventually I was drawn to another parish because of its reverent liturgy and ample times for confession (along with the great advice!). Here the homilies were Catholic; they spoke about the Eucharist, prayer, Our Lady, confession. We were amazed. It was because of this parish that our whole family changed. I was the first one in the family to first go to Confession. With this parish and its homilies, my whole family has been brought closer to God. Once upon a time, less than 10 years ago, my mother would not go to Mass every single Sunday. Eventually she had her own conversion and went to confession at this particular church. Now every single person in my family goes to daily Mass and at least monthly confession/reconciliation. It is thanks to these priests and their willingness to hear many confessions and encourage people to go often. My experience has showed me this: where the authentic Catholic faith is taught (even if it seems demanding!) it is a success. God is loved more. People become more patient. We grow closer to God and we grow closer to each other. But this only occurs when we seek a change of heart, a conversion realising that we need God and His Grace, especially in the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Confession. This is the fuel for priestly vocations, generous families, and the care for the elderly. We can only be self-giving if we accept Christ's gift to us: His Gift of His Church and all its sacraments.

Unfortunately, I believe that the bishops have not been listening to the Holy Spirit in their lives and roles, over many decades and possibly longer. They have allowed a toxic clericalism to take control of the Church, and we have seen the results of this in the media, child abuse of women and men, abuse of female religious and male religious. It is horrifying. We need to dismantle much of the Church hierarchy, and reassemble it in a way that that will ensure that the abuses of the past and today will never reoccur. I don't know how this will look, but I do know that non-religious people, the laity, in particular women, will need to be intimately involved. God is asking us to restructure the Church to stop toxic clericalism and give all members a real say in the running of the Church. The Holy Spirit speaks to us all, equally. This means giving non-clerical women and men real authority, and where necessary authority over priests and bishops to make sure that the abuses of the past and present are never allowed to be repeated. The bishops of our beloved Church have failed us by allowing the perpetuation of criminal abuse against children, women and men, both religious and lay people. Many have criminally hidden these abuses, and moved offending priests and religious to other areas where this abuse continued. This means that the Church must change its culture to one of servant leadership, where toxic clericalism has no place. It means that non-clerical women and men must be given real positions of leadership and authority. Structural change such as this, is absolutely essential. We are all called to serve, none of us have a God-given right to exercises an abusive power over another person. I believe that God is asking us to revisit and perhaps dismantle the current Church hierarchy, that has not served us well in so many ways—child abuse, abuse of women and men, transparency, destruction of careers. Not listening to the will God and of the people of God given that the majority of surveyed Australian Catholics wanting reform in the Church's approach to LGBTI+ people. We are seeing lack of inclusion of young people and relevance to young people. We need to seriously seek ways to encourage female and married priesthood, female diaconate, universal compulsory celibacy for clergy etc. We need to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse. I believe that God is asking us to engage in a kind of second reformation, where all people

involved in the Church will truly listen and respond to the call of the Holy Spirit to change and be responsive to change in our modern world.
It has been a struggle. I travel far and wide to find a place for confession and to attend Mass. I cry a lot.
Over the years I have come to know many fine young men who would have made wonderful parish priests but were not prepared to give up the companionship of a wife/partner or the dream to have their own children. Also, many other Churches have married clergy and are wonderful, faith-filled parishes. Society has moved on from men ruling the world so the Church must now also consider female priests; we know there are immensely capable women in many communities already supporting and working for the Church in various roles, why not the next step and allow them to become priests. Finally, why not gay clergy; once again a reflection of our more progressive society.
No thank you. But I will comment on behalf of our group that we are quite a varied cross-section of older Australian Catholics.
My experience in the Neocatechumenal Way has been a great gift for me - a pathway and support over the years- and also for my children and children of other members of my community. Remember, Australia is one of the most secularised countries of the world.
[Name of the parish]. The word 'man' is still being used in the Nicene Creed. The word 'sleep' when the meaning is 'dead' needs to be completely removed from all liturgies.
At a public meeting last year, two young women, probably in their early thirties, spoke strongly against their primary aged school children having to participate in the Second Rite as their First Reconciliation. Although the priest and penitent are in public view, they considered that their children could still be open to grooming. There is also the problem of young children being taught to manufacture "sins" in order to fulfil the conditions necessary for absolution.
A sick man was sitting in the back of our Church. I felt sorry but did nothing else. The reading was about gifts, and we should use them. Did I have a gift? Could I heal this man? It was scary but if I did nothing that was worse. I approached the man, prayed and laid my hand on him. Nothing happened, he got upset with me and I felt bad. I prayed. Healing isn't my gift.
The living faith of the Church as found in the works of social outreach undertaken by many individuals across all parts of our national community is cause for great spiritual joy.
Recently, we were horrified to hear Bishop [ - ] proudly pronounce at a public forum that there is "clearly no clericalism present within the Australian Church". Many listening reacted with shock that such a statement would be proclaimed, one person gagged as they had just sipped some water. One member of our group said they were tempted afterwards to go and offer the bishop money towards an optical examination; for it is obvious that his vision has become extremely distorted. This made us reflect more on how rife the cancer of clericalism is within our community. If statements like this are coming so confidently from the mouths of our leaders we are heading into even more dangerous waters. We all agreed that in baptism we are all baptised into the priesthood of Christ. Priestly spirituality is therefore simply a call to all members to live their lives as fully as they can as Christians. Our membership within the Christian community

carries within it an implicit call to ministry. Each of us are called to mission; to be ministers in the manner in which God calls us. If the ministerial role a person is called to be is that of leader within the Catholic Church this role should simply be named and ordained. The concept of an ontological change taking place through consecration is misguided and outdated. It is not something that came from within the community begun by Jesus Christ. Rather it grew from a need of power within the Church during the time of Constantine. Our history needs to be recognised and leadership roles need to be re-thought. We are all very aware that a cleric is no more sacred than any other member of the Christian community. Those most competent and able and willing should be the ones placed within these roles. This will lead our community into a place much more connected, giving, worthy, loving and fulfilling than the closed authoritarian path we currently follow. Of course, this will not be easy as power is something many clerics have come to enjoy, and they will fight hard to retain merits which they savour.

My faith has grown immensely since attending a Latin Mass parish. The liturgical abuses of Novus Ordo Churches almost destroyed my faith.

My faith has always been important but more so from the aspect of believing in God. Growing up in the 2000s in Australia I seem to know more people who are skeptical of faith than actually follow it. This is why I say my faith is based more on God rather than the Church. I am a skeptic in some sense, as I know there is a lot of politics within the Church and many corrupt people speaking on behalf of God's word. I think for younger people to want to be involved in the Church many things need to be re-thought and more of a focus on how to love everyone as equals, less on sin and excluding others. Even while writing out my opinions I worry this would be enough to have me excommunicated from the Church. But I think it's important that my thoughts which many of the younger generation share are heard. Teach everyone to love and there will be less sin in the world.

My faith in Christ and his teachings have always guided the choices that I have made in life.

My [period of time] in the Marist Fathers Novitiate in New Zealand was the best year of my life (looking back 60 years). Preparing for the vows particularly of poverty and obedience has had a lasting, beneficial effect on my life, for which I am extremely grateful. I also learned how to clean toilets which has been very helpful in my married life (OK this was in NZ, but we have been in Australia now for just over 50 years). I find reconciliation in the late afternoon at [name of the church] in the city of [ - ] wonderful as I get good counselling, get to make my penance in front of the Blessed Sacrament exposed, followed by an hour or so of meditation, then Mass and finally Evening Prayer. I think that this is helping my family relationships. Fr [ - ], late of [ - ] parish, was inspirational in his apparently laid-back approach, yet keen interest in his parishioners.

The local priest we had a few years ago was very friendly, funny, down-to-earth and understanding of how the world has changed—he was happy to marry a Catholic and non-Catholic and gave very appropriate (for this day and age) homilies/sermons at Mass and other sacraments.

My mum came to Australia in her early 70s after the death of my dad and while she receives no pension, she is supported by her 6 children living in Australia. She is now 82 and lives with her youngest daughter who provides her everyday needs. I pray to my God every day to give her strength of body and mind so she will be able to live out her last days in her children's home and I

truly believe in my heart that my God hears me and is saying Yes to me. She is moving around and is able to take care of herself and can go to the liturgy celebration every Sunday. For this I have my God to thank.

I grew up in [ - ] with a mum who was a Catholic and a dad who was baptised as an Anglican or CofE, but never really practised. He was a very good honourable man with very strong morals and ethics, strong principles of honesty, respect and generosity. He was willing to help anybody. He and Mum brought us up to be good Christians and good citizens. That was my, my sister's and my brother's foundation in life. When I was in Primary and early Secondary Catholic Schools I was involved with YCS through our parish [ - ], and college [ - ]. Later on, I joined the YCW when I was in later Secondary. Then Fr [ - ], who was in the [ - ] diocese, formed a young people's group of boys and girls in late secondary, tertiary and early years of work. Fr [ - ] was a very grounded priest. He worked for seven years before entering the priesthood. I am convinced all priests should work in a real job in the community for maybe up to five years to understand what life is really all about. How can someone go from secondary school into the seminary and be able to truly be a very good priest. I cite the paedophilia issue as an example of how this closed initiation process is flawed. Fr [ - ] was a Probation Officer and he had us helping with the boys and helping Sr [ - ] with the girls all of whom had had hard lives of one kind or another. He had us visiting older parishioners to share time and help with reducing their loneliness. Fr [ - ] continued his work when he moved to [ - ] before he died in the early 1970s because he was burning the candle at both ends—staying up late helping to keep the boys in line and then up early to say 7:00am Mass. However, in his honour, the [ - ] Centre, which he established, has continued in [ - ], and it thrives today to continue to help young people of all backgrounds to live a healthy Christian life. The Plenary Council should visit the [ - ] Centre and look at it as a model to help young people to stay out of trouble and build a strong Christian life. A book has been written and copies can be obtained from the [ - ] Centre in [ - ]. These connections to Christian life from home through school and into my early twenties have helped me stay on the right path. My concern is that the same path does not exist today, as evidenced by the lack of youth at Mass or who participated in the Plenary Council discussions in our parish. Young people don't feel connected to the Church. They say there is nothing there for them. On the contrary, I have attended the local Baptist church in [ - ] recently at the invitation of my neighbour, as I have been telling her of my concern about the loss of our youth. The young people are actively involved in the Sunday Service as well as in meetings during the week. Their model is that kids go through four to five transitions in their lives and they want the youth pastors to be there to help them every...

My comment is about the absolute lack of leadership in the Church, on issues of faith and morals. Where was/is the Church speaking out on late term abortions, Safe school—warped sexualisations of our kids and euthanasia? What is happening in the USA around 'post-birth abortions' i.e. infanticide, will happen here soon. Many of our bishops and priests are missing in action on these issues, but they are very vocal about, global warming, 'refugees', and environment.

For me the example of parents and grandparents in their faith has helped shape me.

I grew up in a practising Catholic family and attended a Catholic primary school. My earliest memories included Jesus's instructions to love one another as you love yourself, and do unto others as you'd have done to you. Later in my youth I learned of the practices the Catholic Church,

supposedly the vehicle of Jesus's instructions, deemed evil, such as sex before marriage, masturbation and the use of contraception. I was so disgusted with myself for being unable to fight natural urges in puberty that I confessed my shame to a priest at my Catholic high school. Thankfully, being a Jesuit, the priest encouraged me to trust my own goodness and the faith I had in myself, and ignore the decreed instruction from the Church. Later, when I found myself grappling with homosexual thoughts, I naturally questioned why God would make me this way if He considered it so evil? And I remembered to trust my own goodness—I couldn't accept that God could hate me. I tried for two years to make myself different, but eventually realised I was fighting not only a losing but a pointless battle. I was still treating others exactly as I'd like to be treated, and loving them as I loved myself. I was living as a true Christian, and I was gay—they simply weren't exclusive. I was extremely fortunate to have a Jesuit education that encouraged me to think broadly and openly. And even then, I went through years of hating myself for being myself, thanks to a completely outdated doctrine. How many others in less fortunate circumstances, at that juncture, will either continue to hate themselves or simply turn their back on the Church? How is either of those scenarios acceptable or desirable? I want to see the Catholic Church reform. There are great people doing great things in our Christian community in Australia, and none of them spends their time pontificating or clinging to teachings that never aligned with Jesus' practice in the first place. They continue to shape my faith, and I hope we can restore the Church in their image.

I've had a very chequered history on my journey of faith. I was baptised in the then Church of England as a baby. At the age of about 11 my family became members of our local Methodist church. I attended Sunday School every week, studying the scriptures and singing in the Church choir. I was confirmed as a member of this church at the age of 16 and I participated in the church youth group. During my late teens and early twenties, I still considered myself a Christian. However, by my mid-twenties I was questioning my faith because I witnessed practices which were contrary to my understanding of Christianity. So I then considered myself an agnostic, progressing to an atheist. I had no church involvement for around 20 years. In my early forties I began to miss being a member of a faith community and I started to visit several denominations of Christianity. At the age of 45, I was received into the Catholic Church after completing the RCIA program. Since that time, I have undertaken several years of theological study, completing an Associate Diploma of Pastoral Ministries from [ - ], a Certificate of Spiritual Leadership from [ - ] and a Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Direction from [ - ]. For the past ten years I have had regular sessions with my own spiritual director. This has assisted me to have a far greater understanding of how God communicates with her/his people. I'm now more open to hearing the messages God sends me through my dreams, my positive inner voice, family and friends. I feel blessed to have experienced the life I've lived so far. I know there is more to come and at times I feel a little apprehensive about what I am being called to do. Luckily for me, I also have a wonderful psychologist who has helped me try and stay "in the moment" with the mantra "nothing will happen today that I can't manage." Unfortunately, after 25 years as a member of the Catholic Church, I have come to a place where I'm now considering changing my allegiance to another Christian denomination. I hear you ask why?

My Catholic faith is always my religion of practice since young despite I absconded the Church for years due to internal conflicts of being a lesbian. I had experienced numerous God's graces in my entire life which I believe strongly that God has never abandoned me at all.

In 2015 I hit rock bottom in my life. I wanted my life to end. All my life I had been attending a Catholic church and two things plagued me. Fear and guilt. I did not know where I had adopted this from. I was a regular person. I did my best to be the best person I could be to others. Was I perfect? Far from it. Did I have a close relationship with my Saviour Jesus Christ? Absolutely not. I loved Him only from a distance, because I felt unworthy to come close. He is Holy. I'm not. He is sinless. I am a sinner. Fear and guilt kept me away from my source of life, love and healing Jesus Christ. One night in 2015, I couldn't sleep. This had been a regular happening. I was searching for some meditation music, when I found a Christian pastor explaining the Bible. His name is Pastor Joseph Prince. He explained the Bible in a way that made sense to me and the Holy Spirit in me confirmed this, even though I struggled desperately with fear and guilt. Now I have an intimate honest relationship with my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I depend entirely on Him in my life. He is the Lord of my life. I am safe and secure in Him. I love Him much, because I'm forgiven much. I know now my sin debt is paid for by the blood of Christ. I was not taught this at the Catholic schools I attended, nor at the regular weekly Masses I attended.

I was born in New Zealand and went to Catholic schools where nuns taught me—it all gave me a great love for the Catholic religion. Participating in various activities like the Children of Mary, playing the organ for Mass and mixing in groups for Catholic youth helped me to continue strengthening my faith.

We experienced bigotry and observed violence in our old home land. This was between so called Christians.

Spending time in Indigenous communities, teaching religion in schools, there are many people who have no connection to the Church. This experience has shaped me to respond to the plenary council.

When my children started school in the early 1970's we were told not to discuss religious matters with them since things had changed and we did not understand such matters anymore. Catholic education went downhill since then with respect to passing on the faith. The new Mass we were told would be good for the young and would result in improved attendance by the young. This, of course did not happen. Very difficult now to recover lost ground.

Yes we will, if you guys will like to contact us we are happy to give testimony.

- At the recent Health and Integrity in Church and Ministry Conference, we encountered many women who demonstrated exemplary and competent leadership for the Church in our times. How can women such as these be fully embraced into Church governance structures? •
- Conversely, in our [ - ] Archdiocese, the number of Pastoral Associates (the visible, pastoral face of women in leadership at the local parish level) has diminished significantly and dramatically over the past 20+ years—from over 200 in the 1990s to about 100 today. Many of these competent women have had their positions terminated upon the appointment of a new parish priest. Those who remain do not believe they are fully supported and protected by the local diocese. •
- The embarrassment felt by some priests when participating in diocesan forums, usually all-male

groups such as the Archbishop's Council of Priests, when discussion is about Church matters generally, but particularly when the discussion involves critical issues involving women—e.g. abortion, IVF, birth control.

I don't have much experiences, I was just raised to dedicate my life to Jesus.

I am from an ethnic background and my faith came from my parents. I was educated in Catholic primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. I could see a clear incongruence of what I was taught at home and what was taught in my formal education. If I went to Mass in secondary school I was laughed at, and at University, the lecturers clearly were anti-Catholic. For example, there was a pro-life stall in the University foyer for one of the events and many of the staff were openly critical of this. I would like to attend Mass after work but it is not available in my area—I have to travel a couple of suburbs away. I feel the priest in our parish is so bogged down with administration that we don't receive any formation or good Catholic teachings. No one tells people about the power of the Rosary prayer and devotion to saints.

My faith goes back as a child. My mother and father both very stanch Catholics. We went to Church daily and helped the Church choir out. My mum did help the Church and the community in many ways. We prayed the Rosary every night, had a tough life but my faith is what kept me together. It gave me a sense of hope and to believe in something and that is the person I am today.

**Story 1.** - Failure of the Church to demonstrate Christian values. My sister is a survivor of a terrible abuse by a Catholic priest who was found guilty and is now in gaol for a long time. My sister was forced to follow a rule of the Church back then, to visit confessions regularly as, if sins were not heard and forgiven, you could go to Hell. It was in one of these confessional hearings that the abuse took place. Another reason why the Church needed to change some of the ways of thinking. I have sat with her on numerous occasions and attempted to support her through an horrific ordeal as she has, over the last two years, been called to travel to [ - ] and talk to strange people about her story of abuse which happened over 50 years ago. My sister's mental health has suffered since the abuse and her life has taken many downward spirals as a result of not getting help back then because no one would believe her story. It appears even now no one believes her story as she has been interrogated, time and time again, by very well-paid lawyers sent down from [ - ], paid by the Catholic Church, and constantly trying to undermine her statements. Not one ounce of compensation has come her way and I am to believe that is the case with many of the women involved. She has told me the percentage of survivors who have taken their own lives, has increased in the last year. My sister has lost all sense of trust in the Church and does not know who to turn to, to feel safe and believed. As a family we support and love her dearly but her trust issues will never be repaired and I feel to this day—50 years on—her life is very vulnerable. How do we help her as Church?????? **Story 2.** Lack of openness and empathy: My story was that of a gay family who were christening their child. On the day of the christening, when they arrived at the Church, there was a 'Say No to Gay Marriage' petition in the welcoming space of the Church. It is so disappointing that this was their experience of being 'welcomed' into the Catholic faith community. **Story 3.** A priest making Homily relevant to the congregation: Last year in [ - ] for the [ - ] Festival, the priest spoke drawing parallels between Jesus King of the Jews and Elvis King of

Rock n Roll. The congregation could relate to every word—as opposed to previous years when visitors weren't even mentioned. The homily being a highlight of our weekend.

Yes. After Vatican 2, I joined with other Catholics in studying the documents and trying to put our learning to practical use in our daily lives. Some changes were made in Church practice. Our big parish held wonderful celebrations of the third rite of Reconciliation. There were large crowds and earnest participation. But as the decades have gone on it seems the hierarchy became wary of lay people making decisions and gradually more progressive actions were terminated. I believe the Church has failed to see that many of my age, if we still attend Church, were helped to move forward, then told to go back in our boxes. Too late! That was not possible, now many of my friends and I are just disenchanted with the Church. Jesus and his teachings are still important to me but Church structures have failed me.

There are many stories I could share as to what has shaped me in my faith journey. From the days of being a young mum when I arrived in Australia many years ago from the UK; finding my 'local' Church; the local primary school; member of numerous committees, from tuck shop duties, to being on the Parish Council, etc., and all the various faith journey courses and discussion groups of which I had the opportunity to be part of over the years. One important group I belonged to for over twenty-five years was my Small Neighbourhood Group. This was introduced to us by our then parish priest - Fr [ - ]. His favourite story was to tell 'the faithful' of the first night he came to our meeting and on arrival at the house, realized there were no cars parked out the front. Why? Because we were literally all neighbours living within walking distance of each other. These meetings were based on the Gospel message. We would read the coming Sunday's Gospel, reflect and discuss. Then we would share our stories, our problems and joys. Some neighbours, who no longer went to Mass found their faith reignited. Questions would be raised, addressed and if there were problems, they would be followed up. One of the main questions was, and still is very much today, why most of us 'good Catholic' parents' children, once they hit the teenage years, stopped going to Mass or have got divorced. Yet it heartens me when I read about all the tremendous good so many young people are doing to help our troubled society. Yes, I thank God for the gift of faith and I ask God also to bless all those who have shaped my faith journey all these years.

I love having the choice to be a practising Catholic in Australia. So do my parents who migrated from a Communist country. I hate that I am somehow branded as a homophobic bigot because I believe in the Sacrament of Marriage should be with 1 man and 1 woman. I am disappointed that the Church allowed the LGBTQ group persuade so many Catholics to vote Yes. I don't like how Muslims have become first class citizens meanwhile Catholics are stoned by the media any chance they get. I hate that my bank had a sign up that said "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas"—the words I grew up with. I am not sure if it's worse but last Christmas none of the people behind the shopping centre counters wished me anything. We should not allow Christmas to die because we are afraid to be discriminating. If anything, it's discriminating against Christians.

The vibrancy of World Youth Day and recent Australian Catholic Youth Festivals, and the express desire of the young for identity and orthodoxy that is engaging.

I became a Catholic 12 years ago but now found the Catholic Mass very mechanical and routine. I no longer feel an uplifting experience.

I was a missionary in PNG during the 70's I would like to say nowhere have I been afforded such kindness as I was in the jungle by quite often nonbelieving people!! So you don't have to be baptised or even know Jesus to live up to the good He put into each and every one of us! He made us and He looks after each of us and eventually eternally.

The practice of regular prayer and the opportunity to regularly attend Mass wherever we are (near home, on holiday) and listen to the teachings of Jesus and the Word of God is a great way to regularly reflect on our faith and seek guidance in our journey. This freedom of being able to practice our faith freely is something that certainly helped shape my faith and the faith of my family. This Plenary Council session—an opportunity to explore and share is also a great way to reflect on our beliefs, faith and that of others.

My faith experience in the Australian Church has formed me with a strong belief in God and a very strong belief in the sacraments and the Mass. I have struggled to be accepted in my parish when I have offered to assist as it is not what you know or can do but who you know so now I have given up and have gone outside my parish. My children were given a Catholic education but do not attend Mass but they still believe in God. Both have had no support from the Church in difficult times in their early married lives with serious illness and a breakdown in a marriage which has torn the family apart. The regulations in place for some of the sacraments make it difficult for people and I have found it difficult to know where to go to get assistance regarding the sacraments on occasions this should not be an issue. A priest should be available in an emergency to anoint a person this has been an issue for my family. I do my best but cannot find the pastoral care that is needed in my present situation. I have studied Theology and have a deep love of my faith and God and feel that this is all that is important to love God and to love my fellow man is what Christ commanded and that is all that the Church needs to do to fix the problems that we are facing in the future.

My experience over the past 70 years is to sadly see a Church in decline, to see people despise us for not remaining true to our faith, to not stand up for a Christian way of life, to cave in to left wing lunacy and for all clergy to run for cover when criticized. We must find some backbone to speak out for our Blessed Lord.

As current President of [ - ] I share my humble story of the call that I felt so strongly to teach the Word when I attended an Adult Education session in my local parish. The light went on, that was what I was called to do, what I wanted to do with all my heart and despite the fact that I had two sons at school a fulltime managerial position and a husband with a business I began to study part-time. I continued through my studies and completed my doctorate and now am a Senior Lecturer in New Testament and Academic Dean of the [ - ] College in [ - ]. Like Lydia of Acts God opened my heart to hear what God is calling us to do and our Church needs to hear that call of God to each of us from our baptism to proclaim the word in our lives and in our work and in whatever way we are asked.

I know my faith because it was drummed into me as a child like the 6 times table. I was taught what about the Ten Commandments, the grace received by a truthful confession, the power of the Rosary and respect for the Blessed Sacrament. I am grateful for the opportunity to express my feelings about the state of things. I have met many Catholic officials, some good men and women,

others not. I grieve for the Church. A once powerful institution that attracted people because of its "black and white" attitude to the human experience. It is now a shadow of its former existence. I have committed many mortal sins but I keep going back to God hat in hand for forgiveness. If I had any doubts I asked my teacher, my priest or my mother and was given an answer that left no doubt in my mind. I asked a priest in confession the other week about an ongoing problem I had, hoping for some clerical advice ... but was told that maybe I should talk to one of my male friends. "No Father, I'm here to get advice from a priest about a spiritual matter". Absolutely incredible response from a priest. Attending Mass, I have seen many acts of disrespect of the Blessed Sacrament ... people walking into the Church with cups of coffee and chewing gum despite the Church's ruling on no food an hour before Communion (fasting).

I am a convert of many years and actively involved in my parish. As a convert, I believe I see the flaws in the Church more starkly than those brought up in the faith from the cradle.

The Church and our Catholic faith are a constant in life. While everything else in the world changes, it's good that the Church and what it stands for remains the same.

I grew up in a family which I can best describe as almost living in the Church. I think this came largely from my father who was a convert from the Anglican tradition and with the willing cooperation of my mother who was from an Irish Catholic family. They had both emigrated from England as soon as they were married, again at my father's instigation so that his future family would have the best start possible. This we did from having a stable family life and education that meant we all completed full secondary education and more. Faith wise, four of the six of us entered religious orders. I am one of the four who subsequently left the order to which I belonged. I have been married for over 30 years. I was a member of the Carmelite order for 26 years. I have lived very committed to the Catholic Church and tradition. While living through the challenges of my transition from religious life and into married life I believe the graces of my life have led me to value and speak for:

- The encouragement of lay families associated with various religious orders and congregations so that their traditions can live on with diminishing professed numbers.
- The encouragement of the development of companioning of each other so that each person will come to know and act out of his/her individual relationship with God, other people and the universe. This relationship of course is set within the community of the tradition where the individual discerns their action in the light of the word of God, gathered for the Eucharist and attentive to the teaching of the Church in its various forms. The main point I want to make is that the individual's discernment must be highlighted otherwise there will be little enduring commitment to living our faith. The days of acting in a certain way because the Pope says so, or the priest or any external authority want is have long gone.

I have had very sad occurrences which have made me seriously wonder if I still wanted to be associated with the Catholic identity. However, I am not sure if this is the forum for telling sad tales, so I am just putting my hope in this council that it will actually discuss some of the issues I raise here, and those of other everyday church-goers. What has happened in the past can't change the hurt done, but so long as this is not just asking for the sake of asking, but really a serious investigation into what Church communities in Australia feel, and that action is taken as a result, then it is a great start.

Whenever we gather together as a whole school, whether it's for assemblies or Mass, we like to begin by acknowledging and giving thanks to the original inhabitants of this land we live on.

Been doing religion since primary school.

I loved how family came together for Church; the music (for the times - the 70's) was fresh and interesting; my parish was a place of rich experiences and connections. My family now attends other Christian churches; there is a freshness and grace filled liveliness to these other Christian churches. I despair for the Australian Catholic Church—multicultural groups attend, but their young ones are already drifting away. Please do not subscribe to the popular belief that Vatican 2 was to blame for the demise of the Church. Sexual abuse of children by priests has been happening far further back than Vatican 2. My grandmother's brother was sexually abused by a priest when he was an altar boy. My grandmother's husband was sexually abused by a priest in [ - ] circa late 1800's. My brother and I attended Catholic schools in the 70's in [ - ]. My parish priest [ - ] was a sexual abuser of boys; at my brother's school some of the brothers were sexual predators of the boys. My family is ordinary and yet our history is peppered with this scourge of evil going back over 100 years (probably further; no reason why not). Wisdom ordains that you concede to the need for women in your senior ranks; to be seated at the same table of the Lord.

I am trying to bring up my children Catholic. The Catholic schools do not support me in this as the teachers frequently have little to no understanding of Catholic faith despite having a religious education degree. One teacher thought it was ok to have first Communion before first reconciliation. Another thought the crucifix was a symbol of good luck. Another thought that teaching about contraception as an acceptable alternative was ok. Another teacher was teaching my sons the respectful relationships program which was clearly prejudiced regarding that most men were disrespectful to women. This is just not true and particularly harmful at an all-boys school. School principal and parish priest did nothing to help my sister who was undergoing surgery and chemotherapy for breast cancer and needed placement at the school. The response was pretty much that a lot of people survive breast cancer. My sister was a weekly Mass attendee there and even helped run the Church Fete while undergoing treatment. Just appalling. The large majority of children making their first Communion at my children's school treated it like a birthday party, and do not attend Mass. Simply a matter of getting it ticked off so we can get into the Catholic high school attitude. Can you imagine how children who do take it seriously do feel about this? Why are the priests not stopping this absolute disrespect for the Eucharist and young Catholic children?

A liar. No. He would not have gone through the crucifixion willingly. He would have lied his way out and ran away to hide.

I slipped through the cracks. Didn't marry, went to a parish Church for a number of years and no one ever said Hello to me. Now that I am recently retired, I say Hello to everyone and even to people that I don't know and hopefully this makes them feel more welcome.

It has been concerning with the nonspecific feedback given by some priests in confession, which I believe does not give a person an identification of their progress. Hopefully priests will more seriously consider their roles as a mediator for Christ. Also, there should be a great emphasis on mortal sin as we should not receive our Lord's body in this state.

The Catholic Church has provided me with a sense of belonging to the Christian family. It provides the structure and spiritual nourishment for my faith practice. The weekly Mass is at the centre of my faith practice. I regarded the Church as a beacon for Christian values and a moral compass. Unfortunately, the now revealed child sexual abuse history in Australia and elsewhere and the Church's response, in particular its conduct, in covering up such abuse by priests, has changed the way I regard the Church's role in my life. I have not lost my Christian faith but I have lost my faith in the Catholic Church as an organisation.

This group of 5 participants are parents of students in a Catholic all girls secondary college. Four are from a strong Catholic faith, one is a Methodist who is very active in his Church. Three of the four Catholics have known people first-hand that have been victims of clerical sex abuse. Despite the hurt and shame, they have remained strong in their faith and strongly articulated their understanding of the sex abuse not being a reflection of God but a reality of our human failings. This was a theme of the conversation, including the Methodist participant, each person was steadfast in their faith in God, the example of Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit. All are involved in their faith life in a very active manner—through Church and the school community.

Grew up in an extremely strict Catholic family. Family members in the priesthood and sisterhood and lay service. Have become extremely disillusioned with the Church as I have grown older. I feel that the Church has lost touch with society and has become corrupt and has allowed far too much inappropriate behaviour for far too long. I have lost school friends due to the actions of priests we were supposed to trust. I feel lost. At times I have wanted to reconnect with my faith but when I return to Church I feel chastised by the priests and ultimately end up not going anymore. I am losing my faith due to the actions and inaction of the Church and my children are growing up without it because of it.

I have been very fortunate to be involved in a wonderful parish from the time of its inception - which had a big emphasis on inclusion of all from many different cultural backgrounds and an encouragement towards lay leadership and taking steps into the unknown—taking risks, trying new things to encourage growth. It has meant that over time we have been able to grow a number of people in terms of leadership skills who have gone on to provide further leadership in the wider community. This has been a testimony to some wonderful religious leaders who have had the wisdom to see the value in relinquishing power and been prepared to walk with their community—how blessed are we! The Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse has been a crisis of faith for many young people who are at that stage in their life where institutions and adults are questioned anyway and have then seen that trust shattered for all to witness. However, I am ever hopeful that the Spirit will once more assist us to enliven our Church with youth and vigour—and I am very open to whatever change that will lead us to be a part of—as long as we remain close to the living Word Jesus and the mission he calls us to bring to fruition.

I was 11 days old when I was baptised way back in 1955. Over the years I have drifted away from the Church; it was easy for me to criticise and pontificate and I had a litany of wrongs that I could readily produce to denigrate my Church. It was an Easter Saturday, when new Catholics received the sacraments for the first time and we (I) were invited to recite our baptismal promises with the catechumenates. I remember I stood up and recited and meant when I said “I do” to all the

questions. When I sat down after “my renewed commitment”, I knew that I was different. And so started my renewed love for the Church and for God.

Receiving Holy Communion distinguishes the Catholic Church from other growing churches. We need to have open concerts praising God like these other churches to get our young people back.

One of our group offered his story. He came up through the Catholic School system in [ - ] in 1970s. Looking back on his religious education, it was fairly sound in primary school, but he learned little of value in high school. In the next 20 year of his life, Sunday sermons was almost his only ongoing catechesis, and his faith practice went slowly downhill. Then (20 years ago) he joined a Catholic religious group (which was outside his parish) that sparked his interest. Challenged by that group and its culture of prayer and learning, his faith blossomed. Little by little, he started praying regularly each day, then stated to go to week-day and Saturday Mass when possible, and started reading the Bible and the Catechism. Twelve years ago, he got involved in leading adult catechesis within his Church. He says his faith development in the past 20 years would not have happened without being spurred on by this religious group. Sunday Mass alone was just not enough.

The 3 people in this Listening and Dialogue Encounter all joined a lay religious community ([ - ]) about the same time, about 20 years ago. Each of us had, in the years before joining, strayed a fair way from Church teaching in many aspects of our lives, though we had (with God’s grace) been faithful to attending Sunday Mass. The Community we joined was new to Australia and “finding its feet” in [ - ] at that time. We each joined the community independently and for different reasons. It challenged us in many respects. It challenged us in terms of our faithfulness to regular prayer, in terms of the holiness of our prayer, and the day-to-day practice of our religion. It also taught us the importance of growing in knowledge and understanding of the Bible and of Church teachings. We look back in amazement at our spiritual growth. We have been blessed with two religious (a priest and a Brother) from the community’s “mother country” of [ - ], who now live in Australia have been leading us over the past 8 years. We have learned so much and grown so much in our faith.

I did a 2-day “Called and Gifted” workshop in our parish (in [ - ]) 14 years ago. I had read about charisms and was interested (or perhaps just curious) to find out what my charisms are. I had no plans beyond just finding out. The workshop gave me some possibilities, and I was offered some one-on-one (or small group) sessions to explore this more deeply. The most likely charism in my case was “teaching” (and perhaps “understanding” as well). I was then challenged by the facilitator to find a way of testing this charism. The opportunity came up to get involved in the RCIA Team and I “specialised” in catechesis. I am still involved in RCIA 14 years later and I have never looked back. I find helping people learn about their religion and the love of God deeply satisfying. I seem to be able to “infect” RCIA Catechumens and Candidates with a love of the Bible, Catholic teaching and the whole idea of becoming Catholic and knowing God. I get a lot of very positive feedback from them too. It has been a great experience for me, and it all started with the workshop.

I have seen the devastation that a decision to have an abortion had on a family. I have also seen the devastating effect the decision had on the mother (in our family). If only those considering abortion could see what I have seen and felt.

My parish priest, Fr [ - ], in his homily in [ - ], told a story of a woman he met at a social gathering. He said she seemed to have a special "aura" about her as she talked to people. He said he asked her what it was about her that seemed so special. She replied that she had started "reading scripture". This inspired me, not to try to have an "aura", but to start reading scripture. I had started reading the Bible a couple of times, but had soon got sick of the OT. This time I started with the NT, and bought a NT Study guide on Amazon Kindle so I could look up all the references automatically. I also used an "Audible" book on the NT by Fr Felix Just S.J. USA as background to each book. I had never studied the Bible like this and had never seen an opportunity to study the Bible in 68 years of being a Catholic. I read many other books about faith and prayer at the same time. And started praying a lot more. Quite simply it has changed my whole life. I am much more motivated during Mass. It is now the highlight of my week. Previously it was just something I did, in most cases. I went to confession for the first time in about 20 years. It's made a significant difference in my relationships. I now see my Faith study and growth as a lifelong journey. There are still many questions I have to find answers to. But it's a new beginning for me.

I have found support in small groups within our parish, church choir and good start group when the children were young. Parish playgroups and children's liturgy groups, family groups, help to support one another, and help to encourage and bring parishioners together in carrying out gospel values.

Participants reflected on the things they appreciate in our Catholic life as experienced in our parish. • We have a dedicated priest to serve us in the parish • Daily Mass and meditation and reconciliation • Adoption of Child Safety policy • Four well established churches in the various towns • Functioning Parish Council and church committees • Friendly church communities and committees • Loyal body of parishioners keen to be involved in activities • St Vinnies Conference to assist those in need.

Within our faith community I am blessed with many inspirational and strong people who challenge me in many ways, not always easy! I believe this has led me to be a more confident person in our faith community, drawing from the Holy Spirit, many prayers and listening to my heart. Not always being a good listener and switching off when things get too hard. I am working hard on being the best person that I can be and on becoming more confident with the help of the Holy Spirit, prayer and listening to me heart.

A reflection: We of earlier generations were raised to Catholicism via the negative power of fear that, thankfully, we have largely avoided communicating to our children. I have experienced wonder and many blessings within my ever-deepening faith; but I have also experienced loss, hurt and discrimination—the latter particularly delivered in early life by unkind and ignorant teaching nuns. That being said, I think the downfall of the Church as we know it all comes back to fear. Fear is terrifying, selfish, greedy, and a powerful means of controlling. Fear, and its close relationship with anger, also has a habit of coupling itself with rejection so the influence of fear has turned people away from the Church. Rather than increasing people's spirituality or nurturing souls, fear,

for many has led to anger, resentment and therefore abandonment of the Church or alternatively, obsessive religious behaviour devoid of compassion and carried out in some sort of dread. Words are powerful! For example, scriptural education may well reframe 'fear of the Lord' to emphasise respect—for God and indeed for all existence. Furthermore, there is strong feeling within younger generations that the Church is an out of date and hypocritical organization. One example I have heard said with derision is that the Church preaches care of the poor while basking in excessive wealth—a wealth that also seems to contradict Christ's life of poverty. There is also confusion about an image of God—for instance 'if God is a loving Father why doesn't He care for the suffering of people He has created?' Simplistic ideas and ill-informed comments perhaps—but these are the kind of suggestions and beliefs that prevent the progeny of senior Catholics from following their religion or practicing their faith. To re-capture the spiritual and healing message of Christianity for the modern world, what would Jesus say? Among many of His revelations, "do not be afraid" and "peace be with you" spring to mind but in reformative terms, perhaps a new and major focus on The Lord's Prayer—recognized across all forms of Christianity—would be of value? Finally, it is refreshing to listen to the current priest in my parish—one whose enthusiastic message focuses on Scripture and delivers a strong sense of goodness, the enjoyment of life and the promise of something greater. Such educated, wise and engaging priests are imperative and relatively rare. The risk for the Church is that these may become depleted of energy and disenchanted unless supported by the need for change. In the 60's 'modern' Catholic thinking promoted the concept that "the people are the Church". Perhaps now is the time for completely revisiting that idea? It is surely now that the Church must watch and listen to 'the signs of the times' and act accordingly.

I taught in the Catholic system and most of those friends don't attend regular church. I have always believed that the Church is a community and so much more than a physical structure. I acknowledge that people in their own way can live their spirituality without this formal structure. People are living the Church on the street and we need to be flexible in our interpretation of what it means to be Catholic/Christian. "When the chips are down" the community rallies. When the crisis is over, people retreat. It is a fine balancing act trying to be there for others and hoping that they'd reciprocate for you. Sometimes I think that more people need to become aware of needy others to share the load. I had a strong upbringing which made us acutely aware of others needs especially as my sister was profoundly disabled.

My parents took us to church every Sunday, the readings did not capture my attention. At school we were taught the stories and this is where I learnt my Catholic values, because it was taught in a way that related it to life. Now I have my own kids and church is still the same, I can see my kids find it hard to understand what is being said in church and why they have to go.

I live in a parish which has had an unfortunate history of having priests who have not been celibate. Each time a new priest has been appointed we have endured changes to practices to suit the personal whim of the newcomer. When challenged, a claim is made that the appropriate committee has been consulted when in effect the approach has been to railroad the committee. When the vicar general was told of this lack of genuine consultation his response was, "Oh well, he will soon learn".

I returned to the Church about 10 years ago after a 35-year absence. I have found much that has changed for the better but the exclusiveness, though lessened, of the clergy remains and individual clergy are not always grounded in realities of a rapidly changing society. The Catholic Church has so much that is beautiful and meaningful to offer but unfortunately this is often mired in a culture that has lost its place in the real world. Emphasis is often placed on what doesn't matter to the exclusion of basic Christianity. I find this difficult to contend with and have become involved in Social Justice groups within the Church, which I found rewarding but have encountered a contrary experience when I have become involved in committees or groups, which are overseen by the clergy. There seems among some clergy, a resistance to include the laity, particularly if you are a woman.

My faith was first at home and then at school. Being present in a Catholic school formed the foundation of my faith. This is an important part of the work of the Church in Australia and needs to be a priority for the Church's survival.

Arrogant priests who regard themselves as above laity (mainly older Irish ones in 1950s and 60s); arrogant bishops and cardinals, unfortunately a couple still with us in Australia; the enlightenment of Bishop [ - ] of [ - ] in the 60s; the disgraceful treatment of Bishop [ - ] of [ - ] just a few years ago; the "good guys" like Bishop [ - ] of [ - ] and before him, [ - ], retired Bishop [ - ] and others; the election of [Pope] Francis—please don't let him be a disappointment.

Recently I suggested to a parishioner, of senior age, that Adam and Eve were not real people but part of a religious narrative. The person was deeply shocked, went home and re-read the Bible and was thus comforted in the belief that Adam and Eve did exist in the way described in Genesis.

My story is the precious gift I have of a beautiful generous friendship with some Aboriginal women who continue over the years to inspire my faith.

As a teacher in a Catholic school, I worked with my Year 10 Youth Ministry class on a Stewardship unit. In class, the students researched environmental issues and strategies to overcome these issues. They learnt about how creation is a gift from God, and therefore it is our responsibility to care for it. The students also became familiar with Catholic Social Teaching and how it guides their behaviour. These learning activities ultimately led to the students' project for the unit. In groups they created short films for a target audience of primary school children. The films aimed to highlight an environmental issue, suggest appropriate strategies to overcome or lessen the issue, and incorporate Catholic Social Teaching. Once created, our class visited the Grade Threes at the local Catholic primary school. There, the Year 10 Youth Ministry groups ran workshops, which included a viewing of their film and the Caritas "Hearts For Climate" activity. The Grade Threes and The Year 10s absolutely loved the workshops and it really was a learning experience for all involved. For me, this experience highlighted the power of education and the potential of young people. The Year 10 students learnt from Catholic Social Teaching, the words of Pope Francis, and the teachings of Jesus. They were inspired and filled with passion, and although it wasn't easy for all, they stepped out of their comfort zone. They took on the challenge, not just for the sake of a class activity, but as their responsibility as stewards of creation. Their voice on this issue wasn't restricted to a workshop in a primary school class, but in our school, in their homes, in their workplaces and perhaps most challenging, among their friends. This example relates to one class,

in one school. I imagine the possibility of all Catholic schools, parishes and other organisations working to save our environment, and can't help but wonder why that isn't a reality. Organisations such as St Vincent de Paul and Caritas do such wonderful work to care for the dignity of the human person, and they make a real and meaningful difference. Our changing climate threatens the dignity of people and all forms of life, especially the most vulnerable. My prayer is for the Church and other Catholic organisations such as schools and workplaces to work together to restore God's gift of creation.

1. I need to be treated as an enquiring adult. To stand and recite the Nicene Creed every Sunday became an impossibility. It is a fascinating historical document. I understand something of its background. But why in the 21st century are we obliged to recite it? My younger siblings, children and grandchildren will not stand and recite it as 'truth'.

2. <https://www.afr.com/news/martel-book-adds-to-scandals-plaguing-Catholic-Church-20190222-h1b14v>

It is time for homosexuality within priestly ranks to be addressed with compassion and openness. 'The Cloister and the Closet' needs to be required reading for all candidates wishing to enter training for the priestly ministry. Visiting Frederic Martel needs permission to speak on Catholic property. The intransigence of hierarchical authority and climate of fear and anxiety around some speakers being disallowed on Catholic property is alarming. Quote from Archbishop Coleridge: "Over the years it's been a journey from seeing abuse as a sin, to seeing it as a crime, and then finally seeing it as a culture, by which I mean that abuse and its cover-up were aggravated—and probably caused by cultural elements in in the Church. It took me a long time to see this and to see therefore the need for cultural change if we are to get to the root of the crisis and not just treat its symptoms". This quote could equally apply to the need for cultural change in regards to 1. The role of women in leadership positions in the Australian Church. 2. The urgent need for a reform of training attitudes and practices for priestly ministry.

I grew up on a wheat and sheep farm in [ - ]. My family and some 80% of the neighbouring farmers were Methodists and attended (mostly regularly) the nearby small country wooden church. As well as being the focus for worship, the church was also the focus for the community. The Sunday service was at 2pm, followed by Sunday school for us kids. During the hour of Sunday school, and often for a further hour or more after, the adults would stand around and talk, discussing farming, politics religion, family gossip and much more. Sundays kept the community together. The Methodist liturgy, while having a basic structure, was flexible. Key elements were hymns (Methodists are great singers and its founder Charles Wesley was a prolific composer of hymns), extemporized prayers of praise, thanksgiving, confession, repentance and petition, and two sermons—one for the children and one for the adults. Special events such as harvest thanksgiving were joyous occasions. This liturgy was part of my growing up and into adulthood. In the 1970s I met [ - ], a committed Catholic, and began going to Mass. Strange and challenging at first – far more structured and prescribed and with the focus being the sacrament of Eucharist. After we married, [ - ] and I initially attended both Methodist and Catholic churches and were involved in both communities. Then our Methodist church started experimenting with alternate forms of service. Over time this became unsatisfying – the services became an end in themselves

with discussion groups and an increasing focus on social justice issues. (The Methodist church having become the main part of the Uniting church in 1977 seems to have continued this trend and is perhaps the most “progressive” of the Christian churches on many of the social issues). As a result of these changes [ - ] and I drifted away from the Methodists and went only to the Catholic church. Over time I became more familiar with and connected to the Eucharist, and I became a Catholic in 1979. Over subsequent years I have grown to value the Mass – its defined structure, with prayer, scripture, teaching and Eucharist. With [ - ] I have, at various times, also been involved in other faith related activities—the charismatic movement, prayer groups, Teams of our Lady and parish family groups. While each of these has been valuable as part of my faith journey, none has replaced the Mass as the focus for my relationship with God. From my story I would draw the following:

- The importance of the faith community for mutual support and encouragement. This is particularly important in the present increasingly secular and hostile environment.
- The value of constancy in liturgy. In seeking to make the Church and the liturgy “more appealing and relevant” we need to place due value on tradition to avoid “throwing the baby out with the bath water”
- The primary focus of the Church must be the nurturing of the faith in the community and the spreading of the gospel ...

I've had wonderful experiences in my faith and Church. I am part of [parish] in [ - ]—I went to primary school and it continues to be my parish. Such wonderful teachers, and a happy and lively congregation. This is my home and I feel really a part of this community.

I am forever grateful for endless benefits the Church in Australia has brought me personally and the community building I've seen it generate. I've met some of the most amazing people that nourished by their faith, are able to constantly help others in need. I was fortunate enough to attend World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008. The scene would have made St Paul cry with joy as it very much resembled that of the early faithful Church when the gentiles and Jews were welcomed all the same to share in this community... and where the Spirit was one, regardless of our varied talents, backgrounds etc ... Importantly, the political figures of the time, welcomed Pope Benedict, and acknowledged the great work the Church in Australia has done, and continues to do in Australia and beyond. He mentioned how people tend to point fingers at the Church over its mistakes but fail to acknowledge the invaluable gifts it has given through schools, hospitals, and charities, for example. During that week as a young Catholic in cold winter in [ - ] I experienced what St Teresa meant when she said "Solo Dios basta"... God alone is enough, the pilgrimage and activities help us detach ourselves from our unnecessary burdens and experience a freedom "the world" cannot give ... the more generous we were with our time, food, not complaining about the weather or conditions; the more full with the Spirit we became, and true joy lived in us... At the end of WYD we were transformed people, with a renovated Spirit and a thirst to tell the world, leading by example, how awesome our Lord truly is, and how He is all they need.

I was baptised at birth, educated in Catholic schools, and have been involved in my local parish—wherever I have lived—all my life. My faith has always been important to me, and I do not take the Catholic Church for granted. Over the years, I have been involved in various Ministries and in different Catholic organisations. Making the continuous choice to be Catholic throughout my life has not always been easy but has always been rewarding.

How is the Church going to support Refugees? Suffers of abuse? Include women? Gay people?

I come from an Italian background. My parents are traditional Italians. As a young child and teenager I did not accept the traditions. Now as an adult I am so grateful for them. They have formed me. I have an open mind to all things. I try not to judge but rather because I understand who I am I can reach out to others. My mother taught me the traditions of the Church. My Father taught me spirituality. I am so blessed to have a balance. My father who was not raised a Catholic said to me shortly before he died whilst watching the Mass on TV, "Come here stop running around and sit with me, this (meaning the Mass) will bring you peace". When he died he said to me, "Stop crying, don't worry, Jesus came for the cross. He was holding the cross in his hand". My dad learnt the teachings of the Church through mum, but also he used to love watching the saint movies and listen to the priests' homily. He would always watched Mass at home. He would pray the Rosary with mum. The Rosary would be led by the nuns on the Italian TV channel. Today my son comes to Mass. He is an altar boy and he loves helping Father. It actually encourages him to go to Mass. He loves Fr. Fr always says 'Hi' to him and he feels special. Fr is always in the open and never alone with him or the other children. It is important that our children have a healthy "love" for our priests. I am not afraid to allow my son to be with Fr. It is important that our children are not scared of the priest ... I have come from [ - ] so it is not easy for me to encourage my son to be an altar boy but I cannot project my fears on to him. My son knows that his body is private and no one is to touch it. So, we must encourage healthy relationships with our priests. Not all priests are bad. I am active in parish and my son witnesses this. I try to show that we must help our parish. It is important for him to witness and be involved in voluntary work. This is our faith in action. Our faith starts with rules/traditions but as we grow so, do our understanding and our faith blossoms and continues to grow and change. It is like an elm tree. The seed is nurtured, it needs the right conditions, as it is matured it grows tall and strong and provides shade for all. We have made mistakes as a Church. We have learnt. We should be proud of our catechism. Our catechism provides our foundations. From this we grow and nurture of faith. Our faith and love for Jesus is ever growing. The Holy Spirit will give us courage, fortitude, and whatever we need to live our faith and continue to love God our Heavenly Father through his son Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Ever since I have moved to Australia my faith in God has decreased.

As an individual of Italian descent, my faith is incredibly important to my family. As a young girl, I would go to church every Sunday without failure. However, as I got older, I began to realise that people within my own community are not as accepting or do not care about the issues the society is facing. Sure, you can provide millions of Caritas boxes a year but that doesn't make you a good person if you are still not helping other underrepresented groups and individuals. The Catholic Church has also allowed for people in our congregation to take a stance that does not acknowledge climate change, and hence believe that is fake. I know this because my own father does not believe that climate change is real because members of our own Catholic and Christian community are supporting this stupid movement against renewable technologies. The Church needs to stop trying to do the job of climate scientist and just educate people about God, and understand that science is the only thing that will assist us. Period.

<p>I'm not Catholic but have attended a Catholic Primary school and am currently in a Catholic Secondary school. Although, my experience with faith and the Catholic Church has always been well.</p>
<p>My experience with the Catholic Church has always been positive. I have been attending Church since I was born as I have been raised up by a Catholic family. I, myself am Catholic and have attended Catholic primary and secondary school. Recently, I have become very busy trying to balance school, work and my social life so attending church hasn't been a priority to me but my faith with God is. I want to change this because I used to go to church every Sunday and I enjoyed doing that but because of becoming busy, I now go maybe once every 2-3 months. I think I just need to make going to church my top priority and have time for God because God's number one priority is and has always been us and I think that should be the same for us as well.</p>
<p>Both my parents grew up in a Catholic Church. But when they got married they converted to Pentecostalism. So now me and my sister have grown up in a Pentecostal Church our whole lives. I take great pride in my religion. I go to Youth every Friday and to church every Sunday. I even go on Wednesdays because we have rehearsals for Sundays since I sing on Sundays. I read the Bible and pray every single day. Love my church and most of all love Jesus.</p>
<p>An experience which has shaped me was when I received my sacraments—baptism, confirmation which I received together. When I received the body of Christ for the first time at my Holy Communion sacrament I felt closer to God.</p>
<p>I think the reason I am so strongly attached to my faith is because I've been brought up to place it as a priority and that has allowed me to witness the beauty of people coming together to work towards a common goal. In saying that however, a lot of times we forget what it is all about and get fussed over trivial things and we get angry and impatient so it's really important to take a step back and reflect.</p>
<p>To have faith in God and that God is always beside us to guide through our life.</p>
<p>My story is the precious gift I have of a beautiful generous friendship with some Aboriginal women who continue over the years to inspire my faith.</p>
<p>No, as I came from Malaysia and received most of my faith education there.</p>
<p>Growing up in the 70's in [ - ], we were part of the Modern Church which embraced Vatican 2 Changes. Masses were vibrant, homilies were meaningful, music was modern and the whole experience was engaging and enriching. Community was strong and connections were deep.</p>
<p>Why has the Australian Church treated great pastors so badly—Bishop Bill in Toowoomba?</p>
<p>My single aunt doesn't get paid as much as men. She needs to provide for her kids but the pay gap is restricting her.</p>
<p>Why don't more people speak up when an individual is being tormented by racist remarks? Why aren't people more accepting of different cultures?</p>

I don't go to church because I'm not Christian but I still respect every culture and faith as God has only the same messages in the same ways throughout all scriptures in all faiths be it the Bible, Bhagwat Gita, Quran, etc.

My experience as a Catholic who immigrated to Australia from Europe is sad, living in a country where the Catholic faith was the strong majority to living in a country with little sense of religion let alone the Catholic faith is troubling. As a Catholic working in a Catholic school, I am persecuted from the values of the Church, I am surrounded by others who undermine the Faith to our young people daily. On issues such as abortion and homosexual unions the opinions are open and play down Catholic teaching as being old thinking that needs to change, the young people in our Catholic schools are not getting the values they will need to grow the faith in Australia. In fact, the laidback and weak stance of religious education is creating a youth who waivers between religious beliefs and doctrines as they have, for their time in Catholic schools, been convinced that the Catholic faith is just as valid as other religions and that they are all equal and a path to eternal life, an insidious lie. I educate as I can and help the young people I come in contact with to see the truth and beauty of the Faith and for that I am rewarded by them as they are happy and thankful I have explained Church teaching in a way which resonates truth.

Mass at [ - ] on the [ - ] Coast had a great impact on me. Parishioners came to the local hall, a place they were very familiar with, on Sunday morning, set up chairs in a semi-circle for Mass, then enjoyed a cuppa and chat, with little or no cost, upkeep or effort.

My faith came alive when I started learning about all the amazing truth that the Church has safeguarded and taught through the centuries but this only really affected the way I lived my life when I was taught how to pray. On a series of retreats that are run each year in [ - ], I was able to form myself in the intellectual side of the faith and then put it into practice with genuine religious experiences. The beauty of faith and reason coming together has been the most powerful aspect of my faith thus far.

I have been a religious sister for 65 years, so that life experience has shaped me in so many ways. That, and the simple faith of my family, have been my lodestars. I love the Australian Church, but weep at the inability of its leaders (generally) to think and act differently. I have such hopes for this Council! Please God I will not be disappointed.

I have met many great, friendly people in my parish. Parishioners are welcoming and helpful. Though the number of people attending Mass has been going down, still the people who come to church/Mass are happy to volunteer and help whenever there is any need, which is a good sign. Religious education in the school is also very important to me and my family.

Good priests have helped to form me. Bad priests have had a very bad impact on many people.

I am a child of the 60s. The 60s were an exciting time. We were going to the moon. There was a feeling of empowerment. Society did not like Vietnam and made their feelings well known. I couldn't wait to get to university to participate in the dialog. We had the Whitlam government who got out and did things that gave more opportunity and power to the community. This is not a political statement—I'd have never voted for him, but I do admire him as one of our last politicians with a conviction, vision and action to prosecute his case. And at the same time, Vatican 2 was filtering into my faith experience. The Church post V2 felt like it had a mission and it

was moving. I, the laity, was being encouraged, not required, to participate in my own growth and the life of the Church. But what happened to that momentum? I suspect that some of the hierarchy fought against it, and many of the laity were not ready for it and were not prepared to step up or had no desire to take responsibility for their own faith. Today at 58 I look around 6:00 Mass and on any standard Saturday I'm usually the youngest Caucasian in the congregation. So why am I still attending Mass? I'm definitely over the hill, in spite of my promise to live long enough to get even with my children, and I'm closer to the end than the beginning. As I look toward my three score years and ten, I am still trying to answer the question 'Is that all there is?' I struggle with a formal faith formation which ceased in high school that leaves me poorly equipped to answer the question. I despair that my Church has stopped, and seemingly lost its way. My friends, and my siblings either do not struggle with this question or have found other sources to give direction. I want to reignite that sense of mission and journey that inspired my young adulthood. I want to reignite that sense of wonder, of journey and mission. It won't be for all, but that doesn't matter—it is better to stand for something and stick to it than look for a lowest common denominator. Jesus stood up and stood for something. He was crucified for it, but the 'something' was bigger than Jesus the man was. He created a mission that excited people to lead it onwards. He inspired others to join and continue. I think it might be easier to close our Church than to set the mission and lead others there. It saddens me deeply. But I still haven't answered my question and I'm still seeking.

My story is that my Catholic education and family example shaped my faith, which has held me in good stead throughout my life.

Many years ago, as I sat in the church on Sunday at Mass, I questioned what I got out of going to Mass. The question was regular and weekly. But the thought came to me, one Sunday, that I was there for those others who were there with me, not for my benefit alone. Turning the question on its head meant that it no longer bothered me. I was part of something bigger, which we call the Body of Christ.

I attended a Catholic college where all my teachers were nuns. I was a child of migrants with English as my second language. I was fortunate that most of the nuns were not abusive. I can only recall one and she was a little crazy old school! I could avoid her. My home life was happy although my father had died just before I started school at 4 years of age. The nuns taught me English. I joined the Sodality of Mary with little encouragement. I loved the Eucharist and still do. As a little girl I saw Jesus as my friend and I could talk to him about anything. This saved me. I became interested in helping others and at school we were all encouraged to do this hence I became a health professional. I spent 12 years at the same Catholic college. Sadly, most of my school class no longer practice their faith. This also was the case at my husband's Catholic college for boys. The nuns taught us to think for ourselves and be independent and I am thankful for that. I am married with 4 children who no longer attend Mass but have assured me at least a couple anyway that they still believe in God. I am not sure whether I believe in the Church now as it stands but attend Mass nonetheless each week and sometimes during the week. Confession in the last couple of years has not been a priority. I suspect because of what has been happening in the Church and because of personal experience with a family member whose life has been a ship wreck. I can honestly say I love people and I don't hate anyone. I hate what some people have

done. As far as paedophiles are concerned I just don't give them much thought and pray for their victims. God will deal with them of that I am sure! I believe he is merciful and will listen to their pleas and will judge them accordingly as we all will be judged. Most days I look at the world and love the people I meet. Some I must say can be hard to love! If we listen we can understand where they are coming from. They just haven't had people to listen to them. My faith does not lie within the Church walls but out in the community. I have many Jewish friends as well and some Muslim. As a Church we need to reach out beyond our parish walls to the wider community and that way they can know God.

I have attended and participated in some very meaningful celebrations in various churches. My suggestion is that we need to train and encourage priests to include a variety of what can be boring if not done well.

The [ - ] Community has prepared this submission to be considered by The Plenary Council 2020 members. We are a community of consecrated lay women, founded in [ - ] in 1957 and are a member body of the Union of Catholic Apostolate (Pallottine Family). Saint Vincent Pallotti, whose charism we follow, recognised that ALL people have a vocation in life and that we are ALL called to live our particular calling as active apostles within the world. One of the scripture quotes he based his charism on is that "we are all made in the image and likeness of God" (Gen1:27) He founded the Union of Catholic Apostolate (UAC) in 1835 and was recognised at the Second Vatican Council as a saint whose charism was a century before its time. Following this charism, members of [ - ] Community have lived and worked throughout Australia since our foundation. Member's apostolates have included: Teaching, Nursing, Pastoral Associates, Office Workers and Missionary Work. These roles have included working with: the First Nations' People of this land, people experiencing mental illness, children and families from refugee and multi-cultural backgrounds, single parent families, gender diverse people, our own families—plus many others. It is out of this background and experience that, after prayer and discussion we have compiled this submission and continue to pray that the "Institutional Church" will recognise the need and respond to the reality of the issues that face us in this, the twenty-first century.

As a divorced Catholic, due to domestic violence, I never lost faith in God, but I did lose faith in the Catholic Church and its people. I left the Church in 2005 and only sporadically attended Mass and received the Holy Eucharist. In 2013, I started attending [ - ] Anglican church in [ - ]. I was enveloped with their warm fellowship and all-encompassing love. In the first week of Advent last year, Jesus called me back to my Catholic faith and the sacraments in a dream. Now I know the reason why. I feel the Holy Spirit is compelling me to be part of this major event in the Catholic Church.

I am saddened in Mass when I do not hear about Jesus ... why isn't His name mentioned and adored when we gather? Why aren't we desperately finding ways to engage our youth?

Having been enculturated in the pre-Vatican 2 Church, I was then challenged to embrace the changes of the sixties and seventies. We became Christian Communities on a journey, priests and people together. The liturgy became more accessible and there was more lay participation in liturgy and governance. Hymns used more modern language and whiteboard screens helped us to engage more actively in the liturgy. In short it seemed that there had emerged a greater

"horizontal" connectedness within the parish. This was reflected in the Third Rite of Reconciliation which was well-attended, very meaningful and potentially instrumental in keeping the sacrament alive in the Australian Church. This was a Church where I felt welcomed, comfortable and able to grow in community with others. It seemed to be an authentic Australian Church. Now it seems that there is a new season of change. In my current parish, there is a more solemn, formal approach to liturgy. The overhead screen (which made it straightforward to join in singing and prayer) has been removed and we have reverted to weighty hymnals. The adornment of the altar with 6 tall candlesticks tends to separate celebrant and people. There has been a rapid pace of change with little consultation or explanation. It is obvious that a number of good and devout young priests are attracted by pre-Vatican 2 practices and spirituality. That (briefly) is my experience.

My Catholic life has been very simple. My parents were practicing Catholics, my 2 elder brothers, like me have always practiced our Catholic faith. We were educated through the Catholic Education system in [ - ], including being boarders at [ - ] College for our secondary education. My eldest brother and I have married Catholic women, we both are still practicing and our brother is a priest.

I work in a Presbyterian school where the Bible is taken seriously. The teachers and students shape their lives according to the Bible. They have strong family values and they stand up for Jesus' message. As a family we prayed the Rosary, we prayed before meals, we went to Sunday church, but when the children turned eighteen years old they stopped practicing their faith.

I go to church most weekends and the music makes me feel a bit sleepy and tired. It also makes me feel like I'm not really doing anything except standing, sitting and kneeling.

When I go to church, it brings me closer to God and calms me down. I don't go to Church very often but I pray every night before bed because it helps relax me after a big day.

An experience of faith for me is a couple of months before my abuelo (grandfather in Spanish) died. It was a couple days before Christmas and he was in a critical condition. The doctors didn't think he would make it as his body was failing him. My mum was distressed because she was starting to lose hope too. I said to my mum, "God wouldn't take abuelo 3 days before Christmas." My abuelo lived through that Christmas and passed in August the following year. That was really the only time I felt faith had done something to help my family.

I used to pray a lot when I was younger and I had a very strong faith but over the years I have grown to become confused at what it means to be Catholic and if the Church is doing things for the right or wrong reasons.

I have a very strong connection to God and always speak to him/her. I don't only speak to him/her when things are bad or when I need something but when things are good because I know that he/she made them good and is helping me. There are some days when I go to Church that I leave feeling very inspired by my music and my future. I've always wanted to become a singer/performer and travel the world, but I know that this is God's plan for me because I know that God gave me the talent for a reason and it's to help people and to spread His love to the world.

<p>Some years ago, I was very ill and came close to death. Over a period of some months, three different priests appeared and administered the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. Although all three knew me well, they came unbidden by me but I believe called by God. I slowly returned to a healthy life and the Lord's call to continue in service to the Church as a laywoman despite its all brokenness.</p>
<p>I attend my Church's youth group however these white people I know only attend Church for special occasions such as weddings. As I attend a Catholic school I also attend school Masses.</p>
<p>I have grown up in the Church, specifically in the Neocatechumenal Way of Australia. I have been to the last 2 World Youth Days, and I have experienced God working in my life and His love. My parents are going through a big separation, but even among such suffering in my life I know God is real, because I have prayed for things no human can give, and I have gotten them in ways I never thought possible. The Catholic Church and specifically my Catholic community have helped me develop this faith, and are still helping me now.</p>
<p>I received the sacraments of Initiation but did not believe what I was receiving, the faith was taught to me in a childish way, throughout high school I was forced to sing hymns but not given any formation in the faith. I left school an atheist. I joined a youth group in university and it challenged me intellectually. I encountered Christ and got serious about the faith.</p>
<p>Our church has always embraced a view that it was a welcoming community of faith. It is evidenced by: 1. Family Passionist Groups 2. Interfaith dialogue 3. Men's Club 4. Women's Group 5. JPIC - Social Justice Outreach 6. CanCare - cancer support group 7. Afterschool Religious Education Groups 8. Children's Liturgy 9. St Vincent de Paul 10. Soup Van 11. Seniors Group 12. Passionist Companions Reflection Groups 13. Liturgy Groups. All these groups which make our parish community so vibrant also spread hope and the Gospel message in our local community.</p>
<p>Our church at [ - ] has always valued opportunities for faith encounters and growth. To this end the laity have always been empowered to assist the ordained in breaking open God's word so that it speaks to the people where they are at. For example, our Easter liturgies are prepared by groups of Lay people - Holy Thursday is principally prepared by the St Vincent de Paul team and ministry to the sick team. Stations of the Cross are presented in a beautifully reflective, sombre and prayerful manner and the 3.00 ceremony is the domain of our Passionist Companions. Easter Vigil is organised by our RCIA/ASRE teams as the epitome of walking with those who are immersing themselves in our faith tradition. In addition, we have hosted and supported Faith Institutes, Interfaith dialogues, Retreats, Days of Reflection and seminars based around care of our environment (Laudato Si), Equality in the workplace and many other socially sensitive topics.</p>
<p>I go to Mass every Sunday if not more. I sent four children to Catholic Schools where they received a good education but that had little of anything Catholic about it. They learnt more about other faiths than their own. The [ - ] Catholic Education Office has proven itself to be interested in the money it receives from the Government and not on providing a Catholic education.</p>
<p>The Church in Australia are really trying their best to gather as many parishioners as they can since there is a dwindling number of it as well as candidates for priesthood and nunhood.</p>

<p>For me, faith has been a journey of spirituality, and feeling God in my everyday life, through good things and bad things.</p>
<p>Faith matters to me and has changed over the years. It means hope, it means strength, it means you are not alone and to me it is very important to have faith in something, it does not have to be God. I believe in God to guide me though my life.</p>
<p>My faith is fed by the opportunity of service I am allowed in the Church. Any role I am able to take on increases my sense of self value and closer to a fulfilling Christian life.</p>
<p>I completely and utterly rely on my faith to encourage and have faith in myself and others around me.</p>
<p>I live in [ - ] in an area where there's no weekday Mass every day. Other parishes have selected days only, while I hear Mass every day. My husband and I have to drive 15 - 20 minutes to catch a 9:30am Mass at [ - ] in [ - ] that has holy Mass every day.</p>
<p>I came to Catholicism because after becoming a mother. I appreciated the emphasis that Catholic teachings place on Mary, the mother of Jesus. I enjoy going to Mass to be part of a congregation sharing a common belief, but getting to church and Mass has become near impossible with my family. Life now involves weekend sport, and has a more hectic pace. Whilst the ability to stop and think about God can occur at church it is not exclusively now.</p>
<p>I am an RC but have been influenced by the evangelicals who make small groups work well in their churches; and whose pastoral leadership is shared among a team.</p>
<p>I relish the community the Catholic faith provides to me.</p>
<p>I really feel part of the Church through the Eucharist and Confession. The immense potential that we have here through the structures previous generations left us in the Catholic Education System and the vast number of parishes should spur us to be more apostolic.</p>
<p>I went to a Catholic primary and secondary school and one year at a Catholic university. I have a wide range of friends I have acquired during those years. Despite having brilliant teachers, models of faith in action, people who live the word during those formative years, I am sad to say not one of those friends identifies today as Catholic. All are ashamed and angered by the state of the Church today and see it as corrupt and irrelevant. I have always had a strong faith (I have battled with the Church and have issues too) which for some reason remains strong. I am disillusioned by the Catholic Church. Homilies are vague and irrelevant. Priests hide from the difficult questions or are not prepared to have a respectful interrogation of issues. The Bible is not understood. Sunday readings are contextualised in a way that is difficult to understand. We have really been let down by our priests in that sharing of knowledge and theology. I currently worship in a Church of Christ community more than I do in a Catholic church because the scripture seems to be made more relevant, more accessible, the hard questions are not avoided, prayer feels more sincere and Communion is shared by everyone. I love the sacraments of the Catholic Church and hold them sacred but that is not enough to keep me engaged and active as a person of faith. The Catholic Church does not challenge me in discipleship like I am challenged in the Church of Christ Church I have been attending. I come from a long line of people of faith, many who are in religious life:</p>

priests, nuns and brothers in missionary life and the state of the local Catholic church in [ - ] saddens me.

A reminder that a few years ago priests who were married were required to move away to avoid scandal. Fortunately, most ignored this and got on with their lives, many continuing great service to the Church. How ironical that "avoiding scandal" has been the most heinous failing of the clerical hierarchy in sexual abuse management. It's a pity parishioners have not been more vocal about what we really want, instead of passively accepting that "they" know best. We are now paying the price of our naivety. Faith inside the Church is very difficult to maintain in these times, so faith despite the Church is a precious gift to be sought.

Our families have provided a strong foundation of faith. Our community represents cultural diversity.

Faith has always been important in my household because it gives us a sense of belonging and security to believe is something that is supposedly greater.

I continue on my walk - have a growing faith in God, and relationship with Him through the risen Jesus. I grew up in the Catholic Church attending regularly, and was (and still am) attracted to the powerful message of God, and Jesus' teachings. This is my Number 1 reason for going to church. Now raising children, we felt a calling in our walk to see another Christian church, as our parish and conventional Mass seemed to fall short—not exactly sure why but we had a yearning for more of God's word and how it can relate to our lives. We also regularly attend another Christian church which has re-invigorated our faith, and has been a blessing in our children's lives where they actually want to go the church, see their friends there, and take part in the youth activities. They have wonderful modern worship music and band members from within the church - mostly youth, playing many songs from variety of leading Christian bands. Support groups within the church for men, youth, women take time out of our lives to enjoy fellowship (community events, camping, worship bands, youth sports and games, movie nights). This brings the walk with God to a new level, to be in fellowship doing everyday activities together, and supporting one another. Pastors and special guest speakers bring their own experience and testimony to be heard, and help inspire us along our walk with God. It is inspiring to hear also of the many extended missions, and organizations that have been born from ordinary people that attend the Church - in them having faith in the plan God has for their lives.

I had an amazing experience when I lived in [ - ], Canada and worked with Divine Renovation Ministry. I had such a beautiful experience of a welcoming and inclusive Church community where everyone was valued. I had an experience on a retreat where a homeless person was just a part of the retreat and not singled out. This was my first experience of this happening at a Catholic event. I loved my time with Divine Renovation and I hope that this is embraced in Australia.

Story No.1 My history is that our family were parishioners when Fr [ - ] was the parish priest. My sons were altar servers and made their sacraments there, as did I (converted to Catholicism). When one totally trusts and bares one's innermost thoughts to a person, it severely damages one's trust in the Church to subsequently find out that the person you have bared your soul to is a paedophile. The Church hierarchy (and others in the Church) knew about Fr [ - ]'s activities and

kept silent and did nothing to protect anybody (my sons were not among those he molested). Memories of what should be special occasions are tarnished.

We understand that women are underrepresented in decision-making at the highest level of the Church from past experiences and study.

We have all been brought up in Catholic families and embrace our faith and many of the Church's traditions.

I've watched parish priests treat their parishioners, including some employees, with absolute disdain. They can fire them without notice, as long as they pay them out for the remainder of their contract, using parish money for which they are not accountable to the parish. Consultation with parishioners is minimal, and usually through laymen handpicked by the priest. There are many priests who are good men and good pastors, but if they're not—they're responsible only to the bishop, whose priorities don't include respect for the sheep. In fact, without detailing it, this story is of finding out that in practice, respect doesn't really apply to the relationship of ordained and laity. This hierarchical structure doesn't reflect the reality of the Eucharistic life we're called to live with God. Say what you like. It doesn't. I'm only still here because of the other stories about life among lay people.

I have been blessed to grow in my faith in a family where my mother and father were in the mould of always seeing life and me through the lens of Jesus' love, compassion, mercy, justice, forgiveness. Their example was supplemented by a few priests in my early years who, when I asked questions about the faith/my faith, asked me "what do you think?" thus actively encouraging me to understand and question and think into my faith without losing sight of the need to question from a perspective of faith. Then a similarly faith-oriented wife and a series of welcoming parishes who have consistently helped me to grow in my faith from that perspective of love and compassion and forgiveness. Providing this sort of loving and nurturing environment must be the best way of ensuring that people grow in and into the love that God wants for us to experience.

My faith came to life when fellow Christians shared their stories—this never happens during our Sunday liturgies! Our 6 children were all brought up knowing Jesus and God but do not find either in our parish celebrations although they certainly know God in their hearts and live great family lives with a hunger for the gospel values i.e. social justice in this world. The third rite of reconciliation really touched their lives—and mine!—but this is no longer available so close friends/mentors now fill this role through deep sharing.

As a child in the 80s attending a Catholic school, I was taught very little about my faith. It has been only the last couple of years that I have learned about mortal sins, the importance of receiving Communion in a state of grace, and the Precepts of the Church, etc. By God's grace I have now been enlightened, but I am concerned for my fellow Catholics (adults and children) who continue to be left in the dark and uneducated from an early age about our true Catholic faith. Our faith has now become too watered down, and becoming removed from the true Church founded by Jesus. We are more concerned with accommodating worldly Catholics rather than remaining faithful to God and His wishes. The Church really needs to begin educating our children, and return reverence back to the Mass. Most people tend to forget that Church is a place of prayer and

worship and tend to forget who we truly receive in the Eucharist. I now receive Jesus kneeling to acknowledge my humility and that He is my God. I hope we can once again remind parishioners of this very reality. For it is right and just.

I grew up going to Mass each Sunday and attending a Catholic School. At the age of 18 I went off to university armed with the knowledge that the Church taught that you should go to Mass on Sundays and that sex outside of marriage is bad but not necessarily why God planned it that way. It all seemed kind of repressive and I quickly drifted away from attending Mass and thinking about God. I also think I must have forgotten that it was Jesus truly present in the Eucharist each Mass, because I remember being quite surprised when I rediscovered this in my early 20s. It was through a parish mission that I was first reintroduced to this concept, along with a call to contemplate just how much God loves us, that my faith began to be reawakened. Discovering Christopher West's work on John Paul II's Theology of the Body was what made me really fall in love with our faith and come to realise that the Catholic Church really is the one true faith. I remember feeling so disappointed that I hadn't heard this message until I was 24.

Watching the series called Presence from the Augustine Institute has really renewed a deep love of the Mass and reverence for the Eucharist.

As a mother of two young children, I am blessed to be able to attend Mass most days whilst on maternity leave. Whilst I delight in taking the children, I feel it would be quite fruitful for me to be able to attend on my own of an evening every now and then. I also will not be able to attend daily Mass on the days I am at work when I return.

My 3-year-old son has just started this program and I have been blessed to be able to attend the first few sessions and have already learnt so much. I wish this had been available to me in my childhood. I think if this were more widely available children will be catechising their parents!!

Attending formation such as the courses listed has above has been imperative in my faith journey. They have given me such a deep love for the Catholic Church and really renewed my faith. This knowledge spurs me on to live for others in every aspect of my life.

As a young woman in the Church, I have always felt respected and valued. I get frustrated at the way the Church is portrayed in the media as being against women when I really don't feel this is the case. On the whole, I do feel we need a bit of work in the PR department.

I grew up in a Catholic School, going to Mass each weekend. But I would say my prayer life was token at best. Coming to the knowledge of God's unfailing love for me sparked a desire to spend more time in prayer but I remember feeling quite lost as to how to go about this. Attending retreats run by Fr [ - ] and Fr [ - ] were transformative.

My secondary education was in the 70's, post Vatican 2. The Church in Australia seemed to me to be seriously questioning. My education in understanding or practicing the sacraments was limited at school. I have needed to explore what the Church teaches and why throughout my early adult life. I questioned but I found it difficult to find teachers/priests that could answer my questions. I

did my own research as I went through life, just keeping ahead of my children/young adults as they asked questions. I had a hunger for knowledge and understanding. In my experience many of my friends and family were not motivated to learn about Catholicism. When I married I knew little about the sacrament and did not learn about a covenant until I had been married for 16 years. I did have good examples in my childhood of the lived reality of marriage, for which I'm extremely grateful. My husband and I discovered Marriage Encounter. This movement in the Church has supported us on our marriage and taught me about the actual living of Gospel values within my marriage. We have been able to tackle problems and challenges and develop personally in order to grow as a couple. In our careers we have been encouraged to embrace continual education. We have chosen to do this in our marriage as well. God called us to be the best wife/husband we can be.

I attended both primary and secondary schooling and attended Mass with my mother. I would like to send my sons to the local Catholic primary school but with the issues being faced my husband who was brought up COE is not supportive.

After giving birth to my baby, I could not attend Mass because there was no ramp to enter the Church with my pram. I could not lift it because I had surgery and it would tear my wound. I asked the priest to have ramp but he said he couldn't but said they only leave the ramp out for funerals. It's not good enough.

Stories from our group:

1. My conversion: I lost my sister to cancer. I went to many churches during that period but did not feel welcomed in these churches. • A lot of priests behave like they are doing a chore. • They have developed a robotic persona to say a Mass and not something to be celebrated and enjoyed. • So solemn and church community are not welcoming. • Some priests don't engage and greet people before and after Mass. • Some priests have to say 4 Mass in a day. They are rushed and need to complete in 45mins. Then my girlfriend invited me to St [ - ]. She says "would you like to come with me to celebrate Mass?". And I went and it is so different, welcoming, alive, celebration. My initial perception of RCIA is very different from what I actually experienced. Rites of Catholic Initiation of Adults (RCIA) sounds like a pain in the bum. Maybe call it "come and have a cuppa and share faith". I am baptized now and married in a Catholic Church.

2. My experience with Church youth activities: When we were in Malaysia, my children were part of a big youth Catholic group run by trained youth leaders in the main city cathedral in [ - ]. Every week, there will be a youth night with different engaging activities. They loved going to the weekly youth gathering. They assisted with leading singing, organizing stuff. The group is huge and they make lots of good friends. Every year, the group organizes a youth camp with hundreds of youth. They look forward to going to Mass too because the church choir comprises of youth. During Christmas, they will go carolling to houses and enjoyed fellowship and had fun. Then we migrated to [ - ], Australia. The Catholic Church that we attended at that time did not have youth programs. So they followed school Christian friends to City Life, which has very good weekly youth gatherings. It was really concerning to me as a mother that my children may leave the Catholic

<p>Church and join another Christian church. The Catholic Church needs more organised youth programs like other Christian Churches.</p>
<p>I have been fortunate to have been involved with priests that have been community builders rather than recluses.</p>
<p>I have been a member of the Focolare Movement for a long time. Through its spirituality of unity and mutual love, I have many lasting experiences of Gospel based daily living. My faith in God who is love has been deepened and strengthened. If not for the Focolare, I may have deserted my faith already after all that has happened in the Catholic Church in Australia—the numerous sexual abuse on innocent children and young adults and how they have been callously mistreated. How the Church became dismissive, secretive in dealing with their atrocious, evil mistakes starting from the top.</p>
<p>Dear reader, whilst I have mentioned a little of this earlier, I can add that I knew very little about my Faith and couldn't even tell you about the Precepts of the Church and similar things. I have been in the dark for so many years! Before returning to Church in a more active way, my last memory of attending "Confession", was a general one where the priest gave all those in the congregation absolution around Easter ... I thought that was sweet and easy ... how foolish was I. I can now see how I've been so far off the track in living the Faith and in being faithful to God. I wasn't. By God's grace and encouragement from my grown-up children, the light has gradually illuminated my mind and heart to the point that I now attend Daily Mass and strive to live a faithful Catholic life, making reparation for the past; atoning for my sins and those of others and doing whatever can be done to extend God's kingdom on Earth.</p>
<p>A part of the Catholic Church—the Catholic education system—has given the foundation to my education, including my science education. I would like to use that education in the practice of my religion.</p>
<p>Arrogance and certainty have been and are features of the last 2 parish priests at [ - ]. Why has the overhead projector been replaced by hymnals? Why has the bulletin been replaced by a glossy bulletin that features a large 1950's image of a 'white' Jesus, Mary and Joseph? How was it that a previous parish priest brought in a large white Mary statue from the 60's era? Yes, these might seem small even trivial comments. However, symbols are very, very important. Arrogant decision-making that comes out of a 1950s mindset attempts to hold parishioners in a state of obedient 'childhood'.</p>
<p>I believe my faith is fairly strong I seek guidance and I believe God is listening.</p>
<p>Our experience come as a small group of concerned secondary school teachers working in a Catholic school in the northern suburbs of [ - ]. We recognise that Catholic schools struggle to embrace a fully Catholic identity because we offer two competing educational ideologies in our school curriculum. Predominantly we offer a utilitarian, careers-based education. Here we have much in common with secular state-run schools. We then offer Religious Education with a strong focus upon human formation. Many students fail to see the relevance in an education that focuses upon human formation. They are primarily focused upon getting good results so as to get into the "correct" course or "correct" job. For them, RE is a distraction. This is not only the attitude of students but of many parents, and unfortunately, a number of teachers as well. This</p>

experience of ours has persuaded us that Catholic schools must offer more than an industry driven curriculum. Our experience has convinced us that Catholic Schools need to be drastically more than secular schools. By our experience we have come to the belief that the Church and its schools need to be counter-cultural in its endeavours.

I am not a teacher, but have had three teachers in my immediate family and have one in training. I choose to not engage in social media but subscribe to a print daily newspaper.

I was born and bred a Catholic and attended Catholic schools. In University I joined the Bosco Society and when I left University I joined the YCW. This was the most influential group in my experience and my faith grew and developed enormously. Part of the YCW meetings was a Gospel discussion where we looked and discussed a passage of the Gospel and then more importantly discussed how that passage related to my own life and circumstances. We also had items of interest and facts of action where we looked at areas of our lives and noted anything that we thought was unfair or unjust and made a plan to act upon it to try to remedy the problem. This is where my interest in Social Justice was born and as a teacher in a Catholic school and eventually an REC I was able to implement activities that involved the students in Social justice. Now that I have retired Social Justice is still an important interest me as well as environmental issues. I credit YCW for this continuing interest and am ever thankful for the formation it gave me.

Our (my wife's and my) experience in the Church, at parish and diocesan levels, has been quite involved and constant (over 20 years). We love our current parish for its diversity of prayer groups, dedication and goodness of priests, richness of liturgies, and the love and care we experience on a weekly basis. Our faith is nurtured there and we are motivated to share our faith and love with others in the parish and outside the parish.

I went to a Catholic primary school and I also went to church regularly but now that I am older and a bit busier, we collectively as a group do not attend church and Mass that much.

We are Members of Teams ([ - ])—One statement that sums up our group is “Acceptance of one another, being a spiritual anchor in our lives and by sharing highs and lows, we realise that others have similar concerns and this gives each one comfort.”

I am so thankful to have two pastors who are the embodiment of Christ's Word. They truly understand His teachings and they demonstrate their willingness to model His behaviours. They are inspirational and I feel their pain (although unspoken) about the way the Church has dishonoured not only Jesus but all of us who believe in Him. I am not the type of person to just turn a blind eye and hope the watershed issues will be addressed e.g. the abuse crisis; the lack of keeping in step with society; the out of touch with Christ, hierarchical structures and Church riches that are incompatible with helping those in need. I am very committed volunteering in our parish but I want to do more and hope the Plenary Council, really does take into account what myself and others have expressed.

Our group certainly felt we no longer 'fear' God but hold him in awe and we thank the Second Vatican Council for its insights. We felt that those attending Church want to be there and feel part of a strong community, not out of any sense of "having to" but "wanting to".

<p>Our group are long term practicing Catholics including two Nuns, plus one member who had lapsed and who has returned to the Church.</p>
<p>The mission of the Church in Australia today is carried out in a context that is both multicultural and multifaith. The presence of people of other faith traditions in our communities has implications in a variety of situations in the Church. The Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of [ - ] has produced two sets of guidelines—one for parishes and agencies and one for schools—in order to ensure that Catholics are prepared for and skilled in this diversity, while at the same time keeping the witness to Christ at the centre of their mission. By engaging in interreligious relations according to these guidelines we hope to help Catholics deepen their Christian commitment and identity through their encounter with different faith traditions. We engage in interreligious dialogue with confidence in the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church has not failed to provide rich teaching and guidance in this endeavour. The Second Vatican Council urges us to “recognise, preserve and promote what is true and holy in other religions” without ever ceasing to “proclaim Christ ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life’ (John 14:6), in whom may be found the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself” (Nostra Aetate §2). These guidelines also contain many resources of the Church’s magisterium for further study. The guidelines are attached to this submission.</p>
<p>I have found that the lived witness and enthusiasm of my parents and siblings plus some teachers at tertiary level in particular (both religious and lay) has had the most influence on my living of the Catholic faith.</p>
<p>I have experienced the very best and the very worst of local Church communities. While I am an active parishioner, I have seen a vibrant parish lose its vitality. The current scandals in the Church have certainly driven many away in my community. Lack of sound leadership from the pastor fails to engage the community. While some faithful laity do their best to keep things afloat, it is not enough. Pastoral and strategic leadership for contemporary times is critical.</p>
<p>I removed my children from the Catholic Education System and taught them their Faith at home, sending them to a non-denominational Christian School whose teachers were very inspired to share the Gospels and whose parents by and large went to their different churches. I was very reluctant to do so but very glad that I did as my eight children are still going to Mass and the sacraments and now bringing up their own children in the Faith. Two of my children's families are home-schooling as they feel that the Catholic schools are little more than de facto state schools, providing cheap, private education to growing numbers of people who have no interest in being Catholic. There is little Mission going on in most of our schools, it seems that the Faith has been exchanged for the dollar ... so who is dictating the terms of our education?</p>
<p>Secrets are perpetrated by people who are not doing the right thing I reckon! When I was 7 and making my first confession I had to lie, make up sins so I could go to confession! I recommend that confession and secrets be scrapped.</p>
<p>Let’s be honest: I’m sad. Really sad. And angry. So angry. Confused. Hurt. Disappointed. Betrayed. Deflated. On one level, I’m devastated by the events of the last few days. Not because I’m a Pell supporter, I’m not, never have been, but because this is yet another blow to the trust so many of us have in the institutional Church. I’m so angry at the shame and the hurt that has been brought</p>

upon the Church I love by those who have preyed on the young and the vulnerable, and I feel betrayed by those who have, time after time, covered these crimes up and treated victims and their families with disdain. But here's what I won't do: I won't start sharing the writings of journalists that I find morally abhorrent on social media just because they have leapt to the defence of the Cardinal. When these are the same ones who condemn asylum seekers and inspire outrage about "African Gangs" their voice isn't one I want speaking for our Church. It's about consistency, not convenience. I also refuse to undermine or question the great hurt that the actions of these priests and religious have caused for victims and their families. The actions of these men have torn apart communities, ruined families and destroyed lives. They have betrayed the great trust placed in them by their congregations and, in doing so, have stolen the faith from so many. Their actions are inexcusable. It's impossible to deny that our capital C Church is fractured and in turmoil. So many are trying to hold on to a structure and way of being that belongs in the past. Whilst the rich tradition and ritual of the Catholic Church offers us much in terms of building our relationship with God, the clericalism and power-hungry attitudes and dispositions of days gone by do not. But the real Church isn't the institution, it's the people. The people who challenge the status quo and sign post the way forward. People who are voices of reason and empathy. Those we walk with who share the hurt and the frustrations yet maintain and nurture faith in a compassionate and loving God. It is these people I stand with in calling for change. So, I'll be there on Sunday. Like many others. But there are just as many, maybe more, who won't be there. Not this week, not next, maybe someday soon, but possibly never. And I can't blame them. For we too are victims of the actions of these men in power. Will it be easy to walk into that church given what has been revealed this week? No. But at the end of the day I don't go to church because I believe in Cardinal Pell, or the Pope, or even my parish priest—I go because I believe in a loving God, I go to Mass to encounter Christ in the Eucharist. And that doesn't change.

A story about my faith experience. My experience is one of frustration—there must be more women in all areas of the Catholic Church. Especially in the decision-making areas. The Church has always been a place where they dominate over the women and oppress them. They see themselves above the law. The Melbourne Solution needs to be immediately abandoned. No one in the Catholic Church should be in charge of any investigation into sexual abuse or any misconduct by a cleric. If there is an allegation—it needs to go straight to the police to be investigated. No buts. I do not believe that a parishioner/person should have to pay a priest to say a Mass in the memory of someone. Is this Christ like? Would Jesus have asked for payment when a person asked for a prayer to be said for them or their loved one that has died? At the moment, when a person asks for a Mass said for a loved one that is dead, for example on their anniversary, the priest mentions that person's name a few times throughout the Mass and then pockets money. No, it is not Christ like. It is money grabbing at its highest—taking advantage of someone's loss to make money. Is this money written up? (I have never heard of a receipt been given, indeed my family was not given a receipt) Or is it pocketed for the priests' own personal use? I have faith in Jesus but not in this self-serving, money-grabbing, abuse-covering Church.

I believe that God is angry and disappointed at how the hierarchy of the Church, the bishops, archbishops, cardinals and popes have built a fiefdom in his name which is protected by an ironclad web of fragments with no accountability to lay law, driven by reputational protection

through seals of secrecy, and avoidance of detection by moving criminal perpetrators and attacking the credibility of victims. Jesus left the Jewish faith to create a better Church when he saw the commercialism of the temple. What would Jesus think of the unimaginable wealth of the Vatican? God's Church has been desecrated by evil men acting in his name from the lowliest paedophile lay brother to the inaction of the Pope. The reputations of the many good priests are now tarnished by association. When Catholic schools withdraw their sacramental Masses from the Cathedral where Pell committed his crimes, I believe God will want that offensive location deconsecrated. I no longer admit to being Catholic. I say "I believe in God" but I am embarrassed to admit to belonging to the Church. I would almost rather be associated with an outlaw biker gang than the Catholic Church. At least they are honest about their criminality. They don't hide behind their colours, unlike the robes and the smoke and mirrors of the ceremonial worship in the Church, intimidating their victims into frightened silence. The hypocrisy is breathtaking.

The institutional Church in Australia has failed miserably in this role for the last fifty years. As a teenager I was excited by the prospect of change through the Second Vatican Council that would open the Church to the world and make it a more inclusive organisation. Unfortunately, this was never realised and the Church reverted to an inward-looking dogmatic organisation. Despite my disillusionment with the institutional Church, I have remained a regular church-goer and received spiritual nourishment at a parish level. I have avoided any engagement with the broader Church as I generally find their pronouncements irrelevant to my search for meaning. Indeed, the leadership of the Church seems to be incapable of entering into open and meaningful public debates about issues of the day. The clerical abuse scandal in recent years has diminished the standing of the Church even further. Any moral authority the Church may have had in the past has been severely tested for even regular church-goers. Now that we know the abuse was covered-up for so many years, it is clear how insular and self-serving the Church hierarchy was in the face of this crisis. They appear to be more interested in self-preservation than the pastoral care of their people.

Put bluntly, I do not know of one suggestion I have submitted or individuals in this group have proposed to any Church clergy or its administration which has been adopted or even considered. The Church is basically a dictatorship and nothing changes unless from above. Is it any wonder that people are abandoning the Church in droves, yet we are the Church? Keep this up and you will be left with a Church of elderly clergy but no parishioners. Your choice.!!

I currently attend Mass regularly and contribute financially to the Catholic Church. In different roles I have worked directly or indirectly for the Church for years. Being part of a faith community with Christ as its centre is important to me. However, over time I have found remaining a practising Catholic has become more and more difficult as it is increasingly impossible to ignore the Church's significant and abhorrent failings. I have known many good clergy, but have also known or at least met three priests who are now convicted paedophiles and one Christian Brother. At an intellectual level, it seems impossible to think that the Holy Spirit could truly be guiding the Church structures that have failed us so immeasurably and led to such horrendous sexual abuse of children. Actions of the Church within its recent history scream of dysfunction, abuse of power and a lack of Christ-centred direction. This includes the repeated shifting of known paedophile priests to a disadvantaged parish in [ - ], to the so called 'Ellis Defence' which

<p>was argued to prevent abuse victims from suing the Church. For the present, I remain a Catholic in the hope that this plenary will bring about significant change. At the moment, the Church looks like and feels like a crime scene. Without radical changes it will continue to look and feel this way. In many ways, the changes need to be great in order for the Church to no longer feel like the abusive Church of the recent past. There have been outspoken, well-informed critics in the past who the Church has deliberately sought to discredit, quieten and ignore. Hans Kung is an example of one such person. In all honesty, I do not expect the Church structures to change all that much. There is a lot of power at stake and I expect the powerful within the Church to try to maintain the status quo as much as possible. Without radical change I cannot see myself remaining as a practicing Catholic indefinitely.</p>
<p>Prayer is important in my life. I need to spend time to listen to God's message of healing. I often call on God in prayer and it gives me the strength to carry on.</p>
<p>Encounter with a caregiver from an orphanage who have been alone for many years. After being welcomed in the parish community, the issues were markedly improved. This led us to consider that a care phone line could have assisted earlier.</p>
<p>I've taught my children about the love of God even though at times, I'm personally challenged about this myself. My kids have helped me to strengthen my faith in myself. God has blessed me through hardship. Others in the Church community have helped me look at the big picture of our Christian journey. I realise that sharing stories are important even sharing with others that don't believe. I have learned to have faith and trust in God.</p>
<p>A frustrating experience regarding the lack of priests so that the last sacrament was not available for my mother. This made me feel that old people are neglected in nursing homes. They have access to sacraments and this is very distressing. My brother died, and again no last rites. My experience is that young people have no basic foundation of the Catholic faith even though enrolled in Catholic schools. The parents are not teaching them. As a single person, I feel out of place when most of emphasis is on families in the parish I attend. I feel isolated when I say I do not support same-sex marriage.</p>
<p>Three of the group remember the time of enthusiasm during the Vatican II council, and the hope for change at that time. Their hope was not sustained but they feel that the Plenary Council at this time might bring about true change. It is time to be enthusiastic again.</p>
<p>Personal experience shows that the Archdiocese HR department virtually conspired with the priest to discredit a secretary and did not listen to the concerns brought to it. For example, stating that it was OK for the parish priest to walk into the secretary's office with only a towel on, which obviously is not OK.</p>
<p>All talked about the fact that their children, their grandchildren and great grandchildren never go to Mass. They find it not relevant anymore. However, they also talked about the good that their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are good people. Probably in their Catholic education, these younger people had been taught the social teachings of the Church. They believe in God and they believe in Jesus.</p>

I'm a lifelong Catholic but in my early forties I lapsed temporarily because I was searching for something inexplicable within me and seeking a closer relationship with God, who I thought was out there as a punishing God overseeing all my faults. I came into contact with Pentecostals who invited me to church. However, I did not go as I somehow knew deep within me that whatever it was should be able to be found within the Catholic faith but as yet I hadn't found it. Disillusioned and at my wits end, I cried out to God for a miracle when my bag was stolen in a restaurant. I wanted an answer "now" and not "next week, next month or next year". I believe he heard my cry and what followed was quite bizarre but I knew then that God had answered my prayer. In Thanksgiving I went to a parish that same Sunday evening for Mass. It was there that I first came into contact with the power of the Holy Spirit alive in people which I had not experienced before. That experience changed my life and my whole life went slowly but surely from disarray to loving and serving God. Only the Holy Spirit could have done such a work in me.

My Catholic faith saved me from believing that my life was worthless and meaningless, I believe Father [ - ] from [ - ] parish in [ - ] was instrumental in that healing process and once during confession outside of the confessional box, when he touched me I felt the presence of God flow through him to me.

- I've got a lot of faith in future about people in Australia attending church. I believe more people will attend when other cultures can take the Eucharist.
- I am not Catholic, so I don't have an experience of faith or of the Church in Australia.
- The experience of faith has shaped how I believe and to learn from different lessons from the priest and Bible.
- When I was in 6 years of age, making friends wasn't easy. I went home and prayed hoping I would make friends and little did I know I began to make friends. That was my experience.
- The experience that I had with faith of the Catholic communities is that you are connected to God and his family.
- The experience that has shaped me is when I joined a choir at my school and we had to sing at Church, I felt like God was singing with us.
- I find that every Church I go to, people have been respectful to everyone and everything. That shaped me to respect people and things to follow Jesus' footsteps.
- I used to think of greed but then I knew people needed stuff so I did not buy things for myself, I bought things for others
- When I was about nine, I wondered if the story of the Big Bang was correct or the Bible. So I started to compare Science and Religion to see which one made sense, and in the end, I went with Science for some things but in the end, I realized never to compare the two because you will lose belief in both of them.
- To pray for loved ones and to God
- Yes. When I was little I was playing ball and I slipped off the ball and hit my head at the edge of concrete. I felt extremely dizzy and I was sent home immediately and taken care of by my mum. A few days later, I went to a youth group I go to and we did a special prayer about people who have hurt themselves and about the past etc. After that I felt normal and I didn't feel the pain anymore.
- Yes. Going to Church with my family at least two times a week and performing everything I thought was nonsense when I was young. I now want to spread God's faith and obey what he wanted us to do
- I asked for the Jesus bread when I wasn't allowed to because I was hungry. It didn't even taste that good :( 3/10
- I was raised in a Catholic household but I'm not Catholic and feel anxious to come out to my parents because I feel like they expect me to be Catholic
- The Catholic faith has not shaped me. To me the Catholic faith seems forced. Like many people are forced
- The experience of faith I have had was that people who have learnt from the Church to care for each other and to take care of this world
- The experience of faith I have had was that

people who have learnt from the Church has taught me things about caring for each other • I do not wish to share my experience. • Going every Sunday has shaped me to be a child of God • The Church taught me to love and forgive. The Church taught me to believe in others and myself.

This has arisen from Prayer Groups.

A priest who shouted at my 15-year son in the confessional "Tell me your sins Boy!" My son was just there to forgive his father, the priest wouldn't listen and we could all hear him shouting at my son who never returned to the Catholic Church again to my great heartbreak. For children under 18 years of age, confession should be done in the open space of the Church so the priest cannot bully, intimidate or anything else.

My wife and I struggled to have a baby, a doctor told us before that we should go to IVF if we wanted to conceive. We were trying without success and our relation were suffering because of that. One day we were arguing for something silly when she saw a church open and asked me to stop, but we kept arguing in front of the door. Then, I entered the church and she followed me. An enthusiastic priest was inside, telling us that he was happy to meet a young couple that wanted to stay with Christ for a while as He was exposed in adoration. Then my wife started to complain about our marriage and saying how sad she was with me. The priest looked at her eyes and asked "What is really happening?" and then she started crying and said that we were trying to have a baby without success. The priest asked us if it was okay to bless us with the blessed oil for the sick and then told us to just sit down near Jesus and talk with Him. We were there in silence for about 20 minutes and then in our heart without saying a word we felt love for each other again, we hugged and asked forgiveness to each other and then that month my wife got pregnant. We went then to say 'Thank You' to that priest that without saying much, helped us to reconcile and did what all Christians should do with the people that are suffering—bring them closer to Jesus.

I am a convert to the Faith as of February 1985, days later I began a career in the RAAF. I was lucky to have an elderly, holy priest give me one-on-one catechism classes for many months prior to my receiving all the sacraments in a personal service and Mass. I was then granted the grace to have the attention for numerous years of one of the last Thomistically trained theologians/philosophers in the southern hemisphere. My formation in this way allowed me to remain strong in my faith during the military and future careers. I have eight children and as of today 13 grandchildren. I was taught, and refuse to budge, to receive Holy Communion on the tongue, and be reverent in the Church and through Mass, to stay afterwards and say a prayer of thanksgiving. Over the years I have been mocked and belittled by my fellow Catholics and priests for my gentle insistence to receive my Lord on the tongue. Sometimes this makes going to Mass stressful when I should be at that moment, finding peace. You say you are inclusive, what about me?

Well, my faith is strong and my life is willingly and happily placed in God's hands. Through many trials and sufferings, you could ask me how can I have such trust? My life hasn't been perfect. No one has a perfect life. My parents divorced when I was around 12 years old. My father was abusive to my mother. My younger brother was sexually assaulted by our parish priest as a child. My first husband cheated on me. I have chronic pain issues. I had a miscarriage. I could go on. However! My mother lived (still lives) a life walking hand in hand with our Lord. She has taught me through example how to live for God. She loves Jesus and has a very close relationship with Jesus.

We are in this world but not of this world. The spiritual battle that goes on around us is real. We choose to follow Jesus. And in following Jesus, we walk with Him to the cross. Heaven cannot be reached otherwise. In bearing our own crosses in life, we are united with Jesus. I have complete trust in everything and anything that will happen in my life and I know God is lovingly holding me in His arms. Only with God's strength can I achieve anything.

I went to a Catholic primary school for 3 years, then an Anglican school. I did all the sacraments through the Catholic school, but only in the last 2 years as I have rediscovered my faith as an adult have I actually come to know the teachings of Christ. I am sorry to say, the Catholic education system failed in forming me as a Catholic. However, clearly statistics show this is the norm rather than the exception. Now as a 31-year-old I am drawn to parishes which are traditional, including Latin Mass parishes. Through our Church's unique and wondrous history and tradition, our Lord really can be received!

My experience of the Church in Australia has been a positive one. In school I had the opportunity to attend the 'Ignite' Conference which changed the direction of my life and faith journey for the better. But a one-off experience is not enough. I came back to my parish which had nothing to offer for young people and I felt alone. So, after attending WYD 2008 I decided to start a youth group in the parish. Volunteering for the past 10 years with little support has been rewarding and challenging and I believe youth ministry jobs should be offered in every parish.

Over many years, my husband and I have been faithful members of the local parish. We have supported many priests and volunteered with a parish care group so we have wide experience of a caring, supportive community. Our opinions are fashioned by these interactions with local people and their struggles and our own family challenges.

Attending worship services at a Uniting church with my now wife, broadened my appreciation of the Christian life and challenged me to reflect on why we do things as we do in Catholic worship. This led to a deeper appreciation of Catholic worship as well. In the Church in Australia, I have met many people, clergy and laity, who are supportive and reflect a genuine Christian way of life. However, I have also come across indifference and judgmental attitudes. I regret that I have not sufficiently challenged those in authority to be more accountable and transparent.

I had a wonderful experience at a country Church growing up. We would all gather outside and chat for 1/2 hr afterwards. It was a real sense of community and everyone knew each other. On the other hand, I was raised with a lot of guilt which made personal relationships very difficult. I don't like the emphasis on guilt that I felt growing up. I think sexuality is a big taboo in the Catholic Church and people feel dirty or ashamed to have a normal healthy relationship.

My grandson was preparing for his First Holy Communion and I attended a special celebration of the Eucharist with him. The celebrant was the parish priest who was a foreign Australian priest. He had been in Australia for some years but I still found it difficult to understand what he was saying. At the conclusion of the ceremony, I enquired of my grandson what he may have learned and how he felt after the celebration. His reply was "I did not understand a word!" The same priest celebrated on his First Communion Day. With our multicultural society, I am sure there are communities in Australia where this priest could relate very well. Cultural and language problems make relating, educating and searching difficult for both the young and the old.

Our parish priest [ - ] at [ - ] trained in the [ - ] seminary heavily influenced by Pell. I am disturbed that the parish owns a house where [ - ] has brought together a group of young men contemplating priesthood. [ - ] is extraordinarily conservative and has taken the parish back into an uncomfortable model that encourages parishioners to remain 'obedient children'. It causes me great concern that we no longer have a lay pastoral associate. I would rather money was spent on a salary rather than a glossy parish bulletin which features medieval images of Mary, Joseph and Jesus. Symbols are so important. Theology will not change in my lifetime (I'm 73). However, symbols can undergo significant change.

I am writing as a practising Catholic who has been fortunate to have been raised in a loving Catholic family, taken all the sacraments (other than the last rites), been an altar boy, educated in a Catholic primary and secondary school, been part of an active parish based YCS group, been a member of parish Councils, School/College Councils, St Vincent de Paul Society, had all ten of our children baptised and educated in Catholic primary and secondary schools. I have watched as our children have drifted from the Church and regularly ask myself why. I am increasingly anxious and apprehensive of the ability of the Church to nurture the faithful in the ways that I have experienced. I don't mourn for the old days but I am alarmed that today's Church has no contemporary substitute to inspire and show the way to our young people nor embrace in a meaningful way the talents of the laity women in particular.

I have been a bushwalker for about 15 years with my son, daughter and son-in-law. We have trekked in Victoria, Tasmania, NSW and Northern Territory. In that time, I have come to appreciate the beauty of God's Creation more and more. In the last ten years as part of my annual retreat I have walked in national parks around Australia. It is in this walking in the wilderness of Australia that I experience the Presence that is God in Nature. This walking in Nature has been a time of prayer for me. It has transformed my life and my desire to invite others to have this experience that brings a renewal of a person's relationship with God and a deep desire to care for our common home—Earth.

I was born into a Catholic family and experienced a stable childhood, Catholic education at a time when life centred around a parish. One of my early memories is a nun sharing her love of the Eucharist and making Mass for me a meaningful experience. When as a teenager, my eldest sister left home to live overseas and another sister went interstate to become a nun, I felt my connection with them was continued through Mass. I was fortunate enough to be a member of YCW, which I owe for my experience of meeting Christ in the Gospels and for creating a meaning to my life. My world became my altar and the awareness of social justice and love of neighbour colours my spirituality today. I married someone from overseas. We were a struggling family with five children when we received word that his father was dying. Some of our fellow parishioners organised a collection to fund his fare home. This overwhelming sense of community within the Church of the eighties is something I hold very dear. We were blessed with four sons and one daughter. Growing up, all children were exposed to similar experiences. At 25 years of age, my youngest son told us he was gay. My husband to that point was a vocal homophobe, his response to our news was "he is my son and I still love him".

I grew up with an Irish priest, who knew everyone in the parish, who visited homes and showed interest. I have lived in my current parish for 25 years. I have had one visit from one

representative from the parish. The reason for the visit—I hadn't returned my money pledge (I actually had!). I don't want a visit now—I have made my friends from the parish and do not need or want anyone to come now.

From the ages 15-20, I attended a young adult faith formation group through my parish. It taught the Churches teaching on moral and ethical issues. It also covered explanations on the Mass. Guest speakers were invited and it was well attended. I am ever grateful for this formative opportunity given to me through the generosity of young, faithful, passionate lay Catholics. This adult formation set me up for life. I still recall the basic principles I learnt 15 years ago on Absolute Truth, Transubstantiation, and ethics relating to Abortions and Euthanasia. I also loved attending World Youth Day (2002, 2005, 2008, 2011) I found this very encouraging and missionary.

I was brought up on a religion of 'fear' in Catholic schools and by priests. At home, my Catholic father never went to Mass again after a serious conflict with the priest. My mother was C of E. so I lived with the fear of her 'going to Hell' because she was not Catholic. It has taken me and many others, years to free ourselves from an institutional, judgmental, and male orientated institution. Maybe if the hierarchy could divest themselves of their vestments and status symbols, and dress simply, as did Jesus, their witness to the life of Christ would speak volumes. The experience of freedom from rigid structures has been a most liberating experience. It saddens me to see this rigidity still expressed by some clergy today. In a Plenary C. group session at the church I attend, there was consensus that such clericalism is still rife today.

I was a New Age healer and deeply immersed in my work with a strong desire to help people through natural therapies. I was led astray by some therapies that were not from God and it took me a period of time to wake up the true nature of that supernatural activity. I am forever grateful to my mother, a very prayerful person, in a Rosary group, and at that time in a charismatic prayer group. Her simple advice to me was to give all my healing gifts to Jesus and if he wanted me to have these spiritual gifts then they would grow. If this was not of God he would lead me away from them; which was what He did. He respected my free will and led me slowly to come back to Him and trust. I began to read widely the history of the Church and Church teachings. I returned to Mass and after I was married was fortunate to move to a small country parish with strong home school families. They lent me many books, and it was a marvellous help to me. My husband had also been into false pagan practices, and we experienced approximately a year of spiritual attack that was exhausting and frightening. We did not know who to turn to and although the priest blessed our home he also indicated that he was somewhat alarmed by what we tentatively began to disclose. We worried that people would think we were crazy. A parishioner who ran a large accountancy firm and was active in the charismatic renewal felt that God was calling him to help us. We told him what was going on and he came each week to pray with us and guide us. He had an understanding of deliverance ministry and had arranged for us to receive help though CCR. [ - ], my husband also began RCIA to come into the Church. There is much that happened at this time that I would like to share. A bishop told me that I should write my story down. He gave me the name of an exorcist priest. I have needed time to heal; to understand; to make sense of my journey. I have been focusing on my family and 4 children who are now grown. I would like the opportunity to share what happened to us.

I have been fortunate to have good role models throughout my life, attending Catholic primary and secondary school. Also close contact over my life with two religious orders, lay people and people that are today's apostles. The stories of religious abusing children is truly painful. The Church needs to take responsibility and stop saying that there is more abuse in families.

My faith has been a journey from when I was a young child, I would pray with my dad. I wanted to hear the voice of God. I wanted to know he was real. After a few months of asking each night, I heard him say 'thank you for praying'. From that moment I had experienced the living God, I knew. Alongside this I was also experiencing religion, some things were really not good, I rebelled against man-made religion, and had a hard time in my teenage years. I knew God was real but there was a real disconnect with the Church. God met me where I was though. That unconditional love of a father, met me in the darkness, and called me lovingly back to Him. I will forever be changed by His unconditional love and forgiveness. Today my relationship with God is strong and He is forever speaking with me which I am forever grateful. Pursuing the pure heart of the Father God, Jesus and the feminine heart of God, the Holy Spirit is forever changing me. This is the one sustaining rock and personal relationship with the living God. Bless.

\* Christ wants us to be inclusive but Church is exclusive at its core. \* Child is gay so I don't feel I can practise religion as the son isn't included • The Church has divided families because of its messages, teachings and attitudes towards divorce, homosexuality, and infertility. This has caused people to feel shame, and isolation.

I am a cradle Catholic. In recent years, I have struggled with my faith and in particular the Catholic Church. And I frequently ask myself "Why do I remain a member of this Church". Whilst making up 70% of the Sunday congregation at my Church, a woman cannot be ordained. Whilst I can lodge a submission to the Plenary Council, there will be no women involved in the final decision-making. I hope and pray that as a result of the Plenary Council, change will happen. Even though I have a nagging feeling that it won't. I am still reeling from the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the deafening silence of the Catholic Church to the findings. I am fortunate that I have never been a victim of sexual abuse. And my heart goes out to those who have. I despair at the lack of compassion shown to the victims and their families by the Church. I get angry at the state of the Catholic Church. How could the hierarchy let this happen? And I hang my head in shame.

I belong to a lay Benedictine prayer group as a Benedictine oblate (centred on the Benedictine Sisters of [ - ], [ - ]) that meets once a month to pray, share, discuss material relevant to the Rule of St Benedict and best to live it out in daily life. Being a mystic in the daily is a spiritual pathway for all Catholics. We meet at [ - ] church, [ - ] once a month under the leadership of [ - ]. Our group is made up of [names of 12 members]. We have been meeting since 2003 in houses, schools and parish meeting rooms ([ - ] church). This has been a real success and could be a model for parish groups across Australia.

I'm a convert to Catholicism. When I was first received into the Church more than thirty years ago, I was bombarded from all around by Novus Ordo charismatic renewal stalwarts on the one hand, and traditional adherents on the other ... two extremes. Through my own reading, research, prayer ... by the leading of God ... by my own observations of all 'colours' of Catholics, I have come

to see that traditional Catholic teachings are the bedrock, from which the Church should not stray. These teachings are based on the words of Christ, and how can we argue with that? I'm unimpressed and disappointed and shocked that the Archbishop of [ - ] asked the Gay and Lesbian community to tell him how they think the Church should go. He shouldn't be asking anybody which way it should go! He should be teaching us the teachings of Christ. He's the shepherd, we're the flock.

Compassion and listening to one another.

I grew up with very religious parents. I was blessed to know and learn about my faith through their example of prayer, church and importantly, faith in action. At times, I have been involved in the Church in various aspects over the years. It was fundamentally so important to me and I loved it. Yet as time went on, I distanced myself and took a different path and metaphorically journeyed far away ... Around five years ago, I recommenced praying, one prayer a day at a time. Slowly this progressed to more prayer and meditation and then eventually back to Mass. The journey is still ongoing ... I am however very clear in the knowledge that God was always there, simply waiting for me to return. Whilst my life has been in turmoil for the last two years, prayer, my faith in God and my beautiful supportive family and friends have given me the strength. I am very conscious and an advocate of the power of prayer and gratitude in my life. In words of my father ... "Without God... there is no life."

This submission is compiled from responses of parishioners of [ - ] church, [ - ]. [ - ] is situated approximately 10 kms from [ - ]. The parish has been in existence for over 100 years. Parishioners are newly arrived migrants, a large older Italian population and many Australian born. The demographic of the area is changing with younger families moving into the area. The parish focused one of the Sunday liturgies on the Plenary Council 2020 survey, providing parishioners with the opportunity ,a time of quiet prayer prior to them answering the question (What do you think is God asking of us in Australia today). Over 100 responses were received and compiled into this submission along with the outcomes of a meeting of the parish Pastoral Team.

I feel very lucky in the opportunities I was given that have led me to my current faith and role in the Catholic Church. My journey through childhood to my teenage years was similar to many in my generation. I was baptised, and went to Catholic primary and secondary schools. I went to Mass fairly regularly as a child, but that participation waned as I became a teenager. By the time I had reached my later teens, I was deeply interested in the 'big questions'—What is God? Why are we here? What is the 'right' way to live in the world. But my curiosity led me beyond the Church—it wasn't that I didn't believe Catholicism had answers, but that I was curious to know all the different possible answers. That's where my good fortune came in. In Year 12, I was a participant on a Stranger retreat—run by the [ - ]. It was an amazing experience—and the best part of it was the opportunity to talk about these 'big questions' with a group of people of varying, and different, perspectives. There were no right or wrong answers, just a common searching for understanding. I was then invited back to be a leader on these camps. Each, again, was a blessed experience. It was on these camps that I experienced what for me is my favourite type of liturgy—not a cold formal Mass in a Church, but a (sometimes messy, always warm) community celebration where each person takes ownership of one aspect. I was also again blessed to be able to have deep conversations about the big questions, and accompany other young people (many of

which might be considering them for the first time in any depth). The way these retreats would develop, as 'strangers' chatted and became friends over the course of a weekend, made God come alive for me in a way that no previous experience ever had. If I consider where my faith was really born, where the Holy Spirit really came alive for me, it's there on those retreats. From there I was able to take part in an immersion experience at Corpus Christi community in [ - ], to be a member of the [ - ] Community and volunteer on a Vinnies soup van and visit a youth prison. I was awakened to social justice, and our mission as Catholics in the world. Confronted with the challenges posed to faith by the 'new atheism', I became curious about Catholic writers and thinkers, and thus deepened my intellectual formation in faith. Eventually I found myself working in Catholic publishing, where I remain today. My main concern out of this is where are the opportunities for other young people like me to find their way into the faith? There's no way I would have responded in the same way to a religious retreat that was more strongly focused on simply praising and worshipping God. I needed to be able to ask questions without being fed the answers. I needed to experience the Holy Spirit working freely, messily, in the world, rather than being forced into a liturgical space and told that's where I should encounter God.

I have been brought up as a Catholic and am an active member of the Church through my commitment to Catholic education. I am also a member of a faith community. In my vocation and ministry, I prepare Catholic children to receive sacraments of initiation as well prepare adults for RCIA. I have been in faith education for over thirty years and so can comment on my observance and reflection of young people's commitment to their spiritual and faith journeys. I observe as a religious education teacher in Catholic schools and amongst active parish ministry, that young people have a strong desire to connect with their spirituality. However, it is no longer a journey they seek via an institutional Church. The breakdown of family, the influence of social media and social commentary now forming the moral compass (e.g. the use of twitter feeds on programs such as Q&A), a culture of relativism and shopping cart spirituality seems to be the norm for many young people. I'm wondering whether this paradigm shift (move away from institutional Church) has resulted in a loss of connection with the Catholic faith and connection with the traditional parish communities. Is it time to consider evangelisation can be more effective for young people in their 20s, particularly when many will venture into university life? At best a Catholic secondary school can offer some form of Catholic Identity through its whole school approach to religious education. However, it seems that young people's drive to consider a deeper spirituality connection now grows more earnestly as young adults, rather than as a growing teenager. At best we can offer a contextualised faith tradition for our Catholic school students as the connection to a strong parish Church community is tenuous at best.

I left the Church for years then through the reading of the Messages of Christ in "True Life in God" I returned to the sacraments and to a true life in God.

I am so grateful to my parents, teachers, priests and other members of the faith community for the faith I strive to live today. They have been wonderful examples to me throughout my journey. I have been enabled to think, reflect, pray and grow in my life of faith because of their witness and encouragement. During my teens, I questioned, challenged and at times struggled with many issues related to faith and the Church. Thanks to their guidance and encouragement, I came through with greater confidence and understanding of being Catholic in the world of today. My

<p>hope would be that many of our young people today could be given the same opportunity from family and Church.</p>
<p>Faith to me means that by doing the right thing according to my conscience (which has been formed by Christian teachings) the world will become a better place for the human race.</p>
<p>I attended Catholic secondary school and was very incidental about my faith. When I was divorced I found that the seeds of my Catholic education began to flourish and helped me to make decisions about what is important in life and has given me a great sense of calm and peace. I now place a great value on my faith and my trust in the Lord is unquestionable. I would like to ensure my adult children know the support faith can offer but right now they see faith as irrelevant. I want them to be able to see the relevance of faith in their life and that you can be young and faithful adults and it's not a negative aspect of your identity which suggests that you are a conservative and boring person who is just following a "cult". I want them to be able to say they are Catholic without any fear of loss of social capital or stigma.</p>
<p>The group who are making this submission are a prayer group that have been meeting for over 30 years in different parishes. For many years, the group, which meets weekly, had over 50 people per week. Now the numbers have dwindled to a few faithful members. While supported within the current parish, there have been times when we have had to move because the priest has changed and not been encouraging. We are a very diverse group of individuals who would probably not have very much in common except for the faith we share and love of God which draws us together.</p>
<p>I was brought up in a migrant family where my father was Lutheran and my mother was Catholic. We had the Latvian Lutheran minister staying at our house one weekend a month and the Latvian Catholic priest another weekend. When my father passed away, the Lutheran minister was unavailable (in hospital). As my father was a leader in the Latvian community and had negotiated the monthly use of a Church of England church for their monthly service some 30 years previously, I was in a dilemma. The Latvian Catholic priest came to the rescue. He held the Lutheran service in the Church of England church and on that day, we all realized the importance of God in our lives.</p>
<p>The attendance at holy, reverent Masses has helped me enormously to feel closer to Our Lord. These Masses are few now, and have to be sought out, as most parishes are talkative, and seem to have a lack of knowledge of Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament.</p>
<p>I was not born in Australia. I was a lapsed Catholic when I came here to Australia. I then attended the Holy Mass daily. Thank the Lord God for the benefits bestowed on me. I still practice my faith fully.</p>
<p>I have heard of a non-Catholic woman who married a Catholic man. He was not a practising Catholic so she took the onus of bringing up the children with the faith. However, she was sidelined with all the menial tasks when she volunteered for helping out at the local parish because she was not a Catholic. Hearing this story leaves me with a deep sense of pain. We as Catholics can sometimes be the most un-Christian in our attitude to others.</p>
<p>In one parish, with the installation of a new parish priest, within 2 weeks radical and substantial changes were made to the way in which the liturgy was celebrated; this was much to the dismay</p>

of many parishioners. Despite a number of people asking the parish priest to discuss the changes, all requests were refused. On behalf of the parishioners, I was asked to appeal to the local bishop. The response was: "It's his parish; he can do what he likes." This was hardly the response I expected. Subsequently, I left the parish along with a good number of others, people who had once believed that this was a welcoming and inclusive parish to one and all. Of those who stayed, some said it was because they had nowhere else to go as they were unable to travel, others simply stopped going to Mass altogether (One person's experience).

We are both cradle Catholics who managed to hang on to our faith on the journey of life.

My childhood in the 1950s was when clergy were a special part of our family and parish life. An era also of obedience without question! I have now lost trust in the Church hierarchy. I still worship regularly at Sunday Mass and have my own relationship with God. It is understandable that my family do not worship on Sundays and feel that the Church is hypocritical in "Love Thy Neighbour" as the Church seems to strive to alienate people instead of welcoming.

I have been a baptised Catholic for all my 81 years on this earth. I have had had a range of experiences over this time, from autocratic parish priests who "ruled" their parish to pastoral and kindly priests who served their people wonderfully. I have lived through a period where parish priests were in charge of a parish and lay people had a very limited role, which was usually performed by men and mostly in regard to collecting and raising money. And then I have had the experience of being on a parish council where I have had the opportunity to try to influence what was happening within the parish, sometimes without much success. One such issue has been and still is that of the parish knowing what is discussed at a parish council, in that this is not shared with parishioners. Nor is there is a sharing of anything about parish finances, even though the parishioners are the ones who are giving their money to the parish. These are examples of what I see as a lack of openness within parishes that ultimately discourages lay people's involvement in their Church. The same applies to dioceses. My experience tells me that we have not moved very far from the days of "Yes, Father" and the expectation of blind obedience. Lay people are still not being treated as responsible adults when it comes to the management of parish, diocesan and national matters.

I grew up Catholic and have raised my children as Catholics. However, the Catholic Church is not in touch with the laity and becoming more distant and changing with the times. My children have no interest in going to Mass as they do not see it as relevant in any way.

I am afraid our Church is dying unless we change things; We need to update the music, the sermons, have priests who speak English well, engage our youth... etc. What did Jesus do when a sheep wandered away from his flock—he left the rest and searched until he found that sheep. The Catholic Church has not lost a sheep, we are losing flocks of them :( are we doing what Jesus would do? It doesn't feel like we are looking after the lost sheep at all. We need to find a way to welcome them back to the fold without judgement. When I grew up, there was an Antioch youth group—it was awesome—Mass was a great celebration—it was great to love God and share that love with other people the same age. This doesn't happen in my parish.

I received spiritual, doctrinal formation that helps me in my day to day struggle to live my Catholic faith well and passing it on to my relatives, friends and acquaintances in a natural way. It's so

uplifting learning how rich the Catholic faith is and putting it into practice in all circumstances of my life. Authentic happiness is being Holy and staying close to God and serving others.

When I discovered that I had a gay son, I was faced with the terrible dilemma of accepting the Church's teachings about homosexuality and rejecting that part of my son, or, putting aside those teachings and ask myself "what is God asking of me as a mother?" There was no doubt that the answer was to love him unconditionally. This act of unconditional love, modelled by Jesus, has left me in the paradoxical position of feeling that His Church has abandoned us in this. Its lack of curiosity, engagement and stonewalling conveys a message of rejection and disinterest. The only words we hear are those of "disorder". Despairingly, we seek to challenge these teachings and beg for their scrutiny in the light of greater understandings of creation. So my experience of the Church has been one of having to turn away from one of its teachings in order to love unconditionally. My prayer is that the law makers will be courageous enough to engage with those of us who live this experience and to ask "What is God wanting to tell the Church in relation to homosexuals?"

i. More welcoming and relevant

- Our Voluntary Masses at school are well attended and relevant because they are more relaxed, the gospel reflection is given by one of us. This is a good model - sharing of experiences from the congregation, active involvement beyond just listening
- TGI Fridays and Masses run by YEP are also well attended by young people, they are youth led, with fun activities afterwards, and they foster strong sense of community (YEP - Youth Engagement Project is run by local parishes and schools to engage youth, see website for details <https://www.yepmelbourne.com/#about>)
- In parish, often feel a disconnect with sermons from priest every week, they should be inclusive rather than being a preachy message, less condemnation of groups in the community (e.g. LGBTQ)
- Music is the key to engaging young people, need less rigid format of Mass, more dynamic,
- use of humour – Mass should be joyous, as seen on immersion in East Timor (good explanation in James Martin SJ's book - 'Between Heaven & Mirth').

ii. Greater focus on Social Justice

- The Church should continue its role advocating for and providing services for homeless and refugees and other groups in need (we have opportunities at school to support these with our time and money and think it is an area the Church does well), money raised in parishes should be used to support local community services and international communities in need, not just used for running parish—this would give people a sense of connection with the work done by the Church in this area (fundraising at school is most successful if we know what our money goes to and the cause is seen as worthwhile)
- School immersions (indigenous immersions to Kakadu and Kimberley region, overseas immersions to Jesuit Missions in Timor Leste, India, and Thailand/Vietnam, and YEP Bourke immersions have allowed us to experience what life is like for others, it changes our perspective and motivates us to want to make a difference, these sorts of opportunities should be more widely available through parishes, parishes should have more active engagement in helping others e.g. soup vans etc
- Issues like climate change and sustainability are important to young people, the Church needs to be more actively engaged in these issues on a practical level.

The drop-off of Mass. When two or more people meet in my name I am with you. I think young people can follow Jesus into the community when we do good works, by following him into the community of the Kingdom here on earth we are in communion with him. SVDP.

Yes, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a Catholic parish that teaches and promotes the authentic Catholic Faith. Our parish schools are almost devoid of any Catholic catechism, replacing it with popular ideologies, parish halls are now places to practice Yoga and our Catholic priests promote almost anything but how to work towards the salvation of souls.

I joined the Church over 50 years ago because of the Catholics I met. They were working and still are working for social justice and standing by the people in need. I joined because they were living the gospel and not just a whole lot of doctrines.

My formative faith was based on an Incarnational Christianity and Marian devotion. God is Immanent in all the world. We said the Rosary—a wonderful guided meditation. We prayed and sang frequently throughout the day. These devotions have been lost and children are not formed in prayer. We should look to our Orthodox brothers and sisters, who practise an intimate faith, as well as a liturgy (albeit very long).

I think that what God is asking of us has not changed since Christ's Final Commission to His Apostles around two thousand years ago: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). The problem for the Church in Australia is that this is not being done, not even to members of its own flock. Speaking personally, I went to a Catholic school and had always been involved in Church events in my youth. However, I found as an adult that I did not have nearly enough sound formation and catechesis to be able to stand up as an adult Catholic in the world. In fact, I have had to make huge sacrifices to fill this void of knowledge and formation, which has affected my career and my personal relationships. Of course, I am prepared to make such sacrifices for The Faith; but how many Catholic souls of my generation (Gen X) have already gone to their particular judgement or have made all their main life decisions without even knowing properly the full truth and beauty of the Catholic Faith! Moreover, in my opinion, the scandals that the Church currently finds Herself in are, in fact, consequences of the failure to adequately preach the Catholic Faith to all nations—Australia in particular—as without the Catholic Faith, the Church sadly becomes a pointless, apologetic and inward-looking bureaucracy. So what should be done? Firstly, the Catholic Church in Australia needs to recognize that there is an enormous problem of whole generations of Catholics in this country who have had poor catechesis and formation. Secondly, this problem needs to be addressed by both prayer and action to supply for these decades of neglect. And thirdly, the Church then needs to fulfil Our Lord's Commission of going out to baptize and teach all nations, i.e. the non-Catholic world. It is only when the first two of these steps have been taken that the Church can actually fulfil Our Lord's Final Commission.

I am an educator in a Catholic school and have been for 40+ years. I have been involved with sacrament preparation and have had the privilege of 'walking' with students in their faith journey.

I was able to obtain an annulment which enabled me to marry the love of my life. This experience brought me back to the Church after spending many years in a marriage where I was pressured to

let my faith go. The annulment process was long and arduous but well worth the result. I wish this process were available to others who may have made mistakes in their lives but whose circumstances do not qualify them for an annulment or they are put off by the up to 18 months the process can take.

Talking after Mass with fellow parishioners is the way these ideas have developed. This submission combines a personal interest in medieval history with awareness of the need for re-imagining reform in the Church.

My parents came from what the Catholic Church called a mixed marriage. My father the Catholic and my mother from the Church of England. My mother lived with the stigma for the rest of her life even though she did everything possible to bring her children up Catholics.

As a non-Catholic that attends Mass at least twice a month (since 2005) I am appalled by the silence that has accompanied the news of abuse that has been aired in the Royal Commission and the media. I was particularly disturbed when the congregation of our Church was instructed to immediately contact the police when there was a risk that our Church building might be burned down. However, no mention was ever made during a Church service for parishioners to contact police if they had witnessed or been the victims of abuse. As a parent of children, I found this announcement regarding the protection of Church property to be upsetting. In the same vein, I find signs on school play equipment forbidding children to play before and after school to be deeply disturbing and fails to appreciate that children are supposed to play and be physically active. Accidents are part of life and no liability cover should dictate whether children can play in the morning ahead of class, just as the Church's response to sexual abuse survivors was misguided, I consider this attitude of depriving young children of what is natural to them (while noting the history of violence against children at the hands of some Catholic clergy) to be unjustified and urgently in need of review. I also believe that not allowing priests to marry is misguided and a cause for much of the pain the Church is experiencing at this time. As a non-Catholic that enjoys celebrating Mass with my husband and children, I see these types of attitudes detracting from my overall experience and willingness to fully identify with the attitudes of the Catholic tradition.

It has been my own observation in more recent times that the Church and religion have become somewhat political and the minority (in terms of numbers) who have the biggest voice are promoting their representation as that of the majority. The songs we are permitted to sing and when we can sing them, the prayers recited throughout the Mass etc, are all set in stone. There is no flexibility to grow and expand. And so we are more like a dictatorship than a democracy. Another observation over the years is the shortage of priests in Australia. There are very few young men going into the priesthood and so we find ourselves having to go abroad to fill our shortfall. This gives us an amazing opportunity to tap into the different cultures they represent, which could help us build and grow our faith and our community. But they too are hamstrung by the way things are done. Things are set in stone, and therefore we are unable or more to the point, unwilling to break away and be open to new ideas. How can we expect a different outcome when we use the same approach time and time again? Our world and its people are ever changing. And in order to survive we must be prepared to change and grow with it and them. Our Youth are the future, let's find a way to bring them back and inspire them to grow our Church and

our faith. Let's lend them an ear, give them a voice and a respect, so they feel empowered and are willing to dedicate their time to help build up the Church and our future. In closing, however we tackle the topic of leadership in our Church, whether we continue as is, or we incorporate the laity and the youth, let's be open to change and challenge, let's be inspired and motivated to grow and evolve. Male and female, ordained and laity, young and old, let us as equals find a way forward in the way Jesus taught us which is with love, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience but above all love.

I am married to a Greek Orthodox Christian and for the last 14 years have attended services alternating between Catholic and Orthodox. In going to different Greek Church services, I have always been struck by the fact that the priest delivering the service may be married with children and has this in common with many of the members of his flock. The Catholic Church in Australia has arrived at an important crossroads on the issue of considering marriage for male priests and/or allowing female priests.

The reason why what I have written above is close to my heart is because my own weakening of my Faith came as a result of the Catholic school system. Throughout high school, we were never taught basic truths, like the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, the Four Last Things, the Saints, the Mass etc. The focus was often on social justice and comparative religions, which did nothing to help me realise that Truth exists as an objective reality. It was only after leaving high school, and being confronted by a situation in which I was forced to question what I believed and why, that I began to ask questions and research more into the Catholic Faith. After research and inquiry, I realised that the Faith was not just something that was part of my identity, but something that was true, and that if I wanted to follow Christ, I had to be docile to His Church. I realised that sin was real, but also that Jesus offered real forgiveness through the Sacrament of Confession, so I finally went back to Confession after 11 years away, and started anew to follow Christ. It was this journey that inspired me to go back to the Catholic schools and pass on the Faith that had not been passed on to me. For this reason, I am now a teacher at a Catholic school, in my first year of teaching. And it is my passion and desire that young people have at least the opportunity to come to know the love and forgiveness that Christ offers them.

When I joined the Carmelite Order, I remember the joy on the faces of my friends and priests because they believed what I was doing would support them in their lives.

I was born and bred Catholic. Church used to be a community, meeting place. My parents were very involved in parish life and I felt a sense of belonging. Mixed with this though was a sense of superiority, due to the fact that I was a Catholic and didn't know much about other religions. I thought that if you weren't Catholic then you were less of a person. As I matured and experienced life, I was able to rationalise these thoughts and make sense of them. Later, I was a member of my parish Pastoral Council, when I went through a divorce—sadly as soon as the parish priest heard about this, I was dismissed from the PPC. I was devastated and felt very isolated and let down by the Church. My friends from the church were very supportive, but unfortunately, there were 'road blocks' in place set by man-made rules and regulations that determined whether I was worthy enough to receive Communion, or read at Mass, or be a Eucharistic minister. I really want to be a

part of the Catholic community, but feel extremely conflicted as to how I can do that, when I am not being authentic. I feel as though the Catholic Church has become exactly what Jesus despised!

From early childhood there was a priest in my parish who gave the impression that the love of God was what counted and that what we did was to be in line with that belief. He did not concentrate on what was done wrong but that we were expected to do right as a matter of course. Later some people put into my head that if you did wrong then God would not love you. This led to a guilt idea and that you did good to avoid hell almost. Fortunately, on an occasion it became clear to me that God had to love me no matter what I did as perfect love can do no other. The real issue was how I returned that love, in other words God wanted a loving relationship not one based on fear. Most remember the early Missions of fear and damnation. Now I can view a situation as how it affects my relationship with a loving God.

When we moved back to [ - ] from New York, we had to travel 1.5 hours on a Sunday to find a Mass that was reverent and actually felt Catholic. It was ridiculous, embarrassing and made me extremely angry—is this what Catholics in Australia deserve for their complacency? Maybe, but the experience we had while trying to 'find' a parish will stay with me forever. Liturgical abuses, big screen TVs on the altar, Extraordinary ministers being used in small Masses. None of it made sense. Thankfully, we found a parish with faithful and holy priests but I shudder to think that that is what so many people experience each week. We have so much beauty and history in our faith—why is Catholicism in Australia so ... average?

Personally, I have had good family upbringing with a strong faith in Jesus. My parents lived their faith day to day. Their example and many virtues have taught us to be charitable and considerate of others. We had 2 nuns in our family who have passed away. We have had good holy priests and nuns in our lives who also showed us the love and trust we have in Jesus. My journey has now moved to bringing the love and care of The Good Shepherd to the children in the Church, for they are our future Church, they are our wealth and hope for the Church to continue when we are long gone. I have not found any religious program so good as the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, where the child lives in the Atrium for many years. It is 2 hours a week but many stay on from the ages 3 to 12 years. These children encounter Jesus in the Good Shepherd and build a relationship with Him. It is centred around the Holy Mass, the children are presented the liturgy of the Holy Mass with an understanding of it. This gives the child an interest to go to Mass and know the Liturgical time that is presented. Knowledge of the Holy Mass, the sacred scriptures and the practical life gives the child a feeling of belonging to this family of God. Two of our young boys have a love for the priesthood and we pray they will continue that relationship with Jesus. Another one of our girls who has been there for many years wants to become a Catechist when she finishes school. We see the faith and the work of the Holy Spirit flow through these children. You can speak to any Catechists of the Good Shepherd and you will hear many sharings of blessings and grace.

Theology of the body is such an important subject that is not available in so many secondary schools. If I had had a well-formed teacher through my Catholic education that was able to communicate the truths of St John Paul 2 Theology of the Body in secondary school, my high

school experience would have been far different. It is something I should have expected to have learnt at a Catholic secondary school.

In my experience, we very rarely see seminarians in active participation in our parish churches. This is probably because they are busy with their formation and studies and do not have the time to come out. However, I recommend a program as part of the curriculum of seminaries, that the seminaries go out to local or nearby parishes and take part in Church and other parish activities, such as Bible study classes, or other forum for discussions. However, I think it will be particularly effective if the general lay Catholic or other young people see happy, committed young men and women on their way to taking up religious vows. As part of this program, these young seminarians and novices, should be asked to give short talks to the laity on their life experience and how they have found the formation years in seminary. The purpose of this proposal is to encourage other young persons to take up religious life (if they have the calling) and not be "afraid" of their own calling. There is nothing like having happy, gregarious, and genuine committed people visible in Church life as they will act as an example and encouragement to others contemplating this form of living.

##I propose a special program created at the diocese level, which is directed at boys and girls at secondary college levels 11 and 12. This program should be an open and frank discussion with them where all contemporary issues should be openly discussed. This is not a catechism talk. It's about showing them that there is great value in remaining a practicing Catholic against the present social trend and recognising that for many such school children, they have parents who themselves do not practice their faith. The main drivers / participants of such a program should be committed young adults. I am happy to explain more about this proposal and will also be writing to the Archbishop of Melbourne, as I feel this sort of program cannot wait till Plenary Council concludes in 2020 or 2021.

I grew up in the Uniting Church and became a Catholic 33 years ago. My faith has been nurtured and enriched by people in the parishes I have belonged to and the Catholic school I have worked at for 18 years. We need to nurture strong supportive communities where we can share our faith together. This has been especially important for me in the last few difficult years when the Church has been under attack. We need to strengthen each other.

As stated previously, there is no engagement with youth or young families. Need to modernise homilies. 90% of the time I walk out of Mass not understanding what has been said. Long winded explanations on theological matters that provide little guidance as to our lives or realities we face. Priests would benefit from presentation training. How to engage with an audience? Highlighted recently by a 15-minute homily in a 30-degree stuffy church where the congregation was visibly distressed. The goal should always be the outcome wanted, not to talk until people tune out. This is clearly why new Christian Churches are growing. They understand what is needed for these times!

I am deeply grateful for the Catholic education my parents worked very hard and struggled to pay for. I have no doubt that has had a significant and largely positive impact on me. A formative experience I had was of a schoolmate and lifelong friend being hospitalised with a normally life-ending condition at age 16. Too long a story to write here, but the faith response that followed,

his survival and remarkable courage, along with the extraordinary support and faith of his parents who over the years I came to know very well, was life changing. Not everything has been rosy—I was taught by a teacher who has subsequently been convicted several times for sexual offences against young people and in hindsight a few things I witnessed at age 12 were signs that all was not well (but at the time I thought it must have been "normal"). A few other childhood experiences with a particular member of the Church also come to mind that in retrospect make me feel quite uncomfortable. I don't identify myself as a victim, however that and a later life experience that exposed me for an extended period to the lasting and seriously damaging effects of childhood sexual abuse (not related to the Church) bring me to tears at times—I have great compassion for those who have suffered so deeply. Although there is so much pain in the process I think the recent investigations and revelations regarding sexual abuse are a necessary and important process that will hopefully result in some healing, reconciliation and forgiveness that is only possible when the darkness is exposed and the truth comes to light. This cycles me right back to the need for our Church to be much more welcoming to sinners in the manner Jesus was. Unless we do that, no one will feel welcome, myself included.

- Catholic schools – Families coming to Mass with their children (how are they welcomed in to our Church)
- What message are we 'as Catholics' giving to our families?
- Our 'connection' with God
- What do we come to Mass for ... ?
  - o Meet with other parishioners
  - o Reconnect with God
  - o Pray to God
  - o Pray for others
  - o To serve God
- Positions of leadership of the Church
- Decision-making

Experiencing the disappointment of some of my close friends has made me aware that there is something seriously wrong with our Catholic education system. I know of 2 mothers who lament sending their children to exclusive Catholic colleges – they have come out atheists. Not sure what that is saying about the Catholic system!! I know that the saints and reading the history of our Catholic Church has made me realize that if we are not fed on what our Church has done in the past, we will not learn to love it and therefore I am sad when I see a lack of this in our Catholic schools. I have been to a number of school concerts and the programmes are full of secular themes. Have been a little disappointed that no Catholic topic was part of the programme. There are so many great stories of heroic lives that could be studied and produced by students in Catholic Schools. I wish that Catholic media was alive and thriving in our Catholic system. I believe if we did concentrate on researching and then producing our own stories, music and songs regarding the interesting and heroic lives of the saints and martyrs of our tradition, the Catholic education system might be more successful in tackling the issues of lack of belief and possibly produce the next generation of believers.

My education in the faith through the 50's and the 60's at Catholic schools, being taught by nuns and brothers, and the guidance of practising Catholic parents formed my faith. Also the wonderful homilies given by our wonderful parish priest. My family was a family that prayed the Rosary too and that is a wonderful and powerful prayer.

My wife and I sent our sons to a very well-regarded, and academically excellent Catholic college in [ - ]. One of my sons drifted away from the faith in his later school years. This was not an act of teenage rebellion. Quite the opposite. He was an academically gifted student who liked and respected his teachers. He listened to them and they led him away. My other sons have stayed faithful to the Church but they did so despite what they were taught in school, not because of it.

They did so by arguing with their teachers, including key members of the religious education staff. They had to argue for the authority of scripture, the reality of the Resurrection, and the obligation to worship among other major doctrines of the Church. All of these were treated as a joke by senior school staff, including staff whose job was religious education. As I said, academically the school was excellent, but we paid money, a lot of money, for our sons to receive a Catholic education. Instead, they got an education where some of the trappings were observed, in a slipshod manner, but none of the substance was taught; indeed, was derided. Masses and other para-liturgies were carried out but in such a casual and uncaring way that this only emphasised their irrelevance to the actual school culture. The Eucharist was regularly and knowingly profaned. Speaking to other parents and former students, this school was not unique. Indeed, it was not particularly bad. It's become clear that there are many that are far worse. These 'Catholic' schools misrepresent themselves and take money for services they do not deliver.

Our faith and our experiences have been based on a spirituality for everyday life in which God is present in our world and is active in all aspects of our lives. For both of us, this dates back to the 1960s and to our involvement in the Newman Society at the University of [ - ]. It has continued through our nearly fifty years of marriage with our involvement with "Teams - a movement for married spirituality". Our experience of "Church" has been predominantly associated with "communities of like-minded souls" rather than geographical parishes.

We were taught respect, trust, love and never disputed.

We hosted a menALIVE function at our parish a year or so ago which resulted in a much closer bond between the men that were involved and a willingness to be better Christians and be active men within the parish. Without our Church and its values this would never have happened.

Local culture is changing from traditional Anglo-Catholics to multicultural.

Story 1: The values of Christianity are demonstrated far more strongly by what we do than what we proclaim. In my youth, long before I participated in the RCIA, I attended a Christian Church of a different "brand". My father had suffered, and been severely impacted by a cerebral haemorrhage. During recovery he was employed as a Church Officer and needed the active involvement of our whole family to be able to carry this out. This was well understood by the minister of the parish. One Sunday, my father had omitted to place the collection plates in the correct location. This wasn't noticed till the time came for the collection to be taken up. My father, already feeling embarrassed and frustrated with himself, stood and walked across the front of the Church passing between the congregation and the pulpit to collect the plates from the store room. As he did so, the minister lent from the pulpit and "dumped" on him for his failure. In those few moments, his actions outweighed all the words that he delivered from on high. After many decades I vividly remember the hurt of that day—long after any good that the minister may have done has been lost in time. There have been other such "hurts" from people in the Church and many "Christian" acts from people who are not. I have come to terms with this on the basis that the Church is made up of fallible human beings but it's the underlying Christian values that are the foundation on which I have tried to build my life. We, as the Catholic Church of today, have a huge task to project the Christian message against the background of so much hurt that

has been inflicted, and poorly managed, over so many years. Our actions – of which there are many and of which the vast majority are beyond reproach - are under intense scrutiny.

Story 2: I am more aware of people suffering, especially since retirement. We need to know who we really are as Catholics. We are a Christian community with the same religious beliefs and we need to know what the Church's core belief is. It's easier to give support when you are being supported. We can't do good works if we try individually. But, it's really hard being Catholic. I don't tell people unless they're Catholic. Too much negativity out there. I feel some shame of how the Church has operated. A lot of suffering and the Church has never addressed it. With Catholics, I know I'm secure.

Story 3: My grandmother taught me my faith. She was compassionate and strong. If Mum and Dad had taught me more, some decisions in my life might not have been made. Their foundations were watered down. We need an understanding of right vs wrong. My husband has provided that strength in faith. We need to form ourselves in faith, right to the very end. We must turn to God when we make mistakes. Many act as though there will be no judgment in the end.

Many years ago at a clergy gathering, I raised the question of the ethical investment of Church funds. I was virtually told that it was none of my business. While I have no concrete evidence to suggest that Church funds are not ethically invested, the continued total lack of transparency on these matter leaves me wondering.

The current practice of avoiding these issues by attempting to have a Marriage Tribunal declare a previous marriage a non-marriage is seriously flawed. There have been a number of times when, as a priest, I have raised the possibility with people who have been in a previous marriage and wish to be married again or seeking an annulment. The response has usually been negative. One factor is the fear of the pain of going through another assessment of the painful experience of the breakdown of the previous marriage. Another is reluctance to have what they believe was a genuine marriage declared a non-marriage and all the implications of this. People express anger at feeling abandoned by the Church. This is another denial of the reality that, sadly, some marriages do come to an end. Personally, I have found this situation very disturbing. Do I refuse the request of someone who genuinely wants to be married in the Church or refuse to follow the party line and agree to the request? On at least two occasions I have agreed to such a request and on others I have participated formally in a ceremony where another person has been the celebrant.

Through Renew in our parish in late 1980's, I came to a personal relationship with Jesus and was filled with the Holy Spirit. I have since attended Life in the Spirit seminars (which Pope Francis has recommended for all parishes). I have witnessed changes in people's lives as the encounter the Risen Lord Jesus in their life. We need a new Pentecost and for the Church to work towards this is the way the Spirit moves.

Faith is a life journey and each individual has their unique experiences of God.

The story that has been living in me for some months is the great loss I have felt with losing dear family friends from attending Mass with us. Our children went to school together at local Catholic schools. We have always shared Easter and Christmas as bright sparks in my family's lives. We attend each other's family events which includes birthdays, weddings, sacraments, Christian

celebrations. This has been a deeply treasured part of our lives. Approximately 2 years ago, we noticed that our friends were not coming to Mass as they had been. I had a suspicion of why, but needed to be patient until the time to share was right. At 16-17 years of age, our dear friend's eldest son disclosed that he was bi-sexual. This came as no surprise to us having known him since his birth. In primary school, my husband and I had noted that this might have been the case. My heart breaks through these years, not because he is gay, but because I envisage the difficult path ahead for him and his family during his late teenage years. And yes, this was very much the case. Our dear friends, deeply faithful, had their own experiences at our local Catholic secondary school that caused deep hurts in the form of rejection. I have repeatedly invited them to make a plenary submission to tell this story and am fairly confident they will do so. But, I want to share my pain with you, that my dear friends no longer come to Mass with us, they express that they have to stand by their son and send him a message of unconditional love. This couple had a wonderful relationship with our beautiful parish priest. They'd known him for years and [ - ] (Mum) had served on parish committees including faith development team. Where does this lead to? We continue to love and have a close relationship with all members of this family. But we have lost a big part of our shared connection in faith. The dad openly tells me how much he misses our parish priest but their hands are tied. How on earth or in heaven can this be right? Please don't try to tell me that being gay is his cross to bear. The God I know and love would not reject this young man. He would open his arms to him lovingly. We have to move on this. Who said marriage is between a man and a woman? I don't need you to answer that question. I need us to challenge our traditional stances on so many things, go the next layer deeper and ask where did this come from? Is this what God would want for us today? I feel very committed to my faith and God and this listening and dialogue period has challenged me positively. It has opened my eyes to many hypocrisies. It has woken a desire in me to speak up.

A clear realisation that: - the decline of our culture is significantly affected by the inability of Catholics to stand for Catholicism in today's society - the Church and many (maybe even most) of Her clergy have either given up on the faith, and so don't teach it, or are scared to because those in authority over them such as bishops will exact retribution against them if they do - a realisation that so many of us laity are now deciding to withdraw all funding to the Church and Her institutions (Sunday collections, appeals etc) because the hierarchy simply don't get it any other way. Instead, we are funding faithful Catholics and faithful clergy. That decision is also in respect to the lack of any authentic governance from the Pope who seems to be part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Overall as a group, we found that most people shared in the experience of community service and social justice through the work of Vinnies, Rosies Oblate Youth Mission and Caritas. People also acknowledged the impact of fantastic clergy who worked for the pastoral care and support of all in their communities and parishes. There was also a huge shared support for youth ministry and the impact of parish-based youth ministry on the journey of a young person in life.

Two of our group only attend Church on major event (Christmas and Easter). The youngest member is brought to Church every week by his parents. Church is found to be uninteresting and at times boring. The Church hymns are somewhat dated and could be modernized. We think faith

promotes some good views and values such as inclusiveness, acceptance, compassion, helping those in need.

Four or five years ago, I approached my primary school sons' parish priest to ask if it would be possible for the Church to provide our children with some way of dealing with the constant media coverage of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. I know I find it difficult as an adult to reconcile my belonging to a Church which has not only failed to apprehend abusers, but has actively covered up abuse and even aided and abetted it in some cases, e.g. Ridsdale & Pell. How are kids supposed to feel? The priest was condescending and dismissive. My now 16 and 20 year old sons say they are atheists and want nothing to do with a Church of paedophiles.

'Tomorrow's Catholic' movement to encourage and include the lay people to have a greater involvement in the Church was so exciting and so much work was done to promote lay involvement. The whole initiative was shelved. Is this Plenary Council 2020 initiative going to end up the same way?

Wellsprings for Women is an organisation that operates outreach and education programs to women who have been isolated either through physical dislocation or mental health and other wellbeing issues, including family violence. It was established in 1994 by a Presentation Nun, Sister Ann Halpin. It continues to thrive today largely due to a group of women from several faith backgrounds who are either staff or volunteers. To see social justice in action and to have a living experience of Jesus' teachings, visit Wellsprings for Women.

Studying theology with some outstanding teachers in [ - ] and then seeing these ideas put into action in many ways through the work of Fr [ - ] or community centre [ - ], and other communities that have both a spiritual and justice focus, have all been inspirational and very formative for me.

We are responding as a group of young religious seminarians, all in formation towards the priesthood and coming from three different religious orders. By chance and also by our own efforts, our little group has become very friendly over the last year. Although we hail from three different states in Australia, and now belong to three different religious orders and study at two separate theological colleges, we have come to find that we share a kindred spirit. It started with the fact that due to the small number of Australian vocations these days, all of us have experienced some formation on our own and it can be a lonely experience. We realised in modern religious life we cannot rely on our own communities to provide everything for us, it is unreasonable and overly demanding. We sought friendship and companionship outside our respective orders and we have built a little community of young religious that expands beyond the four of us. We started gathering socially once a month over the past year and we can all attest to the fact that this collegiality and fraternity has very much helped us in our human formation, our Christian formation and strengthened our religious vocations. We are now participating in a plenary council dialogue and listening session together, but also looking at how we can collaborate in terms of resources, communications, personnel, formation, vocations, mission, etc. We have purposely moved away from the culture of our predecessors, where there was competition between the orders to fight for vocations. We have challenged the old structures that didn't allow for interaction between orders and we have moved to a system of more collegiality and collaboration. This has helped us immensely understand the needs of the Church and to

understand our purpose within the Australian Church. We hope our little example will provide some context to the questions we have raised above and also provide an example to the Bishops of Australia as to how various agencies and aspects of our Church can collaborate more effectively in the future to provide for the life and mission of our Church in Australia.

I was very proud when in 1981 Raheen was sold to the Pratt family as its use as the Melbourne Catholic Archbishop's residence was an embarrassing display of the inappropriate wealth of the Church. When a renovated Church commissioned a bronze sculpture of the Crucifixion (quoted at \$60,000) and then boasted of purchasing it for ONLY \$30,000 (at cost). This adornment was unnecessary and the money could have been used to house 2 refugee families for a year! Or fund women and children in a Refuge for many nights.

My Faith comes to me through the rather unique circumstances of my life, or rather what happened following. I was orphaned as a child— I never got the chance to know my mother, as she passed away before I turned two. My father passed away from motor neurone disease four years later, leaving me orphaned at six and a half years of age. Anything could have happened to me, and I could have ended up anywhere- in a foster home, orphanage, ward of the state, etc. But I was blessed with such a wonderful extended family, one which never hesitated to do whatever it took to raise me. I was blessed to have a father and mother figure in my uncle and aunty, who raised me as a son, and provided me with the certainty and stability I needed. Also, my paternal grandmother, my Nonna, was a major part of my life, and instilled in me my Catholic faith. I thank God for her perseverance, as it has made me the Catholic I am today. I continue to thank God for all the blessings in my life, in spite of all the challenges I've faced, and know he has guided and protected me throughout my life, in spite of my failings. And I'm glad that God has persevered with me throughout my lifetime. I wasn't always the model disciple. For much of my teens and twenties, I did not bother going to Mass weekly, even though I still felt the Faith and prayed daily. I had become lazy in the practise of my faith, and felt that I need only be a 'good' person, even though I was allowing sin to permeate through my life. My return to weekly Mass, and all the activities I have been involved in since, came out of a greater desire to belong, and to fulfil the primary obligation of a believing Catholic- I know God was calling me to return, and ultimately step up. I always wanted to contribute more- early on I merely attended Mass, but did little else. It was only through joining the Knights of the Southern Cross a decade ago that the Lord opened up many opportunities for me, so I could contribute at local level (parish and Branch level), and then slowly at higher levels (Regional and District, and in recent years Diocesan and State levels). Through my work with the KSC at all those levels, I have made many friends, contacts, and established many important networks. I am also proud of all that I have contributed in that time to the wider community. Today, I am proud of my role in assisting the education of seminarians through the Archbishop's Dinner and the KSC Priests Support and Education Fund, and to be able to support our clergy, laity, and Church when needed. I thank God for blessing me with many talents, which I hope to use to highlight and defend the rich traditions of our Faith, many lost over the years. My hope is that all parishioners will step up and contribute to God's Greater Glory with their skills and talents, and take a more active part in parish life.

We are writing this submission, as a group of religious priests and brothers, the day after Cardinal Pell has been convicted of child sexual abuse. We don't necessarily agree with the courts,

especially in relation to the evidence given. However, we are well aware that many atrocities have been committed in our Church and so this current atmosphere has contributed to the way in which we have framed our response here. We will share three quick stories about how we have experienced the flow-on effects of Cardinal Pell's judgment. 1. An elderly lay woman, currently residing in the Nazareth aged care home, caught two trams to get to our Provincial house yesterday because she desperately wanted to speak to a priest about the sexual abuse crisis and Pell's conviction. This was startling to us that people would still seek our advice from clergymen about this topic. But it shows that we do have a place in all of this. 2. On the same day as Pell's conviction was released, I called my brother for his birthday. My brother, although raised in a very devout Catholic home, no longer attends Church and has many differences of opinion with the Catholic Church, although respects many aspects of its tradition and liturgy. He has been particularly outspoken about Cardinal Pell and critical of the Church's cover-up. During the phone call, he surprisingly offered his sympathy to me and my fellow brother priests, understanding that it was probably a very tough time for all, no matter what our judgment on the situation might be. I had several messages from friends the next day all offering their support to me and also trying to make sense of the situation themselves. I offered them the image of Mary at the foot of the Cross and many found solace and hope in that. 3. I heard that on the day of Cardinal Pell's conviction being released the Archbishop of [ - ] met with the diocesan and CTC staff to ensure them of his support at this time and to prepare them for criticisms that might come from family and friends. I found this very encouraging that the Archbishop sought to be with his people at that moment. The provincials of many religious orders have also sent emails and supporting documents to their clergy to help them deal with their own pain and the pain of those in their parish/school communities. This sort of compassionate response from leadership has been an encouraging face of the Church to see.

We are a group of three students in an all-boys school. We are leaders in Year 12. School Mass has been a large part of our experience with faith. Daily morning prayers in homeroom have been important. Our RE subject from Year 7 - 11 taught us principles and values. We only attend Church and Mass for the most important dates on the Christian Calendar. We have experienced college prayer talks, the college prayer we repeat frequently and prayer booklets. Turning to our faith in stressful and difficult times - when we need support and someone to listen to us. Using our faith, the Church, and the teachings of Jesus as a guide in our lives, which has shaped and influenced us.

This work of John Paul II is what brought me home to the Catholic faith and changed my life. I was saddened that the first time I had encountered it was in my 20s and hope that young people in the future can receive this good news as part of their schooling.

Experiencing the fullness of the faith when I first attended the Extraordinary Form is beyond words. There was no silly chatter in the Church between the people. It was absolute silence. I was really able to enter into the mystery of the Mass and Christ's sacrifice for all of humanity. Every time I serve as an altar boy at a High Mass in the Extraordinary Form I am so much in awe and adoration of God's blissful and mighty presence, whilst worshipping Him in the way He demanded. From then on, I ceased to receive Holy Communion in the hand, as well as attending irreverent Masses. This is the best decision I have ever made.

Having faith matters because it is important to have trust or belief in something you can rely on in various circumstances. It is also important to have faith to show your true self and understand what beliefs work for you and best improve you as a person. This was completed by four secondary school students, (Yr 12, Yr 11, Yr 8 and Yr 6). We attend an all-boys school in Southern [ - ]. Three of us attended a Catholic primary school, the other attended a public primary school. Three of us attend Mass around 3 times a year and the other attends once a month. All students have raised funds for third world countries; one has been involved in a soup kitchen, one has done the World's Greatest Shave and another student has been involved with St. Vincent de Paul, selling Christmas trees for disabled children in Chadstone and participating in the St Vincent de Paul bread run.

I'm new to Australia and came from the Philippines. Happy to know that there is a Filipino chaplaincy and there is Filipino Mass in key churches within Victoria. However, I hope to see a Filipino Chaplaincy that gathers the various smaller Filipino Catholic communities and allow them to interact with the different Filipino seminarians and priests instead of just focusing on lots of fund-raising for charity (understand charity is important but this should not be the only goal where much of the energy is spent). My background and faith have shaped me to be a witness in my workplace and share inputs / topics about the faith where I can. Through these friendly non-judgmental discussions, I've noticed that most Australian-born individuals just find the Catholic faith (or any religion) is irrelevant to their busy lifestyle, or they don't want to follow organised religion blindly or never had that sense of community at all when they were young. I've noticed however that Australian-born individuals who were grounded on their Catholic faith came from devout families. This led me to think that families in Australia play a big role in one's upbringing in the faith.

My faith has been shaped by the opportunities to adore the Holy Sacrament; Holy Hours in [ - ] Cathedral in [ - ]; Opus Del retreats; Pope JP II last visit to Australia; World Youth Day in Sydney with Pope Benedict XVI.

I was shaped by Catholic Intellectual Apostolate at [ - ] University and the University of [ - ] in the 1950s and 1960s, and later to some extent by Vatican Council II. It is a matter of deep regret that so many of those who shared that formation with me have been driven out of the Church by the reactionary stance of so many in authority in the Church including Popes who have tried to negate so many of the promising steps of the Council.

I am a religious Sister with a life committed to the Mission of God and as we once used to say 'joyful loving service to the Church'. My vows are to God. My service of God has always been joyful and loving and is still expressed full time among the people of the western suburbs parish community to which I am presently missioned. I am deeply, deeply, deeply sad as I listen to people who gather in groups in the Convent (including 2020 Plenary) and to individual Catholics and Catholic families who knock on the Convent door. There are lives here to be nurtured, but they are not nurtured as they could be. With all my heart I hope and pray for radical change as a result of this Plenary. I have no power and no voice except to 'lift up the power of love'. (Teihard de Chardin) In Universities and other places, and among the People of God here I am accepted

<p>and respected, but never in the official structures of the Church. I meet arrogance there. I work quietly to preserve unity, hiding a heart that is weeping.</p>
<p>We are a group of four students, (a Yr 12, two Yr 8 and one Yr 6). Only the Yr 6 student attends Mass regularly, about once a month. We have school Masses and go to Church on big feasts like Easter and when we were in primary school.</p>
<p>One faculty member spoke of a time that his family went to Mass with him for Father's Day. His children are young adults and they got very annoyed when the homily was an appeal for new Church pews. These discussions annoy young people who want money to be spent on programs and aid that will make a difference to people in need. Especially when the 'old pews' are fine. Another staff member takes his family to Mass each weekend. With younger children it is sometimes difficult to get to Mass on time. To his embarrassment the priest chastised late comers—from the pulpit. Another faculty member, who is also a weekly Mass attender, spoke of the challenge to listen regularly to priests preach when they are not understood because of language and accent.</p>
<p>Such a nebulous word, faith—I'd prefer to talk of trust as in Ken Wilber's Integral stage ...</p>
<p>My faith was bolstered by a feeling of God in my life, in both good times and bad and my faith is constantly reaffirmed through my work as an RE teacher.</p>
<p>My battle with mental health issues was shaped by my faith. I had begun to abandon my faith until I decided that I would reconnect. I did reconnect and my faith is stronger than ever. Now I have the opportunity in my current employment role to try to guide the youth of today through their faith journey, whatever it may be.</p>
<p>I am not a Catholic ... but recently working in a Catholic school has made me think more about society, family needs and the common good. Please can the Catholic Church aim to simplify its beliefs and work in a modern world.</p>
<p>I am not religious. I was christened in a Uniting Church but have not grown up in a religious family. I have only one friend who is religious but the other people I surround myself with are not devout Catholics.</p>
<p>I grew up as a Catholic, without really questioning my faith. It was always an important aspect of my childhood, but not the most important thing. I went to a Catholic secondary school which I adored and my education there has definitely shaped my life and the decisions I have made. I studied extensively at [ - ] University and faith was there, but not more of a backseat role. I am now a teacher at a Catholic girl's school, and again (like when I was at school) it is the Catholic community that I really love being a part of. For me, my faith is very strongly linked with my faith community—in this case my school.</p>
<p>Hello, I grew up as a Catholic, attended Catholic Church every weekend with my family. As an Italian family, my cousins were an important part of my upbringing and I am still very close to them as an adult. A large proportion of my cousins are part of the LGBT community and as they feel they are not accepted and their relationships are not validated by the Church they and their families have moved away from the Catholic Church. My Nonna was a very devote member of the Church, however given that so many of her grandchildren are now not allowed to marry in the</p>

<p>Catholic Church she too is beginning to question the teachings and the acceptance of all into the Church.</p>
<p>I grew up with a very devout grandmother who attended Church every day and prayed for several hours a day. My mother was also very devout and went to Church every Sunday. The male members of my family just observed Easter and Christmas Masses. I completed my teaching degree at ACU and brought up my children as Catholics. Regardless of not attending Church I still observe in my workplace and in my dealings with people. I have a strong faith.</p>
<p>I have been so enraged in the past year with all of the horrific stories that have unfolded regarding the abuse that has occurred but despite this I find that I can't let go of my faith even though friends have left.</p>
<p>I am a practising Catholic who embraces the teaching of our Church on such things as free will, the Eucharist and the teaching around sin as being a knowing and deliberate turning away from God. I could not feel at home in any other Christian Church. I am saddened that my two grown-up daughters, who although remain very spiritual people have left our Church because they don't believe that it welcomes and respects all the members of our community. When [ Y ] , a former parish priest of ours was excommunicated, my daughter declared herself to no longer be a Catholic. Having had [ Y ] as our priest for seven years and having heard him uphold all the basic teachings of Christ and the Church, this was an incomprehensible action by the hierarchy. This is particularly incomprehensible in light of so many who have been proven guilty of the abuse of children not being excommunicated.</p>
<p>Young people in our community have enjoyed the experience of Church and Jesus Christ through an encounter with Christ, held within an environment that is non-judgemental and accepting of all, no matter what race, gender, sexuality etc. people identify with. At the end of the day, the important thing is to accept and respect the dignity of every human being for they are created in the image and likeness of God. Young people turn away from the Church when they experience a sense of judgement or ignorance from certain members of the community who refused to acknowledge the God-given dignity of every human being and focus heavily on traditions and rules that may not be as accessible or work well in the society we live in today. It is important to acknowledge the challenging society in which young people and other members of the Church are practicing their faith in.</p>
<p>I was raised as a Catholic but left the Church for several years. I then had a conversion experience. Before the experience I was despairing. Life was not working for me despite my achievements. Out of desperation I went to a prayer meeting and soon after I had the conversion experience. After this experience I commenced my journey of self-awareness and healing. The experience brought about a 180-degree turn around in my life. I moved from rejecting God and Church to embracing my faith. I thank the Lord for this grace of the gift of conversion.</p>
<p>My whole life has been immersed in the Catholic faith and tradition. I love my faith and my Church and I choose to follow the teachings of my Church to the best of my ability. All my working life, I have been strongly connected to working in Catholic schools. I have done this for over 35 years and this is my preferred choice of a work environment because I enjoy the moments of prayer and the ability to witness, experience and uphold my Catholic values to my students, their parents and</p>

my colleagues. These are testing times and I have witnessed the changes in the way people wish to express their faith or even turn away from it. I welcome this Plenary Council and pray and hope that the all who sit on the Council, read, think, pray and reflect deeply and wisely and with love. Change is needed and this is the time for it.

I am a 67-year-old Roman Catholic gay man who has been in a committed relationship with another Catholic gay man for 22 years. I was educated at a Jesuit school. I have been openly gay since I was 21 and I have been fortunate to have always had an accepting family and a large group of accepting friends. I have never really been subjected to homophobia directly but certainly many times indirectly. But up until meeting my partner, I always felt uncomfortable and that I was not good enough to be a member of the Catholic Church. This feeling was reinforced when our then Archbishop publicly refused to give Holy Communion to Catholic men and women who identified as being same sex attracted by wearing a rainbow sash. I realise that this may be seen as provocative behaviour on their part but the actions of the Archbishop still shocked and saddened me and I stopped attending Mass and the sacraments because I believed I was not welcome and not worthy. Sometime later my partner suggested to me to come to Mass with him to the Church he was attending. He was comfortable there. I did this and have been attending ever since. Both parish priests we have had over the course of time have been totally accepting of us and this I believe has helped the parishioners to be accepting of us as well. We are now fully involved in various activities of the parish, and feel a part of it and completely comfortable and most importantly I have been able to explore and hopefully develop my faith. I would like to recount another experience involving a subsequent Archbishop which was a bit more recent. Our parish was celebrating its 150-year anniversary and the said Archbishop was invited to attend the event and celebrate Mass. After Mass the parishioners had organised and provided lunch in the presbytery gardens to which the Archbishop was invited. He didn't and was conspicuous by his departure after spending some time in the presbytery. Why would he not meet the parishioners and mingle amongst them. Consequently, I don't have much time for these arrogant clerics Archbishops. This type of behaviour espouses the clericalism concept and it has to change. It's not what Jesus would have done. I have been fortunate to be part of a parish that welcomes and includes my partner and I. But I fear that there are many parishes where this may not be so and we would not be welcome. This hurts me and upsets me. I know that our current Archbishop invited the LGBTIQ Christian community to make submissions to the Plenary Council as a group and that other Catholics objected to this and asked him not to. Fortunately, I believe the Archbishop denied their requests for which I thank him. Jesus had no trouble whatsoever with otherness. The future of the Catholic Church in Australia must be more inclusive and accepting. It must change.

I was anti Church, could not stand the hierarchy, disagreed with the teaching and wanted nothing to do with the Church despite being a baptised Catholic. I was very far away from the Church. The Lord took pity on me and saw my lowliness. Through a relationship breakup I realised how lonely and miserable I was. My plans for my life were petty and meaningless and I had really sunk to the bottom of the pit. It was then that my sister who had returned home from an overseas journey in search of the meaning of her life ,stumbled across the Neocatechumenal Way in London and had listened to the catechesis and was looking for the Neocatechumenal Way here in [ - ]. At that

time, it was in [ - ], the parish of [ - ] and there was another catechesis that had just commenced. She invited me to come along and listen which I did because according to me I had lost everything and had nothing to lose. At first, I didn't really realise that the catecheses were Catholic because the style of preaching was not what I had heard when I was young. When I was young the Irish priests would only speak of going to hell, "you are a bad person because you are a sinner" and that "God was going to judge you severely". These catecheses were much different, they spoke of a loving God, a God who forgives, a God who loves and in Jesus Christ His only son our Lord, who has always had me in his mind has been by my side and I have never known this. He had a plan for me, better than the plans I had for my own life. I trusted the word of the catechist because I could see that through their preaching the Holy Spirit became evident through the word of God. In Jesus Christ I truly became to see that it's true that I am sinner through the horrible pain that I had caused my family and myself and how I had believed in false doctrines of the world and that I am in need of conversion daily because I know the tricks of the devil and how easy it is to be a slave of his through the many sins that I have committed. These catecheses were the turning point for my way of living and the Lord has truly given me everything that I have today not on my own good works, because I have no good works, but because I said "Yes" like our mother Mary, "let it be done in me according to Thy will". He has provided for me a husband and thanks to Humane vitae we have 10 children and 6 grandchildren. Almost all of our children also practice the faith and are part of the Neocatechumenate, why I say almost all because the Lord has to help us with our pride. We lack nothing. The Lord has supplied us with work, money, house, health and above all a community where the faith can grow. My husband and I and our children have also been on family mission for 3 years in [ - ] assisting the communities, participating in the evangelisation, visiting the people and announcing the gospel wherever the Lord allows. This is the Mother the Church that I have come to know and in Jesus Christ who has to save me daily all gratis.

These are the suggestions and stories surrounding the importance of getting the youth/Catholic schools, back on track:

- There is less and less allegiance to the Church, from Catholic schools.
- One member shared how he felt that his kids had no exposure to the faith in a Catholic school, unlike in his own time. Now, none of them go to Church. He also has a sense of failure in terms of raising up his kids as Catholics, since none are practicing.
- One member shared how the Church did not keep up with the times, and how religion was the most boring subject for his child.
- Another member had blamed himself for his kids not practicing, but realised later that it was the bishops and hierarchy's fault for not changing and keeping up with the times, so he has stopped blaming himself.
- Another member shared that his son who went to [ M ] college, is still practicing, but his daughter who went to another school is no longer practicing. He feels the way the Catholic school is run, made all the difference.
- Another member had a counter view. His son was not religiously inclined, so could not fit into [ M ], especially for religious lessons, so moved to another school where he is happier.
- Also, there is competition from sports and outside school activities to Mass and worship on weekends.
- Another member had the view that because Australia is a rich country, hence there is a turning away from religion. Contrast this to poorer countries in Asia and Africa where the faith is stronger.
- One member felt that the internet and social media taught wrong values to our kids. In the old days, values came from parents; now they come from peers through internet
- Another member shared that for him, it wasn't the Catholic

school system that brought him close to God, but his experience of God as he grew up, through Church activities and friends.

We are first generation Australians. Our exposure to the Church through our childhood was largely cultural, and despite being education in Catholic schools, our understanding of Church teaching was minimal and our motivation to follow Jesus was non-existent. An invitation to our local parish youth group brought us into a community of our peers (we were teenagers at the time) who loved God and found meaning and clarity in the Church. It was a beautiful experience to discover the richness of the Catholic faith and encounter Christ himself through prayer and the sacraments. Through World Youth Days, we realised the global Church and the leadership of the Holy Father. Through individual spiritual direction and participation in confession, we each grew in our relationship with Jesus. As we have become adults, and discerned our vocations, our aim is always to follow Jesus who we love very much. It is counter-cultural to be a young adult who loves the Church and trusts that the Church teaches what is necessary to live God's will most completely (even when that is so challenging). We love the Church still, even with the failings of some of her leaders. We believe Jesus is the foundation for a truly good life. We want the Church in Australian to never forget her mission for the 'salvation of souls.' Each person deserves the best chance of hearing the Gospel because the Gospel is good for everyone. When we are striving to live as saints, we are convinced the mission of the Church in every sphere in which she is active will be more effective and more lifegiving, because it will spring from our relationship with God.

We all know of priests who have suffered depression or become alcoholic. How much of this was loneliness? How often have affairs started because of loneliness and no one being around for the priest to talk to? How much is the priest's own interior life fed? If he could go to confession every week, wouldn't he understand why he needs to make himself available for the laity? Running a parish is a professional job and should be given to lay people, such as accountants, event managers, catechetical teachers and a Board for each parish run by laity and reporting directly to the bishop. Why is a parish priest wasting his time on parish councils instead of saying Mass and hearing confessions? If you want to empower the laity, then let us run all the professional tasks in the Church, leaving the priests to perform those tasks to which their sacred power calls them. The ministerial priesthood is called to serve the laity. They do this by enabling holiness through spiritual direction and the sacraments. The laity is called to bring Jesus Christ into the centre of the world. One of these tasks is the entire responsibility of the parish, with the priests simply visiting to give the sacraments.

##I don't really expect any of the current lot of bishops to pay any attention to this or any other submission because you have grown up in a clerical environment and can't see beyond it. I have challenged you in this submission to radically reorientate your outlook back to a vocational view of the priesthood rather than a professional view. At the same time, I know that you won't or can't. It would be too hard to come out of your comfort zone and truly seek The Holiness, which is your baptismal calling. But you are called to be saints! Don't become cynical thinking dreams of holiness are naive. Jesus calls us to "be holy as my heavenly Father is holy". You can do it, you can change and help the whole Australian Church to reform itself into an agent of change for the entire people of Australia. People are attracted by genuine holiness. If you stay stale in your

clericalism, Catholicism will continue to wither in this country. If you renew your vocation to become another Christ, to struggle to truly follow him, you will give up your golf on Monday, your alcohol, your porn addictions, your gay associations, your overeating and your loneliness. You can pour yourself into the apostolate after spending an hour in prayer with our Lord each morning. Then you will help renew the Church. Then when your life is finished you will hear the words of Christ "well done, good and faithful servant" and Jesus will give you a really big hug.

The Alpha course for most of us is what bought us to a closer relationship with Jesus and has strengthened our personal relationship with God. Listening to others and their stories about their life experiences that made their faith stronger.

Our parish is blessed to have priests who are humble, approachable and compassionate. This has impacted me very positively and I use them as my role models in how I live out my life as a Catholic in Australia.

Catechises classes for adults in every parish across Australia would be a game changer!!!

World Youth Day was the forming factor of my return to faithfulness to God. This helped me realise that there a community of faith and that I do not have to be alone on the journey to Christ. I believe faith networks are key to helping people on their faith journeys know that they have other like-minded people around them for support. Other things that have shaped me and my faith are events where people (often priests/bishops, those who a well versed in Catholic doctrine) have presented talks and taught/clarified certain teachings that I didn't know and understand.

The most significant experience that has shaped me has been to witness the incredibly faith-filled parish of [ - ] in [ - ], which was the basis for the Divine Renovation book. They are so intentional about sharing the gospel message and raising up disciples and leaders who have a desire to draw others into a relationship with Jesus. In contrast, most of the parishes I have witnessed in Australia are declining rapidly, and showing no signs of meaningful change.

During the period when the Royal Commission was in progress, an officer from the Archdiocese Office of Evangelisation told someone who wanted to organise an event to reach out to others that he shouldn't bother since the Church was facing so much bad publicity. A bishop once told a member in the group "The parish priest is a benevolent dictator." At events, the Church leaders don't seem to reflect an interest/love for the people. Seem to be distant and expect to be accorded respect. Good reference point would be to reflect on how Jesus would behave. To use Jesus as a reference point.

"Are you surprised that there are many people who have lost the grace of God, lost their faith, or have turned against the Church? There are many reasons for this, but there will always be one main reason: lack of prayer." - Cardinal Van Thuan "Why are there crises in the Church? It is because people do not take prayer seriously." - Cardinal Van Thuan

I feel blessed that I have had so many good influences in my early life that helped to develop my faith in God and the Church, and Christian values—parents, grandparents, priests, relatives, primary and secondary school teachers. They have helped me to get a good sense of right and wrong, and values such as caring for others who are not as well-off, working hard, not thinking

only of myself, life isn't always supposed to be easy, how to cope with adversity and sadness etc. As an adult, my involvement in parish life and being active in some ministries as well as groups such as the Legion of Mary, Knights of the Southern Cross and Couples for Christ has also helped me to develop a stronger faith. I also feel blessed to have been able to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2017 and having a good experience of faith at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. I feel sad for those who never get a good experience of the Catholic or Christian faith, and am stirred to make more of an effort to evangelise others around me, especially some of my family members.

I think as an adult living in a different world to when I was growing up post Vatican II, I have had the blessings of belonging to a wonderful parish over the last 26 years that practises a true sense of what it means to belong to a community, where all are welcomed and included. People come from all walks of life but everyone is gladly received and shown hospitality. Parishioners are encouraged to be involved in liturgy, decision-making and leadership in a democratic dialogue facilitated and supported by a wonderful parish priest. Social justice is at the forefront of what it means to be in our parish and there are many initiatives that we are involved with. My faith community has kept me practising my faith in a world where being Catholic is not popular or looked upon with much admiration in the general Australian community.

Committed to the Church, deeply involved in community work with the Church, but rejected when I decide that religious life is not for me. I'm hurting.

As a Latin person and in our country we used to have Mass every day in most of the Churches. Here in Australia in my community, it is only twice a month on Sunday so it motivated me to be part of the liturgy, that it wasn't happening in my country. At the moment I'm still giving my service to God as a guide of the Mass in [ - ] church in [ - ] (Spanish Mass).

I was raised in a faithful Catholic home. My faith was fed and solidified in an amazing, devout youth group. I was toughened counselling outside abortion clinics. I would like the youth to be nourished and guided as I was, especially as society is so much worse these days.

I am no longer participating in parish life and am feeling severely disillusioned by the Catholic Church in Australia. This is not a reaction to the child sexual abuse crimes. It is a more general reaction to the lack of professionalism amongst the ordained leadership of the Australian Church. Males continue to equate ministry with power, entitlement, and elite-ism. I am also distressed by the unequal treatment of women and the lack opportunities for them to minister. The rate of disaffiliation in Australia is significant and increasing in most age groups, not only young people. Second generation migrants are not remaining connected to the Catholic Church. The heart of Christian faith in the Catholic tradition is being lost because the Church continues trying to exercise power, rather than serving.

I believe God is a loving God and the Church is a supporting community through-out my life journey.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my submission. May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and may the Holy Spirit work through you. My name is [ - ]. I am 27 years old, from [ - ]. I am recently married to my wife [ - ]. I don't know where I'd be without my faith, which I love deeply

and enthusiastic to share with others. When I was a child, I was blessed to have a deeply devout grandmother and mother who taught me, in both conversation and by example, how to pray and have a personal relationship with Jesus. They also taught me to believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and how we ought to order ourselves in response to this reality. However, many Catholics do not grow up with devout elders like I did. For these Catholics, it was up to Catholic schools and sacramental instruction to teach them about the faith and help their faith grow. Unfortunately, I know that in many (if indeed not most) instances, Catholic schools and sacramental instruction has not provided young people with the quality and depth of faith they rightfully deserve. I view this as a tragedy which has contributed to Catholics lapsing in their faith, holding misinformed views of Catholic doctrine, and most tragically, not having a meaningful relationship with Jesus. This saddens me and I know it saddens many of my young Catholic peers who also are active in their faith. It is disheartening. It is also disheartening and so sad to see Catholics at Mass show little or no regard or reverence for Jesus truly present in the Tabernacle and in Holy Communion. But can we blame them, when even the laity helping out at Mass and sometimes even priests themselves barely provide a good example to follow? It is disheartening and so sad knowing that many Catholics my age have never been exposed to the rich beauty of the Catholic faith, be it in liturgical forms such as *ad orientum*, musical forms like the ancient and angelic sound of chant, the magnificence of sacred Church architecture which helps draw one's mind to God, or prayerful yet joyful festivals such as feast day processions. Most young people, despite being Roman Catholics, have never experienced the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite. The only aspect of Catholic faith many young people are familiar with is typically a very modern and plain celebration of holy Mass, stripped bare of the richness of outward facing symbols and expressions of faith that carry so much meaning to the human heart and psyche which, in my experience, are the very things young people truly yearn for. I truly believe in my heart of hearts, that helping young people grow a personal relationship with Jesus, combined with improved access and opportunity to experience the beauty of some of the more 'traditional' aspects of the Catholic faith as mentioned above, will go a long way to strengthen the faith and authenticity of the Church in Australia.

I have lived a life of sin until my conversion in 2017 and was baptised on Easter Vigil 2018. I only see the beautiful side of the Catholic Church. I feel like I have won the jackpot in life and see the Church for the beautiful compassionate institution it is (despite recent atrocities). I put that down to being very fortunate with who I was helped by in my formation. Two religious orders have shaped my faith and love for the Church. The Somacan Fathers in the [ - ] parish in [ - ]. Especially Fr [ L ] and Br [ - ]. I wish so deeply we had Somascan Fathers all over Australia. In fact, I wish we could replicate Fr [ L ] in every parish! Secondly, the Benedict Monks of New Norcia in WA. What an amazing spiritual town. The only monastic town in all of Australia. I wish we had more places for spiritual retreats like New Norcia!! The Church has changed my life, and the legacy of my family (wife and children). God is central to everything I do, and I am the most unlikely person. I am covered in tattoos and have lived an unconventional lifestyle, had very well-paid career. I have given up everything to the point I allowed myself to go bankrupt to shed all the earthly things that consumed my life and have dedicated my life to God and serving others, and raising my 4 children to know God. I wish people could see the Church how I see the Church!!

1. Complaints about criminal behaviour must be referred to police for investigation. If members of the clergy are investigated and found guilty, the Church must also have means of restitution. Clerical perpetrators of child abuse, should be automatically removed and undergo counselling and support to assist them to move into new occupations where they do not have privileged access to young people. Church must act on Christ's principles and look after their flock rather than trying to minimise monetary loss. We must respond as Jesus would and care for the weak and vulnerable. The Church needs to be transparent in all their dealings for the sake of its existence now and in the future as a true testament to Christ.

2. Schools should include Sunday Mass as a prerequisite at least monthly. If children can attend other activities on the weekend, one of those activities should be Sunday Mass. Our actions influence children. Watering down religion taught in school for the sake of political correctness is wrong. Catholicism needs to exist strongly in our own schools. State schools offer alternate options for those that do not wish to attend a Catholic school. As in corporate life, when you join a company you endorse their culture and accept the directive or you leave. School choice is the same. We should not be fearful of offending if we do nothing intended to offend; when a child attends a Jewish school there is no question that Judaism will be taught. To survive and grow we need to instil the beliefs and values in our children and the schools, especially the P\primary schools are vital in this. Engagement with families and children is needed, such as family friendly events and interaction during and after Mass so that going to Church is a time of joy and interaction with our Lord

3. Parish communities are composed of a diversity of parishioners and a priest, each bringing different talents and knowledge. Each parish needs a board of Church leaders who would take on the various roles required. This board would work as a parish team co-ordinated by a paid working employee in various roles in the parish. The priest would no longer be the only person with responsibility for everything in the parish, but instead be part of a team of committed people with skill and talent working together. This would enable priests to work in the role that they are best suited to with help and support of a working team of parishioners empowered to help create and develop a community that they believe in. Each parish would hire a coordinator, to head the board and to be the point of contact for people in the parish and overseeing to various requirements such as information, needing help, support and working in the community on projects, family days, working bees and liaising with priest and property manager; similar to a cross between a Sacristan and a community liaison. We need to talk to each other, listen, and live the Gospel.

I would like to share that I initially began my involvement with the Catholic Church when, as a non-Catholic, I used to often accompany my wife to Mass before we were married, and subsequently, all the time since our marriage in 1973, when I was aged 26. As the years passed my involvement with the Church deepened, to the extent that I eventually was baptised Catholic at Easter 1983. I took that step because I considered that the Church to me was the institution which best demonstrated how we can be the light of Christ in the world. Despite the many horrible revelations of cases of abuse in the last few years, I still believe that. I have never felt I should not have made the decision that I did. I am still proud of my Catholic faith. I just want to see this Church of which I am a part, to experience healing.

My faith has been sustained by the fact that in most of the parishes I have been in, people have been reaching out to me. We all want to feel wanted and it is such a Christ-like response. I try to do the same but sometimes get too caught up in the responsibilities of organising stuff for Mass and rosters etc.

I am a convert to Catholicism from the Church of England. My attraction to the Church of Rome was its ability to change as reflected by the Second Vatican Council. The council is our chance, within Australia, to change.

When I said I was going to convene a parish group to put in a response the Plenary 2020 call for submissions, almost everyone in my social circle laughed at me and said it was a fruitless exercise, and that nothing would change! Some reminded me that we had done this exercise in [ - ] before, looking at the role of women in the Church, and that nothing had changed ... except that most of the women who made our parish submission, thoughtful, Christian women, have now left the Catholic Church. What a loss. And another story: As a group of us were leaving after our second session discussing the Plenary 2020 submission, someone remarked that this group is Church for them, a group of equals, genuine faith-filled lay leadership, kind and thoughtful listeners of each person's input. Someone in the group said: my mum chose Catholicism—an option for the poor; we set up a food service for low income people and when people came in for food, we treated them with respect and dignity. That is the sort of Catholicism I want to belong to.

My years of Catholic schooling in primary and secondary helped shape my beliefs and my understanding traditions and scripture and our Catholic context in Australia.

I read Below-the-Line comments on most news articles. As a Catholic, I'm ashamed that my faith has been blackened by a toxic culture within the Church hierarchy that has led to the hoarding of wealth and the abuse of numerous vulnerable people. People have forgotten that Australian Catholics are responsible for welfare programs (e.g. Vinnies), started many schools, hospitals, and orphanages, as well as providing outreach services. Now if I point to any of those things to explain why I'm Catholic, I'm accused of being stupid and ignorant of the damage Catholics do through those same institutions.

- When I came to Australia a year ago, I attended around 10 churches until finding one where I could understand what the priest was saying. It was also helpful the words were showed on a big screen, which made it easier to follow the prayers in English.
- When I arrived in Australia, I struggled to find a Catholic church by looking around the streets and researching online. We need to communicate better online, the location of parishes and clear Masses timetables and have a central website to make this research easier for new people.
- I have been participating in Catholic groups since my childhood, which changed my view about the Church and about my faith. It has also taught me more about the Bible, about spirituality and, more importantly, about God.
- After our group reflection in preparation for the Plenary Council, together we decided to start a small group for prayer and adoration, meeting at the end of each month—before the Mass celebration—so in this way we can foster a new spirituality and grow, as believers and members of the same family, in prayer and participation in our community.

I attend Mass as regularly as I can. I work every second weekend and therefore cannot attend every week. When my children began to question why we should go to Mass my answer was this.

Jesus called us to come together as a community—he recognised there was strength in community— the Mass is not about what we can get out of it but is about what we can give to others by being there. My family lived in a community of about 1800 Catholics. My wife and I taught at the school of 280 that my children attended. At weekend Mass, we would see maybe 10 other children and it was hard for my children to see the point of being there. I told them it was their youth and energy that gave the older parishioners hope in the future of the Church and the parish they had attended since their youth. By attending Mass, they were giving the gift of hope to the community. They both attended the children's liturgy and both became altar servers which continually brought joy to the older parishioners.

Can bishops articulate what sin is?

I have always found the Church to spread good ideals of peace and love and it makes me sad that it has a bad image in the wider community to the point that I don't want to mention I am Catholic. The Church needs to do more to support victims of abuse by priests and to show they are really caring. Often in the media the opposite comes across that it cares more about priests and the Church than children.

I come from a family where faith was paramount and serving others was the ultimate expression of that faith. I have worked in Catholic education for more than 30 years and I am saddened that the Church, my Church has acting in many ways contrary to the loving mission of Jesus. My faith in God has not waived but I have seen so many other people turn their back on the Church and accuse people like me of aiding the evils in the Church by remaining in it. This breaks my heart! Yet, I'm still actively involved in my parish and still teaching in a Catholic school. I believe God can help the Church resurrect into a new life of love and service.

My story, in 2019, is rage. Anger. Frustration. Approaching hopelessness.

No. I will just say that despite my rants above, I have been offered immense support from my Church community over the years when battling significant health issues. Although I question a lot of the current teachings (or at least, the Church's spin on it), I still believe in its fundamental tenets. My guardian angel has stood by my side through many dark times.

In the 1990s, we gathered in [ - ] parishes to talk about the Church as lay people. We asked for the changes that are still being asked for—married priests, women priests, bringing back into ministry former priests. We asked for non-compulsory celibacy as compulsory celibacy is an unnatural state and risks significant psycho-sexual health issues. We asked for a more democratic Church and real roles for women. The Church would not be in the strife it is in if lay women and men were involved in its governance and the Church was more inclusive. The sin of sexual abuse has eroded people's trust in the Church and ruined its moral authority. We never knew what happened to our input; we assume that it was ignored by the bishops. That is part of the point of this recount—the wisdom and experience of the full Church (laity, youth, young and old) is not utilised or valued. This is to the Church's detriment. Christ's ministry was not for a select few; Christ reached out and loved the vulnerable, he was inclusive and not sexist. I pray for the day when the Catholic Church realises that the reforms undertaken by other Christian faiths has not resulted in their demise. I pray for the time when the Catholic Church has the courage and self-confidence to truly listen to its faithful; to its adherents and critics and make real change. When our son told us that he

wanted to become a priest, we were worried for him. I believe in living a vocational life and endeavour to do so in my work, as a wife and as a mother. I cannot believe that Christ intended a Church dominated by celibate males holding power over many and being so distant from the lives of their lay sisters and brothers. And so, when our son said he wanted to become a priest, we worried that he would not have the opportunity to find a loving soulmate to live a faith-filled and intimate life with, that he would be tainted by the scandal of the Church and that his psycho-sexual health would be detrimentally affected by compulsory celibacy. He chose such a life and we accepted that—but we were worried for him. He would have made a wonderful priest, but that cannot be when he is forced to choose between family or priestly orders. And what if our daughter decided that she too was called to become a priest? If she was Anglican, Baptist, etc—she could. As a Catholic? No. It is not based upon her worthiness, her calling, her suitability. It is solely based on her gender. And so, I am cautious with this Plenary Council—we have been asked to contribute ideas and insights before and it has come to nought. We need real, deep change and we are still waiting. Fewer and fewer people are waiting though, as more people turn away from the Church. I have realised that the Church has to undertake real listening, genuine consideration and authentic change or it will be irrelevant in Australia, we will fully become a missionary destination and our parishes will be empty or near empty spaces. I pray that the hierarchy of the Church will listen and reform.

I was assaulted by a priest in our family home when I was a child. I disclosed only during the Royal Commission—50 years after the crime. My family were loving but my father died a soul-broken and disappointed man shortly afterward. I live with the regret of disclosure. The priest was already in jail for similar crimes when my case was heard. He has since died. This incident changed my life and took away some of life's joy. My former husband was also assaulted when he was in a seminary before I knew him. I don't think he has disclosed this to authorities.

I grew up going to Mass every Sunday with my family, went through Catholic primary school and high school. It wasn't until I finished high school in 2003 that I learnt about the depths of my faith. I had been the weird kid who went to Mass, the pastoral ministry prefect, enjoyed religious education classes ... yet in all of these things I had never actually heard there was such a thing as a Catechism! I hadn't been to individual confession since my first reconciliation, I had never been to adoration and I had no idea what the Church's true teaching on sexuality was. I was so mad when I eventually studied John Paul II's Theology of the Body—Why had this understanding been available but not been taught to me when I needed it most!? If I, as a practising Catholic heavily interested in faith, managed to miss out on all if these rich teachings and practices of our faith; how much more are others also missing out on? Our parish priests and schools need to be more accountable for the teaching of faith. It is not a true choice if we do not fully understand that which we are choosing or turning away from.

My faith experience was shaped by my family who never attended Mass but taught me the importance of looking after the underdog by making our home a refuge and raising funds for many causes. The faith side was developed by the Mercy and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart sisters then then the De La Salle and Christian Brothers whose individual charism and values gave me a broad view. This carried on into my work which I was taught to see as a vocation by schools, my Joseph Cardin Spirituality and a long line of chaplains and parish priests who have mentored me

throughout life. This journey began with [list of names] and continues down to today with [list of names]. I also benefitted from my studies at the [ - ] where I was able to move from the word of faith to heart of faith, my theology studies with a whole range of great lecturers who opened up Scripture for me and my Master's degree in Counselling which introduced me to Practical Theology. Going back to the Sisters. I had the privilege of working in Catholic Education for 46 years where the Good Samaritans introduced me to the mature Mary a tough, determined Jewish mother rather than the meek and mild on earlier times who is at the epicentre of my faith experience helped by Frank Moloney's work. There are many heroes over the last 2000 years who stood up when it counted regardless of the consequences from Jesus to Kolbe and Sr Irene. So, it is hard to accept when you urge bishops to lead they run for cover saying they will be mocked in the public arena. Yes, they will be initially but presently absence from the arena is giving the sneerers, haters and opportunists a free kick. People like Sr Brigid and Sr Pat Fox have shown how. I was chuffed when my own archbishop took on one of the ABC sneerers and won the day with dignity. However we do have media savvy Paul Keatings in our ranks that can put the present abuse in context and remind them of the quiet charity that happens by other 95%

In Part 1, I shared my own story but this is about common features I have heard from members and friends of Cardijn Community of Australia. Family on Communal Values school Experiences varied but were unsatisfying in faith side because there was a lot of talk and pondering but no action or outcome. YCS/YCW (and now Young Vinnies who have a similar model) provided the See, Judge and Act that empowered them as individuals and groups to "make a difference" as McKillop had asked. Rather than being un-involved spectators, they became shapers of varying degrees in their family, relationships, workplace and community. It took off the blindfold to see the world that Jesus saw through the gospels they shared at review meetings. It taught them to do a dialectical analysis within themselves as well as others their review of life sessions. They all talked a key chaplain or chaplains who had become a mentor and lifelong friend. They were always participators who helped others get involved because while the action was important, it was helping others to recognize and use their gifts and fruits of the Spirit that was primary. Those members and friends who have joined Cardijn Community of Australia with no previous connection were attracted because of this approach of turning faith into action and in the review learning there was a double transformation not just of the issue but within yourself. Like seeing the world through the eyes of a child as Jesus urged us to do. For those of us involved as young people, we formed the adult arm, as Cardijn had planned to do, because while we had been in many other parish and diocesan groups there was too much talk and not enough action as well as formation of others. We discovered through two PhD studies that Ozanam, Cardijn and Don Bosco all shared similar ideas and in our audit of many Catholic groups they have embraced these principles of being grassroots organizations rather than hierarchies where the most recent, junior member is valued as much as the oldest, long serving member, Jesus demonstrates this dynamic continually in the gospels which provides the broad appeal given members cover four generations.

My mother died a few days before my 10th birthday; my father had 40 years of military training and distrust of emotions; I 'learnt' to hide my feelings and lived a life of depression, shame and blame without realising that anything else was possible. As a Christian Brother on the staff of a

boarding school, I came across an incident which I suspected may have been sexual abuse involving a student and another staff member. I was too afraid to 'report' it or even to mention it to others as I imagined that I would not be believed and that I would be the one 'in trouble' for accusing a highly respected teacher of something like that. 10 years later, I began to seek help through counselling thanks to the urgings of a few people who cared. Eventually I went along to Encompass in Sydney for 6 months where the notice on the wall of the gathering room (for 'group') reminded all of us that 'There is more to me than the worst thing I have ever done!'. Now I look back and consider how I found the Way of forgiveness (of myself) through being able to tell my story and to hear others' stories in a group setting—where two or three are gathered. Now I have a story of encountering Divine Mercy in the healing Christ and a growing sense that the 'more' is his presence and Life deep within me, deeper than my childhood wound of 'emotional neglect' (as named by a spiritual director). We Christian Brothers have begun to gather in small groups using the framework of 'The Circle Way: A Leader in Every Chair' (book and website) and I have learnt that this is one of many frameworks for small groups being used around the world. I imagine that the Spirit is at work, bringing people together for various degrees of intimacy and relationship and I have sense that my life has been leading up, in the Spirit, to participating in gatherings like these, with echoes of Basic Christian Communities, as both disciple and guide. My usual practice is to place a 'holding cross' into the centrepiece as reminder, especially to myself, that my central, core commitment is to Jesus, God in human form. I think of renaming the subheading 'A Christian in Every Chair' as we hear each other's stories in an atmosphere of trust, love, forgiveness and discernment of Mystery and Spirit. My latest step has been to use some of the Circle Way features in a parish Listening and Dialogue Encounter and I can imagine something like The Circle Way being of benefit before, during and after the Plenary Council. My story continues as the Christian Brothers and the Church in Australia move toward times of significant listening, dialogue and encounter in 2020.

Just very disappointed.

My personal faith has grown through small prayer groups and spiritual direction. My energy and faith are directed to the RCIA which challenges me to confirm and speak of personal faith despite the horrors that are associated with the Catholic Church. It has not been encouraged through "routine" liturgies. Through listening and dialogue sessions, we heard many heart-breaking stories from those who have alienated by local church. Many marriage breakdowns are not by choice and those who have experienced such sadness are not prepared to suffer hurt, not prepared to trust a marriage situation again. We alienate couples who live together for whatever reason they choose. Many have deep and lasting faith and take their choice with deep thought. Some clergy have irreparably hurt many by their judgement.

There was a man, a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society, who had two teenage daughters. A young homeless man approached him for assistance and that young man was taken into the home, accommodated and fed. He unfortunately raped and killed the two teenage daughters. The father of those daughters maintained contact with St Vincent de Paul prison visitors concerned for the welfare of the young man and on one occasion he requested that a prison visitor assist the young man with the particular problem.

God is asking of us to take action. We the ordinary people of Church must be listened to, respected, and responded to—so that the actions we take reflect our thoughts and values—

Positive experiences which relate to this include:

- Witnessing our living experience of Christ’s love in action through our local (and wider) St Vincent de Paul’s Conference and our Young Vinnies group—we have fortnightly meetings, regular visits to homes, donations of hampers and food vouchers, help with trying to find accommodation. This support is offered to the whole community, not just Catholic members.
- Growing up in a family with parents of different religious faiths gave one discussion group member a strong faith of her own. The message she learned from her parents was one of respect of differences, listening and learning from each other, being inclusive. Her faith became one of love and mission for all people, not just those of one religious faith. This informs how she treats everyone she encounters.
- Another experience is being part of the [ - ] Mission—over 100 volunteers from the parish are regularly rostered to spend a Sunday helping serve meals to the homeless and marginalised. They join with other volunteers from various religious backgrounds or with no religion but a set of values which recognises our common humanity. As Christians we have an outstanding message to love one another and being a part of this work is just one way we do this—and it is equal in value to other groups in the wider community which reach out to the poor, marginalised, judged and oppressed.
- Our own parish priest is one who always connects with people of all ages and beliefs. He inspires them to find meaning in their faith and empowers and encourages them to live out Jesus’ message of love in action. He never makes himself to be the keeper of the faith or someone who judges those who fall outside the rules of the Church.

Negative experiences of the theme of love in action within our Catholic Church:—A number of our group have experienced priests in various parishes announcing to people during Mass that only those who are Catholic and in a ‘state of grace’ are allowed to come forward to receive Communion. This is a very exclusive message which not only misses the point about coming together in God’s love and then taking that love out to others, but alienates and judges people.

Discovering the work of Bishop Robert Barron, Peter Kreeft and Fr Robert Spitzer via the internet (mainly YouTube) was a tremendous blessing for me in my early teens. Even though I don't know them personally it's almost like through their work I had mentors. Going the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) in Sydney at the end of 2017 was a big turning point in my life. Prior to it, I was an isolated Catholic with no other Catholic friends. I was shocked to see that there are other young people proudly living their Catholic lives.

As leader of this group, I hear many stories of rejection. Some who are part of this group say, “God will reject me because I am HIV+”, others have been rejected by family and friends because of their sexuality or the virus they carry. For me it is important that we teach about a God who always accepts us "just the way we are".

My story: I was born and raised a Roman Catholic and even studied high school in an exclusive boys Catholic School run by Franciscan missionaries in the Philippines called [ - ]. I joined the Legion of Mary during my childhood days. I even studied in a Catholic university but cannot remember being taught about our catechism in any of these institutions. And this is from a country that is very Catholic. As a result, I had a lot of unanswered questions about my faith. I also felt unable to defend my faith adequately against the attacks of other religions and non-believers

as I did not even understand it myself. Here in Australia, the situation is even worse. I have witnessed my children go through the Catholic school education at [ - ] without learning more about the faith apart from what their mother (who, by the grace of God, is very diligent about teaching our children about the faith) has taught them at home. My daughter had to teach her teacher how to pray the Rosary as the teacher had no clue how to do it. There were about two to three school Masses a year and the children were not taught what happens at Mass or how to respond. Teachers, who are supposed to be the example of how to be prayerful, reverent and holy, are chatting while Mass is being offered, or are inattentive. It is with regret that I mention this as this indicates how distracted I have been at school Masses; however, I need to share the experience for you to understand what is occurring at grassroots level. The sacraments we attended were like a circus because the noise levels of the attendees were uncontrollable. We can hardly hear the celebrant amidst the din. How can children be expected to love Jesus or follow him if He is not introduced to them properly, to begin with? As a result, the little child's willingness to learn more about God is quelled by the very institution where he/she is meant to be acquiring it. If Catholic schools are willingly secularised, then what is the point of having them? Mindfulness techniques were taught rigorously and fully endorsed by the principal, but prayer, was just something you recited in the morning and not much else. The story of Jesus is like a fairy tale. Going to the few school Masses was just a chore, not just for the students but for the teachers. There is no significance.

We had looked at the Church as sacred but the Church has let us down. We must get through to our young people, especially post the Royal Commission.

This is an experience in response to the sixth dot point in Q1. As an international Movement, we are often struck by experiences we hear from other parts of the world. Two of us from [ - ] recently took part in an interesting initiative in [ - ] in the [ - ] to teach English to a group of 18 seminarians from South East Asia. [ - ] in [ - ] is the place where the Focolare Movement has a sizeable community of around 200 people. Some live there permanently and others spend a period of time there: there are families, young people, priests, religious and consecrated lay people. A number of Asian bishops have chosen to send their seminarians to spend a year there as a formation to 'a spirituality of communion'. This takes the form of formation with spiritual input, shared moments of prayer and reflection, as well as practical, hands-on activities working alongside others (e.g. in the carpentry workshop). The seminarians live a shared experience of faith but also of intercultural exchange in everyday life ... cooking together, gardening, English lessons, sport and leisure etc. The emphasis is on a lived holistic experience. Whilst this is offered as a resource to the Church in Asia by the Focolare Movement, there is no expectation for the seminarians to become members of the Focolare Movement. When we finished the intensive English course, we asked for their feedback. The strongest impression was that they had felt welcomed and understood; and in this first month they had found an atmosphere of family and trust which overcame language difficulties and cultural differences. This seemed to be a solid basis for each of them to embark on the year ahead. We also had the firm belief that the whole year in [ - ] would be immensely valuable for their future ministry.

As a young lay woman of faith, firm in my faith and grounded in the life of the Catholic Church, I live a life dedicated to prayer, to peace, to service, to youth, to Jesus Christ and His Church, and to

love. I am constantly distressed and appalled by what I hear and read from fellow young Catholics especially in the lead up to this Plenary Process (here I refer to Youth Speak discussions on Facebook). I am a young woman who also identifies as LGBTI+ and have been silently suffering for years without a voice. I put my faith in Christ to be my strength. Yet I cannot put my faith or trust in people (lay people and leaders) of the Australian Catholic Church. I would hope my Church could be a place that I feel safe, to trust that I will not be asked to be silent about my identity (as I already have). I will continue to stand by young people who are struggling and trying to find a place to belong in this Church, but I am one of few. We need to know we are accepted and safe. Note: I would be more than happy for this to be published with my name, however I do not feel protected enough to do so. I continue to pray that things change.

I was raised Anglican. It was my experience of Catholic high school (at [ - ] College) that convinced me to explore the Catholic Church. When I started attending Catholic parishes I felt unwelcomed and alone. I was even told by one priest that "This is not your parish" because I lived outside of the parish boundaries (I never did find the map). Thankfully on my last try, after resolving never to go into another Catholic Church, but being convinced to by a co-worker, I was greeted by a wonderful community. A man with whom I am still friends lent over during the greeting of peace and said "You're new, let me introduce you to everyone". He was Jesus to me.

I have learnt and I am learning my faith through my parents, youth groups at [ - ] church at [ - ] and the [Marian movement]/St [ - ]'s Youth Group in [ - ]. Our activities include praying the Rosary, playing together, and learning about our faith. [Marian movement] includes praise and worship and is supported by religious sisters. [Youth Group], on the other hand, are split into two age groups. I belong to the high school group, where I learn about our faith in a more detailed way. [Marian movement] is the same in terms of the catechism we learn, thanks to our leaders, who are very knowledgeable. I would be nice if every parish/ school would have something like this available to kids. Another thing that I experienced is the Religious Education in my school. We are taught about Jesus' life, the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Virtues, the Rosary and the parables. The way that this is taught is like any other subject, 'listen, do the activity and remember.' Unfortunately, this method doesn't work. Most of my classmates in year 4 and up find R.E. boring and unimportant. They don't like going to Mass because they say that it is boring. It has come to a point that majority of my classmates openly say that they don't care about God and some of them even say that they don't believe in God.

When I was 14 and at a Marist Brothers school in country [ - ], there was a brother who did not usually take Religion classes. Perhaps he was not trusted. One day a boy made a derogatory remark about Jews in a class he was taking, and the brother simply said, "Just remember that Jesus, Mary and Joseph were Jews." I want to acknowledge the beautiful ideas about married love that Archbishop [ - ] gave to Catholics of [ - ]. My wife and I still treasure them after 57 years of marriage.

Priests focus too much on administration—there should be more pastoral work and more home Masses. We need to demonstrate our faith through witness. We are not an exclusive club.

My husband was groomed and abused by Fr [ - ]. He was a young boy and he was trapped into a web of shame and lies well into his 20's and finally disclosed the abuse when about 45. His life, my

life and the lives of our three daughters have been devastated in many ways. My faith is shattered, not in Christianity, but in the Catholic Church.

My experience of our Church is rooted in my experience at a parish level, and I have been very fortunate to have always belonged to parishes with wonderful priests. What happens higher up in the Church hierarchy doesn't interest me, even at the diocese level. The biggest milestones in my life have based around the culture of the Church—my baptism, my other sacraments as a child, my wedding, my own children's sacraments, the death of my beloved father, prayer during my mother's ill health. Now in middle age I have increasingly more time to give back to my community of faith. In recent years I am identifying more as a Christian than as a Catholic, and believe that our Church leadership needs to go back to what Jesus taught us. Just as Jesus told the money lenders and traders to leave the temple, I believe he would also ask our Church leaders to leave.

I am a practicing Catholic who belongs to a beautiful parish community. But I have still felt extremely isolated within my faith community. There was a point where I was struggling (being at home with two young kids) and there was nothing my parish could do support me. And there are many Parishes that can't. I feel that Church's need to be places where everyone can find a place where they fit. At the moment this is impossible with the current structures in place but with some reshuffling, young people, mothers, the elderly, families, men, women can have a place where they truly belong within the Catholic Church.

As a "cradle Catholic" active in the life of the Church, both professionally and personally, I see my faith as continuing to evolve. We need to respond to our faith needs creatively. The most powerful experience of the sacrament of reconciliation is through celebration of the Third Rite when the whole faith community seeks reconciliation.

My journey has been beautiful thanks to my strict Catholic upbringing overseas. I ensure my grown children follow the same path and do not fall prey to the expectations of society. This has been challenging at times in a very liberal society where their peers do not even attend Sunday Mass. In my life I have had many occasions where it was the pure love of God that saved me or a member of my family. Circumstances such as miraculous cures from illnesses, having been saved from a lunatic who was following my car to shoot me, near misses from 2 bomb blasts overseas, miraculous saving from a near divorce, change in jobs, conversion of an immediate family member from a sinful way of life and the miraculous test results that came clean even though all the symptoms pointed to a dangerous disease are a few significant events that I can only attribute to the Mercy of God. I noticed that every time I strayed slightly into the materialistic world without giving the Lord the prominence He deserved in my life, another trial was thrown my way. They were all bitter but inevitably helped me grow deeper in faith and my love for the Saviour. I attribute every blessing and every success in my life to God

I have recently been confirmed in the Catholic Church at the age of 62. I have had a long association with my local parish of [ - ] through my wife, who is a strong, practicing Catholic. I saw good, positive things being done in this local community. I gained insights to the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church through my wife, the local community and especially our priest. I saw people doing good for others, acting as Jesus taught us to do. I saw people living within the

<p>positive community of the Church, the parish. The recent action of the Church, highlighted in the Royal Commission and the press, are appalling and shocking. The Church hierarchy has let this parish down so dreadfully. How could the dreadful decisions that were made be made by men of faith. Within that context I hope to continue to develop my faith, continue to strive to be a better person and support the Catholic Community that I am part of. This involves ensuring the Catholic Church changes, changing positively to redress the wrongs of the past and putting in place the changes necessary to take the Church forward to a bright positive future.</p>
<p>I converted to Catholicism from the Reformed Church for one reason: I believed, and still believe, that what the Church teaches is true and that the truth She teaches represents the fullness of truth that no other denomination possesses. I converted at a time when we had a Pope who was unafraid to say this.</p>
<p>I grew up in a great Catholic community. The Church and all its members were proud and respected in the community. The good works of the local faith community were acknowledged and appreciated.</p>
<p>I am blessed to work in parish communities and am grateful to be able to reach out to others, to witness the generosity of self of many wonderful priests and people.</p>
<p>I have personal experience in Africa with my not-for-profit where we assist schools with sustainable projects you can see the hope that is developed in the children's life. Hope that the world will be better will and always motivates humanity to move forward. Having moved from India, I found my Church to be a strong pillar for my everyday life. The various feast days and regular Sunday Church Masses gives me an opportunity to interact with people of my faith and share the hope, faith and love I have experienced with them. The clerical abuse catastrophe and the complete lack of Church leadership. The disunity of the Australian episcopal conference. The lack of Australian priests and the stop-gap solutions of priests from overseas most of whom are doing a reasonable job. The mediocre quality of Australian bishops. Trust in the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>Some European Catholic Churches, very discreetly, provide shawls for women receiving Communion to cover their shoulders. In the parish we belong, [ - ], there is an abundance of groups which one can join and increase their faith.</p>
<p>Experiences and stories of this theme above • We feel as though women are treated as second class citizens in the Church, but we are the labourers who get the work done. • Recently in our parish when the parish priest had an extended absence due to illness it was the women in leadership on the parish team and women in the parish community who stepped up to run and continue the valuable works of our parish. • Not only were the women of the parish capable of managing our busy parish administratively but really were able to offer something valuable in the spirituality and the mission of our parish. The only thing that they could not do that a priest could do was celebrate the Eucharist. They could and did do everything else from liturgies to pastoral care to leading the parish for three months in the absence of any priest.</p>
<p>I have a lifetime of faith in God, experiences, numerous personal ones. This one stands out. It is Advent. The Advent candles are lit. A 16-year-old girl is reading. She is undergoing chemo. I looked up at the crucifix above the altar and said a fervent prayer for this girl as I'm sure many at Mass</p>

also prayed for her. Soon after the Advent candle on her left went out. Her father got up and relit the candle. The young girl recovered to be well and healthy. I believe the Lord came down and touched her on the shoulder that day. My faith is real. the Lord is there for all of us. He comes to my rescue time and time again. I thank Him every day for being with me.

I came late to my faith (baptised at age 9, confirmed at age 27). I didn't attend Catholic schools. Despite this, I have had a very strong faith. However, the last few years, I have been struggling with the institutional Church. There is a chasm between the hierarchy and Jesus' teachings—not in word, but in action and appearance. Sexually abused myself (not by clergy), I live with the ramifications of this abuse of innocence and trust. How this issue (on all levels—not believing, silencing, disregarding, blaming the victim), has been dealt with within the Church (again on all levels—the parish, archdiocese, Rome) is as abhorrent as the abuse itself. Unless the factors, contributing to this behaviour, are addressed, the Church will remain fractured and runs the risk of being seen as hypocritical and irrelevant.

I always feel that much better when I am able to help someone who may not be as fortunate as myself.

I was fortunate to be raised in a practicing family, however we still rejected and rebelled against the strictness of our upbringing in our faith but fortunately we got to develop and understand our faith better as we grew up owing to the nuns and teachers who interested us and helped us. We were helped by retreats and special speakers would be called in to give us spiritual motivation. Another experience to give context to my response is recently I had a young 25-year-old girl visiting me from Croatia, educated and attractive, so I thought I would ask her what she would like to see happening in our Church. Her answer was surprising to me. She said when she goes to Church, she does not like to hear politics or other stories but likes to know what the Gospel was all about and have an explanation so she could know the Bible. No doubt a mini-version of learning the Bible but at least she was honest.

As a migrant to this country I am most sad to say that my biggest disappointment in migrating to Australia is the faith of the Church in Australia. Our Catholic faith is so rich and beautiful but we are not effectively mirroring this to our faithful. The Church in Australia at the moment is made of mainly small pockets of faithful while the rest (the majority) are getting more information about the faith from the secular press than from the Church. It could be that in the past too much reliance on the clergy and religious to educate the next generation has left the current generation in a difficult situation, as they themselves do not have enough formation and do not have enough knowledge of the faith to pass on to the children and/or grand-children. With the current shortage of vocations, families need to take more ownership in their own faith education so as to be able to be effective agents in the transmission of the faith to the younger ones. Having lived here for more than 25 years, I have found that the Catholic Church in Australia is out of touch with its faithful. My first impression when I went to Mass in Australia was how lacklustre celebration of the Mass was. This is also reflected generally in the faithful who are not at all enthusiastic about their faith. It is no surprise that the younger generation have picked up on this and they are also not at all interested in the faith. We need to look at where we are lacking in sharing our faith as it appears that our "product" is not attractive and deemed out of touch with the needs of the people, especially the young. We need to retrospectively look at what education resources we

have been using, brainstorm where we are lacking so that we can address and improve this situation. If we do nothing, at the rate we are going, I believe that in 15-20 years, many of our parish Churches will be listed for sale in the real estate websites.

The current state of the Church in Australia is out of touch with the needs of the people, especially the young, who generally view the Church and its organisation as not relevant and not addressing their spiritual needs. We need to listen to our young and engage with them to rectify this situation. At the moment the core faithful in most parishes are from the older demographic with almost no young families. We see many young families in our parish school but these families are largely disconnected from the parish and the practice of the faith. We need to look at ourselves and ask why they are not drawn to seek to find out more about who is Jesus and to practice their faith in their daily lives as a community of believers in Church, in the parish. Is what we are offering these young families not relevant to their daily lives and challenges? Are we so out of touch with them that they cannot relate to us anymore? We should be brave enough to look inwards and honestly find where we are lacking in bringing Jesus to them.

I am a young lay woman in a position of Religious Leadership in a Catholic secondary college. I love my job and love being a witness of faith to my students and staff in real and spiritual ways. I enjoy making the scripture accessible, ritual engaging, music inspiring, and community life-giving. It is so disparaging for me in my role as an educator who is passionate about my faith, is active in my parish and is enthusiastic about passing on my love of Jesus with students, to be faced with a Catholic culture that is increasingly reflecting an almost Pre-Vatican II style of religion. Please note: I personally have an amazing parish priest, but we are blessed. I attended a Catholic primary and secondary school and engaged in my faith mainly through my participation in the school choir. I still love singing Catholic and Christian music, whether it is liturgical or praise and worship. I lead my local parish music ministry and I cannot explain the joy that it brings to see and hear, not only the choir but, everyone in the Church connecting to the parts of the Mass through the spirit of music. I value and respect the place of rich and symbolic ritual, I am a lifelong learner who studies theology, Church history and religious studies, and I never take for granted that for many of my students our school is Church for them. I am a 21st century Catholic woman, with a strong understanding of my strengths and abilities, but also sadly aware of the limitations that face me as a woman within the leadership of the Church (even in the Education sector). I am not the perfect Catholic, especially not by conservative expectations, but I am a real person who struggles with the issues of everyday, and I try to do my best to contribute to society in a positive and meaningful way. I have participated in one Plenary Listening session (with many people of a conservative and frightful nature), and have led 6 Plenary Sessions with staff, students and parents. I have had the honour of being a witness to the best of our Church, and the uncomfortable opportunity of being the witness to the worst, however with every experience I have grown in my understanding of how the spirit moves different people and how each story expressed presents a truth to be learned. The Lord is my light, and my salvation. I just wish that we were a Church that allowed for all to join in Communion with us. I understand and respect the need for rules and order, but those rules and order need to evolve with the needs of the people. Thank you for being brave and reaching out to the country. We need hope for a fruitful future and if the bishops can be the Christ-like example we so desperately need, and desist from a boy's club

mentality, I know that we will be ok. There is a time to be a Peter, a time to be a Paul, but there is always time to be Jesus. God Bless.

I realise that one of my cousins is a priest in [a rural area] and I know of the lonely life he endured as a solitary priest in many of the towns with no support or family close to him. Also I know of a few priests who turned to drink because of this loneliness.

After Vatican Two, I liked the priest facing the congregation and the Mass said in English. It gave me a wonderful sense of participating in the Eucharist. I felt that my mind and body and soul were engaged.

Married to a divorced woman with four kids, I had the good fortune to feel an 'outcast' from the Church and, with my Catholic wife, had to 'go it alone'. I had to think out the teachings of Jesus and what He really stood for, and do a lot of praying as a branded sinner—I can tell you God has been so good to me—a bit like the blind man kicked out of the synagogue by the officials, Jesus sought me out. I learned 'poverty of spirit' and now quite often experience the love of my God for me and all my fellow humans. Jesus was right, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for the Kingdom of heaven is theirs now'.

I also submitted a separate response as part of a Small Christian Community group of 8. We have met monthly in a rotating home hosting for over 10 years with a look at the next Sunday's Mass readings; sometimes special texts followed by light food etc. to talk about ourselves and our activities, keeping all confidential within an open respectful discussion.

Various spiritual luminous experiences over 40 years.

I grew up largely isolated from parish life (church too far away and no car). My parents were both born Catholics and educated us in the faith and were true Christian role models in the way they lived their faith. In the 1960's and early 70's I became deeply concerned about the way we were treating the environment. It certainly was not on the Church radar at this time. I always felt on the edges of parish life as though I did not belong. I was educated, intelligent but poor. (even though I had children) I reared four children in the suburbs of [ - ]. They all received an excellent education in parish and regional schools and we took them to Mass every Sunday until they got their drivers licences and could drive themselves. They now only occasionally come at Christmas and Easter. My adult grandchildren (early 20's) are even less connected to the Church. My husband and I attend Mass nearly daily and are involved in the life of our parishes. (We attend different parishes) I have also moved beyond the parish and am involved in interreligious faith and centering prayer. I am truly concerned about the future of the Church. I am grateful for the wonderful friends, parishioners, priests, religious and bishops that I have met. I am grateful for the scholarship found within our ranks and the people who work tirelessly for others. I doubt that we have reached a turning point. The Church will probably decay even further in my lifetime. I do not see any signs of a shift. I hope and pray that the plenary meetings will bear fruit but I see no indication as yet. However it is in God's hands as we say. I am grateful that the bishops are giving it a go though.

I am a cradle Catholic. Born into a Catholic family who never missed a Sunday Mass. My parents in their 80's will drive for miles on their camping holidays to ensure that they get to Mass. I was happy to go along each week but I can't say that I had the personal relationship with God that I

have now. During my 20s and 30s, I was so busy trying to raise my children and fight off the never-ending tiredness that went with this that I really didn't give God much thought. I managed to get to church several times a year but certainly not every week (perhaps this was more out of a sense of obligation than a feeling of need or want on my part). Then in my mid-40s, my life was going very well and I remember driving down the road thinking how grateful I was and I expressed this gratitude to God. I was so grateful that I asked God if there was anything I could do in return. Be careful what you wish for!! After this I began writing poetry with a Christian theme and had a voracious appetite for anything to do with God/Jesus. I did a few short courses in Christian themes and then enrolled in [theological university] and studied part time for 8 years achieving a bachelor of theology and a grad dip spirituality. I loved every minute of my study and now I am working in [ - ] parish as Faith Development Coordinator. I suppose upon reflection I am able to see that the relationship that I have with God now is nothing like what I had when I was younger and I guess things change with age and experiences. I love having "God conversations" with people and for some amazing reason, I always seem to attract people who want to talk about God. At parties, weddings etc. my husband jokes that I am like a magnet to nonbelievers and explorers of religion who really just want to learn more. I feel that there are many people who are curious about God but just don't know where to start. I love these chats and am very happy to explain what I do and why I do it.

I love the Jesus story and lived it. However, I was sickened at Funeral Masses when Father [ - ], our then parish priest always said at a Funerals "Catholics only for Communion". What a disgrace, utterly deplorable. I went and told him, how dare you represent Jesus, He would have said, "come all and receive my comfort in your hearts". Father [ - ] had his racing form guide open, and was not in the slightest bit interested in all the mourners whom he had just insulted. A more recent disgusting comment was when the Vietnamese parish priest spent money on replacing a beautiful wooden altar, with a Marble altar because he said he felt "more Holy when celebrating Mass at a Marble altar". What a disgraceful insult to prior priests who celebrated Mass at the wooden altar, and to us who attended. We are not in Rome where marble abounds—It's all about the priest and how he feels???? My father and mother in 1959 were denied Holy Communion at their 12-year-old daughters funeral, by Father [ - ], at [ - ] Church, [ - ]. My parents were divorced and remarried outside the Church, but attended Mass every Sunday, hanging on to their love of Jesus. What deplorable behaviour, unfeeling, and cruel when my parents knelt at the communion rails waiting to receive Jesus, and Father [ - ] bypassed them. What would Jesus have done had He stood beside the priest and looked into the grief-stricken eyes of my parents, who were divorced. I do not believe Jesus would have permitted this, He would have wanted my parents to be comforted by receiving Communion. I have carried with me a concern I have about my sister who was deaf and dumb, attending a Catholic boarding school here in [ - ]. She died aged 12, in 1959. I have reason to believe she may have been sexually interfered with by a particular nun and or visiting seminarians and or sailors from a nearby naval base. This information was relayed to me by an adult who as a child was a boarder at the same school. She described the nun as "the Queen of lesbians". I too was at a boarding school in [ - ] and was sexually abused by a nun, on several occasions being touched on the breasts by her, while we were in the sacristy. I was 13 years old. This nun also knew my sister, as she was at the same school. These incidences have left me

saddened and disillusioned, about the Church that I so loved; However, I have engaged with good priests and nuns, but this does not lessen the feeling of betrayal that I have carried for 60 years.

- I have been greatly saddened to see Catholic women who are so desirous of ministry that they must leave the Church in order to seek ordination (successfully) in other faiths.
- I have experienced the ministry of married Protestant ministers when our priests, celibate so they can give all to the Church, were too busy to come.
- I have had a parish priest in anger rip from my hands the parish bulletin I had printed and take it out to the incinerator and burn it then publicly call me, Secretary of the Parish Council, a liar.
- I have also benefited from the knowledge, wisdom and support of a number of wonderful priests during my life.
- I also experienced a wonderful education with full support from the many talented and loving school [ - ].

Powerful spiritual luminous experiences over last 40 years.

I have been fortunate to come to this country and say that my faith has flourished here and have had great experiences and growth. I have two prayer groups that are run from our home, a mother group every Tuesday morning and a Friday group once a month, these have been a great consolation to all involved when we need to be clear on our teachings. Our parish is running the Jeff Cavins' Bible study on Galatians at the moment and has run Dr Edward Sri on the Mass. This is nourishing. But I get so saddened when we hear the media run to so called Catholics and some priests who knock our Church for all the wrong reasons. I have faith in our Church and know that God is with us, but I know a lot of good Catholics who let fear take over when they think these people will change what we have held as truths for two thousand years. Unfortunately, our schools have let us down and we have people who run Catholic organisations who do not practice their faith and they have influenced the running of schools etc. This is a painful time for all us Catholics and we need our leadership to make a stand for truth and morals. Our culture is a culture of death but we must stand firm and know who our enemy is. There are so many lies that our youth are being handed from social media and they need to see our Church stand strong against the tide of rebellion and deceit. May God bless you all.

Sharing our story. We come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds but are teachers in a Catholic school. Some of us have been educated in Catholic primary and secondary schools whilst others have experienced schooling in the independent and government education system. All teachers teaching religion in our school have either completed or working towards religious education qualifications whilst others have undergone accreditation studies to teach in a Catholic school. One of the teachers comes from a very religious background and has several aunts, uncles and cousins who are nuns, brothers and priests. This person has worked with many religious groups, has had considerable experience on parish education boards and other committees and has been involved in Catechetical programs as well. Over the years this person has felt at times that some women in parish life have not been given leadership roles or given due credit for their initiatives or consulted on matters that are relevant to them whereas structures in the workplace are transparent and professional regardless of gender. This person although disheartened and disappointed with some of the recent scandals in the Church is very concerned about the youth and wants to continue teaching in a Catholic setting which is Church for so many today. This

person is keen to work with the youth towards building a Church for the future includes active participation of the laity plus support for the clergy and religious brothers and sisters.

I have been so blessed because I grew up knowing that God loves and delights in me and that the Holy Mother Church truly loves young people and wants what is best for them. She has wisdom and the answers to all the questions that young people like myself ask all the time. Unfortunately, many young people do not know this. I knew this to be true because of some of the wonderful youth groups, gatherings and retreats I had the privilege of attending.

Life is a celebration that begins today and lasts forever. It starts when I discover that God loves me not as I ought to be, but just as I am. Despite my faults, weaknesses and problems, I am unique, valuable, and irreplaceable in the sight of God. I suppose if I stop and look at myself I can find a bit more about myself. The hidden individual who is locked in one's own self not able to get out, really out and be a free spirit, really free, like God meant me to be. "Lord you have never waited for me to become perfect before showing me the measure of your love, or commissioning me to serve you in the world. Dare I believe you are calling me to a new venture, pointing me to new beginnings in accepting myself as you created me. This is a task I cannot do alone; I need you as my guide. As I struggle to accept myself I will accept times of disappointment and frustration, opposition and rejection and not lose heart. Hopefully I will be accepted just as I am, the person God created me to be. I would like to impart to people the very depths of themselves like I have found, down, under, or inside me, there is a real person who loves, laughs, hurts, gets upset, yet is still a person, a person of real value, a human being who is that person "Me". As I investigated the inner and outer of self, and discovered the harmony of one's self and found Jesus. If I explain how I did it my way, maybe people will find their own way. I would like people to see as I see them as unique, loving persons who were created by the same loving Jesus who created all of us, to be themselves, full of love, caring, who have doubts about this and that, this uniqueness of themselves, which may have been left out of their lives because we were not permitted to be people of pride. We are allowed to be proud of ourselves because God made all things good and beautiful. "Sometimes when I have something to tell you, I hesitate and wonder—just how much of me and my feelings should I allow to be seen, and how will you react to my words". Copyright [-].

Having been born into the Catholic faith I left the Church at 20 years old in the 70's because I was disillusioned by the hypocrisy I witnessed. At 30 years old, in the mid 80's, during a very dark time in my life, when the past abuse in my very early years surfaced, I encountered Jesus. He intervened when I called out to Him in desperation, with a love I had never experienced. I now have a personal, real relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit has been my help over the past 31 years. He has been with me guiding, consoling and encouraging me to work through the past trauma and come into His peace and joy, always in His love. Never abandoned. It took me 2 years after my first encounter with the Holy Spirit to find Catholic Charismatic Renewal. At my first meeting I knew I was home. The Holy Spirit which was now my companion had led me to a place where others had also encountered God's Spirit in a similar way. It took me years to piece together the fact that I had been baptized in His Spirit, alone, on an occasion at the back of my local Church with His fire as I stood for some time being filled with a heat that just kept coming. I

left that place loving everyone with a love that has not diminished over 31 years for all mankind, His love. It's time for the Church's to call out for help from the Holy Spirit with all her heart.

I know Australian Catholicism comes in many flavours. My parents migrated from Poland, and it was the Catholic Church where they felt a sense of belonging and community. Sadly, in the local "English" Church they felt outsiders and in response increasingly embraced the Polish Catholic community and Polish chapel. The Blessed Sacrament Community and my theological studies at [ - ] shaped me and again made me appreciate the many flavours of being a Catholic in Australia. A genuine opening and flowering of spirit. Sadly, many recent Asian priests have the opposite effect—hard to understand and a loyalty to conforming to the lowest common denominator. I think they are afraid of people of intellect (women especially).

I find my beliefs are very different to my parents' and this makes me a bit sad as they were very devout Catholics and had a real belief and trust in the Catholic Church that I don't have any more. This does not mean I don't still believe wholehearted in the teaching of Jesus ...

My whole life has been the Catholic Church and I am excited that we are engaging in dialogue. In the past, I was not allowed to question and was given a narrow perspective of the Bible messages. Now I see that we are open to discuss and discern our own thoughts and feelings on scripture. I also am inspired by the wonderful role models in the Church who do wonderful things. Unfortunately, they are not seen in the Church to be worthy of position of leadership - Social justice Principles are an important aspect of who we are and how we can make a difference. We would like to see the Church living up to these and show integrity - stop the cover up.

Plenary Response: [ - ] School, [ - ] Preamble: [ - ] Catholic primary school, is one of three, in the large parish of [ - ] on the [ - ], in the [ - ] Archdiocese, [ - ]. The Principal met with several groups to discuss the school's response to the Plenary Council in December 2018. Staff, parents and senior students were actively engaged in the conversations and provided valuable insights that initiated action within the school for 2019. The raw data attachment are the recorded group responses to the questions discussed. "What is God Asking of Us?" "Who Are We As Church?" We want to be part of a welcoming and inclusive community, that is non-judgemental, respects everyone as equals and is realistic about the demands of modern life. We see a prophetic role for us to be informed and speak out about social issues, injustice, environmental concerns and how we can make a difference by taking action. The style and setting for our gatherings and worship is important. The building is not important but the ceremony and service are, actively involving everyone with the priest, choir and ministers. We want to be uplifted by the word of God, with music and prayer that is attuned and relevant to our lives. "What Changes for the Future?" We need to deepen our personal and communal faith by developing an understanding of the scriptures, discerning the message in the myths and stories. We want to share our faith with others and to make it relevant and accessible to the young. Celebrate the work of 'Vinnies' and outreach to those in need in our local area... We need to rethink our liturgical celebrations to be more flexible, varied, using contemporary music and encourage participation by the young to become leaders in prayer and worship. Remove mandatory celibacy and allow mature married and women to be leaders in the Church...

Our Hope for the Plenary Council: We valued the opportunity to gather, reflect, listen and speak from our hearts to share our concerns for the Church. We also have gained valuable feedback for

the future directions for our parish and schools under the leadership of our parish priest, principals and stewardship team. This is a real opportunity for the Australian Church to adopt a process of open transparency in the deliberations and decision-making for our future.

I have been extremely blessed by my faith in Jesus and my work in Church. My faith journey has had many stages and always been nurtured in my parish community. Not always by my parish priests but certainly the faithful people around me. I was challenged and deepened in my faith by my education at the [ - ] Institute in [ - ]. It was there that I discovered so much that had been denied me in my school and parish education. It answered so many questions for me and tied up so many loose ends of the faith. With this knowledge I have been able to work in secondary schools, my parish and now in a wonderful program for children called the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd or Atrium Program. Our parishes, faithful and not so faithful need solid teaching in the who is the person, Jesus Christ, together with the how and why of the practice of our faith. If we can enlighten people to the beauty of our faith practice and how it continues to connect us to those who have gone for us and our lives today, we will build a stronger and more united Church community.

Plenary Response: [ - ] School, [ - ] Preamble [ - ] Catholic primary school, is one of three, in the large parish of [ - ], in the [ - ] Archdiocese, [ - ]. The Principal met with several groups to discuss the school's response to the Plenary Council in February 2019. Staff and senior students were actively engaged in the conversations and provided valuable insights. "What is God Asking of Us at This Time in Australia?" We are concerned with the declining numbers at Church attendance and as Catholic educators wonder why people enrol students at our schools but do not worship together. How do we build open and supportive communities where people are welcomed and fully accepted and treated equally is a key concern? We seek a Church that is relevant to our modern lives: • supporting us to be 'brave' in our faith journey during this time of crisis, • addressing clerical abuse and giving justice to victims making compensation, \* focusing on the 'common good' and working for change in Church and society, • removing the roadblocks to faith and commitment, being present and open to all. • enabling us to be agents of change making the message of the gospel understood and alive. \* listening to the concerns of young people about care of the planet, • discerning models for sound leadership in parish and schools.

Our Hope for the Plenary Council: We valued the opportunity to gather, reflect, listen and speak from our hearts to share our concerns for the Church. We also have gained valuable feedback for the future directions for our parish and schools under the leadership of our parish priest, principals and stewardship team. This is a real opportunity for the Australian Church to adopt a process of open transparency in the deliberations and decision-making for our future.

My faith journey has not been an easy one. In Confession, many years ago, I was given a choice - my Church or my sexuality. My sexuality is not a choice and therefore I had to leave the Church which I loved. For the following thirty years or so, I didn't take Communion, but I attended Mass, even daily if possible, as well as major Feast days. My life changed when I met a friend who invited me to come to the Russian Catholic Church. I went one Sunday and I was immediately impressed with the prayerfulness of the whole ceremony, from the singing, to the processions, to the use of incense and the icons all over the Church. It was so beautiful—and it took me back to my childhood. I'm glad have remained a congregant of [ - ] Russian Catholic Church, [ - ].

Plenary Response: [ - ] School, [ - ] Preamble: [ - ] Catholic primary school, is one of three, in the large parish of [ - ] on the [ - ], in the [ - ] Archdiocese, [ - ]. The Principal surveyed students from Year 3- 6s to make the school's response to the Plenary Council in February 2019. The raw data attachment are the recorded group responses to the questions discussed. "What do you think God is Asking of Us in Australia at This Time?" The children responded that the Church be a 'happy, safe, kind, caring, helpful and inclusive place'. They also highlighted the need for welcoming and acceptance of all as Jesus does, being loving and compassionate to our friends. Mention was made of 'everyone is welcome to the church even if you are not Catholic' suggesting there is a sense of difference being noticed by the children.

Our Hope for the Plenary Council: We valued the opportunity to gather, reflect, listen and speak from our hearts to share our concerns for the Church. We also have gained valuable feedback for the future directions for our parish and schools under the leadership of our parish priest, principals and stewardship team. This is a real opportunity for the Australian Church to adopt a process of open transparency in the deliberations and decision-making for our future.

The experience of reading *Le Milieu Divin* in my early life. Since then, enjoying women writers like Elizabeth Johnson, Ilia Delio, Sandra Schneiders, Judy Cannato, Anne Hillman, Australians Mary Coloe and Elaine Wainright and having Dorothy Lee as lecturer at [ - ]. Also belonging to a small ecology group for many years.

Yes. My experience is of being part of a group of women who gather monthly and pray our Joy of the Gospel shared prayer in the style of *Lectio Divina*. We contemplate a gospel passage (frequently a narrative or parable involving women) repeat the words where the Spirit seems to be nudging us. The love, warmth and appreciation of each other empowers us to be missionary disciples. As paragraph 120 begins in *Evangelii Gaudium*, *The Joy of the Gospel*, "In virtue of their baptism all the members of the People of God have become Missionary Disciples." The Samaritan woman (John 1-41) became a missionary disciple immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans come to believe in him..."because of the woman's testimony". I experienced illness and surgery last year, the love and support received from this little community was just beautiful, overwhelming really and certainly the best healing.

During my 35-year career as a secondary school teacher, I completed a Masters of Religious Education and a Graduate Diploma in Religious Education at the Australian Catholic University. I taught Religious Education from Years 7-12 and was Director of Mission at [ - ] College, [ - ] (2004-2008) and [ - ] College, [ - ] (2009-2016). As [the latter] College was a canonically administrated school, I worked with many parish priests in my role as Director of Mission. Some of the priests were helpful and interested in assisting secondary schools but unfortunately such priests were few and far between. Some were fragile due to poor health, some were new to their parishes and struggling to connect with their parish and a few had unusual personalities and did not stay for long. Occasionally I would attend Sunday Masses at the ten parishes connected to [this] College in order to learn more about my students' faith lives. I was disappointed in the lack of engagement the priests had with their parishioners. There was often an air of aloofness between the priest and the parishioners. I was also Director of Mission at [the first school] in [ - ] from 2004-2008 where [ - ] church was a short walk from the school. However, Fr [ - ] was always difficult to contact, the

church was locked and the parish House was unattended during the day. I understand he may have been involved with the local Vietnamese community but many non-Vietnamese parishioners within [ - ] parish had left because they felt excluded. The parish of [ - ] lacked life. When we were able to use the Church for Mass we would need to engage another priest to preside. Fr [ - ] (who has sadly passed away since then) often obliged us in presiding at special school Masses. Corpus Christi seminary is keen to promote the number of seminarians training at the College but it is obvious that there will not be enough priests for future years. The new priests that are coming out of the seminaries are also of concern. Many have only recently arrived in Australia and have difficulty connecting with the Australian culture. Some of the young men seem limited in their life experience and are socially awkward. I encountered this at [the latter] College where we accepted third year seminarians for half a day, once a week for their Pastoral Practice. Some of the seminarians from [ - ] found it difficult to engage in conversations with students and even with teachers. Some had no idea of our Catholic school system because they had grown up in another country. Sadly some gave me a sense that they were in a position of privilege above the work of a teacher and were keen to get back to Corpus Christi so that they would not miss lunch! A few showed authentic interest in the Religious Education classes and sought to be involved in activities.

Having grown up in the Faith yet affected by the spirit of the world the living of the faith was not consistent. It was an encounter with a group of Christians at University along with the continued witness of my parents that led me to a reassessment of the Faith. It led me to learn more of the beauty of our Catholic faith, the revelation of God, and to try to be more faithful to the call of Our Lord. The more I learnt and understood, the more I desired to bring it to others.

For me my experiences in pilgrimages overseas has greatly helped shape my faith (e.g. World Youth Day, walking the Camino, visiting Marian shrines or the Holy Land). Some of these activities are something I think all Catholics, especially those of us here in Australia so far away from Europe, should experience.

I am a child of Vatican II and my formation as a lay person was in the years immediately after the Council when a religious order began to form lay people to share its ministry of parish renewal. Lay people, young and middle-aged, worked alongside priests and religious sisters and brothers. I was encouraged to undertake theological studies along with many other lay Catholics. There was ecumenical outreach to other Christian denominations. The Holy Spirit was abroad and Catholics felt that they were agents of the Gospel message, not just recipients. I am fortunate to still belong to a parish community but it is a community much changed from the past. The liturgy is flat and lifeless—if it were not for the faith of those who attend Mass with me, overwhelmingly from migrant communities, I would be little inspired by the experience. Somewhere along the line, the vitality of the Council fell away because there was no fundamental change in the canon laws that prescribe parish and diocesan life. Parish councils were voluntary, not obligatory; a new parish priest could make any changes he liked to existing practices. Parishioners have no input into who their priests are and definitely not who their bishops will be. It seems like the universality of the Church, one of its great strengths, is also one of its great weaknesses. That universality needs to be expressed through diversity not conformity.

The experience of a most joyful and uplifting Mass where the celebrant was from Africa. He embraced the whole congregation and made them part of the celebration. It reminded her of Vatican 2.

I am a member of a fabulous parish. Some years ago now (2011 in fact), my husband was having surgery for prostate cancer. You can imagine just how scared I was. I was sitting in my daughter's apartment on the 24th floor in [ - ] Street. I was trying to pray, but I just couldn't put the words together. I was in that unit by myself (I thought), when I felt a hand on my shoulder. Some 'body' told me I didn't need to pray because so many others were praying for us. When I was diagnosed with breast cancer the next year, I felt very comforted by the prayers of my fellow parishioners. We are both well now! My fellow parishioners' prayers are powerful.

When I gave birth to my first child in 1997 at the age of 39, a song came to me ... 'If only George Pell was a woman, what a different world it would be". This shocked me ... but I knew why ... as an artist I saw that in giving birth, I had to say "Yes" and allow life's power to move through me. It was an extra-ordinary experience and I saw that I was a vessel of life's desire and force to move forward. I felt that at my very deepest level I was trusting and saying "Yes" to life's movement. I feel our Church needs to be like a woman and trust that God desires to give birth to a new Australian Church and that we should not be frightened of this. We need to be burnt back to our essence and trust that the seeds of new life will be released among us and within this country.

I am so grateful to God for my faith, instilled in me by my loving parents. I am so grateful to my mother for teaching me to love the Mass. I am so grateful to our bishops for affording Catholics like myself, with an opportunity to kindly ask for more daily Masses to be afforded to those of us who have a strong desire to receive Our Lord daily. Thank you.

For over 25 years, as a lay Catholic, I have been hearing about the Church in Australia dealing with and failing to deal with cases of clerical sexual abuse. Reform and repentance have taken a very long time and are still not fully achieved. There is so much grief.

I have been involved with running and being a part of youth groups where we talked about scripture and explored our faith. We also had good people and priests around us who supported us. I've also been part of life in the spirit weekend which was amazing, a real experience of knowing Christ and the Spirit.

I identify myself as a gay man with lifelong physical and emotional attraction for members of my same sex. My Catholic family and schooling led me to the belief that there was no room for me in the Church, that I was intrinsically evil and some sort of lesser and corrupted human being. At the age of 67, I still struggle to see myself as a good human being, with no reason for deep shame and embarrassment about my sexuality. My Catholic legacy has left me feeling scared and broken, and unable to feel worthy of anyone's love. I do not feel welcomed in my Church. After withdrawing from the Church for the best part of 40 years, I re-joined a parish community some 6 years ago. It is a big struggle to keep up my participation in parish life. I do so with the aid of a handful of allies within my Church community.

I attended a youth group ran by a priest called Father [ - ]. He taught the faith in its entirety. He was inspirational and fascinating. In all my years at Catholic schools I was never taught these

things. I was taught a very watered-down religion; it was just about being a “good” person, and wasn’t specific to Catholicism. It was nice but not something that you would be prepared to make sacrifices for, or devote your life to.

Growing up in the 1930's and 1940's, we attended the local Catholic primary and secondary schools, played netball or tennis with the local Catholic club, and participated in social activities such as dances. When we entered the workforce it was secular—sometimes there was a lot of bias against a Catholic girl getting the position of employment. In the twenty-first century, life is completely different. We live in a much more secular society, with Sunday reduced to just another day of the weekend for sporting activities. The days of putting on the Sunday roast, going to Mass, and dishing it up when you come home are gone.

My experience of faith was the Eucharist which has shaped me to become a better Catholic particularly the Holy Mass and altar-serving, both of which has helped me to see the light of God and has helped me to discern my vocation better, the traditional liturgy particularly Ad Orientem Mass and Latin hymns during Mass and Holy Hour has also helped me to shape my faith for the better.

• John and Lyn Billings lived out their Sacrament of Marriage with devotion, dedication and respect for each other. Their example shone forth for the domestic Church. The following words of Dr John Billings illustrate the love and respect that grows between husband and wife when they are taught to use the Billings Ovulation Method®. During a trip to Africa in the late 1970s, John and Evelyn witnessed great hardships for rural women, many because of their husbands. “In the Billings’ view, their Ovulation Method offered the promise of a transformative effect as it required both partners to take responsibility for family planning and for the husband to understand his wife’s natural cycle. Describing such a case he encountered in Kenya, John wrote: The husband of one of the couples undergoing the teacher-training course told us that for many years he had behaved ‘like an animal’ towards his wife. He beat her frequently and had no concern for her at all. Then, more than a year ago, they had been given instruction together in the Ovulation Method and their relationship had undergone a remarkable change; he now felt strongly drawn to his wife in a new understanding of her and came to love her deeply. This particular individual, a tall, strong and well-educated African said that with the O.M. ‘something wonderful is happening in Kenya’.” This great transformation is possible anywhere ... “for God nothing is impossible”. • Research in Australia has shown the complete lack of knowledge of women about their fertility. One study concluded that most respondents had no (38.1%) or poor (47.9%) knowledge of fertility awareness. Hampton, K. and Mazza, D. (2015)“Fertility-awareness knowledge ... ” It is incredible to think that in the 21st Century 86% of women in Australia are not aware of their God-given gift of fertility. We, as teachers of fertility awareness are privileged to inform these women and men about the absolute essence of their being. Teachers of the Billings Ovulation Method® are consistently asked by the women they teach: “Why haven’t I been told this before?” • In a study to recognise whether knowledge of the Billings Ovulation Method® is efficacious in assisting couples to conceive the results showed significant benefits. For a total of 449 participants, complete data for 384 was available. Those achieving a pregnancy were 240. The average age of the women was 33 years (22 – 46 years) with 60 % of these couples childless after 15 months of trying to conceive. For the 240 who achieved conception, the average time from instruction to

conception was 4.7 months – 30% in the first month, 54% by the third month and 89% by the tenth month. At the time of the study’s publication, the known live birth rate was 70%, excluding 14 women who were still pregnant and 24 unknown. Marshall M, Corkill M. Barker, G & Turner, J. "Presentation at RANZCOG 2018" In the words of Dr Evelyn Billings, “This is knowledge of her body that every woman ought to have.”

I was brought up in a strong Catholic faith family, attending weekly Mass, primary school, secondary school even university was Catholic. Till today I still attend Mass and am strong in my Catholic faith. It was when I attended university that it struck me that there are so many different Christian denominations and I was very far removed from the diversity of faiths. During this time of questioning and understanding their religion, I still was drawn to my own Catholic faith; however it did bring to my attention how special other religions are and how similar they are too. I wondered why I was never taught about the other religions? Not to convert, but to appreciate, and not judge. Now I am a teacher, teaching at a Catholic school. I have 40% non-Catholics and I draw on their faith and make connections to the importance of all to respect all non-Catholics. Especially living in Australia, the diversity is so special and it was something I was never exposed to growing up.

I love my faith and I love the Eucharist, and I keep telling myself "My faith is not the Church", but I, like thousands of other Catholics are struggling. I feel so guilty for supporting an organisation which has destroyed so many people's lives and feel so ashamed to being a Catholic. My father had been abused as a child by the Christian Brothers, which I had only found out about it when he died 10 years ago. My sisters and I grew up thinking there was something wrong with us, that we were unlovable because our father didn't love us, when the reality is he wasn't capable of loving anyone.

I went to Catholic school for 13 years [ - ] Primary School in [ - ], and [ - ]). When I was 7, I told my teacher I didn’t believe in God. When I got older I was a very hardcore and annoying atheist, that kid in RE class always arguing with the teacher. At 16, I said in an RE class “I have nothing against personal belief, but I hate organised religion”. No teacher tried to help me or address my issues of belief. No teacher was able to answer the questions I had about the faith. I was allowed to do my Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation with all my teachers knowing my thoughts. None of them spoke to my parents. When I was 17, I met my now fiancé. He was the first practicing, faithful Catholic I had met under the age of 40 in my entire life. I was fascinated. I asked him lots of questions, he gave patient answers. I told him I couldn’t believe in a magical man in the sky. He told me not to worry, he couldn’t either. Finally one day it all just clicked. I realised Catholicism was it, and I’d wasted 10 years of my life. I was so thrilled to have finally come home, I told everyone I knew I had converted. My “Catholic” father told me I’d been brainwashed. My boyfriend at the time said the same. My friends at school decided they didn’t want to hang out with me anymore. Not a single person (outside of probably my mother) was happy for me. I felt nothing but hostility towards Catholicism in Catholic schools, and I was hurt and lost for my formative years because of it. This has to change.

- A member of the group has lived through the disappointment of Vatican II because it was not followed through. She was hopeful but the structures that stand in the way was stifling.
- A member of the group goes to Mass as an act of devotion. He is involved in the community and

helps people of all races, religion and cultures. He also works in a place where majority are women. This made him think that we should consider everyone to participate in Church. • Experience of a member who felt very unwelcome in a parish. He believes a parish should be welcoming to make people feel they belong and valued, also, making the parish irresistible to people who wants to join. • A member belongs to a big Catholic family. He feels fortunate to have had a good Catholic education which had a profound influence to him. He had good role models and this made him want to further understand the mystery of his faith. This experience motivates him in wanting to understand and learn more about people, especially those who are troubled. • A member shared his experience with the Vietnamese Catholic Church, which he believes is rooted back to culture and there is a big disconnect with the people. Because of this experience, he would like to see a process of continuous change in the Church. • A member shared her experience as a prison Chaplain where she saw young men engaged and transformed by their attendance at Mass services and liturgies. However, when they are released, they want to go to Mass and join a parish but they don't know how to do so and where to start. This makes the member think that parishes should have a welcome committee who can help men and women who have been incarcerated to be made welcome in the parish community.

Psalm 139: "13 You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders. You knew me through and through, 15 my being held no secrets from you, when I was being formed in secret, textured in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes could see my embryo. In your book all my days were inscribed, every one that was fixed is there." This was the psalm that my parents carried in their hearts and in mine that led me to be at peace with the creation of God that I have been made in relation to my sexuality being a same sex attracted man and I pray that many of the Church may find that peace and solace in the compassionate heart of Jesus. Born baptised and raised Catholic, I have been on an epic journey of faith and culture within the Catholic Church which I love deeply, coming from Sri Lanka as an international student and adopting Australia as home for the last fourteen years has given me a rich diversity of experience of the Church both in the developing and developed world. While there is much piety and heart in the faith, there is a blindness within the developing world, while for countries of Australia there is much head and debate and reasoning of all aspects of faith which means a stronger and more grounded faith but an extreme of faith that could be lost due to a lack of heart. My experience of Catholicism in both these contexts has thus moved me to seek for a Church with a combination of both and I hope that would be the case through this process. The Church in Australia, particularly in metropolitan cities, needs to build a greater sense of community with one another, while I was at the epitome of involvement with World Youth Day in 2008 as part of the international liturgy group and key advisory group of [ - ]'s Days in the Diocese, disenchanted by the local priests and structure, I am now a back pew Catholic who does my best to turn up for Mass every Sunday and have felt the sense of loneliness at times and unfriendliness of the Church community and religious. We need to make more concerted efforts to take some of the good examples of the Evangelical and Protestant churches in relation to their outreach to every member of the community, a kind smile and a word could mean so much to those folks that simply turn up to church every Sunday and especially for Easter and Christmas. Priests do need to be more Christ-like out with the people and sadly its very rare that this is the case and as Pope Francis said the shepherds should smell like the

sheep. I pray for this wonderful community of God here in Australia that the Holy Spirit will lead the men and women of the Church into being a true manifestation of the Triune God Father Son and Holy Spirit in this land.

My husband and I are infertile (we are currently sadly going through a separation now). When we were in a happy place of marriage, nearly every week people would stick their noses in and ask us when are we going to have children ... there're many other stories to tell that aren't kind towards me and my husband due to infertility. We have felt very alone and isolated many times at many parishes due to our fertility issues. We heard that [church] was very respectful we have been attending this church for nearly twenty years now. We are at home, thank you for Fr [ - ]. He's awesome, he's amazing, he knows how to create a safe space and friendly welcoming space for all to thrive. He has many, many young people come to church. I realise I'm being blunt, we need priests' attitudes to continue to be welcoming, warm, respectful and open to loving others. That is where I feel welcome. I honestly am going through very hard times, but each time I'm at [this parish], I feel where I belong. [This parish] is my home. Thank you Fr [ - ] for being such a support to me and to all your faithful parishioners. God will reward you, good and faithful servant. One day my husband said, "I give up going to Mass". I said, "Please let's try [ - ] and see." And we did and we didn't look back.

I came to Australia four years ago and finding a good parish was my priority. I was blessed with a great parish and I felt welcome straight away. I am now involved in various activities within the parish and this make me feel I belong. It is beautiful to have a place in a foreign country where I feel I truly belong, only thanks to Jesus, who is the same everywhere. And thanks to those people who saw in me a sister and not a stranger. I like that the Church in Australia is inclusive and used to so many different ethnicities. When I attended the Mass in St Patrick Cathedral for the new Archbishop [ - ], I got very emotional because there I felt like home, I perceived the beauty of the living Church. I felt less lonely, I felt a connection with the spirituality I am used to, I re-discovered a new intimacy with Jesus and, ultimately, I felt in peace.

Although I have not been a regular church-goer for some time, it has been my friendship with a past parish priest, who I have the utmost respect for, that has helped me to keep my faith.

I grew up in the Church. I went to [ - ] school. I was an altar server. Even though I regularly went to church, for most of my life I didn't really know Jesus. By that I mean that I always just thought Church was teaching you about how to be a good person. I never realised that Jesus was living in the palpable sense that He will speak to you, respond to you, share life with you. In 2010 I was called to deeply seek Jesus, and I found Him. Or I suppose I should more accurately say He found me. I've found that the more I seek Him, the more closely I obey, especially in the discipline of love in all moments, then the more I hear Him. These days there is not a day when I do not hear His guidance, where I do not see His specific acts of providence that help me so much. The story that conveys what I'm describing most strikingly was when in 2013 God asked me to train for an Ironman Triathlon, completely on faith: [ - ]

The overall story of my finding Christ and being transformed is here: [ - ]

I have been really fortunate to go to a school and have a strong family that taught me my faith well which has been the foundation of my faith. I feel this formation has shaped me and I see many who have not been so fortunate and are confused with their faith.

We would like to highlight the experience of many families where priests and Church people were part of their lives. We have been graced by God through their presence and support.

I was born as a Catholic, however unfortunately my family doesn't practise the Catholic faith properly aside from going to church on Sundays and praying every night for safety and success. My family is very much affected by the Asian culture and even though they are Catholic, unfortunately the Asian culture connects with them strongly. This resulted in their obsession of reputation and ambition and to be part of the Asian community, something that is in contrast to the Catholic faith. I only got to learn more about Catholic faith when I was in university, going to a Catholic youth group along with my boyfriend who initially was agnostic but has decided to gradually convert to being Catholic. I learnt more about the importance of family through readings and research with my boyfriend about the Catholic views of family life as we both want to marry. Unfortunately, not enough of this has been talked about, many young men and women are unaware of what the Catholic views of marriage are and what are they needing to seek out for a fruitful marriage.

We are a Catholic based youth group who works heavily with schools and parishes in [ - ]. We journey alongside school students from all faith journeys and our school-based programs are Yr7 - Yr12. Our Young Adult programs cater for those 18 – 30 years from all walks of life, including international students. We are proud of our known inclusiveness (which is sometimes criticised by our youth ministry peers). Our youth lead the youth. We have incredible support on both a parish and school level. This makes all the difference. These communities invest in us in time, support and finance. This makes it possible to continue. We are 10 years strong and are blessed to be supported by such strong communities. Youth ministry is an incredibly difficult ministry in the current climate of [ - ], Australia. Youth ministers need to know they are supported, wanted, and have a place. We hope and pray that positivity comes from this Plenary Council and that Australia wide—the 'young heart of the Church' can be re-ignited in faith and hope in Jesus and His Church. "You, dear young people, are not the future but the now of God." Pope Francis empowers and delights in us. The young Catholics of Australia need to know that ALL of their bishops do too.

I felt that growing up in a parish and attending Catholic primary school/some of secondary school taught me about things like stories of the Gospel, sacraments etc. but did not really teach that much depth in understanding the faith and having a relationship with God. I came across this idea through non-Catholic Christian groups at my high school and university. I now attend only Catholic groups but feel that I need to seek outside my parish to learn about the faith e.g. retreats, seminars. I enjoy being part of my parish but I feel we don't get much depth in teachings. At the moment, I feel a bit caught between a lot of my peers (e.g. people in 20s, 30s) who are very dedicated to their faith and feel that the "traditional" ways are the way to go (e.g. Latin Mass/non-novus ordo Mass) and who often find that general parish liturgy and teaching is insufficient, versus wanting to be part of my parish.

We shared many stories of rich faith experiences in parishes, families, communities and schools.

My experience as a migrant in Australia has not been easy. My family got broken and taking care of my children alone was a real challenge. I have seen how the Church, the priest and the Christian community have done so much for me. God is always there putting the right people on my path.

The writer had been given the assignment of writing up our parish's responses to inclusion and the barriers that excludes 98.5% to 99% from their baptisms fully and enjoying this gift of the Holy Spirit. It is with great sadness and disappointment on reading and collating our parish responses, the writer has found that it is like reliving the experiences of the enquires into 'Women in the Catholic Church'. The same 'complaints' have all risen again e.g.; inclusion, governance, theology, doctrine and canon law. At the time of the enquiry into women, our parish had put in a written response and applied to speak at the public hearings. Our parish's name was drawn out of the barrel and spoke on the final day. The writer also sat through three days of public hearings, there were 90% - 95% of presenters there saying the same things. If I get out the published report called 'Women and Man - One in Jesus Christ', the writer feels she could sit down and weep. At the moment of writing this, I feel disheartened and downright angry! Is there really any hope for us, the laity, to be honoured and accepted fully into OUR CHURCH? Can our bishops find their courage and demand changes to canon law for the faithful here in Australia and worldwide? Have you, our bishops, the courage like those young men in the trenches when they had to go over the top to face the guns of the enemy, to argue for the faithful, for inclusion for all within the Catholic Church—OUR CHURCH. Recently, there was a youth meeting in Rome, the ordained and religious brothers were allowed to vote. Why were the religious sisters, in this day and age, denied the right to vote? Paul's letter to the Corinthians Ch. 13, Verses 4-7 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful. It is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; It is not irritable or resentful; It does not rejoice in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

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.

My faith was confirmed when the local parish priest in [ - ] allowed me to instigate a youth group in the parish. This trust led me to come to know many good priests in the 70's and 80's. Unfortunately, many left the priesthood in [ - ] and [ - ] out of frustration at what they saw (i.e.; no action taken by the Catholic hierarchy in [ - ] against those priests known to be abusing their position of power).

My experience of parish life has generally been of hanging on to my faith by the skin of my teeth in the face of liturgies that are casual to the point of irreverence, POXY parish music which makes me want to throw up, and homilies that are either played for laughs, or are ambiguous to the point of borderline heresy. It's only my experience (as an adult convert) of realizing that there really is nowhere else to turn for the words of eternal life, and my dogged conviction that Jesus is actually present in the Eucharist (despite how nuts that feels to one's sensory perception) that keep me coming back. My own private reading (The Catechism, Fulton Sheen, CS Lewis, Mother Angelica, etc., etc.) has informed me more deeply than anything I've ever heard from a pulpit. The way of the future is a return to orthodoxy. Parishes which do this are flourishing, and lots of young people attend regularly, as orthodoxy appeals to their innate idealism and their need to have their

spiritual muscles flexed. My own local parish, which still sees itself as the vanguard of 'the spirit of the 2nd Vatican Council', however, is moribund. Many times I have been on the brink of leaving it, but I stay out of loyalty to the Eucharist in that particular tabernacle which is being essentially ignored.

The Catholic Faith is integral to my life. I grew up in a religious home where family prayer was a daily event and church attendance on Sunday mornings was followed by the traditional family roast. My initial education took place at the state school after which I boarded at a Christian Brothers college where I soon adopted the habit of daily Mass and frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament. I remember during puberty experiencing a period of scruples as a result of a retreat conducted by the Redemptorist Fathers and soon thereafter decided that at the end of my schooling, I would study for the priesthood. As I reached the final years of secondary schooling, I warmed to the idea that the Church was changing. I was excited by the reintroduction of the Easter Triduum and became interested in the theology and conduct of the liturgy. Some of my relatives and many of my childhood friends were members of other Christian churches and the meeting between Pope John XXIII and Archbishop Ramsey of Canterbury had an amazing impact on me. I prayed hard for the success of the Second Vatican Council. After five and a half years of study in a Diocesan Seminary, I was encouraged to take time out to discern my vocation. I never returned to my studies for the priesthood but remained in contact with my seminary friends after their ordination. I never gave up the practice of the faith and daily prayer, attending Mass and receiving Communion at least every weekend and sometimes during the week. Throughout my adult life I have been involved in Church affairs at the parish level and my understanding of the Church has been deeply influenced by the Decrees of the Second Vatican Council. My concern now is for the reform of the Church so that it may once again be the beacon of light and hope it was for generations past.

God and Mass were such an integral part of everyday life years ago. We Australians have not learned to cope with prosperity but worse, how have we become a Godless society?

My experience of the Church as a young adult is one of moving from parish to parish to try find one with young people. It made me so frustrated to have no young people there. There were a few but not many. My own parish now has a lot of families attend Mass, more so than other local parishes. But I still feel that it is difficult to attend Mass with two young children and feel that I am truly welcomed. There is no guidance from anyone about this stage of life, and it is difficult to know how to raise my children as Catholics while the Church in Australia is going through such a crisis in relation to the sexual abuse case with Pell. I wish there was more that was given to us young families as support.

Most of my family members and friends that live within the suburban areas do not have access to adoration and daily Mass as most of them work. Having this readily accessible within a 20-min radius would help strengthen my faith, friends' faith and my family members' faith. Being able to go to Mass daily will help us Catholics approach the day with the scriptures in our hearts and have a deeper care to the things we do at work and people we meet at work. I do feel the younger members of the community have dropped in church attendance. I too have noticed that within out 6000 to 6500 registered Catholics here in the community in my area, there seems to be a low number of families that attend Mass. However, I do notice that local churches around the area

and nearby Catholic schools have altered the Mass to try to bring numbers or attendances up. Personally, I only have known to love the Mass and Eucharist because I had access to good education and formation to understand the true meaning of the Mass. This has helped me deepen my love for the Mass not because of altering it but because I was given more opportunity to understand the Mass.

I became a Catholic in [ - ], while Bishop [ - ] was still here. My experiences with Bishop [ - ] led me to WYD 2008, and eventually to becoming Catholic. He was down to earth, he attended retreats, he often spoke one-on-one with me and was a genuine guide in my life of faith. His passing had a huge impact on me. Fast forward to now, I live in [ - ] with my husband and three small children. I have completed a bachelor's degree in theology at [ - ]. And I have never spoken with a bishop here. Not only is there an enormous transition between being a youth and being a young parent, but we are also cut off from the source of the Church in many very real ways. And even though I have been working hard in my degree and in my own faith education, I never had the opportunity to meet with a bishop, to feel heard by them, to even see them amongst the faithful. The Church seems to invest so much in youth, which makes sense, but the investment in adult education and adult faith, is lacking. A couple of years ago my husband had his own conversion, and started the process of becoming Catholic. His RCIA program was quite frankly, a joke. While I had never gone through RCIA, as I was 17 when I converted and I opted to speak one-on-one with my parish priest and with Bishop [ - ]. My husband's experience really highlighted the program. It severely lacked not only theological education, but also practical guidance for living as a Catholic. Major moral discussions were never approached, (abortion, contraception etc.). Basic points of sacramental education were missed, and the Creed barely touched on. It was very disappointing to see. I have heard from many others that RCIA in their area is much the same. What strikes me most however in our experiences of converting to Catholicism is the largely unguided introduction to faith and Christian education. While of course, one needs to search and find their own understanding to authentically believe in it, without guidance we are a rudderless ship. The lack of guidance leaves individuals to be "tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:14). I also must mention the lack of community we have experienced. Not only in [ - ], but also in [ - ]. Parishes tend to not have any obvious community engagement. The lack of reaching out to new people, to vulnerable persons, and to families is something that really lets the Church down in Australia. I pray that this point especially will be taken note of for the plenary council. I love the Church, I have found so much beauty and goodness within our Catholic faith. I have adored studying theology, and I deeply wish that all Catholics receive this kind of theological explorations that I have enjoyed (and more!)

My generation was very blessed in that religion was a given in society generally. Parishes commonly had a parish priest and a curate. Catholic schools were staffed by wonderful, committed religious. Before mass-transportation parishes were a significant centre of socialisation. My faith formation began in the rural Church. There was a strong awareness of our Catholic forebears who came to this country in the eighteenth century to escape religious persecution and oppression and struggled to establish poor rural parishes. We understood it was our responsibility to fulfil their hopes and dreams. I had exemplary Catholic parents, weekly Mass and daily Rosary. My primary education was in a one-teacher rural school where we were the only

Catholics and were made aware of it. We received very intermittent religious instruction under a gum tree. My secondary education was with the Mercy sisters whose religious knowledge instruction gave us a firm grounding in faith and morals and religious practices that would stand by us for life. It left us in no doubt as to who we were as Catholics. I have been greatly blessed with a strong Catholic marriage and family. I began my primary teaching career in the state system but continued for many years in the Catholic system as a classroom teacher preparing children for First Reconciliation and Eucharist and as Religious Education Coordinator. During a year in the US as part of the local CCD program I took weekly after-school classes in my home. During a four-year posting in the Pacific, I took weekly Sunday School lessons before Mass and participated in their prayer groups. In my retirement I am secretary and an active member of St Vincent de Paul Society, a catechist in the parish sacramental preparation and now take Communion to a nursing home. I don't quite know how these words can help the Church of tomorrow. I may appear old-fashioned but believe me, Hell could freeze over and it wouldn't alter my faith. I acknowledge that the Church in Australia has greatly shaped me throughout my life. I believe that to whom much is given much is expected. I have received much from the Australian Church and I give thanks.

I am writing one week after the conviction of Cardinal George Pell and this has shaped my experience of faith as nothing else has. I follow Christ crucified and right now we are on the way of the cross. I do not follow bishops and priests—and I am even beginning to lose some faith in our Pope after the pathetically weak statements that came out of the recent Synod. I am a committed Catholic who has given my life in love and service as a religious sister. Over the week, many have asked me why I stay—the only answer is Jesus Christ crucified and a solidarity with God's people—not with clergy or bishops.

Yes, I am 70 and I have always loved the Church and had good experiences there. From childhood, the strong memory of going to Mass as a family, seeing parents' friends there. School with the Nuns teaching and explaining the faith, parish priests always there, kind and friendly and with answers, Rosary at home as a family, a strong image is that of my father kneeling by his bedside praying. His strong faith was very evident, from the wartime prayer book which displayed; "I pray the Almighty God will see me safely home" (which he did 6 years later); to a handwritten letter from the Desert in 1942—sharing the joy of a rare Mass. He also showed us his constant use of time given to the Church in discussion groups; cleaning; hall keeping whatever Father needed... respect and loyalty. In our family, the Church was always respected and came first. Mother always said if we travelled always find the Church and Mass. Youth was a good experience too—YCW; [ - ] —a strong group which ran a coffee house every Sunday night after Folk Mass for any youth to come, talk, sing, have friendship with 2 priests usually there. Youth also sang at Mass, did the collection, cleaning, reading etc. Visited the elderly, and local hostel. Simple tasks but often the youth assisted the parish bingo and dances by making supper. We also had memorable retreats. Later Catholic lay youth community was formed under Archbishop of [ - ] in 1976 at [ - ] House of Prayer [ - ]. Here I learnt a new way of the Church reaching out to all people who needed friendship, help and community. We were in the parish too, and visiting clergy often stayed. (Br [ - ]; Bishop [ - ]) I learnt to be ecumenical as well and their Daily Prayer. Later I was part of the [ - ] Catholic Social Club 1978+ which was formed by a group of priests for those over 25. it was great! We definitely felt part of the Church community and appreciated. Important: Church and

Christian bookshops, Thank you! Disability - my brother 51 tomorrow, waited till 21 to make his First Communion and Confirmation. He is CP and mute but on encouragement from my parents and local nun and priest and family eventually this happened. He goes to Mass every week by NDIS I have met many groups such as Faith and Light where there is Church spirituality and community of the disabled and families. I have had the wonderful experience of Retreats where disability is the focus. Canberra, Sydney; NZ; UK and L'Arch. I hope focus on disability can be encouraged more by the Australian Church so we can be leaders for the world too. I realise there are many examples. My experiences have also been; I like Lenten groups; Prayer groups such as MSC; Josephites; CWL; Visiting Elderly homes for Masses; catechetics. I also like large Ecumenical gatherings for prayers for Tsunami; fires etc. often led by Catholics. Please educate on Islam. We want to welcome refugees, but this religion also brings fear!

I once attended a Eucharistic Procession which was very powerful. I found this public demonstration of my commitment to the Catholic faith to be very empowering. More parishes need to hold these regularly.

Over fifty years ago when I was a young girl of eighteen I received a call to the ordained ministry in the foyer of [ - ] Church in [ - ]. In the long pilgrimage it has been the sacred heart of Jesus, the Immaculate heart of Mary, the sacred heart of St Joseph, the sacred heart of Mary MacKillop, the sacred heart of St Therese, the sacred heart of St Ignatius, the sacred heart of St. Francis of Assisi, the sacred heart of St Benedict, the sacred heart of St Peter Julian Eymard, the sacred heart of Padre Pio, the sacred heart of St Don Bosco, the sacred heart of St Francis de Sales and the sacred heart of St Anthony that has nourished and sustained me.

A case for IVF: The official teaching of the Church does not allow a couple to undergo IVF procedures under any circumstance. However, the experience of a young couple is presented here to make a case for IVF. Mr and Mrs [ - ] are a young Catholic couple who were in their mid-30's when to their great joy Mrs [ - ] became pregnant. Their joy was short lived because Mrs [ - ]'s pregnancy was found to be ectopic. Her fallopian tube had to be removed but she was told that she could become pregnant again because her second fallopian tube was healthy. After much prayer Mrs. [ - ] got pregnant again. But their joy was again short lived because against all odds her second pregnancy was also ectopic. Her second tube also had to be removed and she was told that her only option for pregnancy was to follow the IVF procedure. The couple were devastated and sought advice from Catholic priests and fertility experts of the Church. The advice they received was divided. Some asked them not to deviate from the teachings of the Church, others said their case was an unprecedented exception and that it would be ok to consider IVF. They prayed for a couple of years, followed retreats for discernment and with the pastoral advice and blessings of several Catholic priests started on the IVF procedure. A very large contingent of the faith community prayed with them for all the months of her pregnancy and she had a healthy baby who has now been baptised as well. Though the official teaching is against IVF, other experts on ecclesiology state that the Church teaching on IVF is not an ex-cathedra teaching and is therefore not binding, especially in cases of exceptional circumstances. This couple had several years of joy of the early years of their lovely marriage taken away from them because of the mixed advice given to them. A ruling is sought from the Plenary Council to change the teaching on

IVF for pregnancy and approve the procedure for couples that have no other medically safe and cheaper procedure for pregnancy.

I am a catechist. When I first started we taught children from Prep to year 6. Then people started to say that the children in Prep were too little to understand but I said I was willing to take them. At the end of the year one of the mothers came to thank me for bringing her family back to Sunday Mass. Her daughter had told her they had to go because I had told my class that God looks after us all the time and the least we can do is give him one hour a week. That is why the Church teaches us that we are obliged to go to Sunday Mass.

I am a Christian parishioner who has regularly attended Sunday Mass for the last 30 years. I have volunteered as a facilitator for the Plenary listening and Dialogue groups. However the Church's regulations exclude me from taking Communion because although I am a confirmed Christian I am not a Catholic. I feel that the Church sees me as a second-class Christian who should be converted in order to become a first-class Christian. I have specifically requested that there will be no Communion Mass at my funeral. Something that has been denied me in life will not be observed to make others feel excluded. It would be contrary to Christ's teachings.

I was baptised in the Catholic faith when I was young, < 1 year old. I grew up as a Catholic and made all my sacraments growing up in [ - ]. I was always drawn to the traditions and the way the Church made me feel. I attended Church camps as a youth and often found Mass a place of peace and reflection. I realised I was gay at around 19 years old. I felt sad I couldn't get married in a country and at a church where I felt I belonged. This has changed legally and while I didn't see it as possible as a child/young woman, I (as I believe many would) would be very grateful to feel fully accepted in the Church in all respects. I am part of a beautiful parish where I have been lucky enough to make some wonderful friends who are so accepting of my daughter and me that I am thankful to God always.

I was very blessed to grow up in a large family ... 8 children. Both my mother and father were devoted to us. Though we did not have a lot of money Dad worked very hard to make sure that Mum was able to stay at home to take good care of us and also made sure we all went to Catholic schools. Attending Mass as a family on Sunday was the highlight of the week—our parents always made sure we were smartly dressed. As teenagers—there was always a well supervised dance held at the parish hall, from memory once a month—such a wonderful way to make new friends. I remember well learning so much about our Catholic faith at school. The Sisters of Charity always encouraged us to go to Sunday Mass. I also loved my Catechism ... I believe a must for every young child. We were also encouraged to read books and encouraged to work very hard on our hand-writing. Manners and respect were drummed into us both at home and at school—also expected to help out at home with chores and taking good care of younger siblings. We had a very large dining table and we would all sit and have dinner together—we all loved that! Learnt well to serve others. Encouraged always to be gracious to everyone and to love God. Taught to be very proud of our Catholic heritage.

I am not a 'born baptized' and only being baptized from our [ - ] Catholic Community in [ - ] since 2002. I have got 2 young kids (8 year old and 7 year old). As a parent, I feel like to ensure I would have the right direction for me to raise my kids with a true Faith to God and make sure they will

grow up with a strong relationship with God. After my baptism, I attend regular Mass and service our community in different areas. However, I found that it hasn't help me to deepen my faith a lot and more tend to be a formalized obligation kind of service for a while. At least, I know that our community is so blessed by God that we have some parishioners with strong Faith and real passion. And during my ministry service, I feel that I might not have sufficient knowledge and understanding with my faith, especially as a Sunday School tutor, I feel I would need to get more knowledge for me to bring the right message to our kids. So, I started my Theology distance-learning course from [ - ] since September last year. Since then, I found how little I know about my faith and this is definitely an illuminating experience on me.

My primary and secondary Catholic education by nuns in the Philippines as well as the strong faith and Catholic devotion and practices of my parents and grandmother shaped my faith, spirituality and values. In Australia my husband and I are strengthened in faith and fellowship with other Catholics through our membership and active involvement in the Couples for Christ International movement in [ - ]. For my personal faith nourishment and continuing spiritual development, I participate actively in our parish liturgies and activities, and I regularly watch EWTN on our Satellite TV.

As already stated above, I pioneered in organising the Children's Liturgy Program in our local parish Although it might sound simple, it wasn't. I called up a few churches within close proximity to ask them for a Children's Liturgy Program, and they declined. Their common line of defence was that I could enrol my kids to the local parochial school for them to get a Catholic upbringing. It was a frustrating time for me, as my kids were thriving well in a state-run school. We must understand that in every family there could be diverse faiths, so that enrolling kids to a Catholic school would not usually attract other members' support. In my case, my former husband and father of my kids, is a non-believer. He's always also worried about our kids' getting exposed to 'paedophile' priests. With some gained experience in facilitating children's liturgy session in my old parish, a small team of facilitators, and a supportive priest (Fr [ - ]), we started a session in November 2015, and haven't looked back since. We slowly recruited facilitators. The number of children in the room grew from just a handful to over a dozen, and it keeps increasing. We now have special sessions for Easter, Christmas, Father's Day and Mother's Day. We rotate the coordinator role every year, to give others the chance of leadership but also to share the work. I am now mentoring new facilitators. We're always creative in our session. Apart from the typical colouring activity, we would perform a skit, puppetry, or play game appropriate to the liturgy. We ensure that everyone has a Working with Children Check, and put each child's safety a priority.

I saw priests and members of the hierarchy to enjoy a great style of life. Clergy and servants of the Church should be more humble.

I have been a practising Catholic all my life and received my education in Catholic schools. I studied at [ - ] College and received a Graduate Diploma in Theology at [ - ]. I taught in Catholic Primary Schools for 40 years including 22 years as a Religious Education Leader. I have always taken a very active role in many aspects of parish life, including liturgy coordinator, a position I still hold as well as Bereavement Team leader. Recent scandalous events in the Catholic Church have left me very disappointed, hurt and very angry. The level of abuse from clergy, followed by the apparent cover up by the Church, has tested my loyalty to a Church which has been so

important to me. I have always been proud to be a Catholic, in fact, my religion and my faith are integral parts of me. The greatest betrayal of all is to realise that these same men (the perpetrators) have preached each week about how Catholics should live! For some time now, I have felt that we are far too dominated by male clergy and although I have great respect and admiration for many good priests I know, I no longer rely on them to tell me how I should practise my faith. I do not hold them on a pedestal but see them as equals, no matter their place in the hierarchy. I show great respect for the good priests but treat them more as friends and equals, acknowledging that they are no more worthy than I am. We should be all working together to give praise to our God and to do our best to live truly Christian lives. We need to work in partnership with mutual respect if our Church is to survive. Fortunately, our parish has been blessed with priests who live the servant model of priesthood. If this was to change, I would leave and go somewhere else. As someone who has always been fiercely loyal to my parish, that is a very big statement for me. When visiting other parishes I am alarmed at the wave of conservatism among newly ordained priests. This may appeal to those who wish for the 'good old days' and to some ethnic cultural groups but I cannot see it ever attracting young Catholics back to Church. The Church needs to reinvent itself, break down the clergy domination and find ways to be inclusive and welcoming. I recently helped my cousins to plan my aunt's funeral and respectfully brought all my experience to the discussion with the parish priest. He was pompous, unwelcoming and seemed threatened by someone who knew what they were doing. I was not suggesting anything radical but was merely trying to make the Mass more personal and deserving of a woman who had lived out her faith for 96 years. His actions on the day of the funeral were more like a tantrum as he stood like a stone frowning as family warmly greeted each other on arrival because 'there was noise in his church'. This sort of nonsense is as much to blame for people leaving the Church as are the cases of abuse!

The story of many migrants who upon arrival find a "cold" society and cold Church that doesn't recognise entirely their presence. It is a Church too much oriented towards the material affairs.

The scale and breadth of the abuse and the Church needing external help to deal with it.

Having a father who valued, lived and passed on to his children a strong faith and his pride in the Catholic Church. Attending Josephite primary and secondary schools. Having good and compassionate parish priests.

I came to Australia from the Netherlands as a girl of 20 for a 1 or 2 years working holiday. Coming from an emotionally rich, large solid Catholic working class family in [ - ], I was an ardent reader in my teenage years, and started my own philosophical search about my existence. My believe in God was deep and the practice of our faith very important to our family, we as children went to daily Mass, all through primary school, to the church ten steps across the road, then walked through the schoolyard connected to the back of the church to school and ate our breakfast in class before school started, because in the Nineteen fifties we still fasted from 12 midnight before Mass in the morning as Catholic. That fasting was never an issue or worry to me. It was just so. I lost my faith through reading a book, when I was about 18 called Exodus, by Leon Uris. The details of the Holocaust shocked me so deeply that I had the audacity to say "Sorry God I am with them, I am one of them, where were you for them, Your own chosen people". I stopped believing in a loving God like so many of the young people around but, who thought that were wiser than God

but I still went to Church each Sunday, so as not to sadden my parents and give scandal to my younger brothers and sisters, but I felt insincere looking other philosophies and religions to find the truth, but became restless and unhappy. and wanted to travel so came to Australia, in 1962. I met my husband , who was at [ - ] University, a Catholic boy from [ - ], but like me did not attend church anymore, there was however this comforting shared familiar faith background, very reassuring and good for both of us and a love for Jesus still in our heart. And there was hope that what we had been taught about Him and that mysterious invitation to Eternal Life was somehow real and possible for us. Me in my arrogance, wanted to understand God before I would believe in Him. Of course that is impossible. Sorry I have run out of space , and am not even halfway through what I wanted to tell about our Life as married Catholics in Australia, (we actually went to confession on the day before we married, for we found suddenly we needed God to make this a sacrament, yet not fully committed we were beginning our journey as "nominal Catholics" still longing to know more of God, truth and understanding more about suffering and injustice etc.). But our 5 children were all baptised soon after birth and our hope never left us, love and gratitude grew with each child, but my falling in love experience in the most sorrowful years of my life, in the late seventies, and a renewed deeper understanding and knowledge of the Church I cannot fit in here now, as there are only 209 characters remaining and it is half past one in the night and I don't know how to extend my space.

I had written till about the time of our marriage in [ year ].

We actually married on the Island of [ - ], where [ - ], my husband was working as a legal officer for the Australian Government, which was administrating the little [ - ] Island , in the middle of the [ - ] Ocean in preparation for their Independence in [month], when it became the Republic of [ - ].

We returned to practicing our Catholic Faith, yet always longing to know and feel Christ closer in a personal relationship . We were re-reading some of the classics during this time, like "The confessions" by St Augustine, Dovsteyoski, esp. The brothers Karamasov, The way of a Pilgrim, Tolstoy, I remember carrying everywhere a book called "The cloud of unknowing," a 14th Century book, of an unknown Author also St Teresa of Avila, writing, The Seven Story Mountain, by Thomas Merton, a great inspirational Autobiography, later we read CS Lewis, 'Surprised by Joy', Mere Christianity—Screwtape letters. I read more and more of the New Testament, especially The Acts was helpful for me and gave me great hope that we were on the right track in our Catholic faith. We came across the conversion story of the Journalist and Author Malcolm Muggeridge from England whose dramatic public conversion in England, from Atheist to becoming A Roman Catholic, was feeding our soul. We read of many other conversion such stories from America. I was always looking to be more and more convinced, of the value and the truth of our Catholic Faith.

By the time we returned to [ - ] midyear 1970 we had two daughters, and settled in the suburb of [ - ], where [my husband] set up a small legal practice, operating from the front room of our big old house, and later opened a practice in [ - ].

In [year], with 4 children we settled near the bay in [ - ], and our fifth child was born there in [year]. So we had less and less time for reading or researching, [my husband] was set on making a

crust to be able to get a bigger house for our growing brood.

I remember at the time reading a book called 'the end of religion' by Dom Aelred Graham, it made a deep impression on me. I was always longing to have our Catholic Faith confirmed by what we learned in our life as a family. I was also looking into other faiths, and was interested in meditation. I was also more fearful in this love for them I was concerned about their future, with the testing of nuclear bombs in the Pacific, etc. and other threats to the family and our culture generally, like divorce rates etc.

To pick up the story.

The children went to [ - ] parish School, in [ - ], we went to Sunday Mass, they received the sacraments. It was a beautiful family orientated parish, closely connected to the school ... A very positive experience for our children and we formed solid friendships with other mothers, and families through tuckshop, school Masses, through sharing while waiting for our children to come out of school, parish dinners, fetes. etc.

It was a blessing to have some of the Presentation Sisters running the school still at the early stage of us living there, with great supportive teachers, closely working with the parish priests. We prayed before meals at home and I prayed with the children before they went to sleep. My teaching was not solid in the 70s, but I prayed and hoped it was true what I told them. We were careful in not mentioning hell, in fear of scaring them, but I did continue to mention that sin was what it was, sin. We mothers did not really talk about our faith much to each other. You could often tell faith-filled people by their commitment and way of being. And we saw each other at Sunday Mass, and maybe discussed the readings with one or two. The Church as a whole was finding its way after Vatican Council II. There was no new Catechism yet, in the mid-seventies and the emphasis at school was on the love of God and, to keep children interested in wanting to keep coming, to Church there was some entertainment value put in the Mass, by liturgical dancing and more upbeat, songs were added etc. and a hope that somehow, they would want to live and know their faith for their future life. That held very little water and, lessened the reverence in Church for the great wonder of what is really happening at a Holy Mass...

It was not hard for me to teach my children the fundamental moral law, that what Jesus taught and lived from "Do not do unto others what you do not want done to you" but while praying with my children and talking of Heaven I felt a bit of a hypocrite, still holding God off still asking "Where were you with the Holocaust? And where are you now in so much sorrow, of so many of us your people, In the world?" Yet I had experienced so much love all my life, in myself for others and from others. Each one of my children had been another great wave of new love to be lived and felt, too big for words which I knew must come from God, since His name is Love, His name is everything good and beautiful. Who gave me this incredibly beautiful life, but what about the innocent suffering and cruelty allowed in our human condition etc.

I had been greatly relieved with my first child, the experience had so overwhelmed me with wonder and joy, yes pain too but it was a pain with meaning and bearable to be in my body a conduit and sustainer of a new human person with an eternal soul is mind-blowing indeed. I was so relieved and glad that I actually could love somebody else more than myself, of which I was never certain before the birth of my first child that Love could only come from God, the Eternal Lover, whose essence is Love, and Jesus Son and God who became one of us lived that Love to the bitter end on this earth with us, and for us. The greatest of all Loves but I saw that as a once and

for all then. I mistakenly thought that in the suffering life we were alone. So I held God off in my ignorance and arrogance.

By 1977, we moved into our new bigger house. [My husband] had gone to the Bar and that is lean pickings in the early years, but he loved it. He had a small, windowless room in [ - ]. He supported our income with a second job as a lecturer in business law, on the other end of town.

We felt blessed living in [ - ] with our school and parish community , and great neighbours and friends around us and saw it as the best place to bring up our children.

We liked people and people liked our family. We had close contact with [my husband]'s mother and siblings and their families, and my eldest sister also from [ - ], living close., We all met often for birthdays, baptism, First Holy Communions, and other times.

The challenge of our precious ordinary good life came in the middle of the year in 1978...

Growing up, I experienced family members and friends abandoning the Catholic faith, generally for atheism. It seems to me that a major factor in this abandonment was their lack of deep knowledge of the reasons for faith. My own experience of faith formation at a prominent Catholic school was that although I had a series of religion teachers committed to the faith and eager to pass it on, the teaching of the faith was not systematic, assessed, rigorous, or complete. The teachers were let down by the curriculum. When I finished Year 12, with youthful enthusiasm I drafted a letter (which I never sent) to my Archbishop, giving my view that doctrine and apologetics needed to be taught much more thoroughly. Many years later, and now a priest, my view has not changed. If anything, my view has strengthened from being told by younger practising Catholics, including many younger clergy, that their experience was worse. They hold the faith in various cases, it seems, in spite of their Catholic secondary schooling, not because of it. One, about to abandon her faith after her years of Catholic education, thought she'd better find out first exactly what it was that she was abandoning. It was only the personal learning she did then, that kept her practising, and led her to religious life. Another expressed anger at being cheated of his faith heritage, and short-changed—he only came to understand the Catholic faith as an adult. A teacher has told me that the cultural environment in her Catholic secondary school is 'toxic for the faith'. There has been a major crisis in faith education for decades, and the chain of the passing on of the faith has been broken. My experience is, those in charge of the system defend it; yet the young people who have actually been through it, but still have faith, don't agree.

When I was 16 I was finally able to articulate some things that troubled me about religious and other practical matters—like the "God" part of the man Jesus, and contraception. I asked our parish priest of the time, a friend of our family. He hardly listened to my doubts about the magical Jesus—just gave me a two-inch thick book on Christology and said: Read that—that's all you need to know. What's the other question? I said: It's about the pill—Oh, he interrupted, don't worry about all that—just do what the Church tells you and you'll be right. Dismissed. Eventually, I quit Church in my early 20s for over 2 decades. I would never go back to that kind of "Church." Instead, when I "returned," I decided it was for the worshipping community and God and the "Rabbi"

Jesus—not the clerics or the magic (that only they can perform!!!). I go every week—on terms between me and God.

I have seen many excellent things, but I would like to share a negative experience—sitting through so many parish homilies all over Australia where the content is vacuous and fails to connect with the parishioners.

I grew up in a very strict Catholic family—one where we followed what we were told and not one motivated by the what the Spirit guided us to do. Some of that over-discipline caused some family members (we are five children, I had two children (my daughter died at 39)) to move away from the Church. Like my experience from my parents, my children suffered from a form of over-discipline from me. We now look after our granddaughter (we looked after two other grandchildren too) following drug dysfunction of my son. I am applying a much better way to bring up my granddaughter. Two family siblings (one sister and I) are still close to the Church and close to our God and seeking to be closer. I have a will to help others find a God-focused life. In a way for us, that over-discipline has focused us on finding a better way to communicate God's love and joy to others. I need to learn how I can be more effective in growing my faith, in spreading Christ's missionary work and in reaching out in love to my family and friends and help them to see, find and emulate more of God's love. Above all, whilst the lives of others are permeated by God's love, I would like them to find the richness I find too and to experience the joy of understanding God's presence and His wish for a deep relationship with us all. Above all, I would like the Church I follow to become rich in Christ and rich in mission and reach out to more and be seen as Christ's Church (not man's Church). I am hoping that this reflection at family level, which is so reflected in our Church of the recent past and long-term past, will cause the Church in the same way, to rethink about its root messages and root ways of getting through to its people.

I joined the Charismatic prayer group in my local parish about 20 years ago which brought life to me. The group disbanded 4 years ago and I feel like I have been living in the wilderness ever since. On many occasions, I feel empty spiritually and can be a struggle to maintain enthusiasm for the Lord. Even parish life has a gaping hole in it as a result of not having a prayer group.

- By entering the 21st century and making the gospel relative to today, priests be allowed to marry, not celibate.
- Female priests
- Encouraging and equipping people to have independent and individual relationships with God
- The Church needs to be transparent in its failings and internal dealings, especially in light of recent events. While God is divine, the Church is made up of men and all men have failings, these have been hidden and ignored for too long.
- I think the Church needs to find a way to honour its traditions while engaging with its members in a modern context. The Gospels were written in a particular context at a particular time and each one to engage with a particular audience. Society has changed and I believe some things need to be looked at through a modern lens, in particular its attitude towards women in not being able to obtain priesthood and its attitude towards homosexuals.
- Protect and provide aid for children, the vulnerable and marginalised.
- Become humble, honest and open.

My name is [ - ] and I'm a 27-year-old male born and raised a Catholic. However, for basically 16 years of my life, I went to church only cause my parents made me to. I did not see the point or find church fun in any way. It was only once I discovered my faith that I was able to understand

the reason and meaning of attending Mass. I do admit that being raised by a Catholic family helped me resort to prayer in my most desperate moment. This moment came about due to a heart break, if I had not known about prayer, I wonder what form of solace I would have turned to. After finding my faith at 16, it wasn't a straight path to holiness, through the years I questioned my faith from all angles even wondering if the Catholic Church was right or wrong. During this journey if I had known that I could ask a priest any questions, I would have done so. Nevertheless, God found me and I let Him into my life, going on a journey to learn and know more eventually leading me to join NET ministries, an organisation that changes life.

The story is perhaps about my children that are now adults. When we migrated to Australia, my children were nine and eleven years old. We tried to include them in our [ - ] Catholic Community group and brought them to Masses both in local churches and [[ - ] group but my older one eventually didn't have the will and need to go to Masses anymore especially when she was in university and later moving out of home. With the reasons of being busy and tired after a hard week day work, in the weekend they want to have fun, she and now Buddhist husband said. The appeal and need of praying and going to Church has diminished overtime since her teenager age. I blame this to our situation that my family were migrating here without my husband as he had to be working in [ - ]. I was raising my children as a single mother trying to do everything by myself. My second child is autistic needing much attention. I blame myself for the lack of warmth and prayers at the very beginning of raising of my family so that the good habit had not been instilled. It would had to come from myself as my husband has come from a rather lukewarm Catholic practicing family themselves. I think if the Church could have helped by facilitating with Masses and services for teenagers that would appeal much to them make them eager to come and meet with others practising their religion at their age level of understanding and appreciation, a lot of young people would be saved and maintain their faith and keep going to church.

Just simply what helped to strengthen my faith after many years as a fair-weather Catholic who attended Mass semi-regularly and didn't really understand the deep and beautiful substance of the Church was to get involved in the St Vincent de Paul Society. Being able to tangibly put my faith in practice and interact with other Catholics in a meaningful way made a world of difference.

Story 1 from a woman who spoke with one of us: One woman living in a country town had children attending the parish primary school and she wanted them to become involved in their parish so insisted they join the choir and when old enough become readers at Mass. The woman herself became a member of the Parish Council and Secretary of the Primary School Education Board. In this latter role, she of course had to type and present the minutes of meetings, so used to drop them off at the presbytery (This was before emails). Her children didn't like the parish priest, but the mother thought they were just being children. Sometime later this priest was named a paedophile and she discovered he had been molesting children at the school at the very time she had been on the Ed. Board. She was so upset and this among other things has contributed to her disgust with the Church. She was really upset that her children actually knew a priest who had been molesting children they knew. Of course, she was grateful none of her children had been interfered with. Story 2 from a sister: It was a joy for this sister to work in PNG and experience the way in which the liturgy had been adapted to the culture. In this multi-cultural land of Australia the approach to liturgy still seems to be very "Roman"/ "western").

My story is probably quite similar to people my age. I went to a Catholic primary and high school. My parents took me to church every weekend. The priest we had at our church was a lovely man who worked hard to engage with everyone in his parish. I was an altar server and served Communion when I was older. One day mum asked was I coming to Church and I said no. I was so scared she would hate me for it but it was the first time I had taken a stand against the Church and it felt so good. Since then, every hypocrisy and every hateful action that stems from Christianity just seems so glaringly obvious. When people lie and put the Church as the face of their own agenda, it makes me incredibly sad. I think about my old priest and how friendly and accepting he is and I can't believe the contrast of the actions of the rest of the Church.

• Young priest: I am sad that I turn up to parishes where everyone is 40 years older than me. I came to the Church through service at St Vincent de Paul where people served, shared their life struggles and the Gospel came alive. • Young Person: The Church has turned into a museum of old songs and old ways of doing things rather than the community Christ talked about in the Gospels. I want our priests and bishops to lead us in service not into the past. • A parent: My child goes to a Catholic school and is taught how to take up roles in the Church. When we go to the parish, the priest never invites young people to take up ministries. • A lapsed Catholic: I want the vibrant Catholic community of my youth that spoke up for the poor, that debated and sometimes argued but always about the right questions and then did not just talk about it but then actively formed groups/organisations that addressed the issue.

I was in a book group about ten years ago. I went to lunchtime Mass at the Cathedral one workday and saw a book group member there—I didn't even know she was a practising Catholic. We said nothing. We hide or downplay our Catholicism to others now because the public bandwagon is dismissive and cynical. Please help us to become visible Catholics again and to be dignified in the face of the anti-Catholicism and sectarianism which is saturating our community now.

My daughter, when she was in her twenties, said “look at all the grey hair in the Church!” Her complaint was that at no time was she made to feel a part of the Church, not asked to read or join in in any way. She has left the faith.

We are a young thirty-something couple who have grave concerns about the direction of the Church. The health of a society generally, in our view, depends largely on the good standing of the Catholic Church. However things have been so difficult for so long in the Catholic Church, that we would have to go as far back as the Papal Trip in 1986 (when I was [ - ] years old) to remember when the Catholic Church commanded some level of respect. It has been a long period of difficulty and at times we have questions whether Jesus has abandoned his Church—as we see what seems to be the Church unravelling before our eyes. Since then, the amount of self-inflicted wounds that the Church has administered to Herself leaves us with serious questions as to whether our Church is vital enough to provide a meaningful community for our three children, within a couple of decades' time. We are dismayed that things have got this stage, given the capital and resources built up over a long time. Despite our frustration with the Church, the Church is such a powerful spiritual and community force for us, that we will never abandon her. She is the reason that we are together as a couple. She is the reason that we have most our friendship community and She is our source of life and hope. However it is clear that things cannot continue the way they have

been. Even though it seems at times that Christ has abandoned his Church, we trust in His promise that the gates of Hell will not prevail. Whilst we continually pray for our Church, we realise that more than just prayer is needed. Hence, we have put together this submission and trust that our view will be properly considered. We would like to be contacted about our experiences. We wish every success for the Plenary Council and hope that all involved listen to the will of the Holy Spirit!

My return to the Church as a practising Catholic after 40 years of absence was the result of Grace and proof to me that Jesus is always waiting, calling for us. Some years ago, I had prayed to St Catherine of Sienna for assistance to fight serious temptation and eventually found myself delivered with grace that far exceeded what I deserved. This was my first rung to climb out of a life of Sin. I was momentarily swept up in the controversy (having known of [a convicted priest] through family in [ - ]) and was considering renouncing the Church. Almost as soon as I voiced this sentiment, I actually felt a visceral wave of grief. I was in conversation with a non-believer who referenced Vatican 2 and it occurred to me he knew more about the birthright I was about to reject than I did so I decided to do some research before pursuing this grave course. I found myself in a YouTube thread watching Father Nicholas Gruner—a Marian priest and great advocate of the Rosary—and felt moved to purchase a Rosary. I was soon inspired to pray the Rosary after advising my niece—baptised but un-catechised and angry at God to "say a prayer" when in crippling despair as I felt all else I was offering her in the form of advice and support was failing to move her from this terrible disposition. As I went to bed that night, I felt I was being asked by The Holy Spirit "Well, where are your prayers?" The next day, I attended [ - ] Cathedral in [ - ] and made my first confession in 40 years. Through a deluge of tears of gratitude, I then received Holy Communion and returned to pray under the picture Our Lady of Perpetual Help which just seemed to glow golden just for me. The grace I felt was overwhelming and swept me on a path which included attending the Installation of Archbishop [ - ]—I have never and may never be in a Cathedral again so full of religious and packed to overflowing with members of the faithful. I could not have been welcomed back to the faith any better than that. From there, I learned of The Plenary and am again, so grateful to be able to participate in our Church in such a way. Beyond this, I have learned of Divine Mercy and as I pray for the conversion of my husband—another un-catechised Catholic and the "re"-version of my siblings, I have been gifted the experience of seeing them come closer to Jesus by their love for me in listening to my story. There have been so many occasions of Grace in the 9 months since I have returned that I can document and which humble me. I prayed to find a Catholic Friend and was gifted the most wonderful woman. I prayed to find a Rosary group and a wonderful priest and have found both at [parish] in [ - ]. I have prayed for friends who survived cancer. I had a pagan thank me for my prayers as he returned to health. I have found Eucharistic Adoration at [ - ] in [ - ] where I will shortly attend Ash Wednesday Mass for the first time since childhood. There are more stories ...

I am a typical cradle Catholic nurtured by a mother under the Irish/Australian system. Small parish, Catholic school, Brigidine nuns throughout, Augustinian priests from my marriage. The Brigidines taught me to think about the world around me and about social justice. The Augustinians introduced Vatican II teaching and learning experiences for parishioners as did our Diocesan Bishops of the time. I thrived on this and learnt theology, worked in social justice programs and helped bring educational and multi-faith programs to the parish and parish school.

Liturgy was vibrant and alive and meaningful. This changed when the Augustinians withdrew because of lack of numbers. But we still did Lay led liturgy when needed which were popular until, we had a change of bishop and suddenly the permissions dried up. We need this all back again if Archbishop [ - ] wants small communities to fix the Church. Clergy have to stand aside and be part of the team only!

The laity are seeking more than the religious experience of the sacraments. I am seeking Christian community which is lacking in Australia.

The Our Father showed me where the path lies to the narrow gate, I stumbled and fell for 40 years to truly arrive at forgiveness of my enemy. I am fortunate, Jesus saved me, the Holy Spirit guided me. God won! Let the flock gather and break the bread and share the cup.

I was able to attend a Bible Study program by Jeff Cavins and have used them to teach my children. My son who is 18 years old likes going to church because he understands what is happening in the Mass. He understands how important it is. And I feel so bad hearing stories from parents who are regular church-goers and who even serve in the church and yet have failed to teach their children and now, their children don't go to church anymore. Even if we live busy lives, there is nothing more important than knowing, loving and serving our God who created us.

For many involved in our discussion, we saw our school community as an important place of connection to our experiences of faith and the Church. We enjoy school Masses, as they are contemporary celebrations that involve young people. We appreciate homilies that are applied to the lives and situations of young people. We named songs, music and theatrical performance as important elements to enhance our experience and expression of faith. Learning about different religions and the principles of Catholic Social Justice have had a positive impact on our experience of faith. Taking part in excursions and immersion experiences, including to overseas communities, allow us to put our faith into action. Interfaith experiences have given us a deeper understanding of the role of spirituality in people's lives—and the similarities that we hold.

I am 80 years old and I carry the strong faith of my mother who immigrated to Australia in 1937. I grew up in a Church that was paternalistic, rigid and totally authoritarian. It ruled far more by fear than love. It was a severe, dark Church with immense power and it projected this power through (mostly) grim male leaders.

I have participated in my local parish's Justice, Peace and Integrity Group (JPIG) whose committee is bringing social justice and care for our earth into action. It is relating the clauses in Laudato Si' to life in our local community. Actions to date include, a recycling program, regular egg collections for Foodbank, conducting workshops on issues including sustainable food production, farming, genetic modification and waste management as well as reflective sessions on Laudato Si'. These have been uplifting and connect my faith with the contemporary world.

I have seen many people leave the Church because they are outraged by the crimes committed by clergy and the inaction and cover ups that have occurred. People are blaming God for this behaviour but I know that God, our Lord Jesus Christ, committed no crime. I am sure God weeps at the sight of these wrongs being done. It is up to us Catholics to repair the damage and put the pieces of trust back together by showing that we too weep for all that has happened and we plan

to take steps so that it never happens again. I know some people are just looking for a chance to leave the Church anyway and this just gives them an excuse. However, if we are a loving, caring community who is transparent in how we do things, then perhaps this will be an incentive for more people to stay or join us.

Seeing many people see, judge and act in accordance with "Love One another " message. Just plain good people acting with compassion and treating others with dignity and respect. They, rather than our earthly Church leaders, have provided me with strength to keep the Faith.

Some outsiders view Catholics as brainwashed into feeling guilty about sex, our sexuality, our bodies, etc. I didn't like this 'summary' of my faith but is it that far from the truth? It's hard to come back with a simple answer.

The wisdom of our older parishioners has much to teach us. One parishioner points out how she was given faith: "The faith passed on to me through the faith of parents, community, keeping the commandments, and the various feasts. Catholic education was passed on by nuns who are great believers! Other great role models in the Church help. The Second World War and other tragedies happened yet our Good God was with us, helped us and saw us through." Another describes her faith: "My faith became much stronger when my husband passed away. This helped me overcome my grief and my prayers became daily. I really feel I belong to my Church and think of it as my home." Another woman's marriage built her faith: "My husband died a few years ago. He and I had a very happy marriage. Our strong faith and love of God helped us greatly. I thank God for all the blessings we both received on the day of our wedding. We need to love one another as God has loved us." One man describes how faith was a gift through the Mass: "I lost my faith when I was 21 and came back at 38. Through the parish school's sacramental program my wife became called back to religion and decided to go to Mass again. I resisted, but attended my child's First Communion, just to "keep the seat warm." At the first Mass I went to, when the priest held up the Host at consecration, in my mind I saw an electric thunder bolt which struck my heart. I knew that I had to come back to God, and that all Church teaching was Good News. Later I came to understand that Jesus was in the thunderbolt and He has stayed with me since." Our parishioners recognise what has happened in our own midst and in other parishes: "The victims of abuse and their families have been very poorly treated—there is much to make up in this area. It is a shocking story."

The Catholic Church through the Neocatechumenal Way has been the catalyst for me to be formed in a post baptismal formation to fulfil my Christian vocation.

My faith has been nurtured through charisms such as The Focolare movement, Opus Dei, Emmanuel and the Latin Mass Community. I appreciate the opportunity to receive the sacraments within our local parishes but lament the lack of depth and reverence of so many of our diocesan priests—formation in the faith does not come from our parish or school because those teaching either don't believe it or lack the skills and knowledge to teach properly. Our kids see a sloppy Mass said enough times, so the value of our tradition becomes lost. We know from basic memory training that various acts and gestures can help one recall or understand a concept better. Hence, genuflection, blessing oneself, bowing before receiving Communion etc, are acts that point to and remind us often of deeper concepts such as the True Presence and the Blessed Trinity. When our

priests say a deeply reverent Mass and adhere to these gestures, the greater the reminder for the faithful. When our priests don't bother to genuflect when they pass the tabernacle, are super relaxed in how Communion is distributed etc., the meaning behind these things is lost further till our young people can't see the point at all. In my experience, the Church is alive thanks to the practices and dedication of priests and Religious who are devout and hold true to Catholic teaching.

I was lucky enough to have my faith nurtured by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. I still have vivid memories of the little two-room country school in [ - ]; hot in summer, freezing in winter, packed to the rafters with an assortment of kids across multiple grades. The Sister who taught me, in hindsight, was probably quite young but under her voluminous habit, who could tell? This young woman, without any modern technology, managed to impart truths that I have never forgotten. On one particular occasion, one of the "poor kids" came to school with a gaping hole in the seat of his pants. Modesty was at stake and needed to be dealt with. Sister leant him over her knee and very carefully (for obvious reasons) proceeded to patch the pants. She made no fuss, she dealt with it as if it happened every day and the child in question was given a "Barley Sugar" for his bravery. I was left with an impression of witnessing a simple act of kindness and I still feel "warm and fuzzy" when I think of it. Was this the way the poor, sick and lame felt when they encountered Jesus? I like to think so.

My experience of faith happens haphazardly, not always in church but in many other walks of life. It is in the coming together with other people and the opportunity to help out when needed.

Yes, I am inspired by the Catholic Faith in all its eternal, universal, unfathomable and profound Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Virtue.

Experience has shown me that beautiful (even if simple) liturgy inspires reverence and devotion in young and old alike. Why have we been deprived of Benediction? Why do so few parishes offer Eucharistic Adoration (The few that do are thriving!)? Why is there no Catholic institute of higher learning in Australia which offers courses in fine liturgical music? Are we, as a Church and nation, so financially and culturally impoverished that we cannot establish a higher standard of parish worship (which is sometimes abysmal)?

When I was at school, a teacher told me that the stuff about the Blessed Virgin Mary was not true, she told us, "Of course, we don't really have to take these things literally, Mary probably wasn't a virgin and probably had other kids". Being very confused, I came home and asked my parents. They were horrified that this was the attitude and took it up with the school. The point is, Catholic Education has been broken for generations. If you don't address it now then it will continue until it just falls apart and becomes just another breeding ground for political conquest.

Having been brought up in a Catholic family, and educated by Nuns of St Joseph and Christian Brothers, I realise I am very fortunate. My close association with the Catholic Church has been with trustful and loving people. I have no knowledge of any friend who suffered sexual abuse which is currently in focus. I believe I am part of a vast majority of Catholic people.

I am afraid of people knowing I am Catholic. I am afraid that I will be branded a paedophile, homophobic and sexist. That is how my religion is represented in this nation. I wear a medallion of the Blessed Virgin around my neck because I am concerned that a cross would too easily identify me as a Catholic. I do not talk of Mass, or Jesus. I take Holy Days of Obligation off from work so I don't need to explain to colleagues why I am fasting, or leaving early (to go to Mass). I also feel that I am alone in my faith. I do not have a community with whom I can talk about my faith or the issues facing the Church. Everyone at Sunday Mass is 20-40 years older than me, so I have no friends at Sunday Mass. I grew up with many friends who were baptised, but turned away from the Church, or God entirely. They are not comfortable talking of the Church. Overall my love of God brings me joy, but my experience of the Church brings me fear and isolation.

My greatest and most lasting experiences have been through witnessing people stand up to their faith against all odds.

I have experienced Antioch in [ - ] in 1980's, as adult leader, became State Co coordinator, organized events for 100's of youth and adults. After being very involved in [ - ] parish of [ - ], completed religious studies then Diploma of Religious Education. When we moved to [ - ] in 1998 I have been on parish council in [ - ] and in [ - ]. I have attended many Youth and Diocesan Events including World Youth Day 2008 and have been Religious Education Co coordinator in [ - ] and [ - ]. I attended 3-day Pray 2010 National Conference and National Music leader Conference in [ - ]. I have attended many Women's Retreats, 2 Catholic Guy Women's Heart National Conferences. I have organized many parish events for youth, children and women and 4 years ago, have created a Women's Network for ladies in the [ - ]. I also attended Proclaim Conference last year which was fantastic and felt that the Church leaders are ready to listen to the needs of Catholics who both attend and don't attend Church. I always remember Archbishop Rush of Brisbane who said in 1992 to the laity and young people "You are the Church, make changes and don't wait for the leaders to make changes." I pray that the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who has led us this far, are not stopped by conservative Church leaders. It is essential that not only the voices of the people are heard, but concrete changes are made to revive the dying Catholic Church in Australia.

I value all the organisations formed by the Catholic Church that help others. I value the group—Catholics for Renewal—which is endeavouring to encourage the Catholic hierarchy to listen and to change.

My mother decided to be a Catholic in her early adult life. She brought up all her children as Catholic with my Catholic father. Half of us still attend Mass most weeks. We all still live the word of Jesus in terms of trying to live a life of non-judgement and the belief that all people are equal. We are all extremely social-justice focussed. I think my Catholic community is a beautiful and support faith community. I have been blessed with excellent priests like Fr [ - ] who I feel have truly shown their faith through their actions in our community. I have been blessed to be a Catholic because of what these communities have offered me. At times I am not entirely at one with the rest of the Catholic family (e.g. some right-wing focus, no gay marriage for Catholics in our faith, no women priests). At times, I agree with my mother who said "I am Catholic inspite of the white-haired men at the top". I certainly do appreciate changes in the Church such as giving all priests permanent permission to grant absolution to those who confess to having procured an abortion. I feel that the Church needs to consult more with the lay people. The people who are

going to Mass each week, volunteering for St Vincent de Paul, who are being looked at strangely because people find out they go to Mass each week. This is where the answers lie, not with the "white-haired men" at the top.

As a whole, we are grateful to the Archdiocese for the various ethnic migrant communities which provide a faith community for us to belong to, to worship in our own language, and to forge lasting friendships. The Australian Church has many Catholic schools where our children can attend and receive a good Catholic education.

I was inspired by the genuine joy in family life such as lively discussions and family gatherings shown by my partner's parents and extended family who are Catholic. This strengthened my faith.

I have been lucky to experience the power of youth ministry first hand. It was the work of youth ministers in my school and parish that gave me the spirit to join youth groups and communities which allowed me to become the actively practicing Catholic and active youth minister I am today. Youth ministry is incredibly important and is being addressed by many to be a number one priority, yet I have also seen the opposite with spirited young people wishing to develop youth ministry in their parish being shut down and told otherwise. There needs to be more opportunities and structures in place to 1. Allow young people to gain the training and formation needed to be a youth minister, 2. Be supported in youth ministry development within a parish or school and 3. Long term initiatives to allow youth ministers to move onto something once their time is finished.

- One positive experience of how we own our part in an emerging Church of relevance and consistency is through our current parish priest, who time and again translates the message of the Gospel to the modern Church in a relevant and practical way. Through his daily interactions and welcome of all people, and through his words and homilies, he informs living the message of the Gospel in our daily lives and how we can enable others to experience love. Recently for example, he spoke at Mass about the Gospel on 'turning the other cheek' (Luke 6:39-45). As our pastor, he highlighted how we should treat one another according to the words of Jesus. He then shared that he did not have all the answers, and invited us to think about how we ourselves would translate the Gospel here to our real lives – and think about the difference between forgiving, being true to our God-given nature versus allowing ourselves to be treated as a doormat.
- Another positive experience was shared by a woman whose husband had come across a homeless man in the park whilst walking their dog. He spoke to the homeless man but had felt awkward and unsure of how to approach him or what to say. When he shared this with his wife, she encouraged him and went with him to chat, give him a meal and hot drink. After this experience, her husband has more confidence to approach a homeless person and treat them as a 'normal person' to have a chat with, which he often does.
- Another positive experience of putting our faith into action could be seen in one member's experience of delivering Christmas food parcels for SVdP. It has been their experience that what they received back in love, joy and appreciation far outweighed what they gave in material goods.
- A negative experience for one member is the sadness that has come with witnessing close family members moving away from the Church because of the Church's refusal to act appropriately in the context of today's world and all the negative publicity and sadness that comes with this.
- We also reflected on some negative experiences named by different members of our group. It must be acknowledged that

there was different levels of support and agreement around some of these issues which include but are not limited to abuse scandals, perspectives on IVF, divorce and gender issues. These issues, when not addressed in light of current society, serve to make our Church irrelevant and divisive, rather than inclusive and just, which is the core message of Christ and the Gospel.

OUR FAITH JOURNEY: A Listening Church (Please refer to the attachment for story details) 1. Phil: A Story of Healing, A Story About the Presence Of God in Daily Life 2. Rita: A Story Of How Our Religious Help Shape Our Faith 3. Yolanda: A Story of Two Miracles 4. Bill: A Story Of A Great Witness Of Faith 5. Charles: The Struggles Of A Faith Journey 6. Christiana: Starting In The Faith While Young; The Influence of Schools On Our Children 7. Roni: A Story Of How The Family, School, parish Influences Faith 8. Fr Peter: A Story of Living the Faith Through The Church; Bridging The Gap

Because of my age I did have a very thorough and sound education of the faith in my primary years. When in the early 70's when we were raising our own children, I became aware of some of the negative aspects of the programs offered to children in Catholic schools so prepared our own children for sacraments at home. This early introduction to the faith has stayed with the majority of our children into their adult years and they are now passing the Faith onto their own children.

As part of a team of couples who present a Marriage Preparation course in a [ - ] parish, I have found nearly 60% of couples who are not practicing, in an anonymous survey, that they intend to go to confession before their wedding after hearing a detailed explanation of the sacrament. So many people are so ignorant of this wonderful sacrament.

My parish was a dying parish at the end of last century. Now, it is a vibrant parish with all kinds groups and activities: youth, young adults, preparation for all sacraments (RCIA, infant baptism, First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Matrimony, etc), Masses and celebrations for several ethnic groups, Bible and Faith talks, classes and courses.

Simply, the parish community is where we have our closest friends and where we know we can find willing support if needed.

Before [ - ] and [ - ] got married, and while [ - ] was still a non-Catholic, they had been out cycling one day and stopped by at a Catholic Church to pay a visit to the Lord. After the visit, [ - ] said that he had shuddered while inside the Church as he felt that Someone had been watching him. This snippet highlights the importance of enabling parishioners to remember the Real Presence of the Lord in the tabernacle through frequent Exposition and Adoration.

OUR FAITH JOURNEY: (Please refer to attachment for story details) 1. TONY: The story of a revert. 2. TESS: The story of a single mother. 3. LAUREL: The story of a convert. 4. RONI: The story of a cradle Catholic being inspired by converts. 5. RAY: A story of healing 6. CORRINE: The story of a miracle healing through the Blessed Sacrament.

When I was in high school, the brothers told us that Catholics were very fortunate. At the time the medical practices of psychiatry and psychology were growing and the brothers told us that Catholics would never need such medical services as we had Confession. Years later, as part of our Deanery Leadership Team, I was becoming concerned that a number of us were taking Holy

Communion to elderly people who were suffering mental health issues—depression, cognitive impairment, dementia and Alzheimer’s—but the Church provided no training in how to deal with the many difficult situations we faced each week. Accordingly, I arranged various training programs over several years to provide Eucharistic Ministers to the Sick and Elderly with the skills we needed. In this regard, I met several psychiatrists and psychologists who informed me that Catholics were a large part of their practices. For most of their lives, the patients had been told over and over again by their priest that they were sinners. This had become so implanted in the mental processes that even the slightest inappropriate thought sent them into a state of anxiety that they had sinned. This is yet another form of abuse by the clergy—not intentionally but the consequences are severe.

Community and a sense of belonging has shaped us. Memories of social gatherings and also mission and purpose. We need to know our mission and purpose in the world and then the focus will be on the mission ... the doing part! We are losing our sense of fun and belonging and this is reflected in the secular world also. We need to build community again.

We are a group of staff at the [ - ] Social Services who have a variety of engagements with the Church. Many who have disengaged, some who struggle on in their engagement, as well as those who persist in faith. We share a common desire to live out faith with others—and competing desires to hold the Church accountable for its actions and to simply walk away and forget the Church—and some seeing engaging with this process as simply trying to give CPR to a dying creature, yet still being willing to engage.

Unfortunately, paedophilia is not the most damning aspect of today’s Church. Low or non-existent attendance. There is a well-known mutual help group that encourages spiritual growth. When potential new members attend, a phrase is read out in the welcome. "Though you will hear mention of God, this is a spiritual not a religious program".

A migrant Australian's perspective: This is my personal story but I think it would resonate with all Catholic migrants, especially those from the Third World, where spirituality and religion are a great part of the social and cultural set up. To keep it brief, my family and I come from a tropical country with over a dozen varieties of banana, coconuts, mangoes etc. We also come from a state where our faith is very charismatic, vibrant, colourful and noisy even! In addition, it is a place still where the visible Gifts of the Holy Spirit can be witnessed, action packed, in healing, deliverance, miracles, knowledge, visions and power filled prayer! I personally felt I was living in Apostolic times! In strange circumstances, we migrated to Australia and landed in a parish where the parish priest was an introvert and a Theologian and sadly a man of few words ... After attending my first Mass and eating what I thought then was an absolutely tasteless banana, I cried out to The Lord, saying "What is this place You have brought me to!" The levels of reverence within the Church and the preaching were a big culture shock to us. That was 20 years ago! We actually came to love our parish priest so much and even managed to get him to laugh! Our story and God's plan unfolded as our parish priest/the church in [ - ] and people of the parish community taught us so many things we don't get to learn in Third World countries, either because of a lack of resources or because of different rites and not having a uniform structure within the churches. God gave us employment in the Catholic Heart of [ - ] and we were spoilt for choice, between, the Carmelites, The Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Jesuits. We became true "professional Catholics"

learning more about Catholicism, the Catechism, correct interpretation of Scripture etc. Above all, we found our parish/Catholics from all over [ - ] so warm and so welcoming, that it was joy for us and our children to go to Church! We learned to clean and care for the Church and belong to a great community of believers! We truly felt part of the great Universal Church, living in [ - ] and we still do so! Though everyone around was not as "crazymatic" as us and are still not, in these years we have had the best of both worlds, with many migrant preachers, teachers and counsellors welcomed in [ - ]. The opportunities for growth and development, the support and friendship we have received from the Catholic Church in [ - ] has been priceless. We have had our (small) hurts too, it has but a large part of our coming to spiritual maturity and accepting, living and working with all kinds of people in God's beautiful world. My family and I and many migrants we know, think we are in the best possible place on God's earth and we hope by His Grace to contribute greatly to His Church in Australia.

I feel many people don't attend to these surveys, because they feel they won't be listened to anyway. Please take all submissions seriously—even if you don't have the answers, acknowledge that you have heard the questions, and they will be considered carefully. My experience is that the numbers at Sunday Masses are rapidly diminishing. I have assisted with Music Ministry for 30 years as an unpaid volunteer, I have tried to encourage the younger generation, but there are no new people coming through the ranks. Can the Church consider offering music scholarships at the local level to encourage involvement and growth??

I became a Catholic just before I migrated here. It was my good fortune to be amongst people who held discussion groups about their faith in the light of Vatican 2 (1968). When I moved away, I met friends who would have lively discussions about the Gospel and latest religious books. They always impressed me with living out their beliefs. One lives amongst a struggling Aboriginal community and being active and a presence there for many years. Another has gradually led an increasingly simpler life and is becoming more and more concerned with peace, justice and the environment. These friends were not uncritical people. They have helped to keep me going to shape my faith. I meditate and have been to Bible study groups on and off but will always read the readings of the day.

I became Catholic over 40 years ago I believe I have still made the right decision and I pray that you will too.

I am a practising Catholic, mum of seven young adults, wife of a most loving husband (with a Masters in Theology), daughter of the most wonderful devoted deceased parents and from big family of seven, but I have been broken repeatedly and shocked as the scandal of sexual abuse continues to unfold. • By the news that my profoundly intellectually disabled sister had been sexually abused in State run institutions. Placed into care at [ - ] years and dead at [ - ]." Place in care" was the best for her, my mother was told! We brought her home after [ - ] years and fierce battles with the state, we couldn't sue for what we discovered too late, melanoma. [ She ] suffered repeated sexual and physical abuse, including two broken legs at one time! At times she displayed aggressive behaviours, now I know why. We sued the state for her untreated Melanoma—we were told we could not sue for the sexual and physical abuse she suffered in the institution. They had not bothered to tell us till too late. We had always visited her on a regular basis but the melanoma was out of our sight. [ She ] is our inspiration. Though she could not speak—she was

perhaps the age a one and half year old—she taught us the most valuable lessons in life. Unconditional loved, cared and fought for her- as we struggled for justice for her. We nursed her at home till close to her end and were told she had to go to a hospice which we dreaded - another institution! However, the beautiful staff never saw a disabled person, they told us they saw a courageous woman, one that was dying with the most loving and committed of families. Just before she closed her eyes, I will never forget the most loving of eyes that we shared, it was as if I saw God. As I sat with a priest a few days after [ she ] died, and with my siblings around, I knew I had been with Christ at the foot of His Cross. She was innocent and had suffered so ... • Rocked by brother's news that he revealed to us just a few years back at 56. He had been sexually abused by a [ - ] Brother repeatedly as a young pubescent student in [ - ]. Part of his story is attached. He is an amazingly strong man, one of the survivors but the damage has been profound. As sisters, we are truly devastated to the extent. It was a religious brother most of us remember! This has rocked us all, so few understand the implication on one's life, the anxiety he suffers. Thank God, my brother has survived and strong today but he knows of those who suicided • By the recent revelations of Cardinal George Pell that has rocked and polarised our Church and family. My brother's -survivor- response, to this he wants heard is attached. I loved my Catholic family and Marist upbringing at [ - ] College . Most of our children are involved with the [ - ] community today and have wonderful community spirit . My Brother was a [ - ] Brother but left and whistle-blew when he discovered their dysfunction and abuse in more ways than one.

I have been a part of parish life for the past 20 years, 17 of which have been involved with preparing adults for the sacraments of initiation. I have had an up-close view of how the Holy Spirit is continuously drawing people from diverse backgrounds and faiths, to the Church.

I have been a faithful practicing Catholic for 59 years. I have attended Mass each Sunday for that time and see myself as an active member of the Church community. I'm ready to walk away ... the reason is not only the current abuse crisis but what has led to this ... a trend towards a conservative Church particularly in Australia where we have an inward-looking hierarchy more interested in their own power than how the Church can serve its parishioners. A Church that does not welcome diversity or women. I work in a hospital ... there is no longer a Catholic pastoral care worker ... it can be difficult to get a priest to do a baptism particularly in an emergency ... the Church needs to look at how such issues can be addressed. Why do most priests have Mondays off? Why isn't there a central number to phone in case of emergency? How can we offer services to people who only engage the Church at certain times of their lives? It should be with open arms, not with disdain and lack of service because they are not regular Church attenders.

I would like to share two experiences of the Church which have shaped me. The first was a positive one. Rev. Father [ S ] from [ - ] parish, [ - ] helped me to keep my faith. I could easily have been led astray by my high school friends even though I went to an all-girls Catholic College. However, Father [ S ] was like a father figure to me who kept me on the right path. He was a humble man who had so much love for Jesus, the saints and the Church. He encouraged me to go to World Youth Day and there I encountered Pope John Paul II. The Pope really set my heart on fire for Jesus and His Church. This experience encouraged me to learn more about my faith and actually strive to practise it rather than just to turn up to Mass on Sunday. After this experience, I understood it is vital that we must put our faith into action hence volunteering for many pro-life

organisations and helping the homeless. The second experience is a negative one. In stark contrast to Father [ S ], the priest who was my lecturer at [ - ] University, [ - ], rocked my faith and made me question whether any of what I had been taught was real, by constantly suggesting that any interpretation of the Bible was acceptable. At no point did he refer to the Church's role as the authoritative interpreter of scripture and he basically left every person in the room with the impression that any interpretation of the Bible was valid and there was no objective truth. The fact that he did this in a compulsory subject for religious accreditation to teach in Catholic schools, is another example of how the Catholic education system is actively working to destroy the faith of future generations and its existing teachers. Everyone was left confused and no one was any wiser as to how to teach primary school children the Catholic faith after having done this course. The only impression we were left with was that anything could be questioned and questioning should be encouraged but there are no right answers. This idea that there are no right answers is ridiculous and is completely contrary to what is set out in the Catechism. In other subjects, we teach children to question and then provide them with answers. The idea that we should teach children to question their faith and then say there are no right answers is crazy.

I love my Catholic faith and draw great comfort from it. I am desperately disappointed in our current Church and what I feel is hypocrisy with all of the abused.

When I was in a Catholic primary school the nuns taught that only people baptized into the Catholic (Roman Catholic) Church could enter into heaven. My mother was a convert so all my aunts, uncles and grandparents on her side were Church of England etc. I could never reconcile that a loving God or Christ could exclude good souls from heaven based on which religious affiliation they had. I could understand exclusion of evil, or even those who had done wrong but not good, Christians of another Church or even another faith such as Islam or Hindu etc. That position I took at this young age has formed much of my outlook of how I practice my faith. As a 14-year-old, I proposed that hypothetically there had been an 8th day in creation—the day in which man sought to create God in man's own likeness. This was my analogy of how religions developed interpretations of faith that controlled their followers and excluded others as well as giving tacit approval for some of the atrocities which had been carried out in God's/Allah's/Buddha's etc. name. Not much in the many years since has happened to dismiss that illustration from my psyche. The difficulty is what is God made of and what is manmade? I look to what Jesus said in the Gospels as the basis and question all other teachings that have followed, using that basis as the measure of appropriateness of other laws of the Church.

Nurtured in an Irish Catholic family, with a disabused, ex altar boy father; returned active serviceman; who was angry at the Church. Mother, grandmother, great aunt (parish sacristan) were huge influences. Catholic education with Josephites, who invited this daily Mass goer to join! Mercy Nuns in secondary - YCS leader - YCW Leader. Answering the call to other Catholics who were saying "there has to be more than this" but nothing on offer from the Church. So I was running 4 groups a week in my home discussing and searching for a connection with the message of Jesus in the 70's!! (A new parish priest asked who gave me authority!!!) This led to Theological studies at [ - ] in the 70's. I wanted to offer them more. A rather unique (and very small) group of women in my study cohort!! Only one other lay woman—the rest, nuns. B Theol studies. This engaged me with a group of wonderful men preparing for priesthood (on the same campus)—

those left are good friends). Only two, I believe of my friends, are still serving as priests. The rest left. I can, without fear of error, say they all left because of the abhorrence of the clericalism they too were living with. Pell was the ultimate! Celibacy had its place in their decisions and also, the rejection of female leaders in the Church, played a great part in these priests' life experience and their willingness to continue in leadership in the Catholic Church. I was a member of the forum in [ - ] for the RCIA for several years and invited to speak with seminarians and lecture students (grad and masters) studying a unit on RCIA. Currently I have been working in an all-boys school for 33 years. For the past 14 years I have served as Chaplain to 1200 students. I work every Sunday as a Catechist for a Sunday School Group, preparing young people for Confirmation. This is a great hardship under the current parish priest [ - ], who obstructs our work to exercise his power whenever he finds an opportunity and can make it difficult. He came into our parish and sacked all the people who had built and worked for our community for 40 years - but worst of all, the young people we had nurtured to be our leaders today and tomorrow. He is a proud and arrogant man who displays no real love for anyone - only acknowledgement from those who will be subservient. The irony is that he was pup in the seminary at the same time I was studying. We referred to his group as the 'soutane brigade' as they already displayed their allegiance to being identified as "clerics" not as people of service. They were ordained and even now, I am the victim of that. What is really frightening, is that this has become under Pell and Hart, the norm that is destroying Catholic [ - ]. I am hanging on by a thread and the most amazing living saint, who had guided our community and still holds it together, (by a thread also) is the only reason this man could claim our parish is living. God help us-you don't!

Yes. All of my working life I devoted myself to the service of the people of God. I have worked as a Catholic Primary School teacher and principal, as a volunteer in a Retreat and Conference Centre, as a parish and school religious education coordinator, as a Pastoral Associate, as a Pastoral Leader, as a Grade 2 (or Senior) Pastoral Associate and as a Deanery Resource Coordinator. This has often been at great personal cost, such as when I was being underpaid, without a pay raise for 8 years, or when only part-time employment was available. At the same time a lot of money and effort went into upgrading my theological and ministry qualifications. A priest I worked with was charged with sexual abuse triggering PTSD and depression. I lost the ability to focus enough to finish my final essay for a Masters in Ministry. I was recommended by an Archdiocesan employee to go to Carelink and was put into a situation that was counter-productive. This is a part of a longer story. Last year, no longer being employed within the archdiocese, I sought closure through the archdiocese for the ways this had all negatively impacted me and my life. This was a drawn out, unsatisfactory process. To my dismay, I found out that what I was asking for had been misrepresented and misinterpreted. I received an instantly depressing letter from a top archdiocesan bureaucrat. It did not all accord with the truth of the situation and seemed to be about the archdiocese accepting any responsibility and implied that the parish was the responsible body. This despite the fact that the signature on my contract was that of the parish priest who had been appointed by the Archbishop. The letter seemed to be economic and legalistic in nature rather than moral or ethical and was an absolute slap in the face when I had expected to be heard with mercy, compassion and justice. I know there are probably others, less vocal, who have not sought closure when they have felt they were betrayed by the Church. I wonder to how many others the Church has shown its closed legalistic, self-protective face and

how many of these have walked away despondent. I have struggled to remain loyal to the Church as it increasingly becomes more painful to do so. I pray that in the future it will be filled with followers of Jesus the Christ who live loving, compassionate, merciful lives and treat themselves and others justly.

I grew up in India in a Catholic family and community. Daily Rosary and weekly Mass was non-negotiable. There was no scope to question. The youth of today are taught to question and this is what our children have been doing since they were quite young. Both went to Catholic schools but neither attend Mass. They find it boring and hard to understand. They prefer a multifaith Church where people of all faiths come together to praise / worship as a community. They question why regular Church goers do not behave in a Christ-like manner - they have experienced family members not talking to each other for years, or speaking ill of people, or not doing good works for the poor or marginalised, or making judgements about sexual orientation even though it is not something that can be helped. They question why the Church does not accept same-sex marriages between two people who love each other, when they have seen heterosexual marriages break up and endure family violence. My husband and I are very involved with our Church community but our children's questions have led us to question ourselves and we do not feel equipped to answer them with any certainty. There is no black and white anymore.

When my parish priest refused to perform my marriage because I was marrying a non-Catholic, I knew my priest was just a man, and could be wrong. I asked for God's help and His will was done, married for 40 years and with God's blessing, many more to come.

Being the age I am, a child of the fifties and sixties I attended traditional Catholic primary schooling (Nuns) and secondary schooling (Brothers) and while I was never exposed to any form of abuse, I have come to know of persons who were. My memories of adolescence are generally of happily following my faith without too much question. However, I always had the fear of the consequences of sin (Do others remember those horrible 'Missions' we were subjected to—Fire and Brimstone) and acted accordingly. Would I have acted differently without such fears? Who knows? As I still continued to practise my faith, I developed a more mature and open understanding of it, such that allowed me to participate in many parish activities with a group of faith like-minded friends. It is these great friendships that I treasure so dearly now.

I have been very blessed to be the father to 9 children, that is an experience of faith. That from nothing but the spark of God's grace and love comes forth an individual, that from all eternity has been willed to myself and my wife (and this world without end). That like the mustard seed, one-so small and vulnerable—can grow and develop into an instrument of God's grace. The limitless choices and paths that can be mentally calculated to be followed by this child of God's and through my feeble and fumbling attempts nearly all, hindering development, Our God blesses us abundantly with a faithful follower of Christ. A fellow companion on the journey back to Him who made us. Those experiences of faith reinforce again, again and again the great love He has for all men and women. I have a friend who became a priest. I knew him as a single man, he knew how to party and have a good time. A no-crap type of guy, quick to laugh and have a joke. Could laugh at himself and be the butt of the joke or as easily make sure someone else was! He was seeking and searching. {Truly a call to religious life is by the finger of God. The faithful community must cooperate and work with Our Lord in this for the good of all. So many do not see the joy of this

call but only the human side of our loss, because of the call}. Anyway, he joined up, we did not see each other for 10 + years. He came back to Australia for about 6 months and my wife, I and our family made a decision to attend his w/e Mass. I was inspired by his holiness in celebrating the Mass, his homilies, my children eager to be in his company, a true Man of Christ, fully embracing his call to serve Christ and also be true to his sexuality of being a man. Comfortable within himself, a leader of men, a true Father in the sense of his thoughtful nature to be a teacher and mentor and understanding the true nature of his call to serve the Kingdom. One Mass we arrived late. We arrived as he was reading the gospel. I stayed on and received the Eucharist with my family. After Mass we waited to catch up with him as we always did and see how things were going. He greeted us as always with a cheeky smile, his eyes alight and happy to see us. About 5 min later, he quietly asked if he could have a quick word and of course I was like "Sure". We moved to the side and he looked at me and said "You know [ - ], you will have to attend Mass again". I just looked at him, and inside I just felt love for this man of God, I truly felt loved. I had been late to Mass more times than I could remember all around the world and Australia in many, many cities and parishes and this was the 1st time in my life a priest had called me to task, the 1st time I had been late!!! I could not believe it, I think I started to laugh in joy! Man, he loves me! It changed my life and my family's. I can honestly say, from someone who was regularly late I have not been late since. If we are, we stay and go to another. To me that is a Father's love. That is Christ. Thank you.

My story is really about my fourth child and second son who came out at the age of eighteen. This was twenty years ago. At the time, a well-known Archbishop at the time was publishing hateful comments about the gay community and I wrote to him to explain that his comments were hurtful to our family in trying to come to terms with what had happened in our family. His response, when it eventually came five months later, was entirely unsympathetic. He was, cold, aloof and judgemental. Although that particular Archbishop is long gone, I have seen no change in the attitude of Church hierarchy towards homosexuality other than superficial platitudes. Fortunately, we have met many priests and nuns who do not share the hierarchy's views but, sadly need to keep their views secret. It is only through such people that we stay in the Church, but on our own terms ...

Yes, my family has been going to [ parish ] at [ - ]. The priests speak the truth and not sugar coating the truth to make it easier to digest. He says that we have to dress appropriately to come to Mass, to kneel down when it's time to kneel and to respect the Lord when going from right end to the left end. Simple things, yet unheard of in other churches. We need to teach the young ones to strive to be holy. The priests need to be holy and shepherd us! The parishioners need to be holy! We need to support each other to be holy! Don't give in to the secular world but be the light and salt!

I have spent the last 30 + years in full time ministry in the Church. I have never experienced as much disillusionment and despondency as I am seeing at the moment. Having been a survivor of sexual abuse myself (my father is now in jail where he belongs!) I know the devastation and trauma of no support, denial, defensive responses and active cover up by those in leadership of the Church. The lack of training, accountability and adherence to 'normal' standard was alarming. My father confessed to my parish priest what he was doing when I was 6 years old ... Nothing happened to protect me ... My father was taken off the acolyte roster for 3 months ... He went on

to continue to abuse me actively till I was 15. I reported him to the leadership of [ - ] Community when I was 18 ... They did nothing, actively discouraged my support person from going to the police, but they prayed for us, prayed with us and put me in a situation where I had to forgive ... Problem was he never stopped the abuse—with me, then my sister 3 years later and the 2 girls that were in the care of my family through family day care. None of these should have been affected if my parish priest, Elders in [ - ] Community and Fr [ N ] had actual been prepared to report and take a stand. But instead ... nothing. This is all a matter of public record via the [ state ] Supreme Court where they all testified (except [ N ] who was 'conveniently unavailable'). The impact on the lives of me and the other 3 and our families has been devastating. But it has been the completely inadequate reaction and response from senior leaders, priests and those in influential positions that is actually more devastating than the original abuse. "All it takes for evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing." This is so true now for the Catholic Church—it is finally time to be honest and start to rebuild. The times of secrets and lies are over. Otherwise, people will continue to just walk away. I want a future for the Church that I want to belong to. My husband and children do as well. At this stage, I don't know if that Catholic Church is true enough, honest enough, humble enough or repentant enough to be that Church. How the Catholic Church responds through the Plenary Council will dictate how the future unfolds. I would like to be part of the future shape of the Church. If my voice or participation helps, I would like to be an active participant in the Plenary Council. Thanks, [ Name, Contact Details of submitter ]

I grew up in a strong Catholic community and have experienced the transformational experiences of attending World Youth Days and the opportunity to learn about my faith, in particular our role as creatures within God's creation. I feel a connection with St Francis and nature in my life, work and travels. I hope to share this with others.

I have been incredibly lucky to have been surrounded by the positive aspects of the Church as my mother has worked for Caritas Australia for decades and I have seen the amazing work of many Columbian priests first-hand in Lima, Peru. I attended great Catholic schools and loved living at a [ - ] College in [ - ] during my university years. My 3 children attend Catholic schools and I am actively involved in reading, commentating and preparing the children's liturgy at our local parish. However, without such a strong background of positives, I fear my faith would not have survived. Really sadly, at the moment I feel ashamed to call myself a Catholic and never have I felt this before. I am a human rights lawyer and part of me wants to walk away as how can I justify being part of such a discriminatory and abusive institution, and yet the other part of me wants to start a revolution and make the Church become truly what it is meant to be, a Church that cares for all. Please change the Church as I want to be proud again of my Catholicism and to be able to teach my children that they too can be proud to be Catholic. At the moment my enthusiasm for teaching them about Catholicism is waning and I really need some great reforms in order to lift up my and my family's faith again.

1. Growing up in [ - ], there was always music in the Mass. The hymns were familiar and we had the words to sing along. It made my experience of the Mass positive. 2. Our family regularly said the Rosary together and we would occasionally meet with neighbours to say the Rosary. 3. Our parents took our family of 5 children to Mass each Sunday. 4. Young Mother's group at the local parish in [ - ] was very positive as I was living away from family for support .

I was raised as a Catholic, but from the age where I could decide if I wanted to attend Church, I stopped going. Firstly this was because women were never seen as equal to men according to both the Bible and the Church. It was also because I know that there were (and maybe still are) missionaries run by the Church in places in Africa. I am sure these missionaries did some very good work, but I know for a fact that they refused to give out condoms as the Church does not believe in contraception. This simple act of not giving out condoms put so many people at risk of HIV and I am so mad that the Church did this to people that needed their help! As I got older, and realised that I was gay, I decided that the Church was not a place that I wanted to go to as I knew it wasn't a place that I would be accepted. As I got older, I would go from time to time out of respect for my parents. Only last Saturday, I went to a service. It was during this Mass that I thought 'Why must we repent for our sins every single week? It seems like God thinks that we never do anything right. There is never a Mass about celebrating the achievements of the parishioners.' I totally understand that if you sin you should seek forgiveness, but to go every week (maybe more) for your life and to always seek forgiveness is damn tiring! In this Mass, the priest also informed us that there was a hand-out of the statements of the Archbishop and the Bishops Assembly on regards to George Pell, who had been found guilty the week prior. In neither of these statements (not was it mentioned in the Mass) did the Church admit any wrongdoing. I think that the leaders of the Church could have done a whole lot better. As I was saying, every week we must confess our sins, but why should we when the bishops can't even admit in a statement that Pell has been found guilty? This course of events has made me want to distance myself from the Church, but I want it to be bettered for people to come.

I am so sad and angry. All I want is to live with my life partner, another woman, enjoying the same rights as all other Australians. The institutional Catholic Church seems intent on denying to me and my partner the rights that everyone else enjoys.

As parents, we lamented that the parish we moved into when we married and moved into the area for the first time, was never a place where we were welcomed. The large community there is incredibly fractured and isolated, with a few large cliques and many other disconnected families. For years we tried to be the change we wanted to see—helping set up opportunities for meeting people and welcoming newcomers; working on projects whenever a call for volunteers was made. But sadly after 10 years in the parish, we accepted that change was not coming. Despite many promises from the parish priest, a parish mission and numerous workshops and meetings about the future of the parish, there was a clear lack of leadership and lack of focus. Our children hated attending Mass and they were not being educated in their faith at the parish primary school. Sacrament preparation was almost meaningless. We made the decision to say farewell to the parish. It has been one of the best decisions we have ever made. We have joined a beautiful parish, where we have all grown in our faith. Our children have grown immensely in their faith, regularly go to Reconciliation and they want to get to Mass early each week! As parents we no longer have to police our children at Mass, and we are able to focus and pray. We receive strong spiritual direction and caring pastoral attention from our parish priest and the assistant priest. We no longer feel alone in trying to equip our kids to value their faith even though their school mates don't. Each Sunday they see a parish where Jesus is worshipped with reverence, and they see other children who are committed to their faith. We wish all children had the opportunity to

experience a beautiful celebration of the Eucharist. What was it that made the difference for our children? A beautiful church building, traditional design with paintings, statues, beautiful windows; A priest who had a deep relationship with God and who exuded joy; A congregation who were quiet and respectful; Beautiful, yet simple music; No nonsense Mass, simply following the standard format and doing so without adding or subtracting or changing things each week; Catechism class after Mass and strong preparation for the sacraments. We are convinced that beauty has saved our family, and that beauty will save the Church in Australia.

I have been brought up in the Catholic Church all my life. My parents were always active in the local Church. They lived their faith not just on a Sunday, but all week, in actions and not just in words. I love the Catholic Church, but it needs to change regarding the first Australians and the way it sees mental illness. I suffer from depression and anxiety and I would like the Church to take a more compassionate view of mental illness and suicide.

Antioch youth to youth ministry was the way in the 80s and 90s, the basis of that or a similar model can give life again, perhaps driven in Catholic schools which are perhaps the only 'parish' our young people may ever experience.

Each of us who worked to put this together finds it unfair to single out one or two stories. In summary, however, it is about a journey of faith and the challenges from everyday life that can impact on that journey ... it stops, it starts, it slows down, it accelerates, at times it seems to nowhere and at other times we are overwhelmed by our work (especially as we worked through the Days In the Diocese 2008 and the parish support of asylum seekers and refugees).

The local Church has been a vital part of my life. I have received so much from my participation in the St Vinnies soup van. The faith dimension of my work in a Catholic school is an essential component of my work. In so many ways, I have been enriched by the experiences of my local parish. As I watch the hierarchy of the Catholic Church fail time and again to understand the magnitude of the sexual crisis or worse deny any need for the Church institutions to change, my faith remains buttressed by my participation in the 'local' Church.

I have developed my spirituality through contact with other faith traditions. Whilst I still consider myself a Christian, I would have never grown without experiencing the Other. Truly appreciate diversity and see it as part of God's plan.

I have always highly valued the Church teachings on sexuality and marriage. When someone close to me identified as gay, and told me his story of confusion, fear and grief at the realisation of what it meant for his life and for others in his life-with new vision and through a lens of deep love, I saw how wrong we can be to fear and condemn those with difference and how easy it is to judge from a place of fear. We need to see and welcome all we meet with the loving eyes of a God who has made each of us "in His image". We all need help to live our lives with integrity and love and we need an awareness of support from those around us. Sexual behaviour for all of us needs prudence and right judgement. This is a challenging area of outreach and Mission but we all have a lot to learn from those we may think are far from knowing how to live "the right way".

I have always followed my faith but it has been through my involvement with Charismatic Renewal and Marriage Encounter that I have been able grow and deepen my faith. I am

disappointed that our children have largely walked away from the Church even after they were educated at Catholic schools.

I think that health, social justice and education arms of the Church have always been very good ... I think in term of spiritual/parish life, it has been not great and sometimes hard to justify why should I continue to support and participate in that side. There are some very good people but poor management and leadership across the board is challenging. I do hanker for the past—when there was lot of social activity, bums on seats etc. I think it's time to move forward and modernise and make a different impact that not one based on guilt and rules and regulations ... This is where I see I am at as a result of where the Church in Australia is there now. The Church fortunately is all people so there [is] at least hope.

I'm a 37-year-old doctor and I facilitated the dialogue for this small group. During my training, I worked at a very busy tertiary centre where I was reprimanded for attending to more than my job description (e.g. calling the Greek Orthodox minister for a dying patient). I was told by my supervisor to "lower my expectations of what is achievable in the public system". At the end of my training, I moved to [ hospital ] in [ - ] where our mission is to bring God's love to those in need through the healing ministry of Jesus. On my first day our director of Mission said "don't be afraid to be kind to your patients". I was called to be a doctor, it's how I believe I do God's work. So this statement was both powerful and freeing for me. It gave me permission to care and to be the doctor I trained and was called to be. Shortly after starting, I looked after a prisoner with no family and a severe neurological disease. Realising that he had been arrested because of untreated mental health issues and lack of an advocate, we at [ hospital ] were able to become the people who cared. [ Hospital ] supported me to go to court to have the charges dropped and the hospital community stepped forward in support. He now lives in one of [ hospital ] 's nursing homes where he is happy and cared for. If this is not an expression of "bringing God's love to those in need" then I don't know what is. For me, my faith is as much in my everyday patient encounters as it is in participating in Mass with my parish community each week and [ hospital ] helps me to live out my faith. I'm writing this as I believe God is calling us to move to being a more active Church where the laity can live their faith through their actions. Where we can lead with love.

About 2 -3 years ago, a new priest (Fr [ P ]) was assigned to our parish [ C ] He noticed that we only had a little space for where we pray and ask for Mary's intercession, and that we only had a few statues of Her. Fr [ P ], slowly brought Mother Mary into the parish by first having installed Our Lady of Mercy (Pieta) in the courtyard of the church, that was a present from his previous parish. We then started praying the Rosary before Mass started on both weekdays and Saturday and Sunday. He also found statues of Our Lady of Grace and St Joseph. Our parish didn't just look lively, but you could feel it. My primary school, ([ - ], [ C ]), is a Catholic school. What I noticed though was that the catechism there was just what the teachers knew on top of their heads, and wasn't deep enough. Most of the teachers didn't even know how to pray the Rosary! It was only if you went to Church and knew your faith well, that you could go far in Religion. I learnt my Catholic faith from at Mass, my parents, and two youth groups. The first one is the Children and Youth of Mary, [ - ] and a bigger youth group MHCC (Mary Help of Christians Crusade) - [ - ]. There are 4 groups of MHCC; [ names of suburbs where MHCC groups are]. These are the ways I learn my

catechism and hardly at school. I also think we should make schools go to Mass at least once a week because some only just go once or not even once a term.

World Youth Day in the 90s and a generous [ - ] priest who taught young people the Catechism and to be informed about God, His Holy Word, venial and mortal sin and the truth of the Holy Catholic Church as the means by which God has chosen to make His Word known in the world. Young people need to know the treasures of the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church so they will not depart from it.

I am of a generation which has benefited greatly from Catholic education, in my case particularly through the Jesuits' critical intellectual approach, with a strong sense of social justice and encouragement to help others, to live out our faith, significantly influenced by the Vatican 2 reforms, and to become actively involved in our parish and wider community.

My Catholic secondary school, which had retreats, was a very valuable faith experience for me.

My experience of faith has been shaped by my parents, by good priests and by better liturgy. The holy Mass, when done right and reverently is the most powerful tool the Church has. Liturgy—good, reverent, solemn liturgy—has to be a focus for the Church and its future. Attending Mass with Fr [ - ] in [ - ] and now Fr [ - ] in [ - ] has taught me the power that good liturgy has. I have stood on the altar and watched as Jesus literally becomes present amongst his people and the reverence and solemnity that that demands is awe inspiring. The silence of the consecration, the incense and the attention, focus and prayer of a full church is an experience that you can get nowhere else in our society. It is what is unique about the Church and what demands priority and attention. Modern Catholicism is a mess of factional warfare and infighting, but the fact that in that imperfect human experience can come something so perfectly divine is the reason why we believe what we do. All of us. The truth is that there are multiple ways to achieve that reverence and beauty. What must be paramount is the respect and priority given to God present in the Eucharist. When liturgy distracts from that, or tries to convey political or other messages, it becomes a meaningless perversion of what is holy and good. We need to respect difference and embrace what makes us similar, while not being afraid to challenge people from any school or persuasion, be they liberal or conservative that aims to make the Mass about themselves or their own aims and not about God. At least in my opinion that strength in diversity and difference is what makes the Church strong and is its place in a changing world, with God at the centre.

Once, I studied alongside seminarians at CTC and was truly saddened by the account of one of them who was upset that he has been chastised by fellow seminarians and seniors for giving a little kid a high five while walking through [ - ]. The little kid had initiated the action. This is the horrible outcome of continuing to bury our head in the sand and not call a spade a spade. Our gospels talk about 'mill-stones' and drowning as punishment for these sins as well as the need to be childlike to enter the Kingdom. But we preach, apologise and negotiate compensation rather than listen, be compassionate, confess, repent and heal.

God has always been there for me even when I may have rejected Him at certain times during my life. He has welcomed me back and supported, especially when I have called to Him and asked for His help.

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.

Female religious have educated many Catholics. They have helped shape the Church as we know it. They are elders and respected by the Catholic community.

I am a second-generation Asian Australian. I have found and been nourished in my faith through the support of a number of close-knit faith communities: in particular a Latin Mass parish ([ W ]), a Catholic tertiary institution ([ C ] College), and a religious order (the Dominicans). While I could say much the same for each of these communities, for the sake of focus, I refer to my life as a member of the [ W ] parish: here I met dear friends and spiritual role models, was assisted in growing in virtue and in thirst for deepening my understanding of faith, grew for the first time to love the Mass, and most importantly, had a number of moving personal encounters with Jesus Christ, eventually giving me the courage to welcome Him in a deeper way into my life. This experience of community life was significant for me in part because I had spent a longer part of my life as an Australian Catholic feeling unwelcome and confused, feeling not only that I did not know or belong to a close-knit community of believers, but that this was the normal face of Australian Catholicism: such were the predominant memories from my Catholic secondary schooling and from parish Masses. On reflection, it seems to me that the reason I felt welcome and encountered the face of God in [ W ] (as with other places like [ C ] and the Dominicans) was its identity as an intentional (rather than simply nominal or cultural) community of faith. None of these intentional communities were in all respects attractive or even lacking in serious flaws (and some of them I have moved on from). However, my primary feeling is one of gratitude towards these faith communities, because despite their flaws they were communities of intentional disciples who incarnated a living body of Christ, a body I was tangibly grafted into.

I grew up in a single parent family where my mother practiced her simple faith and was a great witness to myself and my siblings. I had great respect for our priests. I went to Catholic schools and unfortunately was led to confusion in secondary school when my Religion teacher said that Hell didn't exist. I knew very little of my faith and started to believe the lies of this world. Fast forward to more recent times, actually in my forties, having children of my own and things haven't changed much and gotten worse and more heretical in Catholic secondary schools where my own daughter was told again in the teacher's point of view that Hell didn't exist. Another teacher said that Pope Francis approved same sex union, the school changed the uniform to suit a transgender teen instead of providing the student with the Truth as to why she wasn't the different sex. My ah-ha moment came a couple of years ago when I started to question the lies of this world and came across Catholic media such as EWTN that actually taught me the Truth about many things, but especially about my faith - finally. However upon this realization I felt I had been cheated out of a proper Catholic formation all those years prior.

Get rid of the homosexuals in the priesthood, ban Catholics from being Freemasons again, bring back the Latin Mass, bring back tradition. Direct parishioners how to vote in elections and have influence again in society. Stop watering down the Church doctrine to please degenerates and

enemies of the Church. Bring back headscarfs and sacred silence. No women leadership as the Bible forbids it.

We have had a great change in our parish following the appointment of a new parish priest who does not consult at all with his parishioners and who becomes angry at perceived interference. This has had a very negative impact on the parish. Many have left and the welcome and friendliness of the Sunday Eucharist has disappeared. This is very disheartening, as ours was an outward looking parish with a reputation for care. Representations to the Vicar General and local bishop have not helped us.

Born in a Catholic family in Poland, went through religious formation in the local parish during primary and secondary school. Later some occasional involvement in the Academic group as well. Joined the formation of the Neocatechumenal Way at the age of 25 with my wife; still happily married 34 years later and now in an NCW Community in [ - ]. Involved over the years as Catechist in the Way as well as in various ministries in the parish, e.g. Baptismal preparations, Advent/Lenten Programs, Music ministry (leading the Choir), assisting in the work of St VdP, assisting in various ways in the initiatives for Refugees/Asylum Seekers, Bible study group. The wide range of experience and exposure helps me put my faith and inspiration I receive from the Holy Spirit into use as mentor, guide, or just a brother in faith to broad circle of people in the parish, neighbourhood, work, as well as of course in the NC Community. In fact the NC Community has been like a "training ground" or relating to the other and gave me the naturally ability to apply the same attitude of care and acceptance to anyone, whether they are in the Way or not, or even in the Church or not. I would encourage the Church in Australia to utilise and support the formations like NC Way in order to build the Church as the true Community of Faith.

I'm Catholic since I was born, but in Australia I found something that I didn't find in my country Colombia or in Argentina where I studied and it's the life as a community. My husband and I started to attend the Mass in the Spanish community in [ - ] and we found all these beautiful things that St Paul said about the life as a Christian community. People that pray together for each other, that help the others in needs, that love each other even having sometimes differences. I have seen this a lot in migrant communities but also in Australian communities where everyone works together. This is a great example and makes me feel that we can still grow if the communities that are struggling to have people committed follow the example of the activities and things that they are doing.

The World Youth Day in 2008 has definitively helped shape the faith of the generation of the past decade, is was an incredible blessing to be a part of it. The ACYF opportunities that are available now for our youth, the first being held in [ - ] are a life changing gift to the Church of Australia also. We are so blessed to have this opportunity for students, who are the ones who will shape the future of our Church.

As a born and raised Catholic who attended a convent for the whole of my school life, I have been blessed to have had God in my life on whom I depend daily. I have also met some amazing priests and sisters who have helped me through difficult times and comforted me without judgement. Unfortunately, I have also met priests who are the complete opposite; they care about nothing but themselves and their business-run parish. This, along with recent events in the Church, both

locally and globally (which cannot be ignored), has made me look for God elsewhere. I am, thankfully with God's help, able to separate God from the 'institution of men' that is known as the Catholic Church.

[ - ] College – [ - ]. Random Plenary Survey Responses 1. What are some of the big questions facing young people in Australia today? I think that the big question facing young people is about their future. Teenagers are always worrying about their future jobs, so they often ask, 'Am I learning enough?', 'Will I pass my classes?', 'What do I do if I fail?' etc. 2. If Jesus came to Australia today what would He want to see? I think Jesus would want to see students learning about our Catholic religion. I think He would want to also see students spreading faith and visiting Church more often. 3. Why does having faith matter to you? Having faith matters to me because I know I have something that I can believe in, and I have Jesus to talk to and look up to and teach me. 4. If you were to belong to a community of faith, what would interest you in belonging? It would interest me in belonging if they would be welcoming and care for me. 5. What do you think God and young people hope for the future of the Church? I think God and young people hope that the Church welcomes many new members and that children enjoy Church more. Subject-plenary survey year [ - ]

Plenary Survey 1. What are some of the big questions facing young people in Australia today? - What am I going to study for in university? - What jobs can I get that pay well? - Where am I going to live after I move out? 2. If Jesus came to Australia today what would He want to see? Jesus would want to see peace and love. He'd want to see people following in His footsteps and doing good deeds that make Him proud. Jesus would want to see every religion, skin colour and gender getting along. 3. Why does having faith matter to you? Faith matters to me because I would like to have a good relationship with God and I have faith that there is always a new beginning at the end of life and up in heaven with Jesus. 4. If you were to belong to a community of faith, what would interest you in belonging? A relationship with Jesus and God and learning more about the Bible and its verses. 5. What do you think God and young people hope for the future of the Church? That more people will start believing in Jesus and God + Follow in his footsteps and become a good person that helps the community.

1. What are some of the big questions facing young people in Australia today? Why do kids go to school? Why does people get paid for doing something that they don't like doing? 2. If Jesus came to Australia today what would he want to see? He would want to see everyone looking happy and smiling and the environment would look nice and clean. 3. Why does having faith matter to you? Because always having a try is the best thing to do when stressing out about something and to always believe in yourself. 4. If you were to belong to a community of faith, what would interest you in belonging? Making the world a better place to stay in and to stop the violence and all the thin

I don't have a question, however, I do have a great concern and indeed a lack of hope for the future given the strength and power of clericalism in the Church.

In my previous submission I could not think of anything positive to say to this question. However, this morning I attended 2019 World Day of Prayer Service in our local [ M ] Church. It was inclusive, welcoming, respectful of all, joyous, compassionate, and I could go on. The Homily/Talk

given by a woman from the [ L ] Church was quite brilliant. A true story to start and then a call to all to open our eyes and hearts to recognise the suffering and help where and when we can. When hearts connect, God is present. It was a deeply moving simple service sharing the Word of God, singing hymns of praise and sharing fellowship. Christians together: one heart, one mind: God-with-us. For me it is one of the best Church celebrations of the year and I feel privileged to work on the local committee (a woman representing each Church) which joins the host (a woman) in planning and organisation. The local pastor was present and took part humbly and graciously. There was an apology from the [ L ] Church Minister but nothing from the Catholic Clergy. This event, its preparation and fellowship enliven my spirit, strengthen my faith in the loving God who loves, calls and welcomes us all and fill me with Hope. I'm glad now I could offer something positive. Praise our wonderful God! In my life, it is when the person with the 'power' (leader either high or low) is humble and welcoming that Grace is experienced.

##These days I am finding it hard to find a positive experience. More and more at the exclusion of women, particularly in language I simply stop joining in. Recently I attended Mass at [ - ] Cathedral, hoping to have a good, inclusive experience of liturgy. Instead, I was overwhelmed by the prominent male presence. I decided not to attend the Mass for Religious as I feared it would be the same and all the more glaring because it would be mainly women in the pews. I wait on and in the hope of the Holy Spirit as the barrenness of Church life is renewed. A positive experience is the changes that have been embraced and fostered. Each year calling us on further into where God is calling us: enjoying the journey while we wait for God to reveal the destination.

Australian Catholic Youth Festival really strengthened my bond with God as I was able to feel the shared joy from the youth. But also, tough experiences in school (while undertaking the VCE) strengthened it too.

I am just thankful for the wonderful Pre-Vatican II teaching I experienced through the Loreto Nuns of the 60s.

As a member of our parish for 45 years, 3 times on Parish Council and regular reader I was told by the deacon that my name had been removed from the list of readers as the priest had informed him that he could no longer say Mass while I was on the altar. We consequently left the parish. Many of the priests that I have worked with are vulnerable and need ongoing mentoring for their mental health.

The Catholic Church has significantly shaped my values.

Many years ago I had a chat with a Year 12 student at a boy's college in the Eastern side of [ - ]. He had a leadership position and was a serious student. He had a serious complaint about his RE education. He mentioned that he knew more about the other religions than about his Catholic faith. He was angry about this. When I asked him about mentioning this to the RE Co-ordinator, he replied: "What's the use! They don't listen". I spoke with a Vietnamese mother recently. The family immigrated to Australia years ago. The parents had their faith forged during the terrible times in Vietnam. In Australia, they reared their children to attend Mass and say the Rosary. They did. But their children have given all this up and became followers of the secular society. My wife was Polish. Her family suffered terribly during the Second World War with the Germans and the

Communist Russians. She married in Australia to her first husband and had only two children who died from cancers in their early twenties. She was furious with God but had recourse with Mary. She is a woman and she will understand, she would say. Like true Poles they were dedicated to Sunday Mass and devotion to Mary. Decades later we married. During the last eight years or so she suffered terribly and was in great pain. After many years she would say, "Now not even Mary seems to be listening!" We kept going to Mass, said the Hail Mary and when I saw that she did not wear the necklace with the image of Mary on it, I mentioned to her that Mary wants you to put the necklace back on. She was experiencing the absence of the Father as Jesus did. My parents and the three of us lived in a small hilly area near [ - ], Italy. We rented the farm which was about the size of two football fields. We lived on half the produce and the other half went to the landlady. Dad worked from about 5:00 am to after midnight most days of the week. Mum worked very hard looking after us born three and a half years apart. When all the housework and us was attended to, she went out to the fields to help dad. We lived during the Second World War. Because dad was one of the youngest in the family and there were older brothers already enlisted, the government directed that the younger ones return to the family to help the family survive. So it was. Like other immigrants we worked hard, went to Mass, saved money, bought a block of land and then built a house. However many forgot the fabric of society back in Italy. People were poor but they met at the piazza of a Sunday where there were community get-togethers. Where possible, people met in the stable where they shared experiences and laughter, organized assistance and played some games. There was social connectivity and contentment up to a point. Now in the 'land of plenty' we lost contact with each other, became more isolated, fat and sick. When I was at school, I became an altar boy and joined the Legion of Mary. Two of us used to go to the local gardens and asked ...

I believe in God, and I have been brought up a Catholic. However, I feel let down and really unable to trust this institution ever since I have found out about all the corruption, and lack of accountability with its flawed clerics. I feel that if I keep on practicing as a Catholic I'm supporting this abuse of power, and am condoning the past.

Many women felt unheard and undervalued.

Most of our group are Catholic but don't attend Church on a regular basis only for Christmas.

Faith must be nurtured and nourished by prayer and reflection. To have a good relationship with a person we have to show we care, are there for them, interested in them, loyal and responsive. Our relationship with God is no different. Make Him a real person in our lives.

My childhood home was considered a Catholic home. Mum took all five children to Mass every Sunday back in the late fifties, early sixties. Dad stayed home, he wasn't religious, but he didn't stop us going Mass or attending a Catholic school. We all received Baptism, Reconciliation (Confession), Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. But no family prayer together, I suppose because of Dad, though we did say our prayers each night before bed. I left practising my faith when I was nineteen, not because I didn't love God or my lack of faith, it was simply because my mother insisted I should go and I was being rebellious towards her, more than anything. Sort of cutting my nose off despite my face, crazy! Mum was very strict, harsh in many ways. So I went my own way, left home started work as a typist, living my life without God, and my faith. Met my husband, we

were married in the Catholic Church, because I knew that I wouldn't be married in the eyes of God, if I didn't get married in the Church, so [ husband ] agreed somewhat reluctantly, we went to see a priest before we were married a few times. [ Husband ] came from a similar home life. His Dad was the Catholic and [ husband ] and brothers went to Church every Sunday, but his Dad was an alcoholic so that caused many problems, his Mum was not religious. Anyway, we were blest with 2 daughters, I was happy with a loving husband and daughters yet something was missing ... In 1986, I had the TV on vacuuming the lounge room when Pope John Paul II holding hands with young people singing "Here I am Lord" at the MCG in Melbourne, just tugged at my heart, that is where I belong, that is what is missing in my life, so when my husband came home from work that night I told him I am going back to Confession. I can't remember if I told him why and what prompted this change of heart. Anyway I looked up the nearest Catholic Church, which was [ - ] and with trepidation went to Confession, Father [ - ] was so welcoming and what a weight was lifted off my shoulders, confessing my sins and receiving absolution. I went to Holy Mass that very night and received My Lord and My God in Holy Communion for the first time in approx. thirteen years and Oh! The peace and joy that entered my heart and soul was unbelievable. And I have been faithfully living my life ever since, drawing closer, and closer to dearest Abba, the beloved, Jesus and the Lord the giver of life, the Holy Spirit. But sadly for me, my husband never seems to want to change his life in any way now. We have been mostly happily married for 42 years this [month], [year] and I am still praying, and hoping and longing for his heart to be open to our God's loving touch. Sadly, heart breaking for me, our girls have followed in their father's footsteps and material things fill their lives the most. I keep praying ... not to get in God's way, longing for those I love the most in this world and God who I love the most of all could one day become friends.

Being brought up in the faith all my life. I actually learned my faith as an adult, throughout life's sufferings, turning to God, who guided me through reading scripture, and attending Catholic Charismatics prayer groups and retreats. God led me to discover that Catholic teachings are based on the teachings of Jesus. And as long as these are carried out in his Love, we are living the truth.

At the Plenary Council meeting held at [ B ] in [ - ] on [ month, year ] a 50+ year old married woman named [ C ] facilitated the small 6 persons group. [ C ] is actively involved in numerous [ B ]'s activities. I was shocked and dismayed to find this facilitator refused to note down my input on the grounds that in her opinion the other 4 group members did not agree with my response to Q1. She persisted to devalue my input and put herself and others actively involved at [ B ]'s on a superior pedestal for almost half an hour before finally seeing that some of the other 4 members believed my response to Q1 is valid. [ C ] judged me, labelled me, invalidated and criticised my input. She condescendingly argued that the bishops, deacons, priests etc. did not have time to get involved in the issues I raised, that the clergy and Church hierarchy were already working very hard on other things and too busy, that I should seek another avenue such as politics to address these issues, that I should read more and do more to inform myself of what the Catholic Church has already been doing, that I should act to do more myself rather than expect it of the Church, that I should give her my email address so she can send me links and reading material on what the Church already does to address these issues and other matters on their agenda, that in her opinion the Church was already doing all it can and that the issues I raised were not matters that the Church needed to be involved in, that I should do something myself outside of the Church as

an individual. She implied that I must be from one of those "crazy radical" groups that complain about the Catholic Church, that there was no time or room in her notepad to write down my input and that I should input online as an individual. I continued to assert my position, I explained and provided evidence to validate my input. I had to validate myself as "a real Catholic" to get her to accept that my input was worth listening to. After half an hour of resistance from [ C ], she reluctantly wrote down something of my input. Throughout the meeting, it became apparent that [ C ] holds a very rigid and very narrow concept of what is meant by "the Church", its role in the community, its parishioners and in society. The only input she wrote down was that put forward by another highly visible 85+ year old female parishioner that the Church needs to get back to the "fundamental basics", such as prayer, and teach young people those basics. If [ C ] represents the calibre of current and future lay "leaders" and that a voice in the Catholic Church depends on how visible your faith is to the clergy and other parishioners, then the Catholic Church is doomed. Her behaviour was completely contradictory to the purpose and the reason for the Plenary Council 2020.

I will only attend parishes where I know the priest will accept the distribution of The Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion on the tongue. I have been to parishes where I know, the priest doesn't like it and I run a mile away, never to return. May God have Mercy on their souls.

I am 17 and have attended Catholic institutions for the entirety of my life. However, if you'd have asked me two years ago, I would've strongly said that I was against Catholicism, I am pansexual and a feminist and I would've told you that I didn't want to support a religion I felt I had no place in. However this all changed last year, when I took the subject Texts and Traditions. At first, I thought I would take it because I had always just been good at history and religion despite not believing. As we started reading the gospel of Luke something miraculous happened, I realized that I connected to it, that the story of Jesus isn't one of intolerance as I had first believed but it is about our Messiah who strives to help and raise those that aren't tolerated by the rest of society. Jesus preaches acceptance, compassion, selflessness and social Justice. All things that I feel our society needs more of. Since studying this, I have regained my faith, I believe in God and I believe in the gospel. I feel that so many other people my age could feel this way as well, if only the rest of the Catholic Church would understand this.

After a typical Catholic childhood as a daughter of a devout Irish Catholic father (with 2 aunts who were nuns and an uncle who was a priest), I reached adulthood and started to explore my own agency as a woman. I was able to take responsibility for decision-making in my own life (education, relationships and marriage, contraception and raising a family). This personal autonomy came more and more at odds with the authoritarian declarations from the Church. However, I retained the values of social justice that were intrinsic to my upbringing. My own children were not educated in Catholic schools but my grandchildren now are. Now many years later with the perspective of age, I value even more the core pastoral principles of Jesus' teaching. I am sad for the men who worked nobly and with dignity in the old model of the priesthood, but it no longer works for us. God is asking us to change.

I had been practising Catholic for all of my 47 years. Single/Virgin. Followed all the rules I had been taught. I met a wonderful man who had been divorced for 8 years. Not by choice. His wife

after post-natal depression kicked him out and decided she did not want to be married anymore. This man had a 3-year-old daughter so it was devastating. He moved through his own depression, left his house for his daughter and made a home for both of them in rented accommodation to share custody and upbringing. His daughter has been loved and cherished by both parents and life has always been beautiful for her with no conflict. I met this man and we fell in love. He came to Mass with me most weeks, works in a hospital where I worked and is one of the most respected and loved workers I know. He proposed and I said Yes. We knew the Catholic chaplain at the hospital well and [ J ] was so excited to talk to him about our wedding. He was so pleased for us but as soon as he knew [ J ] was divorced he almost cried. He had to tell us he could not marry us. [ J ] walked outside and I found him sobbing uncontrollably behind the church. We went to the Cathedral to talk to the powers there. They told us we would have to delay the wedding and get letters from people proving that his wife had caused this so the marriage could be annulled. How can God want this for their child?? How can God want this for me after 47 years? We were told to go to the Anglican Church to get married. We both still attend Mass every week. My husband has just built a cabinet for all the audio equipment, I have been teaching Sunday school despite working full time. He is a member of the maintenance committee and we are both about to join St Vincent de Paul. Yet I am committing adultery every day of my life??? I am asked every day how I can keep going to church after being treated this way? [ J ] is the most Christian man I have ever met and a much better person than me. My answer is that in my heart I know that I am doing nothing wrong. These "laws" are wrong and if we are to continue to be a presence in this current world this has to change. A Catholic should be able to marry in their church and not made to feel that they are doing anything wrong. The rules are wrong, and the priests in the front line are the ones that know us and their hearts are breaking also. I also spoke to older friends who were made to go to the "side altar" to marry. What, they were not good enough people to marry at the main altar?? God would never want his children to feel this way. On my wedding day, I went to Mass on that morning and asked for a blessing. The old priest, when I explained, did not even ask my name, did not speak to me and only made the sign of the cross. My family called my husband-to-be as I was so upset to come and hug me to remind me that my marriage and what was in my heart was what mattered that day. Please, please listen and share these stories.

As a divorcee who has successfully obtained 2 annulments via the [ - ] Archdiocese from Rome, I had the most intensely traumatic and unhelpful processes and procedures to endure, with papers and more information going backward and forward as more and more information was required - but I was determined not to be a 2nd class Catholic so soldiered on and on and on to ensure that I would not be deprived of the Eucharist by bureaucracy. Subsequently I have been most fortunate to become friends with a wonderful pastoral priest, Fr [ - ], who has shared his Christ-like wisdom and compassion and bolstered my faith, not least in the restorative powers of true priesthood that is pastoral and not clerical/bureaucratic.

I used to be very 'rule' driven. I really think I worshipped the Church rather than understood that I need to follow the Gospel. Now as a widow, I am so sad as to how the Church is in Australia. My late husband who died at age 60 would have made an excellent priest. Indeed he spent 4 years in a seminary. If he had lived, we as a couple, could have sponsored him to do the required study. However, for him to become an older priest, I would have had to die!!!! Only then would a very

well-suited older man be accepted for the priesthood. As I have said, elsewhere there is not a shortage of priests, but a lack of willingness to ordain. I am a very active member of my parish. It is a beautiful place. The priests, who are from an order, are people who are pastoral, mature and live a communal life with healthy relationships. My extended family is deeply impacted by sexual abuse of children. To see members of my family so distressed is so, so, so sad, and in the name of Christ!!! The Church has lost a generation. The lack of pastoral care for the abused and their immediate family has been a shock to me. But Fr [ K ] has been so good. How is Fr [ K ] being supported by his fellow priests?

God saves me every day. He can save us all if we continue to have strong faith.

In dialogue across numbers of parishes, members of those parishes note quite precisely that little/nothing has been discussed/prayed about regarding the broad pattern of sinfulness, the eagerness to safeguard the 'standing' of the Church, the failure of senior clergy across the nation to have acted immediately once violations were revealed ... cover-ups. ! We have lost ... coldly and clearly, the participation, the trust, of essentially the large majority of under 60's. Our churches basically, see no teenagers, very few parents. The trappings of Church are still on display ... the stats show the broad reluctance of Church entities to offer recompense to victims throughout the land [latest tables of dates by which recompense might be paid]. Yet there are indeed faith communities, a wonderful hope, operating independent of the Canon Law parish structures, these surely anachronisms ... with limited, so often very limited, laity input, invitation, respect toward parishioners.

To be honest, I feel like the formative experiences in my late-teens when I re-affirmed to myself that I wanted to be a Catholic for me, and not because of family expectation, and now been well and truly tainted by the utter hypocrisy and criminality of not just the paedophile priests, but the institution that did everything it could to discredit the victims and hide its shame. The only remark I have is that occasionally I attend Mass where the priest's pastoral way allows me to centre myself and reminds me of the sliver of what is left that I value in our faith tradition. Still, at this stage I'm not convinced this is enough to stop me enquiring in the Anglican or Orthodox tradition. I want to mourn for the lost idea of my Catholic Church but I do not feel that is appropriate given the utter devastation that this Church has facilitated on vulnerable children who trusted and were scared.

A good experience was the "Renew Program" in parishes in late 80s, everyone was encouraged to join a small group discussion, we learnt much from each other. A recent experience was participation in "Holy Spirit Interactive Discipleship Program". This program encouraged me to have a relationship with Jesus, Discipleship. Learning about Holy Spirit. Then learning about Evangelisation. I would encourage more parishes to do this course. This course gives practical ways to share my faith with others.

As a 69-year-old I lived through the changes of Vatican II. I welcomed the English Mass with the priest facing the congregation. Such joy!! After my marriage and raising our 6 children, both my husband and I were engrossed in our Church community. Both of us became Eucharistic Ministers. I became involved in the organ playing and was able to introduce beautiful scripture-based music. The parishioners accepted the changes whole-heartedly with positive feedback. Both my late

husband and I were not 'theology based but simple Catholics' who enjoyed participating with our family in all aspects of our parish life under the guidance of the wonderful Franciscans. We both were brought up in traditional Catholic families. My family were also involved in every aspects of parish life in a Dominican parish. My husband's family were very involved with the Carmelite nuns as they lived opposite the monastery and worshiped there. It is so sad to see the young priests coming to parishes who are taking us back to the 60s with old, old hymns; vestments and their "garb". Old traditions are being dragged up again. Move forward!! You are losing families!!

I have felt immediately welcomed by some congregations overseas and in Australia too. Unfortunately, they are a minority in the Church.

As lifelong Catholics, at the ages of 77 and 79, our faith has been severely tested by the shocking sexual abuses, ignored and hidden by the clergy for so long. We have 6 children and 13 grandchildren, 2 generations lost to the faith with a few exceptions.

Growing up on a rural property in country [ - ] has its challenges, more so as a child struggling with one's sexual identity. I had very few friends – a result of my rural isolation and my growing awareness of being different. Coming from a religious and observant Catholic family I developed a personal relationship with Jesus, and this is what gave me the most comfort. It supported me through my childhood, my adolescence into adulthood. I felt understood and loved. As I grew both in my understanding of my sexuality as identifying as same-sex attracted and in my understanding of Church teachings, I began to sense a feeling of betrayal by my Church and its teachings. I managed to maintain my strong friendship with Jesus, but since the Church taught that I was “intrinsically disordered” and “oriented toward evil”, my life felt shattered. I loved my God, and I loved my Church, but it had spurned me, and I felt excluded. I have maintained my love for Christ and maintained a stretched relationship with my Church. This stretched relationship is tenuous. There are good parishes, there are good priests that are welcoming and inclusive, BUT my life and my love of God is not celebrated—it is tolerated. But this IS my Church, and I want my Church to be one that brings hope, exudes love, creates joy. This should be the test of Christian fellowship – not adherence to a strict dogma based upon questionable theology. There has always been a tussle between my core belief in my faith and a Church that abuses me. I want to be and should be a part of this family but am not feeling invited. I have been fortunate though and been a member of Catholic parish that was not only accepting of my sexuality but celebrated me. This was the parish of [ H ] in the [ - ] district of [ city in the USA ] and is what “Church” is meant to be; a family, where I am respected and valued. My life was centred around the Church: early morning weekday Mass followed by coffee and sharing; Centering Prayer on Monday evenings; Sunday Masses that were always jam-packed—filled with people, sound, joy and love—Christ's love; a Coffee hour (after Mass) that was frequented by all. I soon became part of a number of ministries within the Church and participated as a Eucharistic minister—which I saw as a privilege. This was and is a thriving parish where all are celebrated. This parish of [ H ] had become my home, my spiritual home for nearly 4 years and remains a sacred place for me. It is a place of joy, love and celebration (not just acceptance). This is what is “Church”, this is what belonging to a community of Christ means. All whilst studying an MA in Theology at the [ - ] in [ city in the USA ]. I was being nourished intellectually and spiritually from both my parish and my studies. Arriving back in [ - ] in

2014 I've tried to find a place to call my spiritual home, but my search continues. Hopefully this Plenary Council will provide impetus to make this search complete.

Music has sustained my faith and provided an anchor for me in my parish and every part of my life. "Be Not Afraid" by Bob Dufford S.J. has sustained me in times of crisis and led me forward from my Catholic High School into the world. As Gentle As Silence has reminded me of God's presence and mercy. Come As You Are has affirmed that a God of love also loves me as I am, and that community is where we grow and are nourished. Singing with others in choirs over many years has lifted my soul into places of joy when sorrow was all that could be rationally seen. Singing Rachmaninov's Ave Maria in a large choir gave rise to an explosion of the divine into my body. Singing Faure's Requiem and the Pie Jesu at friend's funerals created a space for grace when all people could feel was emptiness. Singing all Chris Willcock's psalms and especially his setting of The Lord is Kind and Merciful has imprinted the words of the psalmist indelibly on my heart and long-term memory: "It is God who forgives all your guilt, who cures all your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion." Singing these words about the nature and promises of God is a gift to all ages. As a teacher, I see our young people who have faith simply do better and have more resilience. I saw hundreds of young men sing Chris' beautiful "Do not be afraid, I am with you" psalm with all their hearts after the cruelty premature death of a friend. They didn't have much they could say but they came together to sing their grief into a song of comfort and solidarity. These are the extraordinary moments of the Spirit available to us with our songs of faith. Rich schools should not have the only access to this repertoire of music and to the way of creating community through our Catholic songs. We need to offer opportunities to sing our praise and our lament, as this is the real stuff of our lives. Music gives us this gift.

My parents were wonderful in forming my faith. Then I took it over at 15 years. Got little from secondary school even though Catholic. The school experience for my kids was a letdown. Especially secondary. Took kids out to go to Christian school, at least they were Church goers.

The three parish priests we have had in [ suburb ] have been excellent.

I have been an active member of the laity throughout my life but no more. I believe in Christ, and I live my life according to the values. I cannot, in good faith, support such a corrupt, uncaring and unchristian organisation. I have seen good work but it does not outweigh the deep harm and division the Church has caused. It's the attitude to women and LGQBTI people can't be reconciled with modern, educated thought.

All of my major faith experiences have come either via having the faith taught to me clearly and authentically (real catechesis in actual Church doctrine) or through personal encounters with Christ via adoration, Holy Mass, retreats, Confession, fellowship with other Catholics, and especially World Youth Day and pilgrimages (which incorporate all of the above!).

Without doubt the work is put in to providing young adult opportunities - holy hour at the cathedral, theology at the pub, retreats, summer school, etc. I was the only young adult in my parish and it was a Young Vinnies group that exposed me to other young Catholics. From there connections were made with other Archdiocesan events and I have found an incredible Catholic friendship circle which has enriched my life incredibly and taught me a lot more about my Catholic faith—which would have been missed from just attending regular Sunday Masses. I have seen the

investment placed in young adult support change the lives of many people - always for the better. I am now married to another practicing Catholic, we have 2 young children so far and are active in our local parish.

The submission emerges from my long experience as a woman in a variety of forms of pastoral ministry across the Church. I greatly desire ordination. I often weep because it is not an option. My heart is in pastoral ministry.

I was brought up in a Christian way of life. As an adult I worked with and socialised with people from many Christian traditions and still socialise with people of other Christian faiths and of no faith in God. This has enriched my understanding and appreciation of other faiths and cultures, helping me to understand God in a bigger and broader way.

It's sad to say but I now see the Church as a very elitist organization, steeped in power. I abhor the hierarchic element in our Church. I hate the need for clerics as they climb the ladder to dress in a garb, in a colour which distinguishes them from 'lower' clerics-and wear hats which makes me think of the Klu-Klux clan. The stronger the colour, the higher the rung of the ladder. If it weren't so sad, it would be laughable. On the other hand, I have also found the contemplative and mystical aspect of our Church. I had to look for it myself, and I must say God led me there - not the Church. It is a very precious part of our spirituality but why is it not taught or practiced except in monasteries? It should be made available to all. It took me nearly 80 years to find it!

Being part of a Catholic parish has been a constant in all of my 53 years. I have also worked in Catholic education for more than 30 years. Generally speaking, I think Catholic schools are more reflective of our contemporary realities than our parishes- they provide an experience of Church to thousands of people who have no connection to a parish. The changes to the language of the liturgy in relatively recent times has caused me much concern. The fact that during the Eucharistic prayer the words are now "for many" rather than "for all" is hugely and negatively significant for me. Each time I hear those words, I am reminded of the exclusion of so many people ... myself included. Isn't God about love??? So why then, is such language being used?

Our lives are full. We fill up each day doing 101 things usually based around our family, careers, parish, community, home and garden, and trying to fit some exercise in as well. Before our first Marriage Encounter weekend, we had shared 16 years of marriage. We had enjoyed some amazing highs and some times of great sadness. We knew we loved each other. However in our everyday ordinary lives, our priorities had slipped and were not on each other. They were on the children, the bills, our careers. We thought that a Marriage Encounter weekend might help us to put some focus back on us. We saw it as some professional development for marriage. In 2019 we can now say that we have presented over 40 Marriage Encounter week-ends throughout Australia. We have seen over 500 hundred couples who have gratefully walked away at the conclusion of the weekend saying that they learned far more about each other, the priesthood and the Church in this weekend than they knew beforehand. This statement includes priests who have participated on the weekend. They say they left the weekend with a passion to serve their people. They believe they are more equipped by having learnt more of the lived reality of marriage. This movement teaches useful tools and strategies for people in long term relationships. The weekend is simply a series of talks given by couples and a priest. We each share testimonies

from our lives. At the end of each talk, people are given time alone to discuss and explore their thoughts, feelings, judgements together. This time is private and there are no group discussions. We explore topics like communication skills, listening with the heart, how do we make decisions to love , decisions to trust, decisions to share feelings which are difficult to manage, decisions to forgive, what is a covenant and where does the Church fit into our relationship? Marriage Encounter weekends are for good marriages or “just OK” marriages. They are for ordinary couples and priests who are committed to their sacrament, but who may be busy people and need a bit of time out. These weekends are not designed for couples with serious problems. The weekend is for people who have been married/ordained for 1 year-60 years. It suits all who are open to learning more about relationships. Our weekends are based on Catholic values, but many people who attend are not Catholic. In our experience, this movement has had an evangelising impact on many couples. We have often heard that parents are the primary educators of children. We believe that in Australia today, many parents do not have as role models people who are committed to marriage and people who will work on this relationship. We believe our Church needs what we have to offer.

[ submitter couple contact details ] Australian National Leadership Couple.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter. [www.wwme.org.au](http://www.wwme.org.au)

I was born into a Catholic family, attended Catholic schools and grew up with a strong love of my Catholic faith. I have been a member of the St Vincent de Paul Society for a number of years and am involved with a Church group assisting asylum seekers and refugees. I am heavily involved in parish life. It is only more recently that I have begun to question many of the things that we were taught to be the truths of the Catholic Church and which are matters that can be discarded. Some have been, others I hope will be as a result of this Plenary Council, and will lead to a resurgence in the number of people attending Church and being involved in parish activities and serving God and his people.

As a young Catholic sister of mercy, I discovered a book in the Convent library called ‘The Cloud of Unknowing’. It so delighted me that I began to have hope that prayer could be simple, from the heart and did not require sanctity and endless words! So began my love of Centring prayer, in 1969, and now that this form of Christian meditative prayer is being popularized, in Catholic parishes, I am more than delighted. Around the same time, I read the fore-mentioned book, ‘Waiting on God’ by Simone Weil, and am still reading her, via a very large collection of her writings. Though no longer a religious sister, I am Catholic.

My views have been shaped by just over 50 years of life as a religious and 40 as a priest, from both of which I am now retired.

##This submission is a more particular complement to my general submission, based on my liturgical studies, my former experience as a liturgical presider and educator, and my current experience as a lay parishioner.

I think of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar 'the evil that men do lives after them, the good is often interred with their bones'. Catholics have done amazing things in society. I think of the Sisters of Charity motto 'the love of Christ urges us'.

In our parish, 3 or 4 times a year, we have had lay homilists for the past few years. I have found their homilies excellent, presenting a slightly different view on the readings and sharing wider faith stories related to the readings. I hope the Plenary Council will approve the wider use of lay homilists, of course, at the discretion of the parish priest and provided suitable lay people are available.

Plenary Council responses: Two articles were referred to, preparing the input or feedback for plenary council. They were, - Fr Ray Sanchez CP, "Parish Mission, Pope Frances - Walking the Talk" as retreat material. Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM, "Bishop Vincent's Address to the Concerned Catholic of Canberra and Goulburn", 28 September 2018. In these two above articles, both authors raised their concern to the future of Catholic Church which had been battered by declining number of priests and Church attenders, scandals including sexual and child abuses. These have damaged the Church very badly at which people lost their trust to the Church and put it in crisis. Both articles mentioned that Church needs fresh air or reform, getting rid of the stuffy and stale environment. They allege the main problem is that many priests are more interested in becoming clerical than pastoral. Two sides of people were created, the active group consisting of priests and the lay or congregation as the passive group. The world, culture and technology has changed and developed so rapidly and the Church could not cope with these changes. Three meetings were attended regarding these matters. They are the preliminary meeting of plenary council, organised by SIP (Spiritual in the Pub), Indonesian Reflexion Group (informal group among the Indonesian Catholic seniors) and family gathering with own children (They are all adults and independent). All the people encountered in the meeting agreed with the concerns and supported steps that the Church has taken, especially, the priests should focus in their pastoral duty. The followings are worthy inputs to be considered, 1. Considering the inhomogeneity of culture and level of education of the Catholics, it is important that local bishops being given flexibility to deal with local and actual problems such as divorces, premarital sex, LGBT, IVF etc. They should be spry dealing with these problems and not waiting direction from Vatican. 2. Adults should be provided religious education. Many adults still perceive God as Santa Klaus and obviously it is not suitable any longer. It will also strengthen and develop the Catholic faith. 3. Australia adopts multi-culturalism, and hence, there are many ethnic Churches. The potential of these Churches should not be underestimated, but wisely directed. They should be cultivated so that they will feel responsible, give contribution as local congregation. 4. Parents in Catholic schools can be encouraged to develop their own network such as tuck shop, story tellers in primary schools. This will help in forming the community.

I came to Australia 13 years ago with my wife and my 5-month old daughter (2 more daughters came later, born in Australia). From the beginning, the welcoming feeling in my local parish ([ - ] in [ suburb ], [ - ]) was overwhelming, providing an "anchor" point for my family and me to feel at home in a very different country and culture. This was a specific parish with very specific people (especially the parish priest, Fr [ - ]), but it helped us connect. Belonging to the Catholic Church in

Australia is the strongest link we currently have to this country, which is now our home (throughout being in primary and secondary Catholic schools too).

My experience of the Christus Rex pilgrimage transformed my understanding of prayer. It made me feel a connection to the faithful of previous generations, it gave me a sense of God's kingship. [ - ] College transformed my appreciation of prayer.

I went to 13 years of Catholic school, have 2 devout Catholic parents, and was never told that I could have a personal relationship with Jesus. I knew lots about God, but I did not know God. At 18, I went to a Summer School of Evangelisation run by the DOJ community and had an encounter with the Holy Spirit that changed my life. I felt like for the first time I did not just encounter God as Truth to be followed and honoured, but Love to be encountered. Don Bosco says that it is not enough that a young person be loved, they must know they are loved. I believe this is true for all of us, and is the heart of my life as an MGL Sister.

I have moved to a multicultural area. I see a great difference from my previous parish and the present one. The people here are very spiritual minded and that really influences the other people also. Especially if the priests also are multicultural, there is lot of difference. More people attend Mass, participate in Rosary, adoration, prayer group etc. etc. There is more life and unction in everything there. The priests and people working together can make a real difference. The multicultural priests and people are more committed. This has helped me a lot to grow in my spirituality. In my previous parish, there were about 800 attendees for Sunday Mass but less than 10 people for weekday Mass. While just 400 people come for Sunday Mass and there are about 45 people for Rosary and weekday Mass. And never a weekday Mass is cancelled including the day-off of the priest. The impact of the priest and the people is great. There is a great "we feeling" here.

I am a diocesan youth minister. Being part of a parish-based youth group in my teens helped me encounter a community of friends who lived their lives with reference to God. Through the youth group, I was invited to serve as a Youth Group Leader, and was invited to share in the mission of the Church. Joining World Youth Day pilgrimages allowed me to encounter the breadth of the Catholic Church in Australia and internationally, and gain a deep appreciation for the rich tradition of the Church and its different charisms. I have had powerful experiences through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and Ignatian Spirituality. I have served for 14 months as a missionary with [ - ] in the Philippines.

I came to Australia in [ year ] from Poland aged 10. We moved to the western suburbs of [ - ] the next year. I was an altar boy at Polish Mass at the local church for the next 7 years. This shaped my faith a lot. The Church provided not only sacraments but an important link to the Polish community for me and my family. I was married in [ - ] 6 years ago. Our priest was Fr [ - ] who was ordained priest by Cardinal Karol Wojtyla. This Church was opened by Karol Wojtyla. St John Paul II. I had met the pope in the Vatican as a boy in 1987. In a way I felt that things had come full circle for me and the Polish heritage in my faith was very important for me. I'm sure it's just as important for other migrants and ethnic Catholics. I met many great Polish priests in my life some of whom were very instrumental in shaping me as a person. Going to church has defined me as a

person, as a human, as a man. I thank God for the Catholic Church and I thank Australia for accommodating ethnic groups within the Catholic Church.

I personally have attended Mass all my life and raise my children Catholic. In recent years two of my children and my wife see no spiritual reason to continue attending Mass or being Catholic. To them the Catholic Church is not much more than do-gooders and SJWs that may as well believe in Santa Claus. I feel let down by the Catholic school system and by the homilies for not making the intellectual case for God.

My parish priest at [ - ] in [ - ], Fr [ - ], told a story in his homily in about March 2018. He said he attended a party of some kind and noticed a woman who seemed to have a wonderful, special "aura" about her. He approached her and told her what he had noticed. She explained that she had started reading Scripture. This had a huge impact on me. Not that I wanted an "aura" but it made me realise I had never really paid any attention to studying Scripture. Since then, for there last 10 months, I pray every day, read or study scripture every day, am much, much more engaged when attending Mass, and it is having a significant effect on my attitude to people and life. I never knew anything about who wrote the Gospels, that Luke wrote the Acts, what the Book of Revelation was really about. The origins and theories about who wrote the Epistles. I'm concentrating on the New Testament at present, reading it for the third time and relevant study guides. I'm seeing more and more how much it relates to and fulfils the Old Testament. Soon I will start reading the OT, inspired by the NT. I've read many other books on faith as well. And have a much deeper belief in God and God's purpose for humankind. But it's taken me 68 years of Catholic Schooling, weekly Mass attendance (about 95%) and a priest from India to actually see my faith become ignited. None of my 4 children or any of my 27 nephews and nieces attend Mass. One of my 6 siblings does. This is a clear sign to me that we, our Church, lay and clerical, have a primary duty of Mission, to Catholics, Protestants, agnostics, atheists, and other faiths. Our parish models seem based on 19th century small European congregations where everyone was a Catholic and almost no evangelising was needed, except in the "Missions". Dioceses, Archdioceses, Parishes all seem happy to just maintain the status quo. This sees our Church dying. We will not have many priestly vocations if hardly any Australians really know the Christian (Catholic) Faith. Abuse has been a terrible scourge on our Churchiest, as has been the cover up. But our Church was dying well before it became public. Priestly celibacy and women priests are issues to consider, but they are not the problem nor the solution. If only 2.5 % of Australians attend Mass and this is heading to 1.5%, it's a clear sign that Australians and "Catholics" don't have a living Faith. That they don't believe in God or if they do, God is way down on their list of priorities. To solve this, we all need to become uncomfortable. To have a Mission mentality as Pope St JP II demanded.

When I was a child, I went to Church regularly with my grandmother. As I got older, I changed and went to a parish Church which was English speaking. I didn't feel engaged at Church and did not participate for a while though my faith was strong. As an adult, my grandmother passed away and I thought to myself, Who was going to pray for her as she used to pray for everyone. I went back to the parish Church and this time had a more welcoming parish priest who performed the last rites for my grandmother before she died.

Major impacts on our group: •Youth work in centres of Opus Dei. •Service projects in developing countries. •Holy hour at the cathedral. •The opportunity of regular confession. •Being encouraged to discover the habit of daily prayer.

The story of Teams of Our Lady (Equipes de Notre Dame) and [ Team T ]. Teams of Our Lady is an international lay movement in the Catholic Church, designed to enrich marriage spirituality and make good marriages better. Teams enrich prayer life, which will help couples grow closer to God and each other. At the same time, their family reaps benefits. A team is comprised of five to seven couples whose marriage is recognized in the eyes of the Catholic Church. The team meets one time per month, rotating from one home to another. Some teams have a spiritual counsellor (priest or other religious) as part of their team to provide theological knowledge and expertise. The team shares a simple meal, prayer, sharing on the endeavours, and a study topic. The endeavours are the heart of the spirit of Teams. The team becomes a close community that can inspire one another through their living examples of faith, and share with one another their struggles and successes on their way to holiness. Founded by Father Henri Caffarel in France in 1947, the movement has spread to over 10,000 Teams world-wide. [ Team T in [ - ] ] was formed in the early 1970s and has met regularly since, albeit with a few changes in members. Most of the present members have been in [ Team T ] since the middle 1980s.

[ Submitter Team members ]

I was really feeling low at one point and when I went to Church that weekend, there was this message on the screen..."Give your sorrows to Him" and just recently, saw the message ... "Trust in Him" when I was so anxious/ concern about my son who is backpacking in South America on his own and has just been robbed at knifepoint ... On both occasions, just giving it all to HIM made me feel so relieved instantly.

We often "say a little prayer, place things in God's hands"- it works.

Both of my parents are Catholics. In my childhood, they took me to Mass every Sunday. In High School, however, I became quite disillusioned and sceptical. From what we were being taught in RE, I thought Jesus was nobody more than a wise teacher. Combined with inclinations to teenage rebelliousness and a general atmosphere of irreligiosity (even inside a Catholic school), my middle teenage years were characterised by a lack of faith. I did not want to go to Mass. I thought the Church was outdated and a source of ignorance. I couldn't pray because it felt like I was talking to myself. It was only until I started properly engaging with the intellectual content of Catholicism in the last year of High School my faith grew stronger again. It was around this time I started to understand about the most basic elements of Christianity - arguments for the existence of God, the natural law, why Jesus is God, apostolic succession and the Communion of Christ with the Church, Church history, the Catechism, the sacraments and the nature of salvation, etc. Getting to know fellow Catholics at university also strengthened my faith and understanding even more. My parents nor my teachers never gave me these answers unfortunately, and I really wished I had learned about these earlier. Although there is still plenty work to be done, I am grateful that I returned to practising the one true faith.

•Experience with other Christian faith- a cafe by Uniting Church - part of Church complex- it is now used for transgender monthly day run by transgender community. This story can inspire us to use a space in our churches for outreach programs like this. •Experience by someone new in the parish who was greeted on arrival by parishioners who were made aware that she was new. She was made to feel welcome. This is her first experience in a Catholic Church where she was made to feel welcome. •Experience of someone who works in prisons. The faith of men in prison inspired her to give talks in her parish about prison ministry. •Hearing people coming to 3rd rite of reconciliation. The Church was packed out because Church and liturgy was good. It was not confronting.

Through the grace of God, I am blessed to be a Catholic or a child of God since birth. I went through the second Vatican Council that gave license to water down many aspects of our faith. Liturgical music is now feel good folk music. The tabernacle is now not given the place of prominence, the Church as the house of God is not treated with respect; it is now a meeting hall where there is talk and loud laughing instead of silence and prayer. More recently I have encountered a parish in [ - ] that does not permit talking within the Church, that does daily confession and Mass, that shows the utmost reverence to our Lord and God truly present in the tabernacle. The music is beautifully Catholic and the priests give excellent instruction on the faith of what is right and wrong from the pulpit. They speak of what is right and not of what is politically correct. The result of this is full daily Masses, confession queues out the door and the largest group of altar servers in the deanery. It just shows people (and I am one of them) are looking for what is right according to God irrespective of what man thinks. People are also searching for the richness and beauty of the faith, not some watered-down feel-good ceremony.

I used to be a fervent member of the Church but today I question its "guidance". The Church has a lot to answer for and little chance of getting lapsed Catholics back to the fold. Religion means very little to them. Just look at the numbers attending Mass on a weekly basis. The number of people attending is extremely low compared to the past.

This is my story and how my faith experience has shaped me ... Thank you for allowing me to share this. This is my second submission. In my first submission, I simply suggested 4 words: "The Ordination of Women" but I have been reflecting on a deeper more personal level since reading the Recommendations from the Royal Commission. I am now able to share another submission on those reflections and on my own quite unique story which might help to "flavour" the approach I now take. I was brought up by the Sisters of St Joseph. The day I was born, I was placed into the Care of [ - ] Babies Home in [ - ]. From there I was transferred to [ - ] Children's Home in [ - ]. I was about 2 years old. The Sisters introduced me to God. They did this by the way they lived their lives not through an expectation that I would practice the Catholic Faith or blindly follow the Doctrines of the Church. They continually led by example. They encouraged me to question, not to be afraid of not knowing the answer- to keep searching and always suggested that perhaps Jesus could be a good role model in the way he lived his Life, and Death and Resurrection. In return, I found it exciting to ask questions, to keep discerning the bigger issues and naturally I became interested and I must admit over time very passion for the Gospel continued. When I entered the Catholic Seminary as a young 21-year-old, I did not know all the various rules, doctrines or protocols concerning liturgy and prayer. I was certainly no expert in Ecclesiology. But my fellow year mates

were! Over time while I continued to try and work out whether a Catholic Celibate life as a Diocesan priest was really for me I discovered something more profound—The Gospel wasn't going to change, it was me that needed to keep growing to keep discerning the Gospel. I did not need to be a priest to follow the Gospel, I didn't even need to go to Church on Sundays to live Gospel values. There was such a freedom in that. But I chose to. I chose to practice my Catholic Faith, to go to Mass every Sunday, sometimes even to go again during the week. I settled not on the Catholic Male Celebrant who led the Mass—but on the Readings, the Gospel, the people present and the Spirit of the Experience. I found myself becoming quite committed to the Catholic liturgy and volunteered to assist by offering to cantor at the weekly Mass and lead the Congregation in the singing. I found this experience to be prayerful. It enhanced my commitment to the liturgy and to reflecting even more on how I live Gospel values in my life. Through this I have come to a deep appreciation of Contemplative prayer, reading and praying with the Saints and Mystics, Leaders of Old as I call them or the Role Models who are already there and continue to be an example of how we too can live our lives by following their example in upholding Gospel values. So what is the Spirit asking? To live the Gospel. Thank you, [ submitter ].

In my experience, it is important to have Charismatic prayer group. You get a lot of experience in faith in God from these groups. The community grows better from these groups. There is a lot of respect in the groups and friendships grow.

I am part of a group within our parish who sought to do and have been officially tasked with encouraging awareness of the Plenary Council and with organizing lay participation in its preparation through discussions and submissions. But there is deep and openly stated skepticism within our Church about the likely conduct and outcomes of this Plenary Council and its processes. We, who are doing whatever we can to foster a best preparation and greatest involvement in the Plenary Council, meet this as the main barrier to engagement. This is true not only for uninvolved Church attenders or those no longer practising, but also for a large majority of the truly involved, those still doing whatever they can—with love—within our Church. To attribute such discontent to apathy is to refuse to hear or wilfully to ignore those most active in our communities. With the Plenary Council, the Australian Church has a major opportunity to change this perception born of unhappy experience, including my own. The renewal advocated in this submission has been put before, in one way or another, and more than once. I have personally been involved with and made such representations commencing well over 20 years ago! But, seeing the many who remain faithful and active in Church, one can only thank the Lord, whose Spirit is never quenched. So, faced with the all-too-common symptoms of skepticism and dis-involvement, one can only, as Fr Richard Rohr puts it, lay down one's life! I want to see our Church leaders, as one, do just that! Duc in altum. Now.

Welcoming experiences and the value of all parish members contributions at [ - ] has encouraged me to play a more active role in the life of the parish. At other parishes ( [ - ], [ - ], and [ - ]) I have often felt isolated and not 'religious' enough. Offers of help have gone unanswered. My continued awareness and practice of Christian Meditation has greatly enriched my spiritual life and I feel that this is not 'advertised' or promoted enough within the Catholic Community.

Since marriage, I have always belonged to the same vibrant, loving community whose clergy have encouraged lay people to be part of ongoing education, seminars, etc. and who have walked

beside each and every one of us, especially in the sad times of our lives. Many years ago, my late husband turned down a promotional opportunity to move interstate with his work because he loved our parish community so much. This is something we both never regretted.

I was brought up as a strict practising Catholic and that is how I live my life. I married a man who is Catholic and does not practise but he has always supported me and my desire to raise my children as practising Catholics. I was successful in doing this until my children reached their late teens, and were no longer interested in coming to Mass. I started to force them but realised this was counter-productive as it caused many arguments each Sunday morning and made them resentful. I worry that I have failed them with respect to their faith, but don't know the answer. I guess they are no different to most other children their age which is a real problem for the future of the Church.

Having many churches nearby for praying in front of the tabernacle in the middle of the day are very nice. I hope we have enough practising Catholics to keep these churches open into the future.

As a priest in parishes, my regular heartache comes from meeting parents who present their children for Baptism or Confirmation or First Holy Communion, or couples who come to prepare for Matrimony, who do not know the faith, do not practise it, who may not even go to Mass at Christmas or Easter. My sadness comes from asking myself the question, how has it come to this? Why is our Church falling apart? What mistakes have been made that have brought this about? I urge the Plenary Council not to be side-tracked on to issues of what needs to be changed, how the Church needs to be different so as to be more attractive to the world. Without being true to our tradition, to the faith handed on to us in this land and in further times before 1788, we will continue to crumble and disintegrate. It's not about married priests or women deacons. It's not about bringing back the 1975 Missal. It's not about social justice. It is about Jesus Christ and what He has revealed to us, what He handed on to the Apostles, and we, in turn, have received. It is about Scripture, Tradition and being unashamedly Catholic.

Shortly after moving into a new parish we discovered that our 20-month-old son had an intellectual disability. This was a time of crisis for us, and so many of the services we needed had long waiting lists. This caused us great grief and worry. My wife heard that the parish had a playgroup, and desperately wanted him to be able to join it, both for his own sake and so she could get some social support. When my wife rang up, she was initially told that the playgroup was full, but when she explained the situation the playgroup leader, a beautiful and loving Catholic woman, said 'Well, of course, we can fit him in'. This immediate acceptance and love made a tremendous difference to us, and to our son. Throughout our time in that parish, we received amazing love and support. Christ was truly present.

I enjoy parish life and find belonging in weekly gathering.

I am a mother of four children, three of whom have completed their Secondary education in Victoria, except the youngest who is currently in Year 12. In the primary school years, it was easy to keep abreast of what was being taught there and on the whole the faith was nourished. However in the area of secondary education, I have had to "keep on my toes" to ensure that what was taught was consistent with Catholic teaching. I have often been in the position of having to

question/challenge information provided especially in year 9 and up regarding sexuality. Some of the texts, whilst covering relevant health issues like nutrition, exercise and mental health, have also included more worrying information under the title of "respectful relationships". These have included language which often presents homosexuality and gender fluidity as life style choices. The texts have included suggestions for role play and links to LGBTQI sites. I would understand if these had been selected in Government schools. We need good comprehensive texts that reflect our Catholic faith in these areas. At the moment we seem just to be selecting what is available from those which have an extremely secular outlook. I feel very strongly that this area needs a real overhaul, with an accountable Catholic Education Office and for the bishops to keep a close and practised eye on all material that is being promoted.

My faith has been formed by the everyday and extraordinary people you meet and live Jesus. My faith has been severely shaken by the failures in trust of the administration of the Church.

I was fortunate to be brought up by my mother who was a devout Catholic. Then, a few years ago, I met some people who are supernumeraries in Opus Dei. By attending retreats, information sessions, I have learned a lot more about my faith.

I was born to Protestant parents who encouraged us to participate in daily scripture reading. At university, I began drifting for a few years. Christmas and Easter Church services or Mass were my only spiritual events. I met and married a Catholic, but early interactions with the Church were not encouraging. Baptisms did not feel like spiritual events. My photography studio was over the road from a "Sisters of Mercy" Catholic Primary School. I sought out the opportunity of "school photographer" and was particularly taken with the gentleness and love of the Principal, Sr [ - ]. So impressed, that I said to my wife that I think I'd like our children to start at that Catholic Primary. We lived 20 kilometres out of town, so travel each way included our kids singing simple children's hymns learned at school. In that first year at the school, the eldest was now preparing for his first Communion, and I mentioned to our priest that I too would like to consider my next faith steps. I was given books to read and come back when I felt ready. That took two years, and Saturday morning before Easter 1986, I was baptised and confirmed. First Communion came later at the Vigil Mass lining up with the congregation for Communion from the Eucharistic Ministers. At the time, it didn't really matter, but now helping present the RCIA program, I realise now what encouragement it gives to the whole parish, cf. Acts of the Apostles. After Easter 1986, a friend invited me to come to a "Life in the Spirit" seminar. Although both my wife and I attended, it had a different effect on each of us. That program ignited my hunger to learn more. A few years later, we enrolled in a Marriage Encounter weekend and subsequently invited on to the team. Now we were growing together and learning how God interacts with our life and relationships. We spent a lot of hours understanding ourselves, writing talks, having them workshopped, re-writing and refining. Then regular meetings with other members of the team preparing spiritually for Marriage Encounter Weekends and then presenting the weekends. Another parish priest suggested Cursillo, and afterwards each of us went through a similar process of team formation and presentation of Cursillo. A commitment to our weekly "group reunion", where with others we shared our spiritual journey of the previous week as it related to piety, study and action. In this last decade, we found ourselves heavily involved in an Augustinian parish, which was an opportunity to grow along "Augustinian" principles. Recently we undertook as a Lenten

experience, a First Spiritual Exercise along Ignatian principles. Now two years later, we are still participating in that group. Here we find that again we can share our journey, its ups and downs, with others that are constantly striving for continual conversion, so that we can keep refining ourselves to be more like Christ every moment of our lives.

Up to 1985 I was a 'cradle' Catholic. After 11 years of marriage, my husband converted to Catholicism. It was refreshing to witness his zeal and eagerness to participate in the Eucharist but threatening when my participation was expected after experiencing a "Life in the Spirit Seminar" together. As an introvert I found this extremely difficult and felt guilty and fought against my own spiritual gifts which are different to my husband's. Fearful to share my story of disillusionment, I grew jealous of my husband's ability and willingness to say 'Yes' to God. The words "be not afraid" appear often in scripture. Through movements like Marriage Encounter and Cursillo, our marriage was enriched and a personal relationship with God developed. Friendships with Catholics who share their life struggles, pain and sorrows without judgment brought a spiritual awakening in our family life. Moving to [ - ] 10 years ago presented an opportunity to work in a parish. I witnessed how little exposure people had to their faith other than Sunday Mass. We attended interfaith gatherings and lectures outside of our parish and invited curious parishioners with a response, "No, thank you". Opportunities to discuss 'Laudato Si' and 'Evangelii Gaudium' showed little interest in the parish other than comments 'the Pope should stay out of political issues' or 'what did he know about climate change'. I remember a discussion at a Pastoral Council meeting where 'Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament – Adoration' was to be discussed. I asked older parishioners to support me to get it on the agenda only to be told by a parishioner this was taking the Church backwards. The parish priest showed no interest and after six weeks he stopped the devotion because only a few parishioners were taking time to stop and sit quietly in the Church for an hour. Catholics have little understanding of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at either their Baptism or Confirmation. Back in 1985, I could have stayed a sceptic, but I chose to be curious and asked difficult questions and found the meaning of my faith. I know why I am a Catholic today considering the issues facing the Catholic Church. Prayer, contemplation and meditation are a big part of my life. As a couple, we have embraced Ignatian Spirituality. I no longer hide behind my gifts. I attend Sunday Mass and weekly spend time with the lonely, the disadvantaged and mentally challenged. God plans my week and I am never short of showing my love regardless who I come across. A knitting group that I belong to brings me the most joy and happiness as 12 ladies come together, knit and share their ups and downs of the week.

I was born into a Catholic family and my faith only grew after I had children. My oldest is now 18 and I have found the Catholic charismatic group recently which has really appealed to me. The younger version of the charismatic group has appealed to my 18-year-old twins and has kept them in the faith. I am now seeking to find what appeals to my 12-year-old so that she remains committed to Jesus too.

Heathgrove is an educational project to encourage positive character development and academic excellence in girls and young women. Activities of a spiritual nature at Heathgrove are entrusted to Opus Dei, a personal Prelature of the Catholic Church. At Heathgrove we find that clear and inspiring formational input adds to the credibility (alas not popularity ... 😊) of the Church's teaching. This year we have been teaching basic philosophical anthropology to both Catholic and

non-Catholic young people at [ N ] University and we found that a conversational/ workshop style teaching leads to very positive outcomes: the Catholic students felt confident about what they believed was the foundations of their faith and non-Catholics were open to have conversations about our understanding of human existence. We found that ultimately young people need a sense of purpose not just for being but also for believing. In the words of [ - ] (2nd year Medical student, [ N ] University): "I can trust what I am taught without fear, though not without question, as questions are always encouraged." [ - ] (3rd year Law, [ W ] University) talks about the need for this formation from her perspective as an overseas student: "Uni students from other countries (like me) do desire for spiritual input but we have no idea where to get them. Heathgrove has provided a chance for Uni students to have some friendships with amazing people from different cultures and most importantly some spiritual input!!". Finally, [ - ] (3rd year Arts, [ B ] University) adds with regards to this topic: "As a university student, I recognise how important formation is - not only for myself but for my friends around me. I value the formation I receive from Heathgrove to learn more about my faith and become more like Christ."

One of my best, and my longest friend is the daughter of a minister. She has been devoutly Christian all her life. We have grown up together and she is the kindest, more selfless person I know. She is what every Christian person should be, and it is because of her that I have faith and confidence that the Catholic Community can change.

One of my most vivid memories of faith was as a 27 year old when I joined a group of chaps on retreat for 3-4 days; it was led by an Irish Jesuit and his passion in explaining the scriptures truly seized hold of me (I can recall something of that sensation even now, some 50 years later); it has always reminded me of what the two disciples said to each other after Jesus left them and they returned from Emmaus: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

My mother was a devout Catholic and my father was born into the Anglican faith however he considered the children should follow the faith of their mother since she is the primary carer. I am from a family of 11 children and my mother successfully passed on her devotion and faith of the Catholic Church to which most of us still adhere to. Unfortunately, my marriage came to an end after 20 years and I became a "divorcee". This to me was extremely traumatic considering the rigid rules of the Church at the time towards divorce persons. I had no say in the matter as The Family Law Act 1975 established the principle of "no fault divorce" in Australian law. This means that a court does not consider which partner was at fault in the marriage breakdown. The only ground for divorce is the irretrievable breakdown of the relationship demonstrated by 12 months of separation. This being the case why should the innocent party be deprived of taking Communion etc.

Some shared stories : • Children or siblings coming back to the Church after many years of absence which was attributed to the continued prayer of a family member • General feeling from parents was a sense of sadness and guilt that they had been unable to keep their children involved in the Church. • Others related instances of their children deciding to be married in the Church to make their parents or grandparents happy • In spite of not marrying in the Church or not being married at all parents still brought their children to be baptised.

My wife and I are blessed to have seven daughters and two sons, one of whom was ordained a Franciscan Capuchin Priest at [ - ] Cathedral [ - ] years ago. We are also blessed to have 19 grandchildren to date. [ Parish ] (now joined with [ - ]) has been a pivotal part of our lives. Now of course, we also have a special attachment to the Capuchins. A big turning point in my life was in my 30's (in the 1970's) when my wife convinced me to turn away from local politics in favour of the fight for the rights of the unborn. This led me to being invited to speak as a Right To Life volunteer at around 150 parishes throughout [ - ] at all weekend Masses over a span of about 20 years from 1980. A primary purpose of my talks was to invite those at Mass to make a written commitment to get involved in the pro-life cause and there was always a very positive response. In the 1990's, I became involved with a new group, "the Helpers of God's Precious Infants" whose members prayed, witnessed and offered help to pregnant mothers outside [ - ] abortion centres on a daily basis for 25 years until a 150 metres exclusion zone was legislated 2 years ago. I am privileged to have been involved with helping several of the mothers who turned away from abortion after being meeting members of our group and I am still in close touch with several of these mothers and the children we helped save. I have even attended the baptisms of several of these children.

For the Solemn procession of the Blessed Eucharist, the houses along the route would be decorated with a special cloth and flowers on the balcony. Special linen would decorate the Church altar. Flower petals were strewn in front of the Blessed Sacrament as the procession went along the street.

After suffering from anxiety, I found much comfort in the presence of the "Church" and the resources it offered, from face to face discussions with clergy to literature. I found that contemporary understanding of life and my experiences was of great benefit - this contemporary understanding is extremely important across all aspects of the Church.

Many years ago, when I was still in Secondary School, I attended a [ state ] wide YCS Leaders' Training day. The priest leading and speaking at the day told the story of the village in France rebuilding after the war and the sign, in French, on the Crucifix, saying "I have no hands but yours". The impact on me, on that day was enormous. I went on to work in Catholic Education for 40 years and am still deeply involved in Church activities today.

Recently, my brother was nearly killed in an accident and if it was not for my spiritual faith and the support of my family and Church community I don't think I would have been able to cope with the uncertainty that events like this create. My spiritual faith in Jesus and the Blessed Virgin are at the core of the way I think and act with everyone I encounter. I don't want to see our Church diminish because of difficult rules and traditions that make people feel guilty and turn away. They should have access to our faith which is so important in helping carry you through the difficulties in life.

- attended Catholic primary and secondary schools, learnt all about the Catholic faith during this time.
- I believe that you don't have to go to Church and Mass every weekend to have a strong faith.-
- used to go to Church very often with family when younger.
- I don't go as often as an adult, mainly only for Easter, Christmas and for work.

\* We experience faith through family experiences, but it was a different society then and now.

\* Family traditions passed down and continue today. \* Sacraments are very important to family life. \* Involvement in youth groups and youth days. \* Sharing a meal \*Experience of faith outside the church building.

I was fortunate to be exposed to a lot of scripture exploration with my line of work in Catholic Education. It was not until I did this, did I engage in a higher level of understanding around my faith. I went on to do pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Italy/Spain, again through my work, which deepened my faith also. Not everyone gets to do these expensive trips of course, but it certainly had a large impact on my faith development.

A young woman—early 30's—has just become a Catholic so as to marry her fiancé. Her words to me were " I don't mind being with the priests but I am sure not going to let my children near them." Surely this cannot be just one non-Catholic person's thoughts—and is probably one of the major reasons why people are not coming to Church and are staying away. The Church has a stigma and it must do everything in its power to erase it. Saying "Sorry" is one way which costs absolutely nothing—it is free!

I have been raised in the Catholic faith and have grown up as part of the Neocatechumenal Way. A family friend of ours was an Anglican priest and is now a Catholic priest and has the most amazing life experience and advice of any priest I have encountered.

My experience of Catholicism has been largely positive. I grew up with wonderful priests, nuns and bishops. However, as an adult, I have been shocked that bishops are appointing secular leaders (or lapsed Christians—or so-called Christians with a secular mindset) who are 'bureaucratic bullies' to run some of our large organisations. If bishops and Catholic boards really want to know what is going on in workplaces, they will need to do staff satisfaction surveys as well as staff exit interviews and surveys,—and will need to have an open door so that people can come and tell them about real and ongoing injustices that a toxic workplace is having on their stress levels, health, marriage, family, friends and even their finances. I do believe the results will come as a very large surprise. Such workplace surveys will also mean cowardly leaders will be less likely to lord it over their staff—as they know that they will be held to account.

In the past we had Missions. These were beautiful prayer times during a few evenings where a missionary priest would visit parishes and prayers would be said and hymns sung. These Missions brought joy to a parish and people gathered and mingled with each other. It was a common feeling of joining in for everyone.

We have seen faith in action in our parish recently with the ill health of our parish priest. Parishioners have stepped up to provide daily meals without a moment's hesitation. In one member's time, working in [ - ] as a teacher to Indigenous children on E side in the 70's she remembers how the ladies of the St Vincent de Paul society organised for showers to be built in the school for the use of the kids who otherwise wouldn't have access to showers. Each morning, the ladies would come before school time, organise for children to have shower and provide a clean school uniform. They would then take the dirty uniforms away and wash them and bring them back the next morning ready to do it all again. St Vincent de Paul chapters, wherever they are have always been right there to reach out and provide for the needs of those who are poor or in need. To this day, they play a very vital and important part in ministering to those in need in our

community regardless of race, creed, religion or colour. Truly living what we think God is asking of us in Australia at this time.

People in this group: • Had a positive experience of their faith. • Felt that the catechism and rules and regulations were a strong focus of their Catholic learning. • Experienced pastoral care as an important aspect of their Church. • Felt a sense of belonging and connectedness to their Church community • Determined that priests were often part of their home life, particularly family celebrations and rituals. • Were pleased to have received a Catholic education and many educated their children in Catholic schools. • Felt that Vatican II brought many positive changes, including Mass in English. • Feel lately the Church has lost its way. • Feel disconnected from the Church they felt they knew and the Church they are hearing about through the Royal Commission. • Are concerned as to what the Church is doing to support the victims of child sexual abuse. • Are concerned at the loss of people attending Mass and the absence of young people in the Church. • Feel that the arrival of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) has brought a new life back to our parish. Their heart charism is a strong positive experience in our lives.

The author's education was in Catholic primary and secondary schools. The Loreto and Sionian nuns who taught and encouraged her in leadership, led her to believe that as a woman she could do anything, and she has. She has been a nurse, a teacher, a psychologist, a business manager and a state manager of a community program and a married woman, who with her husband, raised 3 children. Without the gift of these special people, she may well have never had this success. She found community and belonging in her parish through youth clubs, social justice groups, sporting clubs and many other groups. She developed her moral compass from a Catholic perspective. She met her husband after Mass, married in her church and their children went to the same primary and secondary schools as she had. They received their sacraments in this church and were married in this church. Her post schooling education was in state and Catholic hospitals, Catholic Education Institution and Catholic university. When their baby died, it was their Catholic friends, as well as their family, who supported them and their priests and service that gave them comfort when their son was buried. Their priests and religious have been there for them when they nursed and later buried their parents. The Church has been her life, an important guide as she grew and progressed through life. But now she feels a profound sense of shame that the Church that she loves so much, has been a source of such pain and anguish for so many young people, so much so that their whole lives have been damaged by the men who abused them. She is left with much doubt about the Church but still a strong belief in God and a hope that the Church will learn and change.

Participants shared their stories in the Listening and Dialogue session. In particular, the annulment process, the Church's hierarchical system, child abuse and the current generation's lack of faith.

I remember as a teenager, a priest asked me in Confession if I had sins against the sixth commandment. I remember thinking at the time "you dirty old man". Confession, as it was then, was not about me having questions asked of me but me genuinely expressing my sorrow for sins committed. I haven't been to the Sacrament since and I have not prompted my children to go even though we have been a very strong family of faith in our local parish.

## CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The table below is the full list of individual respondents' countries of birth from the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Country	Number of respondents
Australia	1,156
Albania	1
Algeria	1
Argentina	2
Austria	3
Belgium	1
Burkina Faso	1
Canada	3
Chile	3
Colombia	3
Croatia	1
Czech Republic	1
Ecuador	2
El Salvador	1
Germany	11
Guyana	1
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	4
Hungary	4
India	40
Indonesia	7
Iraq	12
Ireland	11
Italy	15
Kenya	1
Lebanon	2
Malaysia	12
Malta	12
Mauritius	11
Mexico	2

Country	Number of respondents
Myanmar	1
Nepal	1
Netherlands	17
New Zealand	17
Nicaragua	1
Papua New Guinea	1
Peru	1
Philippines	23
Poland	7
Portugal	1
Singapore	5
South Africa	6
Spain	1
Sri Lanka	13
Sudan	1
Syrian Arab Republic	1
United Arab Emirates	1
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	44
United States of America	7
Uzbekistan	1
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of...	1
Viet Nam	4
Zimbabwe	4
Not stated	166
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>

## APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS FROM YOUR DIOCESE

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

Name of group	Group size
Catholic Social Services Victoria	17,000
The Parish of St Martin De Porres Avondale Heights	5,700
The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum	5,000
St John Bosco's Parish Niddrie	2,000
Concerned Catholics of Australia	1,820
Parish of St Gerard	1,500
Legion of Mary, Senatus of Melbourne Inc	1,450
Holy Saviour Parish	1,200
Knights of the Southern Cross (Victoria) In.	1,000
Thomas Carr College Students	1,000
Spanish Chaplaincy Melbourne	800
Spanish Chaplaincy	700
St Agatha's Church	648
Holy Trinity Parish	510
Catholic Secondary Principals Australia [CaSPA]	500
Australian Confraternity of Catholic Clergy	500
St Agatha's Parish	500
Ave Maria, St Bernard's and St Columba's College	450
Holy Spirit and St Anthonys Parish	400
St Mary Star of the Sea, West Melbourne	400
Parish meeting	400
Mount St. Joseph Girls College	350
Our Lady of the Pines, Donvale, Melbourne	300
St Dominic's Primary School	280
Worldwide Marriage Encounter	250
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College - Students	245
St Kevin's Catholic Parish, Templestowe	200
Yarra Theological Union	200
Year 12 Class of Santa Maria College	153
Church agency staff (Melbourne)	150
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College - Staff	133
Sacred Heart Girls' College Oakleigh	130
St Columba's College	128
Sunbury Catholic Parish	120

Name of group	Group size
Thomas Carr College Staff	115
Mazenod College	105
Holy Spirit Parish	100
Holy Spirit Parish, North Ringwood	100
Federated Schools of Holy Trinity Parish	100
St Cecilia's Parish, Camberwell South	100
Saint Mary' Catholic Church Thornbury Vic	100
St Kevin's Parish Hampton Park	100
St. Clement of Rome Parish	100
St Kevin's Templestowe Parish	100
Jesuit Education Australia	100
Heathgrove Study Centre	100
Oblate Youth Australia	95
Call of Guadalupe Theatre Group	94
Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans ACRATH	93
Holy Redeemer Servant Community	91
Notting Hill/Clayton Victoria Spirituality in the Pub	90
Notting Hill SIP	90
Nazareth College	83
ACU Short Course in Theology (Melbourne) - The Future of the Church in Australia	80
Acceptance Melbourne LGBT+ Catholics	80
Mornington parish	80
Jt. Joseph's School Crib Point	77
Sacred Heart Parish Croydon	76
Archdiocesan Office for Youth - North Region Youth Ministers	76
St Joseph's Primary School	75
Oakleigh Parishes	75
St. Brendan's Somerville	72
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deepdene	66
St McCarten's Mornington	65
Cardijn Community of Australia	65
The Parish of St. Anne and St. Bede	65
St James the Apostle Parish	60
St Thomas More Primary School	60
Holy Trinity Parish	60
Antonine College	60
St Benedict's Parish Burwood Victoria	60

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
St Louis de Montfort Aspendale and St Brigids Mordialloc	60
Santa Maria College, Northcote, Social Justice Club	58
Frankston parishes/St John's and St Francis Xavier	55
St Kevin's Templestowe Parish	55
St. Mary's Hastings	53
St Kevin's Templestowe Parish	50
St Thomas the Apostle	50
St Paul Apostle Community	50
Brigidine Sisters Victoria	50
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia & Papua New Guinea (Community South C)	50
St Kevin's Parish Lower Templestowe	50
St Thomas the Apostle	47
St Louis De Montfort Primary School	46
St Simon the Apostle	45
Melbourne Eastern Region	44
Association of Pastoral Associates, Melbourne	41
St Monica's College Epping	41
St Dominic's Parish, East Camberwell	41
Our Lady of the Assumption parish, Cheltenham, Vic	40
Melbourne Southern Region youth leaders	40
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish East Hampton 3188	40
St Peter's Catholic Parish	40
St Peter's Parish, Keilor East	40
St Joseph's Parish, Chelsea, Vic	40
SJV Youth - St. John Vianney's Parish	40
St Peter's College	40
Catholic Education Melbourne: Eastern Region	39
Legion of Mary, Preston Curia	39
Gathering of members of the Franciscan family	39
St. Brendan's Mass Centre Somerville	36
SRO- CEM	34
St. Bernard's Parish, Belmont 3216	34
St. Bernard's Parish, Belmont 3216	34
Sacred Heart and St Columba Parish, Melbourne	34
St Mary's Star of the Sea	31
St Luke's Lalor	31
St Patrick's Church Portarlington	31
St Bernard's and St Anthony's Parish	31

Name of group	Group size
The Way Prayer Group	30
St Bridget's 5.30 Mass Group	30
Michele Kennan	30
Parishioners of Christ the Light Parish, Mernda, Doreen, Whittlesea, Kinglake	30
Acceptance Melbourne Inc.	30
St Theresa's Parish, Essendon	30
St. Christopher's Elevate Youth	30
First Neocatechumenal Community of St. Paul's Church, Coburg, Victoria 3058	30
Catholic Chinese Community of Melbourne	30
Kolbe Catholic College Greenvale Lakes	30
St Anthony's Glen Huntly	30
St Annes Parish Seaford	30
OLPS OHR Wattle Park	29
St Agatha's Catholic Primary School	29
Stella Maris Catholic Primary School	29
Greythorn Conference, St Vincent de Paul Society	28
St Gerard's Parish Young Adults	28
St Theresa's Parish	27
St Theresa's Parish	27
St Theresa's Parish	27
Our Lady Of Sion College	26
Sacred Heart Parish	26
St Kevin's Church	25
St Kevin's Primary School	25
St Marys Star of the Sea parish, Sorrento	25
St Carthages Parish	25
St Augustines P.S.Staff	25
Castlemaine	25
St Thomas More Parish	24
Veritas Group	23
Sacred Heart College	22
St Elizabeth's	22
St Elizabeth's	22
St John's Parish School Mitcham	22
Women's Wisdom in the Church	20
Prayer group (at the Carmelite Monastery Melbourne)	20
Legion of Mary, Corio / Lara Parish	20

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Melbourne Jesuits	20
Holy Family Young Adults	20
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College	20
St Thomas More Primary School	20
St Bede's College	20
Women's Wisdom in the Church	20
St Kevin's Parish, Templestowe	20
St Bernards College	20
St Bernards College	20
Australian Cardijn Institute	20
Immaculate Conception Mass Centre Hastings	19
St Martin of Tours Parish	19
St Mary's Catholic Church	19
St. Christopher's Parish	19
Saint James, Richmond Parish	19
Sacred Heart Parish School - Staff	18
St John's Parish SCC	18
St Johns SCC	18
St James Primary School	18
St Joseph's staff	18
The Newman Fellowship	18
St Kevin's Primary School Staff	17
Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre	17
St Judes Parish	17
Kildare Ministries	17
Reachout Group, St Christopher Church, Syndal, Melbourne	17
St Joseph's School SORRENTO	17
St Christopher's ReachOut Group 11	17
Abbotsford Convent Chapel community	17
St Bedes School Staff	17
Ascot Vale Spanish speaking community	17
Saint Brigid's Parish Healesville	17
ST CATHERINE OF SIENA CATHOLIC PARISH	17
Hijitos de Maria (Hispanic chaplaincy)	16
St Dominic's Justice and Peace Group	16
St Joachim's Primary School	16
Legion of Mary, Morning Star Junior praesidium, St Francis of Assisi, Mill Park	16
Catholic Regional College North Keilor	16

Name of group	Group size
Life Teen Mill park	15
Team 55	15
Agua Viva prayer Group	15
Our Lady of the Southern Cross Parish	15
St Mary's Parish grp for plenary council	15
Spanish chaplaincy	15
Our Lady Star of the Sea, Junior Legion of Mary Praesidium, St Francis of Assisi Mill Park, Victoria	15
Inclusive Catholics Victoria Inc.	15
VMCH Aged Care and Independent Village	14
Sisters of Mercy Geelong area	14
St Mary Magdalen's Parish, Jordanville	14
All Saints, Fitzroy English speaking group	14
St Andrew's Clayton Sth Parish	14
St Francis Xavier Montmorency Parish Pastoral Council	14
CatholicCare Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry	14
St Brigids Primary School	14
Mater Christi College	14
Spanish Chaplaincy	14
Bacchus Marsh Branch, Knights of the Southern Cross	14
Cell 36/ St Francis Paris Mill Park	14
Mercy Place Wyndham	14
Catholic Regional College North Keilor	14
St Kevin's Liturgy Team	13
Jesuit Province Reconciliation with Creation Advisory Group	13
Parish or St Josephs & St Marks, Springvale	13
St Bridget's Parish Greythorn	13
St. Andrew's Parish	13
Teams for Married Spirituality	13
Corpus Christi Village residents	13
Mary Help of Christians Parish	12
Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga Inc	12
St. Peter's Mass Centre Shoreham	12
Australian Catholic Biblical Association (ACBA)	12
Box Hill Catholic Parish	12
Loyola College	12
OLGC Primary School, Deepdene	12
Wednesday Mass / Coffee Group	12
Xavier College	12

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Rathminers	12
OLOL Parish Bayswater	12
Focolare Movement (Melbourne)	12
A group in a Victorian Prison	12
Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria	12
Catholics for Renewal Inc.	12
St Simon's Advent Group	12
Residents of Corpus Christi Village	11
Corpus Christi Retirement Village	11
Teams of Our Lady	11
Team 33, Teams - A Married Couples Movement	11
St Therese Theology Discussion Group, St Therese Community, Torquay 3228	11
Catholic Regional College St Albans (Student Representatives)	11
Team 31 Vic East	11
Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne	11
Just a group of very concerned but disillusioned parishoners.	11
Mazenod College Staff	11
Legion of Mary, Mary Help of Christians Praesidium, St Francis of Assisi, Mill Park	11
St Thomas Mass Centre Drysdale	11
Cell group 26 St Francis of Assisi Parish, Mill Park	11
Jesuit Social Services	11
Saint Joseph Church - South Yarra Parish - Melbourne - Victoria	11
Corpus Christi Retirement Village	10
Teams for Married Couples Yarra Sector Team 26	10
St. Joseph's Parish Boronia	10
St Paul's Primary School	10
St. Christopher's Parish Airport West	10
SOSJ	10
Richmond Catholic Parish	10
St Patrick's Lilydale Saturday morning Listening and Dialogue group	10
Catalyst for Renewal Inc., Victoria	10
Our Lady of the Southern Cross	10
St Mary's Parishioners	10
St Mary's Catholic Church Alexandra, Vic	10
School Advisory Council St Francis Xavier	10

Name of group	Group size
MenAlive Sharing group	10
KSC Mentone Branch - 36	10
Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart	10
St Kevin's Youth Group	10
National Liturgical Council	10
A small group of parishioners from St Francis Xavier Parish	10
Christian Life Community - Parkville Group	10
St Christopher's Airport West Youth Group	10
Tuesday Community	10
St. Andrew's Parish	10
Drummond Study Centre	10
Rolling Stones Christian Life Community Group Balwyn Vic	9
Forever Known Young Adults Group	9
Catalyst for Renewal, Inc. Victoria: Maria George, Anne Dowling, Kevin Burke, Barry Hughes PP, John Stuart, Vin Underwood , Mary Conlan, Denise, Egan, Muriel Alexander	9
Catalyst for Renewal Victoria	9
Sisters of St Joseph	9
St Mary's Greensborough	9
Upwey Small Church Community	9
Our Lady of Sion College Box Hill	9
OLSC Parish	9
SOSJ	9
St Gregory the Great Parish group	9
Columban Mission Centre	9
Catalyst for Renewal Victoria	9
Mariana Community	9
St Simon the Apostle—share the care	9
Prayer discussion group	9
Body of Christ Prayer Community	9
St Christopher's Airport West Plenary Council Team	9
SVHM - SVPHM	9
Teams of our Lady, Gardiner Sector Team 10	9
Local friends	9
Western Region Office Religious Education Leadership Network	8
St. Kevens (Plenary Group)	8
Emmanuel Community, Melbourne	8
St. Gregory the Great sub group	8
Teams Movement for married couples:Team 56	8

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Our Lady's - Ringwood	8
Gospel & Life Group, St Brigid's parish, Healesville	8
Catholic Charismatic Group Airport West	8
Catalyst for Renewal Victoria	8
St Paul's Primary School- Sunshine West	8
St Mary of the Immaculate Conception Williamstown	8
Catalyst for Renewal - Victoria	8
Catalyst for Renewal-Victoria	8
St Bernadette's Parish	8
St Bernadette's Parish	8
St Bernadette's Parish	8
St Luke the Evangelist Parish	8
Loyola College - Group A	8
Loyola College Staff Group D	8
Loyola College Group H	8
OLV Mens Scripture Reading Group	8
Parish Social Justice Group	8
Our Lady of Sion College	8
Small Christain Communities	8
Thomas Carr College	8
Campion centre of Ignatian Spirituality	8
Sacred Heart Girls' College	8
Meditation Group, Langwarrin	8
Victorian Catholic Hospital Mission Leaders	8
St Christopher's Church ReachOut Group 10	8
A Plenary Council Discussion Team	8
St Vincent's Public Hospital Melbourne	8
St Vincent's Private Hospital Melbourne	8
Sacred Heart Parish Yea	8
St Francis Xavier Parish	8
Sisters of St Joseph	8
Faber House CLC	8
St. Augustine's Education Board	8
Drummond Study Centre	8
Metro Catholic Prison Ministry	8
East Parkdale conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society	8
NATSIC	7
Team 24 (married couples movement)	7

Name of group	Group size
Ad hoc parish group	7
St Paul's	7
Sacred Heart Girls' College	7
A small group from St Mary's Parish Williamstown VIC	7
St Bernadette's Parish	7
Parishioners of Richmond Catholic Parish, Vic. (St. James Community)	7
The Melbourne Group	7
Loyola College Group G	7
Sts Philip & James Church St Leonards Vic	7
St Patrick's Lilydale Sunday morning Listening and Dialogue group	7
St Simon the Apostle Parish Staff	7
Parish Discussion Group	7
Mercy College	7
Sacred Heart Girls' College	7
St Patrick's Parish, Lilydale	7
CLC Victoria Malvern	7
Catalyst for Renewal Victoria	7
Parish of St Anne and St Bede, Social Justice Group	7
Brazilian Catholics in Melbourne	7
St Monica's College, Epping	7
Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help	7
Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help	7
Spanish chaplaincy	7
Soul Sisters Group St Mary's Parish Greensborough	7
Parish Discussion Group Templestowe	7
Equipes Notre-Dame - Geelong Team 1	7
Grovedale Parish	6
Meredith Parish Team	6
Prestwick Group. Nazareth Parish, Torquay, Vic.	6
St Francis Xavier Parish (an anonymous parish sub-team)	6
St. Paul's Primary	6
St. Paul's Primary School, West Sunshine	6
St Mary of the Immaculate Conception Williamstown	6
St Bedes College	6
Prisoners in Victoria	6
Legion of Mary	6
Our Lady of Lourdes parish, Sunnybank, Brisbane, Queensland	6

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
St Bernadette's Parish	6
Brunswick Parish of Brunswick and Brunswick East	6
Loyola College	6
Loyola Staff Group E	6
Our Lady of Sion College	6
Avila College	6
Catholic High School	6
St Leonard's Parish, Glen Waverley	6
St Mary's Parishioners (8 Feb)	6
Saint Bernard's Catholic Church, Bacchus Marsh	6
Mercy College - Religion and Society Unit 2, Ms El-Khoury	6
Sacred Heart Girls' College	6
Sacred Heart Girls' College	6
St Theresa's Parish Leadership Team	6
St Paul Apostle Endeavour Hills	6
St Peters East Bentleigh	6
Parishioners from St Mary's Parish Greensborough	6
Sacred Heart parishioners	6
St Francis of Assisi Mill Park Cells group 22	6
Oakleigh/Oakleigh East Parishes	6
6 parishioners searching for a way forward for our Church and who support one another.	6
Sr Joan and Co.	6
Spanish Chaplaincy	6
(Small staff group within) Santa Maria College, Northcote	6
St Josphe's Primary school	6
St Mary's Greensborough School Parents	6
St Christopher's Airport West Family Choir	6
St Thomas Parish Drysdale	6
St Joseph's by the Sea	6
Informal friends group	6
Group1 St Thomas the Apostle	6
St. Mary's Ascot Vale	6
Grovedale SG1	5
ACU - Master of Leadership	5
Postgraduate students studying Masters Of Leadership	5
St John's Liturgy Group	5
Western Region Religious Education Leaders	5
Meredith Parish Kitchen Group	5

Name of group	Group size
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 7	5
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 10	5
Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Pastoral Council	5
St Mary's Parish Williamstown	5
St Joseph's Parish, Malvern, Vic.	5
St Josephs Malvern Group P	5
Catholics	5
Sacred Heart Parish Diamond Creek	5
The Catholic Parish of Brunswick and Brunswick East	5
Sacred Heart Parish Plenary group	5
Nazareth Parish, Grovedale	5
Nazareth Parish, Grovedale	5
St. Bede's	5
Santa Maria	5
St Monicas College Epping	5
Avila College	5
Avila College Mount Waverley	5
St Joseph's Parish Malvern	5
St Joseph's Parish Malvern	5
Holy Trinity Parish - Plenary Discussion Group	5
BBE Plenary Council Annette's group	5
Student body	5
Avila College	5
Avila College	5
A group from the Sacred Heart (Croydon) Parish	5
OLMC year 11 group	5
Friendship Group within the Parish	5
Sister of Mercy, Sisters of St Joseph	5
Avila College	5

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Our Lady of Sion	5
Our Lady of Sion College	5
St Elizabeth's Parish	5
Abiad family	5
Teachers for Catholic Classic Education	5
St Mary's Liturgy Group	5
Holy Family Parish event	5
St Joseph's Convent Elderly Group	5
Alpha Australia National Leadership	5
Ordinary Catholics	5
Group 3, 11 December 2018	5
St. Mary's, Greensborough Social Justice Group	5
A discussion and discernment group within the Emmanuel Community (the one that started in France, not the Brisbane one)	5
Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help	5
Small Church Community group, St Francis Xavier parish	5
Thomas Carr College Parents	5
Sacred Heart Parish Croydon	5
Subgroup St Mary's Greensborough Parish Pastoral Council	5
Whitehouse family	5
Legion of Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary praesidium, St Luke's, Lalor	5
The Open Door	5
Open parish meeting at St Patrick's parish Mentone	5
Legion of Mary	5
Inclusive Health Program Team, St Vincent's Health Australia	5
Group 2	5
Staff of Archdiocese of Melbourne	4
Not applicable	4
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 1	4
2 Holy Family Parish Maidstone	4
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 3	4
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 4	4
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 5	4
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 6	4
Holy Family Parish Maidstone	4
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 8	4
Holy Family Parish Maidstone 9	4
No name	4

Name of group	Group size
St Kevin's Parish Templestowe	4
St Joseph's Malvern	4
Sacred Heart Parish	4
Sacred Heart Parish, Diamond Creek 3089	4
Brunswick and Brunswick East Parish Group	4
CRC Sydenham	4
Sacred Heart Diamond Creek	4
Avila College	4
St Joseph's Parish Malvern (DJMP group)n	4
St Joseph's Parish, Malvern	4
The Catholic Paris of Brunswick and Brunswick East	4
St Joseph's parish	4
Thomas Carr College and St Bernard's College	4
Sacred Heart Girls' College	4
Avila College	4
Avila College	4
Avila College	4
Avila College	4
St Josephs Malvern	4
All Saints, Fitzroy Vietnamese speaking group	4
Loyola College	4
St Dominic's Dialogue Small Group	4
Avila College	4
Avila	4
Lent prep	4
OLSC GROUP 4	4
OLMC	4
OLMC Heidelberg	4
J.D.Sleigh Family	4
Our Lady of Sion College	4
Holy Family Parish	4
Youth Engagement Team- St Vincent de Paul Society Victoria	4
St Patrick's P S Lilydale	4
Holy Family Parish event	4

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
St. Mary's, Ascot Vale - Group 5	4
St Mary's Greensborough Catechist Group	4
A small group from St Mary's Parish Greensborough, Melbourne	4
De La Salle College	4
De La Salle College	4
Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help	4
Legion of Mary	4
Youth Engagement Project	4
Legion of Mary, Mother of the Sorrowful Heart praesidium, Sacred Heart, Preston	4
St Augustine's P.S. Parents	4
Costin Family	4
Hickman Family	4
SFX Plenary "Parents" Team	4
St Bridget's, Greythorn	4
Group 4	4
The Open Door	4
St James the Apostle	4
St James the Apostle Primary School	4
St John's PS	4
St. John's Primary School	4
A group of Pastoral Associates	3
CRC Sydenham	3
A Bacchus Marsh parish group	3
St Mary Ascot Vale Group 1	3
Avila College	3
All Saints, Fitzroy Dinka speaking (South Sudanese) group	3
The Legion of Mary, St Martin of Tours, Rosanna	3
(No name just friends)	3
St Michael's Parish	3
Avila College	3
Milan Poropat, Joan Wells, Patricia Kiely-Poropat	3
People from 2 parishes in Melbourne	3
Community of the Sons and Daughters of God	3
Members of 2 parishes in North Melbourne	3
Group from two parishes (Greensborough and Kinsbury, Melb)	3
SION	3
Leith Park residents	3

Name of group	Group size
N/A	3
The three of us	3
De La Salle College	3
St Mary's Seminary	3
De La Salle College	3
Surjadi and Grima family	3
Three readers at Mass	3
Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help	3
Clonard College	3
St Gregory the Great Parish	3
NA	2
Perera and Fernando	2
Mr & Mrs Dalla-Vecchia	2
Dr and Mrs EH Walters	2
Our lady of	2
Year 10 Students of Our Lady of Slon College	2
O'Halloran family	2
Charles and Beth Fivaz	2
Mercy College	2
Mary and Neale Banks	2
Garry & Maureen Mahon	2
Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help	2
John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family	2
St Thomas Parish	2
Albion76	2
Two Sisters Who Love God	2
St Martin of Tours Parish	2
Cantors from Melbourne	2
Peter and Kathie F	2
Nieuwesteeg family	2
Local Family	2
Peter and Carmel Cowan	2
1	1
Mater Christ College	1
Missionary Sisters of Service	Not Stated
St Christopher's Catholic Church	Not Stated
St John the Evangelist Church	Not Stated
Cabrini Australia Limited	Not Stated

*Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese*

<b>Name of group</b>	<b>Group size</b>
St Christopher's Catholic Parish, Syndal	Not Stated
Ovulation Method Research & Reference Centre of Australia	Not Stated
Divine Renovation Forum Australia	Not Stated
Khoi Nguyen	Not Stated
Mrs Lize Privitera	Not Stated
Flemington/Kensinton Parish	Not Stated
Social Justice Group, St Macartan's, Mornington	Not Stated
St Monica's Prayer Group Moonee Ponds VIC	Not Stated
St Anthony's Parish Noble Park VIC	Not Stated
Whitefriars College	Not Stated
Mary Help of Christians	Not Stated
Our Lady of Perpetual Help	Not Stated
Schools within Parish of Western Port	Not Stated
St Michaels Parish 3215	Not Stated
St Thomas More	Not Stated

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