



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

Final Report for Phase I: Listening and Dialogue

A Report to the Archdiocese of Sydney

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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.

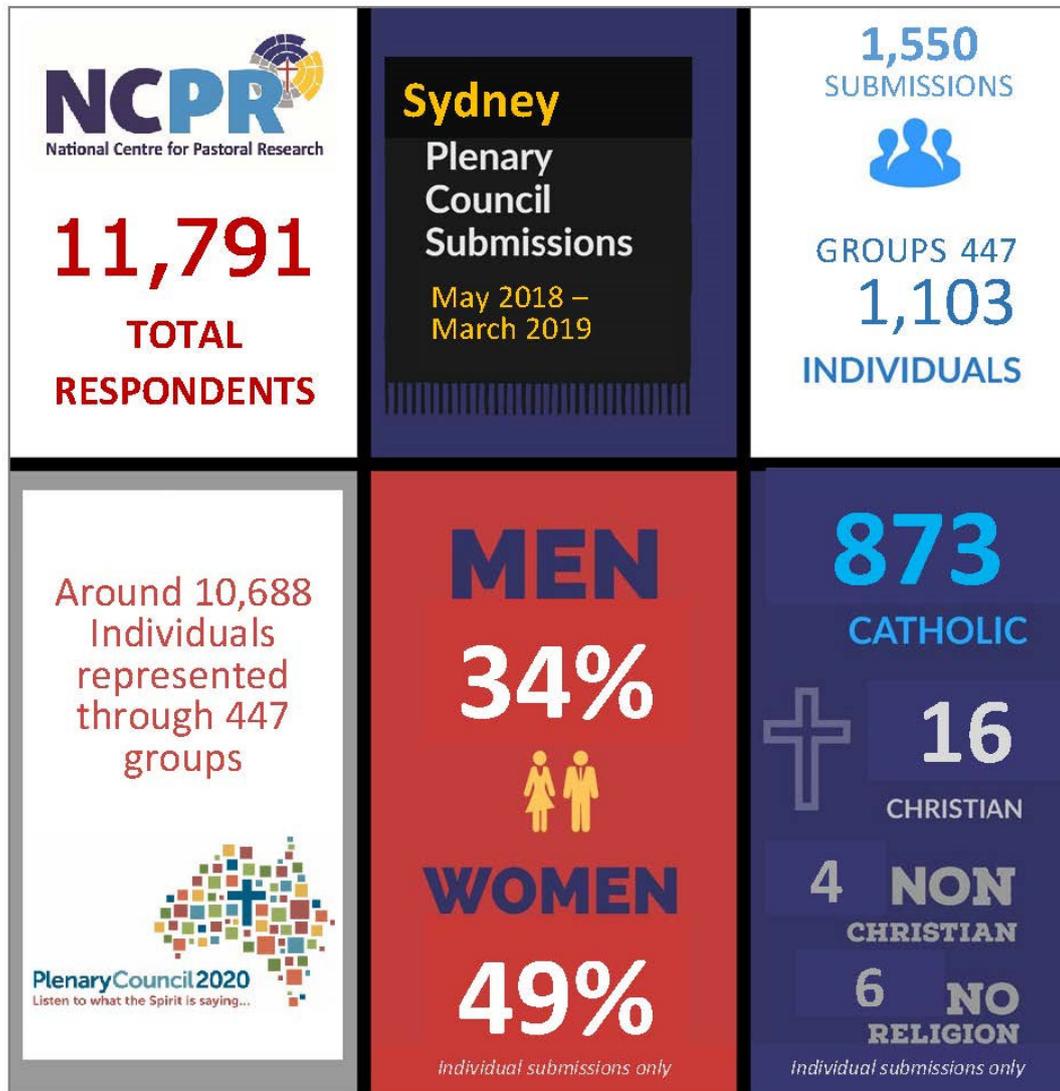
The latter sections of this report contain a sample list of questions received from your diocese in response to Question 2: *What questions about the future of the Church in Australia would you like the Plenary Council to consider?* Along with this, a number of stories of faith or Church are shared, 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.

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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 - Sydney

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 Sydney, we received a total of 1,550 completed responses from May 2018 until 13 March 2019. Of these, 971 respondents had participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter, while another 110 were unsure if they had. About 461 respondents indicated that they had not participated in a Listening and Dialogue Encounter.

Of the 1,550 submissions, 447 submissions were from groups or organisations and 1,103 submissions were from individuals. There were 10,688 people represented through the 447 groups. It is important to note, however, that not all groups completed this question, so total group numbers may be under-represented.

Overall, the total number of respondents from your diocese was 11,791.

Table 1: Number of Submissions	
Total number of submissions received	1,550
<i>Participated in Listening & Dialogue Encounter?</i>	
Yes	971
No	461
Not sure	110
Not stated	8
Total	1,550
Submissions received from groups or organisations	447
Submissions received from individuals	1,103
Total	1,550

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March 2019, a total of 1,103 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 Sydney. Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the same table. About 49 per cent (545) were received from those aged 50 and over. The most number of submissions within this age range were received from the 70-74 years age group (105 responses).

At the close of submissions, there were 67 individual submissions received from those aged under 25.

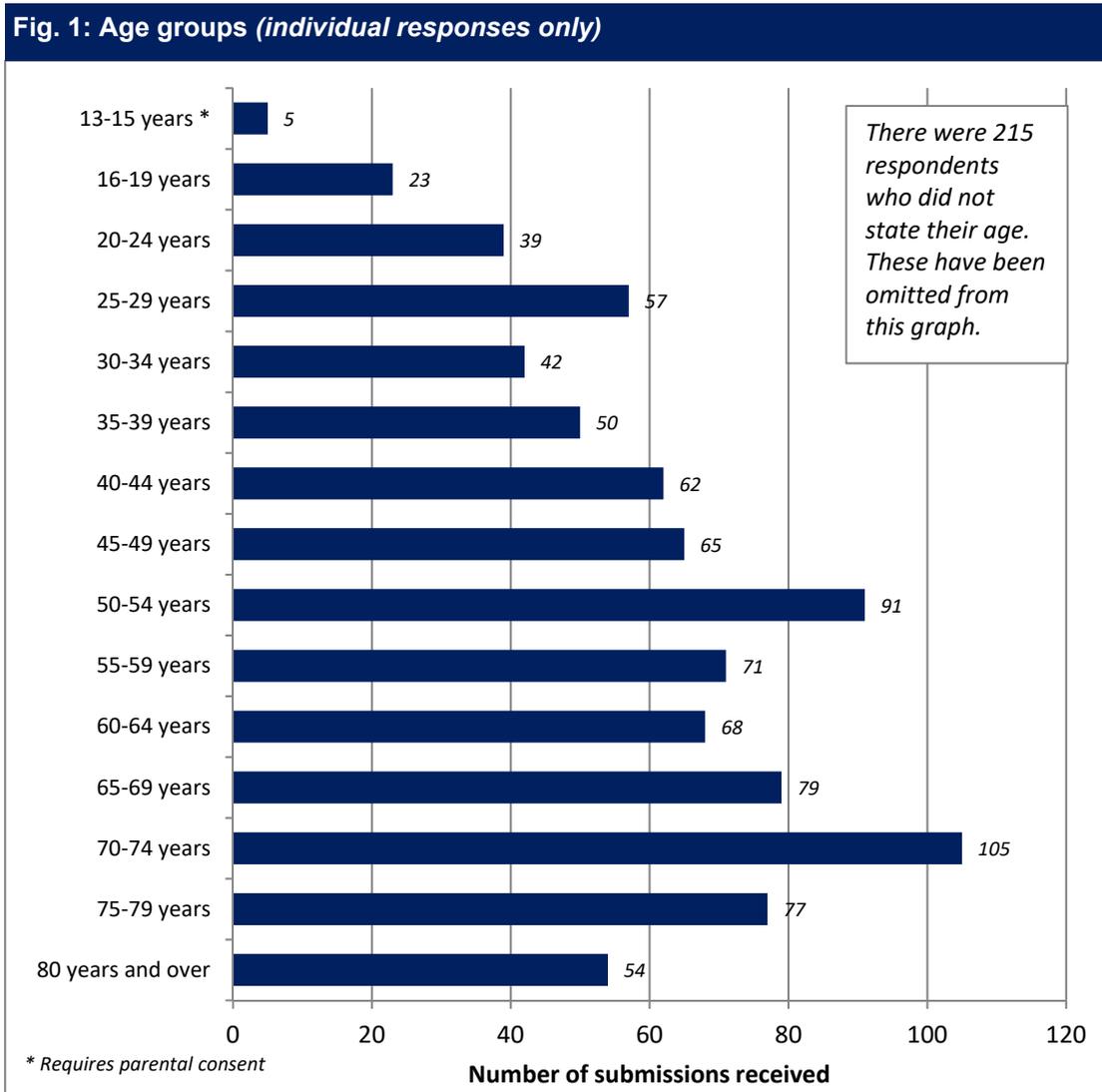
Participants aged 16-17 were encouraged to discuss the questionnaire with their parent or guardian. Many of these responses came from schools that sent in their responses through the online survey. As Table 2 shows, there were 23 individual submissions made from the 16-19 years age group in your diocese.

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

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

13-15 years *	5
16-19 years	23
20-24 years	39
25-29 years	57
30-34 years	42
35-39 years	50
40-44 years	62
45-49 years	65
50-54 years	91
55-59 years	71
60-64 years	68
65-69 years	79
70-74 years	105
75-79 years	77
80 years and over	54
Not stated	215
Total	1,103

* Requires parental consent



Sex of Respondents

A little under half the number of all individual respondents from your diocese were female (49%), while a further 34 per cent were male. Table 3 shows that there were 369 men and 537 women who made submissions. Seventeen respondents preferred not to state their sex, while 180 respondents did not answer this question.

Table 3: Sex (individual responses only)	
Female	537
Male	369
Prefer not to say	17
Not stated	180
Total	1,103

Countries of Birth

Table 4a shows the country of birth of individual respondents from your diocese. As expected, a large number of respondents (59%) were born in Australia. Just over 20 per cent came from other countries, while around 21 per cent did not state their birthplace. See *Appendix 1* for the full list of countries of birth. Table 4b provides a summary of the countries of birth by English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries*, while Tables 4c and 4d indicate the countries of birth of the respondent's mother and father respectively.

Table 4a: Countries of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	650	58.9
Egypt	7	0.6
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	12	1.1
India	22	2.0
Ireland	8	0.7
Italy	7	0.6
Lebanon	6	0.5
Malaysia	10	0.9
Malta	6	0.5
New Zealand	16	1.5
Philippines	24	2.2
Singapore	6	0.5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	21	1.9
United States of America	13	1.2
Viet Nam	6	0.5
Other Countries	63	5.7
Not stated	226	20.5
Total	1,103	100.0

Table 4b: Country of birth - Summary (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	650	58.9
Other English-speaking country	61	5.5
Non-English-speaking country	166	15.0
Not stated	226	20.5
Total	1,103	100.0

Table 4c: Mother's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	489	44.3
Other English speaking country	70	6.3
Non-English speaking country	282	25.6
Not stated	262	23.8
Total	1,103	100.0

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

Table 4d: Father's country of birth (individual responses only)		
	N	%
Australia	449	40.7
Other English-speaking country	87	7.9
Non-English-speaking country	300	27.2
Not stated	267	24.2
Total	1,103	100.0

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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

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

Table 5: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (individual responses only)	
Yes	8
No	871
Not stated	224
Total	1,103

Religion of Respondents

The religion question was answered by individual respondents only. Of the total 1,103 individual submissions that were received from your diocese, 873 respondents (79%) were Catholic. Sixteen respondents were from other Christian denominations while there were four from non-Christian religions. A further 204 respondents did not state their religion and six respondents chose the 'no religion' response.

Table 6: Religion (individual responses only)	Person	Percent
Catholic	873	79.1
Other Christian:		
Anglican	3	0.3
Orthodox	2	0.2
Pentecostal	2	0.2
Presbyterian and Reformed	1	0.1
Uniting Church	2	0.2
Seven-day Adventist	1	0.1
Other Christian	5	0.5
Non Christian:		
Buddhism	1	0.1
Islam	1	0.1
Judaism	1	0.1
Other religion	1	0.1
No religion	6	0.5
Not stated	204	18.5
Total	1,103	100

For those who indicated that they were Catholic, a further question asked them to describe their participation in church activities. Their responses are shown in Table 7. A total of 757 respondents indicated that they went to Mass regularly and were involved in other church activities. There were 59 respondents who said they went to Mass and church activities sometimes, while 21 respondents considered themselves Catholic but were not involved or described their participation in other terms. A further 36 respondents described themselves in another way or did not answer the question.

Table 7: Religious description (for those who answered 'Catholic' to previous question)	Female	Male	Not stated	Total
I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other church activities	436	311	10	757
I am Catholic and go to Mass and church activities sometimes	40	18	1	59
I am Catholic, but I don't practise or get involved in anything	5	1	0	6
I consider myself Catholic but I am not sure what to think about the Catholic faith	8	7	0	15
Other	12	9	1	22
Not stated	9	2	3	14
Total	510	348	15	873

GROUP SUBMISSIONS

At the close of the survey on 13 March, there were a total of 447 group submissions made from your diocese. Around 10,688 individuals were represented through these groups. However, 36 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 359 group submissions provided a group name, 88 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 St Vincent's College with 826 members. There were also a number of other parish, school and community groups such as the Kairos Prison Ministries with 679 participants and St Canice's Parish—online responses with 600 members. There were 11 other groups with 130 members or more.

Name of group	Group size
St Vincent's College	826
Kairos Prison Ministries	679
St Canice's Parish - online responses	600
Knights of the Southern Cross NSW	500
UTS Catholic Society	364
Kenvale College	300
St Martha's Catholic Primary School	266
Women and the Australian Church (WATAC)	259
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea	200
St Benedict's Church	200
Mary Ward Network Australia	200
Sacred Heart Cabramatta, Pastoral Team	153
St Therese (MASCOT) Parish	135
Warrane College	130
St Catherine's Parish, Gympie	85
Parish of Our Lady of the Way	80
Piazza 'House Church' - a women's group that has been meeting since 2012	70
ACU Short Course in Theology (Sydney) - The Future of the Church in Australia	70
Italian Community at St Joseph's Parish Moorebank	67
Band of Brothers	60

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 3,044 members. This was followed by the group aged 70 and over with 2,040 members. There was no age provided for around 879 group members.

Table 9: Estimates of ages of people in group submissions <i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Under 20 years	1,716
20 - 29 years	1,051
30 - 49 years	1,456
50 - 69 years	3,044
70 and over	2,040
Unknown	879
Total	10,186

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

Of the total 10,001 group members whose sex was reported, 60 per cent (6,034) were female and 40 per cent (3,967) were male.

Table 10: Estimates of sex of people in group submissions <i>(group responses - for submissions received after 04 November 2018 only)</i>	
Female	6,034
Male	3,967
Total	10,001

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
- Sacraments
- Social Justice and the Environment

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

- Love God, Love Neighbour (Chapter 4)
 - *Greater trust, faith and hope in God (p. 29)*
 - *Greater focus on Jesus Christ (p. 30)*
 - *Better faith formation (p. 38)*
 - *Remaining faithful to Church teaching (p. 32)*
 - *Greater focus on the Word of God (p. 31)*
 - *Care for neighbour (p. 36)*
 - *Renewed call to holiness (p. 35)*
- Leadership and Church Governance (Chapter 7)
 - *Greater role for women (p. 83)*
 - *New model of Church, diocese, parish (p. 93)*
 - *Greater involvement of the laity (p. 84)*
 - *Ending clericalism (p. 80)*
 - *Greater leadership from bishops (p. 87)*
 - *Greater leadership from priests (p. 88)*
 - *New leadership and governance model (p. 91)*
- Sacraments (Chapter 6)
 - *Holy Orders – Ending celibacy / allowing priests to marry (p. 66)*
 - *Greater emphasis on prayer and sacraments (p. 64)*
 - *Holy Orders - Ordination of women (p. 69)*
- Social Justice and the Environment (Chapter 9)
 - *Greater inclusion of all (p. 108)*
 - *Fighting for human rights issues (p. 110)*
 - *Ending discrimination of LGBTI (p. 110)*

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

- *Outreach to youth (p. 124)*
- *Teaching authentic Catholic faith (p. 151)*
- *Sharing the faith with others (p. 128)*
- *Inclusion of the divorced and remarried (p. 46)*
- *Better teachers in Catholic schools (p. 148)*

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 34 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.

Whilst I am unsure whether God is asking anything, if the Church is to continue its mission it needs to shed much of its baggage. A religious conservatism (black letter law Catholicism), that seems in many cases to support a radical neo-liberal, neo-conservative agenda, has destroyed to a great extent a progressive, inclusive and empathic voice within the Church. In fact, an entire generation has been lost (Gen X) and the succeeding generation looks like the fall off rate will be worse. What we are left with is a largely conservative congregation that seems comfortable with a religious conservative world view (largely obsessed with sexual theology) combined with a support (willing or otherwise) of a radical right-wing economic agenda. This is largely embodied in right-wing political forces in Australia which the Church leadership over the past few decades has costed up to and at times outwardly supported. Whilst social conservatism has put off countless Catholics and robbed it of much of the energy and initiative of youth, the prime concern of the Church should be standing up to the economic radical neo-liberal agenda of the political right. This economic view is destroying livelihoods, families and hope. And I am aghast that the Church continues to be largely silent on such issues. If it does speak out—it tends to be apolitical and not calling out the pernicious forces of the right. The Church needs to be bold and challenge this economic position. Whilst it will make a large number of people in the congregation uncomfortable (as did Christ during his mission), it will signal to the broader community that the Church has regained a sense of not only what is right, but what is of relevance to the broader community. The silence of the Church on economic matters (I am yet to hear an Australian Church leader criticise the Turnbull Government's proposed, obscene company tax) leaves it a shattered shadow of its former self, slowly collapsing into irrelevance. If the Church does not, or cannot address the twin threats of a distorted social conservatism coupled with an economic radicalism, then I am afraid it will disappear as a representative and relevant entity within Australia, which would be a shame.

As a young Catholic, I am deeply concerned with the future of the Church in this country. I believe that we have faltered in abandoning or sidelining many beautiful and traditional elements of the Faith (e.g. sacred chant, the traditional rite of the Mass, and personal devotions such as fasting,

frequent confession, and the centrality of the Eucharist in Catholic spirituality) and by being too submissive to a wider, secular culture on many issues that pertain deeply to Catholic identity and doctrine (e.g. homosexual marriage, abortion, contraception, and euthanasia). On these issues our clergy have been far too silent or conciliatory, preferring to avoid conflict with the wider culture rather than expressing our traditional beliefs openly and joyously. There has also been a profound loss of aesthetics and a fundamental misunderstanding of the importance of beauty in the spiritual life. Many of our Churches are either ugly and brutalist, or excessively modern and bland, and these can hardly inspire the same awe and reverence for the divine as the gothic and Romanesque Churches of the past. We all know that the Church in Australia is in a state of crisis—adherence is low, vocations have plummeted, and hostility from the wider culture is at a new high. I believe that God's message to us at this time is to remember who we are as Catholics—remember who we once were and what we could become again if we only returned to the ancient roots of our faith. As a young person I have great hope in this approach, as I have met many younger people who have a great love for the traditional Catholic faith, but I am also concerned that our voices will not be heard by the Church and that the current problems will only be magnified in the future if we continue down our current path of modernisation and submission.

The Lord is asking us to stand firm. Our faith is being attacked and targeted more so than ever at this time and this is the time for our Bishops to speak the truth with love, even if others don't like it or disagree. If our leaders aren't willing to stand up for the faith, then what example do young people have to follow? We are being called to encourage and normalize vocations. We have a major crisis in Australia, the breakdown of families and the lack of priests to administer the sacraments means the faithful are falling away and not being formed well. We need to encourage the domestic Church in our families and take Sunday back as the Lord's day.

God has ALWAYS asked to tighten discipline against clerical abuse by ordained and religious regarding clerical habits and the proper safeguards on the liturgy; The relaxing of discipline regarding compulsory wearing of clerical habits (since the 1960s) is to be blamed for much of the sexual harm on children. God is asking the Church to return to the authenticity of the Roman Rite: Forbid communion in the hand, forbid liturgical dances, forbid lay ministers distributing the Body and Blood of Our Lord (The Blood should not be distributed); Forbid elderly women acting as acolytes ([-], [-]). God is asking for committed and mature priests, deacons and religious, who undergo deep authentic theological study in Thomism (not lukewarm Josephite "spirituality"), men and women who are able to teach and be role models—to die for the Church. God is asking the Church in Australia to lead society, not to be corrupted by its lavishness and sins (Gay marriage, abortion, euthanasia, profit-making, luxuries). God is asking the Church in Australia to humbly recognise the failures of post-Vatican II "deformed" reforms carried out so unlawfully against the wishes of the Council Fathers by modernist bishops, with the support of many religious congregations in this country.

First responses: 1. We should adapt to the signs of the times, if the Church is getting smaller, reflected by the number of Mass-goers. 2. Fully cooperate with the recommendations of the Truth, Justice and Healing Commission. 3. Bishops and clergy to be servants and to live simply. 4. Ordain women who have a vocation and the gifts to do the job. 5. Make sure we respect our Lord at all times and show it. 6. We need to be ready for the youth to support them. 7. Do not forget older people and give them the support they need. 8. Attend to the Mass, Holy Communion and the Altar. Discussion was held on most topics as follows: Why fewer people come? We want to hear about the Bible, have it explained on different levels and to have it applied to the present day. We don't get good homilies to do this and that is why the young people go to places like Hillsong as those people are very good at explaining the Bible. Our priests need better formation to teach us the Bible. Some priests say Mass in a 'lackadaisical' way, not inspiring. The singing should be more inspiring so people will want to come back. Use top-class music and have skilled top-class people take charge of the mixing of music. The mixer should be near the computer so the person in charge of overheads can control it. Currently in our parish, it is not in use. Priests need to improve educating their people—

the Anglican priests who have come into the Catholic Church are appreciated for their homilies as they explain the Bible. The readers need better formation in reading with expression and clarity. Parishes should have a library of spiritual books in the Church so parishioners can borrow or sit in Church and read books and be educated. Where does the power lie in the Church? Sometimes the priest has too much power and the laity have no say, or sometimes a lay-person has too much power, or doesn't use the power they have. Communion ministers need better training to know the rules. Lay people should be encouraged to have book discussions, perhaps papal documents. Social occasions could be organised so people make connections, especially to make migrants welcome. These occasions need to be subsidised as otherwise they are too expensive for many but numbers have dwindled and so the money in the collections has gone down. There should be stricter criteria on the 'understandability' of their English if priests from overseas countries are brought over. Use of TV broadcasting for homilies could be used to support people in the outback. It can be suggested to parishioners who drive to Mass that they might pick up some house-bound elderly Catholics. FINAL STATEMENTS 1. We need more training and encouragement to step up to the job of taking responsibility for both service and teaching others about the faith. 2. Strengthen the role of the laity in the Church and have the priests listen to the laity. 3. I feel the Mass should be as it was in the 1950s. 4. We need to make the Mass a true experience in faith.

God is asking for the conversion of Australia population closer to him. Be attentively to the needs of poor, the elderly, terminally ill, homeless, refugees, the young and to those who needed help most.

We are looking at a situation where there is a strong correlation that the Catholic Church (and many other institutions) is aligned to improper practices. Believing this not to be so it is VITAL that Church leaders actively promote Christian living and proper practices as the way to take us away from our self-centred directions toward our perceived need for "wealth"... To do this, there is a need to have strong leadership with the ability to promote Christian ideas i.e. a good PR organisation with proper contacts. I think that we should be talking to the greater population rather than to our own "converts".

To let those around us know and see the love of Christ in what we do, to live good Christian lives and in doing so to demonstrate our love of Christ and of neighbour. To participate in the public square and to seek to guide our nation's lawmakers and laws for the good of our society.

In my view, what God is asking of us in Australia at this time is that we reform to become a Church truly based on Gospel values. I think that Jesus wants us to become a Church that is open, transparent, accountable and that treats all people as equal. This also implies that we be a Church that recognises its appalling failures in so many areas and that we should ask for forgiveness and do penance. There must be no more cover-ups of criminal behaviour, particularly the sexual and other abuse of children. This reformed Church will also be accountable and open about how it employs all its assets. I also think that Jesus wants us to be a Church that is truly concerned about the +/- 90% of Catholics who no longer come to its liturgies (except perhaps for special occasions or feasts) and makes real efforts to find out from these people why they appear to have abandoned the institutional Church. Their honest views may well reveal what is wrong with the institutional Church. Above all, a reformed Church will treat women as truly equal in all respects, recognising that the position and role of women has markedly evolved during the past few centuries. The institutional Church needs to "read the signs of the times" and recognise that in the whole world woman can now aspire to any office or position—except in the Catholic Church. Not only has this evolution been recognised in the secular world, it has also been recognised by our fellow Christians, such as the Anglicans and the Uniting Church. Unless women are given equal decision-making power within the Church I do not see that the Church has any future in Australia.

The four categories suggested were: The role of priests and laity; Apology for wrong-doing; Prayer; Outreach to the poor. Our discussion covered the first category as follows: To manage the shortage of priests, if the priest were to do only priestly work he could serve a larger area and leave parish management to lay people. Otherwise, he does not get enough time to develop his own spirituality. His presence in schools is important while leaving actual catechesis to the teachers. He would say

Masses in more than one parish. More support of prayer could be given to priests by having prayer groups in the parish. There can be problems if outside management of a parish is brought in—it should be done by the Catholic people of the parish as they have the values of Jesus. There is a problem in our parish that the revenue is down as the numbers are dwindling and so the allocated money to go to [-] is now too high and should be reduced. We have a lot of pensioners and unemployed and, it was suggested the pensioners should be able to use their money to enjoy cruises. Not all agreed as there were different values here. Priests need to rebuild our trust in them but we, the laity, need to remember we come to Church for Jesus, not the priest. The laity needs to remember that the pope and priests can make mistakes on a daily basis as they are ordinary people like us. We have our own relationship with Jesus and this is especially lived out by priests and religious. The laity need to learn and practise more meditation. Lectio Divina and Centring Prayer were suggested. Lay people can grow through meditation and sharing faith experiences. Use of a spiritual director is most helpful on this journey. Lay readers at Mass could have more training in reading with expression as that would enhance the message. Lay people could improve themselves if they got reminders to not come late for Mass or leave early, out of respect for Mass and to not disrupt the experience of other parishioners. The parish priest could give people a gentle reminder. They could also improve themselves by going on walks and smiling at people who might be lonely as there are many lonely people these days. Today there is a growth in the number of people who only attend Mass at Christmas and Easter. This is thought to be due to the influence of lay teachers who taught that weekly Mass was not needed, and not a mortal sin. If lay people are brought in more, they need extra training. There was discussion and difference of opinion on rules of purification of altar vessels. These were seen conducive to the sense of mystery and on the other hand, too many rules would not be very acceptable to Jesus during his earthly life. The laity would like more development days, more teaching from priests. It may be necessary to have all jobs round parishes as paid positions as the pool of volunteers will disappear.

First Responses: Priesthood and Ministries; Youth; Responding to the Royal Commission; Mass Celebration; Care of the Aged. Discussion held on Youth, Responding to the Royal Commission and Mass Celebration as follows: Youth has given Church away. In early days, there was the CYO (Catholic Youth Organisation) and youth were more involved through sport, socials, spiritual direction. There was a priest at all the meetings who explained apologetics. This happened through much of NSW. Competitions were held and money was raised for charity. There were 21 Clubs for those who turned 21. Marriage talks were offered. It has been established by sociological studies that the imbibing of alcohol by teenagers was the downfall of that system as they started joining secular clubs. The Antioch movement was introduced to take the place of the CYO. Young people had a great love of the Mass, would rush into Church and the love was catching—love of Jesus and each other. This movement stopped as they couldn't continue to get couples to act as parents due to financial, family and social pressures. Today we have had some wonderful World Youth Day events that get the youth in, but we want the enthusiasm to continue, to have it all the time. We suggest A YOUTH PROGRAM IN EVERY PARISH. We also question what is happening in our High Schools. It was felt that we lost out when the religious in High Schools were replaced by lay teachers. We think that RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS SHOULD BE VIBRANT AND MODERN. If we don't give the youth real spirituality they will go and find it elsewhere. There needs to be attention given to explaining the difference in language in the books of the Bible and current scientific language, and show there is no incompatibility there. On RESPONDING TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION. The general community thinks about two-thirds of sexual abuse was perpetrated in the Catholic Church, whereas it's one-third, a misunderstanding of the statistics. They were different times and wives and children were seen as possessions. Instead of criticising the old system, we need to adopt change, have a new beginning, adopt the gospel—a joyful renewal. The Church should nevertheless look at all the recommendations on the final report and they should be widely discussed in the Church so as not to rush ahead without a thorough study for future practice. The work of Steven Crittenden was mentioned in this regard. We, lay people, want to know what the Church is doing about the

Recommendations. Numbers at Mass have fallen as people say the Church is corrupt, and some wonder how much the Church can be sued for. Re MASS CELEBRATION: We need to work at making the Mass more meaningful by engaging music and everyone doing their best. Many choices for Prefaces, Eucharistic Prayers make difficulty for parishioners trying to use their missals. Could these choices be made known in the bulletin? Have more young people as altar servers, acolytes, to lead to possible vocations.

I think God is asking us to preach the Gospel and teach the faith. Not in a way that we wish it was, but the faith taught by Jesus, the Apostles and the Magisterium. More prayer, proper liturgy and reliance on God, less politics, less reliance on our own abilities and less trying to engage the world on secular terms. He wants us to humbly start to repair the damage done by failing to properly teach the faith to the last several generations.

I think God would want Catholicism to be alive and thriving and I feel that 'moving with the times' is a paramount need.

He is begging us to shake up the Church, to listen to the people, discard dangerous clerical power, emphasise service of each other. Stop preaching at us and start sharing with us. Go back to the Gospels. Listen to young people as well as older and experienced people (lots of untapped wisdom among the People of God). Less emphasis on doctrine and more emphasis on compassion. Pope Francis is showing the way.

I believe we Catholics in Australia are at a turning point. I believe God asks no more of us today than He has ever asked—the Gospel message, as it was preached to the ordinary people of his day rather than to an elite group of Jewish leaders. I believe the more realistic question is, What are Australian Catholics asking for? The answer lies in a more serious involvement of the laity in the life of the Church. This means that the laity, who are the bulk of the Church, must be listened to; that the *sensus fidelium* be taken seriously by the hierarchy. I believe that unless lay men—and especially women—are not given significant roles in the life of the Church, we have lost the opportunity the Council foreshadows. This means that the laity—many of whom are very well educated in governance, business, committed living, forward thinking attitudes, often in theology and Scripture—are no longer content to be the “pay, pray and obey” Catholics of yesteryear. So, if the hierarchy of the Australian Church not only listens to but actively involves the laity in administration, decision-making and the sacramental life of the Church, nothing will change, and the recent attrition from the pews will only continue. Maybe the Holy Spirit is in fact asking us to turn our backs on the Constantinian model of the Church, and maybe even listen to some of the positive values of the 16th century Protestant Revolution. We cannot any longer remain with the hierarchical pyramid model of Church, every decision being handed down to the laity by Rome and the Australian hierarchy. Please—bishops of Australia—listen to the flock, smell the sheep, get off your high horses (pardon the mixed metaphor!), let go of your centuries old power, and share humbly (and wisely) with the people. Heed the message from Ireland. “Prevent it, resist it, let in not be so/Lest child, child’s children cry against you woe!” (Richard II IV.i)

God is asking us to communicate, to talk with each other and not merely duck in and out of the weekly Mass. In the inner-city, you cannot assume that neighbours know or talk to each other. Also, the Church needs to confront the secrecy and privacy issue, as the general society is sick, sick and tired of the hiding paedophiles within the ranks.

To be a more contemplative people schooled in quiet meditation and contemplation at home, school, seminaries, noviciates as a basis for actions conscious of God’s mission in the world—to be the still point in a hyper-active world.

To be what we claim, “the great south land of the holy spirit”. To embrace the spirituality of our first people and to recognise God’s presence in our people and nature.

We need to use women in assisting in selection of candidates for the priesthood at various stages in the preparation for Ordination. Also consider a return to allowing the Third Rite of Reconciliation in parishes and other settings. Find a way to involve the laity in selection of bishops.

To put on sackcloth and ashes. I feel we are at a spiritual impasse that will not change until the ailing Body of Christ in Australia makes reparation to atone for the evil and atrocities we have committed as an ecclesial community (the sins of child abuse scandal). Pope Francis has just released a letter To The People Of God calling for prayer and fasting from “all God’s people”. The Church in Australia is gravely ill, it’s in hospital and it needs healing before it can move and be healthy. Only God can heal us but we must do our part and sit in sackcloth and ashes. We need to heed the request of Pope Francis, not in isolation but as a community. This needs to be done in all the parishes throughout Australia, largest to tiniest. It needs to be formal having a beginning, middle and end. A period of time should be set aside, whether it be 12 months (e.g. every Friday evening) or 3 yrs or more. Then the Lord will heal the Church in Australia, then we will blossom ... it will mark a new era. Many people don’t understand or feel that communal responsibility for these communal sins, they say it’s not their sin and let’s move on. I feel it, and I’m powerless as an individual to do anything about it. I’m a married mother of 4 adult women and I feel it. It breaks my heart and I think it breaks my heart because it breaks God’s heart. Pope Francis calls for solidarity... a change both personal and communal that makes us see things as the Lord does. He says prayer and penance will help this. “I invite the entire holy faithful people of God to a penitential exercise of prayer and fasting ... a penitential openness that can allow us to be renewed from within.”

1) To listen—to God and to the people of God—those who identify as Catholics in and outside of our parish communities and those who do not identify as Catholics. To become a Synodal Church based on reciprocal listening. 2) Acknowledge the hurt, pain and ache that people are suffering as a result of the sins of the Fathers, sins related to the sexual abuse, the cover-up of the sexual abuse and the wider, more entrenched clericalism, abuse of power and systemic dysfunction. 3) To lament the wrong, make amends for the criminal behaviour, seek forgiveness, and re-establish trust. 4) To re-found the Church based on the life of Jesus, comprised of small, inclusive Christian communities modelling servant leadership and new governance that welcomes all valuing the gifts of the people. 5) To be a Church that honours the principle of subsidiarity. 6) To be a Church that embodies Micah 6:8 Act Justly particularly towards the oppressed and suffering—Indigenous, asylum seekers, the poor and the Earth. Develop just structures that facilitate lay participation in good governance and the full participation of women. Love Tenderly reaching out to the stranger, excluded, disenfranchised Walk Humbly with God through a contemplative, discerning stance That this is reflected in liturgies. Archbishop of [-], [-], asks that we need to consider “How can we combat the virulent secularism ...?” Why would that be the focus of our discernment? Why not step out and meet the God that is present within our secular society? Why not enquire of the atheist about the God they do not believe in and maybe we will find that we do not believe in that God either? He then asks “How can we renew and support family, parish and school?” Why not instead look at what might be new wells? He goes on and asks “How can we ensure that we are praying and worshipping God in ways that are worthy and welcoming?” If prayer is a relationship with God, are there any ways of praying that are not worthy? Is God interested only in worthy prayers or only our simple humbling of mind and heart? Again, he asks “How can we reach out to and care for those on the margins?” Yes, we need to reach out but I believe there is a deeper question: How can we open our hearts to those on the margins to encounter the Christ present and be transformed? Rather than asking “How we can promote, form and support good marital, priestly and religious vocations?” I wonder how can we promote, form and support the flourishing of life, in every stage and calling of life? And why have a plenary council if “the purpose of the Plenary Council is not to change Church teaching or discipline”. How can we say that the Council is Synodal with everyone engaged in reciprocal listening and learning from one another if there will be no change in teaching or discipline?

<p>I think God is asking us to be simpler and humbler; to be an organisation that is more honest and much more transparent than we have ever been in my lifetime... to return to the faithful living of the Gospel Jesus left us; to divest ourselves of ecclesiastical trappings; to de-clutter ourselves of Clericalism that is still all-pervasive despite the wonderful teachings of Vatican II; to take seriously the enormous potential (feminine, spiritual, intelligent, insightful, professional) for the contribution of women to the life/development/improvement of the Church on many fronts.</p>
<p>We are exposed to religious freedom but Catholics are over-reacting and are going back to inventing gestures and practices which show a very low knowledge of the doctrine of the Catholic faith.</p>
<p>That Jesus "comes alive in People's Lives". Those of us who have that seeing Faith will bear witness to others to enable them to know Jesus as real as he is in the Scriptures. He is the same Jesus that reached out to all and sundry and does the same today if only we persevere in asking him. All Prayer is answered somehow.</p>
<p>He is asking us to change. The present Church is not meeting the needs of the people. Only a few people attend Church. But many are devoted Christians who do heaps of good works in our community. Priests need to be more part of community. Their training at present does not prepare them for the real world. They need to train amongst the people. On the job like most other professions do. We need to acknowledge the value of married priests and women taking a valid part of the Eucharist. In our little community, because of a lack of priests we have communion services which are working well. 35/45 each Sunday attend. Now the priest tells us we can't continue with them. In other parts of the country, they have been going on for years? How very sad for our vibrant community.</p>
<p>To answer a question with a question would be to ask, are we a nation with lost souls and have we learnt from our past?—I think God is asking Australians to have faith and to proclaim the good news this can be demonstrated through kindness (the golden rule). It is easy for society to throw stones, I know my own mother and father have their opinions of the Church however, the Church needs to be understood as more than just a few people's actions, rather a community that fosters hope, love, compassion and support and regardless of your story that it is a country that is free.</p>
<p>I believe we should be kind to one another and treat people as we would like to be treated.</p>
<p>Helping each other. Go to the church often. Humble. Peace. Faith to the God. Helping the poor. Whether we love Him with all our heart, soul and mind. If we do shun evil and stand firm for the truth of the gospel. Dawn Mass the best—nine days of prayers. Pray without ceasing as this is the will of God. To provide a safe place where people can come and worship God and learn about God and not feel intimidated or threatened. To be more helpful to each other. To be more fearful of God. We are called to serve—God—service to neighbour. Succession Planning—mission. Public + Private. Prayer. Step up—Be the Voice for the voiceless. Back to Focus on our relationship with Jesus. Step up—New Evangelisation. Step up—mission in Australia. Be active in our parishes by helping each other and listening especially to those who may often get over-looked. God is asking the Church to get involved in affordable housing, refugees and environmental issues. God is asking me as a Christian to get involved in helping the poor and homeless.</p>
<p>To repent of idolatry and abortion. Not to quench the Holy Spirit's action via sin, but to be filled with the Holy Spirit. To stay faithful to His word. Continue our faith and not let the media weaken our faith The Church needs to put "a line in the sand" re: sexual assault, etc within the Church. We need to find a way to make the Church relevant again in a world where Islam (in Australia) is growing steadily. We have to find a way to keep Australia "Christian". Praise be Jesus Christ. The Church needs to be Marian Church. To ask Mary Mother of God to accompany us, for in all of creation, only Mary, created by God, permitted by God to accompany Him in His journey here on earth, give (?) the Incarnation of the Word, His very 1st steps, Calvary, crucifixion, death, resurrection, Pentecost, stayed with the apostles. Only Mary can draw us back and say "this is where her Son walked, this is the way to the Cross of Salvation, this is the Way to Her Jesus. To listen to each other/Discuss issues/Resolve issues/Trust and respect one another. To the loneliness, poverty, brokenness, dignity, true hope, faith in love, respect., Be touch with each other. Have faith in God. We must all learn the</p>

St Michael prayer—defence of our Catholic faith. Every Catholic family should have Holy Water in the house. We must buy Holy Water Bottle from the Church! To keep their faith. Pray more and to care about their fellow-man—male or female. Leave politics out of it and just take each day as it presents itself. Gratitude. Even wise philosophers always say who made the sky, the sea, the moon and the stars? Of course, the great and gracious God. It is about time to give something back to Him before He abandons us; or else second Sodom and Gomorrah will occur. God is telling us to be strong and continue to believe in the ten commandments. God is asking us to seriously pray—our Church has been targeted by the evil ones. Let's have more prayer sessions—speaks out for what your heart tells you—stand for one another—be supportive. To listen to each other and unite together to help one another. To redeem the Catholic faith. To strengthen the Church. To strengthen all areas e.g. family life, single life. To pray and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. To focus on building relationship with Jesus and to fall in love with Jesus all over again. To believe in the Holy Spirit, and keep the spirit of God, to lead our lives in the right path. I feel our Catholic Church needs the guidance of the Holy Spirit, because it is his time, to lead us in the right path. To accept everyone as Jesus would without judging their actions: but wherever possible, to let them know gently that what they are doing is wrong if they are doing wrong, as Jesus dealt with the Samaritan woman and the crowd who accused the woman. God is telling us to be strong and to continue to believe in the ten commandments.

I think God is asking us in Australia to bring the Church into the 21st century. I have worked for the Church for all of my adult life both as a volunteer and paid employee. The Church is in trouble and needs to be renewed with necessary changes to take place in consultation with hierarchy, clergy and laity: ABUSE: Many abuses have taken place over many years, not just sexual abuse, which has been proven legally, but abuse arising from thoughtlessness, disregard for others and simple bad manners. These have been inflicted on people within the Church by other members of the Church and unfortunately by some clergy. I myself have suffered abuse and I have knowledge, because of my positions, of many cases of quite disgusting abusive behaviour. EMPLOYMENT: Lack of professionalism is a key factor. Both volunteers and paid staff should be employed by way of a professional process that ensures suitability for the task required of them. Very often in the past, this approach has not been taken and the results have often been disastrous. Clergy are not trained in hiring and firing of staff and volunteers and it is very necessary that they are trained in these matters. PROFESSIONALISM: In order to achieve a standard of professionalism, it should be mandatory for clergy and lay staff to attend regular updating of their qualifications, emphasizing and reminding them of the role of the Church in the community, that of service, just as Jesus Christ came to serve not to be served. Ideally paid staff would be employed and managed by professional staff based in the Chancery office. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: Pope Francis has encouraged more women to be employed in leadership roles in the Church. This is an excellent idea, particularly in parishes. MINISTRY OF THE CLERGY: I believe that the role of clergy in the Church should be given an overhaul with Time and Motions Studies applied to this ministry. BETTER COMMUNICATION: Parish bulletins should include more communication about what is going on in the parish, e.g. reports from meetings such as Finance Committee and Pastoral Council meetings and a report of finances. CELIBACY: This requirement for clergy should be mandatory.

To be inclusive.

I feel God is asking us to stay strong to the Gospel (and scripture) teachings as originally presented. There is too much PC (politically correctness) creeping into Masses and mostly into School Education. Feminism is taking hold, with 'Men' and 'Man' being erased. Husbands' and wives' roles are blurred causing quarrels and divorce increase. Let's all use our Faith in God's teachings to run our lives not society. I would like to see included in all Masses a Hail Mary, maybe directly after the Prayers of the Faithful which the priest initiates. Also, can we reduce the choir to singing the hymns so the congregations can better partake in the responses, especially the Gloria. This is too hard for the average person to sing. Also, let's standardise the Masses in all parishes. Take a note from

<p>successful companies like McDonalds. Its menu is the same around the world. I can go to 3 different Masses in [—] Shire and they will all be different in their hymns and their responses. Yours in Christ.</p>
<p>To renew its way of communicating so that it speaks to Australians of the 21st century; to renew its way of preparing people for ministry; to listen to and value First Nations people. More at the end—I hope you're not too strict about the 500-word limit!</p>
<p>I don't know what God is asking of us. What I do know is that Christ asked us to promote the kingdom—where vulnerable people are loved and included, where wealth is not extreme, where peace is sought in individual and social relationships.</p>
<p>I think God is asking five things from us. 1. A call to greater understanding—with any difference of opinion; religion; politics or ideology- that we look for what really unites us and holds us in communion—rather than what divides us and holds us apart. This greater level of understanding will help us celebrate and embrace divergent thinking and decrease tensions and fear. 2. Call to live more humanly—with a greater focus on the environment and sustainability; a commitment to live with greater compassion and humility and a focus on other. 3. A call to love one another—particularly those least like us. 4. Call to silence and to be still—to see the beauty of God and to hear the heartbeat of God in today's world. And to be grateful for all we have. 5. A call to be in relationship with God through prayer—to be attentive to this friendship as we are to our best friend / family.</p>
<p>Compassion for each other (e.g. in the traffic in Sydney), compassion for refugees and those who experience horrific natural disasters, e.g. Indonesia right now. Caring for each other (e.g. a woman held her umbrella over her head and mine recently as we crossed a courtyard in the rain). I do believe we are meant to go forward. I go to Mass usually 3 times on weekdays—quite often I don't like the lessons—talking about places where I have never been and I've travelled as much or more than most. I feel sure God would want us to move with the times. I believe God is asking us to be enormously patient with the headquarters of the Catholic Church in Australia. We have to be so tolerant that women do not have an important role in the Church. At [—] Cathedral in Sydney on my last occasion at Mass, e.g. one Easter Sunday, there was no woman in the procession, no woman handing out communion, not a woman reading, so God knows why I haven't been back! God is asking us to work around the system and live good lives.</p>
<p>THAT WE SHOULD RESIST PRESSURE TO WEAKEN THE SEAL OF CONFESSION. That we have more compassion for both our domestic and for foreign people who are poor or otherwise disadvantaged, including asylum seekers and our Indigenous people. That we oppose the political assumption that "our national interest" over-rides the needs of others. That we close down the detention centres on Manus and Nauru. That we attempt to awaken Australians to the way in which all that is best in our culture derives from Christian traditions. That we do all we reasonably can to combat global warming, not pleasing that we account for little more than 1%. That we oppose the over-riding place given to the profit motive, for instance about public housing. That we try to build a more communal society alleviating loneliness and suicide. That we promote "family" values, opposing a culture which sees abortion and euthanasia as reasonable responses to difficult situations—therefore that we do much more to alleviate those situations. That we try to help Australians realise that individual freedoms are balanced by the value of reverence (largely forgotten except for Anzac Day). That we should find a way of making the liturgy attractive to the young without abandoning its dignity. That we should not put the Church's "image" before frankness. That bishops, priests and religious should be both readily approachable and known for holiness. that they should listen more to the laity. And the Church needs to explain convincingly to Australians that it serves people, not wealth. I do not mean that we should sell off our Churches—they can be a place of peace and inspiration for the people, especially the poor; but some people see the Church as concerned for property, and if that does exist in places, we must change it, and we have to find a way to communicate that our real concerns are for people and their welfare.</p>
<p>I believe that a major problem for the Church is the tendency in the media to categorise views as</p>

left-wing or right-wing. Mostly, the media presents the Church as of the "right"; and there is little coverage given to Catholic beliefs and practices that would count against this. There is probably even an anti-Catholic bias exacerbating this problem, and it is further exacerbated because very many ordinary Catholics, many of whom are saintly, do not realise that there is anything to be criticised in our economic or political structures. There may be a risk of scandalising these people if our bishops were to be much more outspoken and blunt on such issues; and if the charge of political interference is not to be justly levelled at them, they would have to be very circumspect. Yet perhaps on matters like the detention of asylum seekers, on our level of international aid, even possibly on the public company rule that the only obligation is to investors, there could be leadership. Quite often it is the Greens and the secular progressives who display a strong concern for justice and the poor without realising that it was Christianity that taught them these concerns. I don't propose a remedy, though I think that Catholic media outlets of a standard approaching the London ones—the Tablet and the Universe—would help. Should the bishops be more outspoken? I don't know—I don't want them to preach a joyless or puritanical rejection of enterprise, but if Rerum Novarum had been a century earlier the French and Russian revolutions might not have happened: should we be more outspoken now? I ask, not say "yes"... Of course, the ordinary Catholics must be protected and not scandalised; yet the public image of the Church should not be simply that it is basically conservative (in a sense influenced by economic conservatism rather than by the real meaning of the word) with a few saintly exceptions. It should be public knowledge that our Churches serve our people—that we do not value them just as real estate. If the public image of the Church could be changed, perhaps too the people would return to Mass. So I don't offer solutions—I'm glad I don't have to make the difficult decisions—but I think that this problem is a major one. It hasn't arisen just because of the sexual scandals.

I am working through a number of topics. My first is the Role of the Laity.

Recognise the enemy in cultural Marxism. Teach the catechism with pride and force of conviction. Mechanisms to change the catechism have always existed and should be possible, but subject to decision from the highest Church authority. The Church has a history of proud encyclicals and interventions in this war going back to the era of Rerum Novarum and the social justice work done during the time of the Mexican communist revolution. It has a history of opposition to totalitarianism going back beyond Hitler (who was a socialist really) and Lenin, Mao and Stalin, all the way back beyond Napoleon (who assumed the totalitarian power of the French Revolution) to the streams of protestant thought and the diversity of Catholic orders that hatched the reformation and started the so called "secular" atheist revolt. A huge topic, complex and nuanced, and not all either evil or good. But the Church must see that we are in a situation that is related to this history, Marxism has not been defeated, rather it has changed into so called "cultural Marxism" where hierarchies other than "class" are constantly being attacked in order to create the Marxist idea of "progress" of society by encouraging a continual conflict between "power groups". So, gender ideology is being used to foment discord between sexual identities, over the last half century to further this "progress" of society (the Marxist "God" ... i.e the thing that moves history forward). Race is often used, especially within the confines of the sacred cow of "multiculturalism", which is simply an economic idea, but is now interpreted in a Marxist way that insists on fomenting struggle between racial groups at all turns in the debate. Age is used, where the unborn and the very elderly are pitted against the rest of humanity in regards to their right to life. Religion of course is used as a means of dividing people into relativist definitions of truth, and constantly changing the approval and ostracism of ideas. It is also delegitimised wilfully as the supreme enemy of the true believing communist, that's not new. But religion is infiltrated by Marxists claiming collectivist poverty as a gospel value, and spawning reactions that can be just as silly (like mine at times!). Even science is used, abused, corrupted, popularised and infiltrated by Marxist and reactionary politics. Teaching, the law, the health sciences are infiltrated and populated by those who have unionised and collectivised the sacred cow of "what is best for the child" against the parents, against the family. The family is pitted against the state. The state is divided against itself. All of this is simply as the

world is. My message is that we have a beautiful document that ultimately comes from our tradition as children of God and followers of Christ, and so is very close to divine truth. Uphold the Catechism as our primary teaching. Refine and improve it by safe means, because to change the catechism rashly is to split the Church.

-To return back to, hold on to, protect, and show more leadership on the traditional teachings of the word of God. -To move away from Church created doctrine and the support of left-wing political propaganda. To show more forgiveness and support for sin, and sinners, without losing the traditional meaning if the word of God. -To make celibacy, optional, not mandatory, for priests. —To allow women to be priests -To protect, and speak out, and have zero tolerance, against the persecution of Christians, in Australia, and overseas. -To protect against the destruction and attack on Christian societies, communities, and countries. -To protect against the toxic influence of political groups such as the gender and race hate speech of Feminist, Left Wing, Green, and LGBT groups. This includes maintaining traditional teachings around abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, marriage, respect of both male and female genders, and to cease participating in the education of students that vilifies groups on the basis of gender, skin colour, etc. e.g ... some of the education currently around white privilege, and the sexist and mysandric approach to Domestic Violence, mysandric teaching of patriarchy, mysandric teaching of toxic masculinity, mysandric teaching of gender quotas, and the gender pay gap myth etc. should immediately cease. -To be prepared to withdraw any service that cannot survive without government funding, when that government funding is being used to manipulate a softening or change of traditional teachings and values around the word of God. -To place less emphasis on the Mass and more emphasis on engaging Christian groups in other less formal forums. -To transition the power base of the Church from less of a pyramid structure, to more of a horizontal structure. -To target more support services to the needs of youth, and the traditional family unit -To broaden the use of all Church owned property, to support the needs of local communities, especially the Christian community, as long as does not breach the traditional teachings and values of the word of God.

To save the unborn children and to have courage to stand up and protect the meek and unjust and unite Australians. To live by the lessons that God sent his own son to humanity to be taught and cleansed of sin. Pray for peace for the whole world. Love your neighbour. Forgive your enemies. Try to be a good person or to be a good Catholic. To embrace modern technology in most aspects of Catholic life e.g. Outdoor Mass—each member old enough to hold one has an earphone (supplied by the person) to hear what the priest is saying. Let's have more Masses outdoors. We need to stand by our religion and not allow the outrageous changes of today's world influence or make us doubt our beliefs. We need to stand up and not be afraid to believe what we believe in. Stand up and be counted. Speak the truth in love. Increasing congruency between word and deed: both clericals and lay people—including speaking up against errors and sin/evil not staying silent because it's none of our business or out of fear/anxiety. To pray more and believe. To live our faith every day—in all thoughts, words and deeds—depend on God for everything

Priests and religious are not to step back as a result of the royal commission, but to step forward, and be more "real" in their communities ... be more like Jesus ... sit with families in their parishes, have meals, home Masses, spend time being with others. They need to demonstrate their humanity. Less focus on flamboyant vestments and raising money. Our youth are crying out for respite from their deafening social media worlds. The Church needs to lead the way... shorter homilies (15 minutes is 10 too long). Better time use, maybe 5 minutes after communion for personal reflection, to really hear God speak to each person. Youth do not know how to create their own silence, we must show them. (Jesus often went to a quiet place to pray!) Teach Christian meditation every day, especially in secondary school. Equip them with the tools to draw on throughout their life. Secondary schools are so top heavy on doctrine and theology that by year 12, most view the Church as just another institution, and can't wait to leave, and get into the "real" world, without understanding Jesus' personal message of Love. Also, be open in challenging popular culture and clear in explaining Church teachings. Concerningly, many practicing Catholics are pro-euthanasia,

and pro- gay marriage. This seems to be mostly out of ignorance and a very rudimentary understanding of Church teaching. As individuals, we need to take more responsibility for growing in faith and knowledge. Sunday Mass is not enough! Most people don't know how or where to look. Priests need to regularly update their congregation of reading material and articles available (contemporary and traditional). Keep promoting the reading of scripture on a daily basis ... even a few lines. People need reminders! We need concrete guidance to grow closer to God.

God would wish me to make a written submission.

I'm not entirely sure what God is asking of us in Australia. But I can say what I'd love to see in the Church, which I hope is part of what God is saying to us: What I'd really like is to know how to live the gospel in most practical ways. For instance, what does it mean to be a Christian husband, father, colleague at work? What does God (scripture and Church teaching) say about moral things such as money or sexuality. Then how do I live out the faith. For instance, I want to be inspired to cultivate a prayer life, to seek God in all that I do. I want to learn to discern God's voice and what he is saying to me. I want to learn to have a relationship with God. As a young-ish Catholic, this is what I look for—a religion that helps me find God in everyday life. I don't mind who teaches me—if it is a priest or a lay person. But I do want to be inspired. I want good solid teaching that is above all motivating. I'd like to be challenged to live my faith. I realise that different generations have different obstacles to practicing Christianity. The older generation were taught to follow the rules of the Church through Catechesis. But they might not have been told why they had to follow them—the focus on the laws of the Church did not give them the practical reasoning to withstand the struggles they faced in the modern world—hence Christianity seemed outdated to many as the nation progressed. The younger generation who were fortunate enough to hear Theology of the Body were taught why they should be moral but unfortunately, they were not taught the discipline of living it. Consequently, we have one portion of the Church that is tired of rules and want to know what the faith is all about and on the other hand, there are those that have heard some aspects of morality explained but have not learnt to cultivate a disciplined life of actually living the gospel. We need to hear the gospel in its entirety—the feel-good message of love, peace and forgiveness as well as the challenging message that calls sin for what it is and appeals to us to repent. But then tell us how to repent—how do we respond to God—even if it is leading us in a simple prayer at the end of a homily or getting a show of hands as to who will commit to God. Get our buy in and commitment to live the gospel.

I came across this quote which spoke to me: "In interpreting history, in the long haul, the most dynamic force in history is culture, not politics, not economics." Therefore, I believe we have to change the culture in the Church and society. The public debate is toxic, in our parliaments, in social discourse, especially in social media. I have a book by M. Scott Peck entitled "A World Waiting to be Born", sub-titled 'The Search for Civility'. I think the Church could be a salve for the wounds of our disintegrating society where the 'culture wars' polarise people, by our appreciation of our Catholic culture and the graciousness of the language of our Liturgy, the Psalms, Prayers and utterances of saints and scholars. We in the Church need to flourish anew in a rebirth of creativity in words and works that are uplifting, inspiring and so raise up a demoralised world out of the morass of hatred and anger and rudeness. We can do it, but we have to re-prioritise away from a top down, corporate or institutional model to a more free-flowing, grassroots movement, creating new ways of being and connecting with each other and forming alive communities of people who really care for each other. Like early Christians: 'See how those Christians love each other'.

God may be asking us to consider big changes in how things are done, which are at the same time in keeping with the gospels and long tradition of the Church. I hope God expects stronger lay leadership, in both governance and intellectual life, but in a way respectful of past clerical achievements.

October 22nd 2018, I write with concern for the demise of the parish I have been part of for the last 30 years. During that time, I served the parish on many fronts and been involved like many others in the building up of this parish to the great parish that it was. A truly formed parish in the Australian style of Vatican II. I have watched with concern the progress and result of the Royal Commission. I

have watched with concern the people who have walked away from our parish in droves. I have watched with concern and have been the receiver of many a seeming rebuff by our two new clerics that the Diocese has deemed 'wise' to dump on us. Through the process of listening and dialogue advocated for the Plenary Council, I have become aware how I have been moving through what can only be called 'Stages of Grief'. I am now at the point of the final discernment of what needs to be 'brought to light' to help us to continue to move on in the 'Spirit of Vatican II' not a turning of the clock back to Medieval times. My concerns: 1. The severe reduction of parishioners in the parish. I have been counting 'bums on seats' numbers for weeks and find that on a normal weekend (i.e. no bolstering of numbers by sacramental families), the formerly 300-350 Masses have reduced to 100; the former 200-250 Masses have reduced to 85-125 and the 150-175 Masses have been as low as 60. 2. I now feel that there is a great similarity to 'rape of children for personal pleasure' the topic of the Royal Commission' and a new insidious kind of priesthood that holds as little concern 'the rights and roles of the laity' who have poured their hearts and souls into this parish for the time it has been in existence. The new priesthood is now 'raping roles' off the laity who have been in charge: think liturgy committee—gone and mourning; choir nearly gone and mourning; all musicians who did other Masses gone and mourning; altar server and acolyte leaders gone and mourning; Before and After School Care cheaper fee gone and being mourned as they now have to accommodate an additional \$150,000 in their costs; girl altar servers not allowed to progress past 6th Class; St Vincent de Paul unable to run without a Clerical Spiritual Director, autonomy gone and mourning; Garden Maintenance gone and mourning; RCIA defunct because who in their right mind would want to become a Catholic now gone and mourning; PowerPoint preparers autonomy gone and mourning; parish Family Mass Group gone and mourning; Craft Group no longer able to provide blankets because Pastoral Care is now only allowed to be Sacramental Pastoral Care delivered by a cleric – gone and mourning; Children's Liturgy gone and mourning; Aged Care—no lay leaders gone and mourning.

3. Develop and revitalize parish life and mission to become a missionary Church that proclaims the gospel.

In my belief, God does not make demand. Through your generosity, kind actions people get enlightened then follow. We don't/can't know what God is asking—we have an inkling about what the community may need—which is for the Church to be more inclusive, more open, providing more assistance to those in need, both physically, financially and MENTALLY!!! To keep practicing our faith and to pray. Peace, loving each other, be Humble, sharing the experience we have, attending the Mass every Sunday. Helping the people who need help. Don't hurt people, no gossip. To stand up and be brave Catholics even if people don't like it! To teach the young people in our schools the dignity women and men deserve to follow God's plan for love in our schools!!! Teaching them to Love like Christ Jesus and Mary our Mother when they know this they will teach others Jesus' Love. To pray for peace in this world and the parish. Have prayers and meditations. Two priests in the parish in sharing their time with parishioners and the Church. Better faith formation for youth in Catholic Schools & greater emphasis on it being the True Church, and Church history to back it up, more about the sacraments. More relevant Masses—less trying to appeal to what everyone thinks the youth want (keep that singing rock-like songs and clapping and no kneeling to Catholic events). The Church is amazing, we need to first know it and then spread it (joyfully!). Oh, and making sure the Blessed sacrament is not left unattended. I find that was sometimes here! And the chapel door cannot be closed if you are the last person and need to leave without moving all the seats! But 24/7-hour Adoration is such a blessing, thank you! Bring back Prayer for Peace of a Sunday Masses Internet, iPods and Mobile phones with children and adults makes them too tired and lethargic to be bothered going to Church. Love one another, help and pray for one another. Be a mission and be part of it. Be forgiving and compassionate. To continue praying, because prayers does wonders in our life. Pray the traditional praising, Worshipping and Contrition or praying by Rosary. The World keeps changing. We just stick to our faith.

For priests to be able to marry if they wish. For permission to have the third rite of Reconciliation at Christmas and Easter. For women to have more say in the running of the Church.

To be inclusive of all. To bring peace and comfort to all. To be active with relevance and meaningfulness in the community. To engage our society with the faith, hope and charity of Christianity. To retain wisdom that can guide society with beliefs, values and attitudes that are sustainable for the Church and Christians. To serve others. To hold strongly to the central position of God within our formal constructs that structures our society, laws and constitution.

The main thing that is needed is deep discernment (as we are doing with the plenary council) with trust that God knows best and that if we listen he will show us the way; then we need to go forward with courage, letting go of things that should be let go. As part of this, we should look and find, with proper research and analysis, the places where the faith is most active; and then we should follow enthusiastically into those places e.g. are Catholic podcasts popular? What can we learn from the success of e.g. Theology on Tap? What other things touch a nerve with Catholics in Australia? Then, we need to be bold and radical, like the early Church: we will be the go-to institution when others are decaying around us if we recognise and act in the radical way the faith demands.

Teaching, reverence, beauty—rediscovery; rely on God’s providence, evangelisation, adoration, stop watering down the faith, reading/discovering our faith, listening to podcast (i.e. Bishop Barron), Catechism, Catholic Institutes, identify should reflect their faith, beauty and liturgy, Mass (respect and reverence) • Our Lady, pray and fast, pray the Rosary, offer our sufferings, make work effective, grace, be more Christ-like, obey teaching of Church, Catholic formation (for adults), spiritual, life and prayer formation, Catholic education system, make the Church more accessible, focus corporal work of Mercy, preach about God’s justice, forgiveness, love and humility, form similar age-group (youth groups, young adults) • Promote Catholic career pathway • To renew ourselves, examine, encourage, faith and spirituality, to encourage priests/leaders to be on the same page, faith, beliefs/doctrines, know the faith, sacrament, children should know Catholic basics, to retrieve your faith, people learn what priests tell them—parents should educate children/young people, public witness/personal testimony, mission (to save souls), homily cannot be substituted with anything, renewal, to bring a new life in the Church, to experience/encounter God • People lack the real reasons to come to Church, need to fortify our Church, to rebuild the Church, to call communities, to be open with all Catholics, to remind each other • Why are my children stop going to Church? To know God’s love through my family, my community, friends, we are afraid to share our faith amongst each other, share our experiences/testimonies with non-Christians. • To step up, recount, why are we Catholic? • Infuse the Catholic faith in all you do—Catholic Schools, Maths lessons, music (learn about icons meaning), science, health; liturgy, perpetual adoration (understanding what to do), know the rules behind liturgy, share your resources with the poor, getting them to be connected, know the social justice (e.g. serve the homeless, be more charitable), continuum in goodness, see beauty and poor, making balanced, develop the transcendence of beauty and goodness (resources), Marian devotion (formation/education of Mary, pray to Mary)

I hate to assume I know what God is asking, but this is what I feel the Catholic Church is being asked of in Australia at this time ... To look at all the good things it does—the multiple ways it helps those in need, and to appreciate and talk about all that work, to continue with all that amazing work. Then, to look honestly at itself, and acknowledge all the hurt the Church has caused and harm the Church has done. Not just by those priests that abused children, but I feel MORE critically, by the Church as an organisation and institution passively encouraging that behaviour by moving priests that they KNEW harmed children, into other unsuspecting parishes, and by punishing those brave, good priests that DID report paedophile priests (refer Newcastle). Other organisations also abused children, but the Catholic Church is the only organisation that's management structure was aware of the issue, chose to not take action to prevent the issue, and also allowed the behaviour to continue. I think the Church needs to acknowledge this, to own this, and to NOT blame 'media hysteria'. Parishioners are not stupid and won't forget. Please don't ignore this particular issue and wait for it to go away.

<p>To return to the core messages of Jesus' teaching and example.</p>
<p>To stand up for Catholic Values, love one another of all races and creeds show compassion, understanding, and humility towards your fellow Men and offer your help when needed with no strings attached, help those less fortunate than yourself.</p>
<p>Compassion, Inclusive, Peace and Unity, Renewal of faith, Integration of different cultures/Practices in the Church, Accepting but firm of certain belief/value of the Church. (Confession) Church needs to be culturally sensitive ... To look after the children, they will be the next generation. For peace and to spread God's Words, Love, not hate, Be involved, Help the sick/poor, and people in need, Unite and let God into your heart, Spread the Word of God, more Unity—no matter what race or religion we come from we are all one. To be accepting of all and loving towards all, Non-judgmental—To take people from where they are on their journey, WELCOMING, To look after each other, Welcoming, Helping the poor and marginalised, Grow—listen, Innovation, Being full of the Spirit—ambassadors, Be more inclusive, Be more tolerant, Be kind and respectful to each other, Unity, Courage, Inclusivity, Joy, Respect for creation, More World Youth Days in Sydney/time for another revival—awakening</p>
<p>Discussion held as follows: Re the response to the Royal Commission's recommendations, the Church must continue to address the need for healing. A story shared was as follows: 'My friend at school was good-looking and a guy began to offer him rides home from the railway station. They knew each other from Church. The guy groomed him and eventually molested him. However, the friend got over it, later married and had several children. As he was a good singer, he later joined the Mormon Church as they did a lot of singing.' Again, re the Royal Commission, we request that the hierarchy share some of their decision-making power with the laity and that Church leaders instigate a major review of diocesan structures and governance and identify a greater role for lay-people. Monks and Nuns are lay-people. Should they not have more recognition by making the lifestyle worth a sacrament, as with marriage. This might draw more vocations. Single people can find their vocation in many ways by work in the parishes, in prisons, etc. The bishops need to speak about and recognise the role of lay-people in parishes, especially since the reduction of priests—sort out more jobs for lay people, to free up the priest to do his job better—e.g. permanent deacon positions are not enough in the Shire, with only 1 in [—]. There are more O/S -born deacons but not enough Australian-born ones. Their duties require thorough training. We could have paid deacons and such salaries need to be looked at as they need to be permanent. The duties of acolytes need to be looked at. Can any of these preach? Do funerals? If paid they don't have to wait till retirement. There is a big need for an education drive for the wider community to make clear what confession means and the situation of a priest when a paedophile comes to confession. The Bishops need to address all the recommendations of the Royal Commission, e.g. on Compass or Q and A. We must be prepared to answer questions, e.g. if people ask about becoming Catholic. We must be more presentable, e.g. through the N.T. All lay-people should be encouraged to read and study these scriptures, as also the history of the early Church from Christ's time and the documents of Vatican II, all under the guidance of the Church. Promotion of the Good News through an Internet Channel with a link in the parish Bulletins to include news, education, music, on-line Mass, prayer (as 'The Family that prays together, stays together'). Perhaps install video equipment in parish Churches for special occasions, to make and show videos.</p>
<p>He wants us to encourage more people to attend our Church and bring back those who have stopped coming. He is asking us to "listen" and live our lives according to the Gospel. He is asking us to be accepting of people regardless of race, sex or culture, particularly our divorced brothers and sisters and those whose sexual orientation is different to ours.</p>
<p>God is asking us to live and spread our faith. To pray towards bringing children, in particular, our youth, back to the faith—find ways and means of encouraging parents to bring their children to weekly Mass. For us to unite in his Church and be one. To treat everyone as an equal, to enable women to step into roles to equally carry on God's Ministry. To stay loyal and strong in our faith—not consider leaving despite child abuse scandals and other criticisms. To pray to the Holy Spirit for</p>

<p>our priests, nuns, etc. and for vocations. To initiate groups in parishes to instruct religious education. To accept the commitment from all, value everyone, show compassion, to be good people and be inclusive. Need to accept other people and not to be judgemental. Our parish growth is currently fading away—how do we rebuild our community? We need to do more for Refugees.</p>
<p>To follow Him, and spread the faith.</p>
<p>We need to keep humble hearts and focus on the true value of the Holy Mass and bring Jesus back the centre of our Church and Hearts, let's return every Mass Celebration with the Full Holy Eucharist Body and Blood of Jesus to share among the old and young alike for this is the only way to stay united, for it's only in Jesus Christ we become one, one Church, one people for it's in sharing Christ's Body and Blood we share one heart in Jesus and for God's Glory alone.</p>
<p>To be strong and support all efforts for the hierarchy, to be open and not to put the Church's reputation ahead of victims of abuse and follow the teachings of Jesus more closely. Also, not to keep man-made rules alive if they result in harm to people.</p>
<p>To make all people feel welcome, to understand the needs of the community and make our faith relevant in our daily lives</p>
<p>God is asking the Catholic Church to be more effective in integrating with the new age of evangelisation; online presence, technology and the arts. For example; social media is a lifestyle, popular culture needs to be integrated into Catholicism, utilising the arts to promote a culture of truth, interaction with the government, being relevant as a living religious tradition, and education on defending the faith.</p>
<p>Christians to celebrate Easter and Christmas at same date. Bring the children and the youth to the Church. Catechesis after or before Mass, or included in the homily. Better homilies, more practical to the actuality based on the gospel. Priests to have some training every 2 years for example. Priest to speak English fluently, so we can understand. Scripture readings done by English-speaking people so we can understand. Priests less interested with their own financial interests (Overseas affairs) and more with the good of their parishioners. Many collections, fund raisings, Masses, etc. etc. can be overwhelming for the poor parishioners that go Church every Sunday Mass. They have their own bills to pay, and families to help. Teachers of Catholic Schools to have religious education in their curriculum so they can teach correctly. Programs or ways to bring back to Church divorced couples, and same sex relationships couples because they are children of God as well. In spite of not receiving Holy Communion, they can receive the teachings and the blessings. And listen to the Word of God. And listening to the Word, they may come back to GOD.</p>
<p>To pray so that our faith may remain strong at a time when many are trying to challenge what is considered right and wrong, especially when there are many in our own faith who seem to be questioning the stand of the Catholic Church.</p>
<p>I feel like He may be looking for more younger generations to be participating whole heartedly in Church activities. It is not a must that it should only be in the Church, it can be where he / she works or on their way, parties and their get together. An act of love or concern can change someone else life. I feel like the parents should teach their kids to pray not only at home / Church but on their way. Just a little prayer saying thanks to God and placing each one whom They meet on their way or their work place in God's hands. I practice that daily, working as a RN I place all my residents under his healing touch and all those who are working with me to have His healing power so any one touch or talking will have a healing effect through our prayers. I can see the difference very clearly so my request to everyone to say a little prayer before starting your day or whenever you have time. We can talk to our God as you are talking to your friend, we can share our happiness or the stress. He listens to all and you feel relieved.</p>
<p>I don't believe God is asking anything of us at present. He has forsaken his people because of the Church's inability to listen to people and they are walking away from the Church. The inability of the bishops to understand that the confessional is no longer a place to hide for paedophiles is mind-boggling.</p>

<p>After a time of listening and sharing of our discernment on post it notes: The topic for our Listening and Dialogue Session was—Renewal. Renewal and re-birth was longed for in many areas of our personal relationships with God, in our parish community’s relationship with God and with each other and the wider Church’s relationship with God. Renewal of governance and structural aspects of the Church life was longed for, a renewal of communication between all levels of Church, in reality a renewal of all levels of Church life. A renewal of women’s place in the life of the Church. A renewal of ecumenism, and most importantly a renewal for young people that would connect them in a new way to the People of God.</p>
<p>To listen to one another. Who is us—the congregation or the priests? I don't believe it is up to the congregation to fix the problem but the Church that's destroyed the religion. I quote Micah—Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with God. I think God is asking the Church to re-connect with the general community and get involved with the community. To become a Church which reflects and follows the mission of God. To listen to one another. Discuss issues.</p>
<p>To be authentic Christians. To get back to basics and show respect for one another; the Church needs to be visiting the sick, lonely, and the poor. So many young priests are wound up in their own spiritual lives and offer so little to the sick, etc. God wants these priests to be HUMBLE and AUTHENTIC. I cannot remember the last time a young priest visited anyone sick in my parish, or had any interest in doing so. The Church is too big and lacks ethical corporate governance principles— e.g. Catholic universities and Hospitals are Catholic in name only—and had poor human resources practices.</p>
<p>1. Procedures must be set up to prevent any further child abuse, be it sexual, physical or psychological. 2. All reports of child sex abuse must be reported to the appropriate civil authorities. 3. Any cleric or religious who is found guilty in the civil courts must never be allowed to resume duties where children are involved. 4. Making celibacy optional.</p> <p>What the Church's clergy from the Pope down to the parish priest is accept the fact that they abandoned innocent children to the evil actions of paedophile clergy and religious. We all know what Christ had to say about those who brought scandal to children! This must never be allowed to happen again and the Church must do all that it can, without denial or side-stepping, to change the factors that caused this and allowed this to happen. In a nutshell, GOD IS SAYING TO THE CLERGY "WAKE UP MATE".</p>
<p>Faith—We need people to encounter Jesus (or re-encounter Jesus). Parishioners—Take more responsibility in their local Church. To be involved in the Church particularly Mass preparations. Parents—To bring their children to Mass on Sundays (not rely on the Catholic school system to provide guidance). Church—Women to be more involved in hierarchy of the Church. Church to be more practical and more down to earth. We need to help people grow in their faith. Church to take responsibility for the wrongs committed. Make clear statements on current moral issues e.g., That holding children on Manus island is Wrong. To clearly define responsibilities and roles of lay people in the Church and Mass. Church to make changes in line with the times (2020). Even small changes may bring the Church into a more favourable light. Revitalise the Church. Lay Faithful—Increased involvement of lay faithfuls in the Church. Strengthen peoples understanding and knowledge of the Church. Education—Help people understand God's grace and how they exist through sacraments and through us. Provide adult scripture discussions within the parish Community. Community Service—To focus on helping everyday Australians. To provide help for e.g., refugees, victims of domestic violence. To identify more with the younger generation. To help the youth of today in life's ups and downs.</p>
<p>To be open and accepting of the changes in our community, family and busy lifestyles.</p>
<p>1. Love God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength and love your neighbour as yourself. 2. Stop the murder of unborn babies, the disabled and the elderly and dressing up such atrocities with socially acceptable descriptions such as abortion and euthanasia. 3. Celebrate and make society aware of all the wonderful things the Catholic Church does in Australia —Provides over</p>

1 million under-privileged, poor Australians with food, social services and basic life essentials every year. —Educates thousands of children—Runs hospitals, nursing homes, orphanages and homeless shelters—Is one of the top five employers in Australia. 4. Celebrate the Liturgy and the Eucharist with reverence, respect and proper participation—Realize the privilege we have as Catholics to be united with Christ in the Eucharist and only receive Holy Communion if we are in the state of grace and have fasted from eating and drinking for an hour. —Dress appropriately for Mass—Refrain from eating, drinking and chewing gum in Church—Quiet reflection, bad mannered loud children, mobile phones ringing and adults having full scale conversations is very disrespectful towards Jesus and the general congregation as they communicate with God. —Be present until the end of the Mass—i.e. the Mass is not ended until the priest leaves the altar after giving the final blessing. 5. Live our lives by the Ten Commandments and be committed to the sacraments. Don't be a lukewarm Catholic, one that attends Mass three or four times a year and attends Reconciliation only once or twice a year and does only what is necessary to secure places for their children in private Catholic schools as this is disrespectful to the Lord and sets a very poor example for the children of such individuals. 6. Be mindful that we are but dust and that we depend on God for every moment of our existence. Be mindful that as Catholics, we have the privilege to serve God with open hearts. 7. Educate the "lost" generation in the way of the Lord and the Catholic Church so that both them and their children become reunited with the Church and Christ. 8. Increase participation of our priests in the heart of the community, out among the people and in the schools on a daily basis. 9. Provide facilities such as Youth Clubs for the young people to encourage them to grow in the Faith and continue their commitment to the sacraments as they move through High School and into adult life.

Discussion was held on 'The Need for Change'. The size of change needed today is greater than at the time of the Renaissance. There is a tussle between religion and science today. Science tells us new things, creates problems for theology, as in Galileo's time when he said the Earth is not the centre of the universe. Now people are thinking and doing things differently because they include the science in their thinking. The Holy Spirit of God is in it all and the Church must listen. We have to ask questions about the wider governance of the Church than the paedophilia issues and ask, 'What is the Church about?' We have to ask what it means to be a Catholic in this day and age and realise that what Jesus means has been changing since the Second Vatican Council. Someone said, 'To change is to be human, to change often is to be perfect.' This applies to the Church leadership as well as to ourselves as members. The Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse had at first the Church saying, 'It is a witch hunt', but the Church changed attitude, starting to listen as the Commission went on. It set up the True Justice and Healing Commission under Francis Sullivan. They recognised Church governance was bad and bad decisions were made. To move forward, we have to look at the paedophilia crisis and act. The drop-off of lay people and youth is huge. Early in the process Francis Sullivan visited our parish and addressed us. Lay people are pushing for change and we need to think of the Church as 'The People of God', taking our responsibility. The bishops have responded to most of the report but not the change to the seal of Confession. They still haven't responded to the report of the True Justice and Healing Commission. Many people these days say 'I haven't left the Church, the Church has left me.' There was a wave of enthusiasm resulting from Vatican II, but now it has died down. Youth say, 'The Church doesn't practise what it preaches,' but we can challenge the youth when they are not living their faith. A current indication of true faith among youth is the WWJD wristband, (What Would Jesus Do?). We have to differentiate between the words of Jesus and the behaviour of people in the Church. An example of good behaviour: a household with six children who pray together, attend Mass and are involved in helping people. A negative influence for Australia is often seen in the anti-Catholic and anti-Christian policies of the ABC. As laity moving forward, we should give recognition to the good priests; encourage the first rite of confession as we are a Church of sinners. Marriage for priests should be optional but this was countered as too relaxed since holy men in history have left their families for God. Spirituality is important, wanted by youth and should be introduced for all. This is already happening in the

<p>Catholic schools where the curriculum for faith is excellent. Parents are often under economic strain causing them to neglect faith, prayer and good example.</p>
<p>Dear Sirs, I have been a daily communicant since I was 18. As a young person, I craved to hear the Truth. As an older person, I feel the same. I have raised 11 children and have tried to install in them the traditions of the Church. Young people and those of all ages look to the Church for guidance and Truth. Please speak to the people about sin and reality. All people are happy to accept each other but NOT the sin. Christ healed and always said "sin no more" Please speak the Truths Christ spoke of. Speak about Our lady and Fatima. The Blessed Eucharist and the Divine Presence. The importance of Confession before Holy Communion. Lead the people to God. Stop the modernism. The fruit is evident in all your empty Churches Bring people back to God. The One True God who never changes. This is what I longed to hear from the pulpit from strong priests who are unafraid of persecution. Rest assured many of us know what is coming. Speak about commandments and the importance of living a chaste and holy life. No more bringing Sodom and Gomorrah into God's House. And respect the Blessed Eucharist. God Bless and keep you and may each one of you be strengthened to fight for Gods True Church. The One He started.</p>
<p>I believe as individuals of Australia, God is asking us to be kind rational people. To be there for one another when disaster strikes. As a nation, I believe God wants us to unite with other countries.</p>
<p>Need to address lack of programs, activities, social outlet which would strengthen parish, enable improved religious literacy, better social interaction between parishioners, greater participation of laity in liturgies and parish life, enable a sense of mutual responsibility we have as baptised, for evangelisation of those in Church, those who have left Church and Catholics who are unchurched. Our parish has become a silo—existing only for itself, with little concern for old, lonely and poor living on our doorstep. We need to be smart (get good advice) to engage young, youth and young adults. parishioners lack basic knowledge of their faith and youth are leaving Catholic schools with little real knowledge of their faith; young people are unable to articulate why they believe in Catholic faith because they have never been taught. Apologetics should be taught in tandem with RE which needs total overhaul in both primary and secondary schools. RE teachers need to be people of faith, rather than someone with teacher quals. Adults in pews need mature formation in faith and Scripture rather than what they learned many years ago at school. Small groups for discussion (Church docs), Scripture study, Lectio Divina prayer groups, would enrich faith. Need for community outreach e.g. community freezer for sick, Although a great deal of investment has been made in local school, parents are not bringing children to Sunday Mass, unless they need ref for high school or want their child to enrol in primary school. Need to better keep tabs on these families after baby is baptised e.g. with follow-up visit few months later. Church is seen as hypocritical in that certain clergy have not practised what was preached; apology was insufficient and insincere and clergy are now viewed with suspicion. There is lack of continuity with frequent change of PPs e.g. 4-5 years; currently, total lack of involvement of sacristans or other authorised lay people in preparation and assisting at liturgies and Mass. Also standards of dress code are not maintained esp. for Spec Min of Eucharist An effort should be made to connect and engage with those who have left the Church because they blamed whole Church for sins of few. Lay people should be given greater roles to play in Church as they are in unique position, having networks, workplaces, homes, clubs, wide social circles which would enable them to bring Christ to others. Parish priest does not have same exposure to society at large or in different spheres. Incumbent for Church to train lay people and provide spiritual nourishment (retreats etc) and the confidence (by having knowledge and faith) to go out and show the face of Christ to others, by their joy and love for all. Possibility for women deacons. Revisit Church teaching on contraception and Confession. There should be no ambiguity in pastors' preaching or teaching from pulpit; need to focus on fundamental teachings of Jesus and send clear consistent message re morals.</p>
<p>We need to re-instate saying of Saint Michael's prayer (written by Pope Leo XIII in 1884) after every Holy Mass.</p>

<p>To be a sacramental presence in our Church and culture: living in ways that embody Jesus' way of living as well as participating in Eucharist and other Church sacraments. In addition, spread the message that all the baptised are called to this individually and through education.</p>	
<p>The same thing He has asked from the beginning: to love Him with all our hearts, minds, strength and souls and to love our neighbour as ourselves. For Christians to radiate this love in our everyday lives to whomsoever God sends to us each day and for Catholics to have a personal relationship with Jesus so that we can be His hands, hear with His ears, see through His eyes so that we can bring Him to the people we encounter and see Him in those people. He would want us to know our Faith so that we have a ready answer to alternate beliefs and non-beliefs of people we encounter. He wants us to trust in His providence and not peruse false idols of wealth, fashion, popularity, instant gratification, fun, fun, fun, etc.</p>	
<p>* To review religion syllabus in Catholic schools, both primary and secondary, teaching with authority what Jesus Christ taught. * That the Eucharistic liturgy be less people-centred and more focusing on God. * That there be on-going education in faith for priests, parishioners, young people. * That lay people take more responsibility in their parishes, e.g. finance, to relieve pressure on priests. * That there be encouragement for lay people to become deacons. * That there be cell groups of lay parishioners meeting regularly for prayer, e.g. Lectio Divina; and for on-going education in faith.</p>	
<p>Laity participation—making missionary disciples (urgent because of shortage of priests). * small groups of Mass-going parishioners who pray together, support one another and seek to be educated in their faith, with a view to proclaiming it to others. * deacons: male/female; married/single; to assist in parishes. * lay people to take responsibility for finance, maintenance in the parish. * groups organised for young people—both socially and for deepening of their faith.</p>	
<p>To be inclusive, reach out to the young, involve more people in liturgy, reach out to non-believers</p>	
<p>1. To modernize our Liturgy. The Latin translation has had its day. Also, It would be more welcoming if at the beginning of Mass, we have a prayer unifying us all—celebrant, servers, people—all here together as one. 2. Also a liturgy suitable for the particular groups e.g., children, Aborigines, disabled. E.g. on a First communion day in November, do we have to have the official readings of the day? 3. I'm a Catechist and teaching students their prayers, it's a bit funny that we still have words like—thee, thou, art—printed in their books 4. Especially in small parishes, when no priest is available, and we have a liturgy of the Word, couldn't we have a shared sermon after the gospel and not go straight on to the offertory? 5. For Reconciliation, please bring back the 3rd Rite. We are a sinful people as well as sinful individuals. With the reputation of the priesthood on such a low and/or people who have left or too removed from the Church, it may be a way to bring them back.</p>	
<p>To be less politically minded and more faith driven. To be less power-driven and more community centred.</p>	
<p>Priests should:</p> <p>*be able to marry and for these married priests to be responsible for supporting couples in various stages of married life.</p> <p>family life but on other topics</p> <p>*be more visible in Catholic and public schools and community arena</p> <p>the sole or ultimate arbiters of what happens in their parish</p> <p>deacons</p> <p>*encourage the youth to become more active in the parish</p> <p>more into the Mass</p> <p>engaging and comprehensible to target audience</p> <p>similarly with children at the family Mass.</p>	<p>*engender the parish community spirit.</p> <p>*who remain celibate not to counsel on marriage and</p> <p>*should be accountable to some council comprising of clergy</p> <p>and lay people for their performance in the parish and other places of service</p> <p>*not be</p> <p>*include women and as</p> <p>*provide more support for scripture classes and catechists</p> <p>*incorporate our youth</p> <p>*be taught public speaking to make homilies more</p> <p>*be taught how to relate to all</p>

<p>Be aware of others' needs. Caring at every opportunity, everyone has a story and we need to have a listening heart.</p>
<p>To be a Church that is Christ-centred, relevant and people-focused.</p>
<p>To have more faith and trust in God. More spiritual growth and have peace within—hoping to decrease mental illness and violence.</p>
<p>The parish priest is of paramount importance. A priest who is able to engage, listen, enthuse, spread and explain the Faith in a comprehensible language is vital. A priest is a role model. The parish is a reflection of the priest. Too often, parishioners seek other parishes as often the priest and the ministries provided/or not provided do not suit. Often, this just needs to be tweaked if priests would listen to feedback. Priests should: -engender parish community spirit -be able to marry then support couples in married life -be accountable to a council comprising clergy and laity for their parish performance -follow protocols/procedures/curriculum as other workers -not be the ultimate decision makers in the parish -be more visible in Catholic, public schools and community -include women priests and deacons -provide more support for scripture classes and catechists -encourage participation of youth in the Mass and parish -be taught public speaking to make homilies more engaging, and comprehensible to target audience -be taught how to relate to different age groups -listen to constructive feedback as most people want the good of their parish The Church should: -be more welcoming of all Catholics -be a community not just for the Mass and sacraments -be more active in the wider community -provide more Bible studies for the laity -be proactive in explaining the Catholic Faith through media outlets especially promoting the GOOD done by Catholics -use media e.g. appealing movies and TV to explain Catholic message to young people -address child abuse by priests explaining they can be forgiven if truly sorry -provide more support for abuse victims -be more truthful when explaining past mistakes -attempt to encourage youth and young families to the fold like Hillsong -should modernize the Mass to reach a new generation -provide Sunday School options for those in public schools and ways/activities to attract non-practicing Catholics back to the fold -provide more support to families following receipt of the sacraments so that they can remain part of the Church and parish -provide more support for scripture classes and catechists The laity should: -be more involved in the Mass -be more involved in sharing the load of parish priests</p>
<p>Leadership—response to local issues in a timely manner. The role of the clergy in encouraging the faith. The lack of priests is a major issue—Anglican married priests are welcomed into the Church, yet Catholic men cannot marry, and also accept the vocation of the priesthood Bible study—part of the Protestant Churches—why not so in the Catholic Church? How can we understand our faith if we do not know the Bible? Increase knowledge of the Gospel—a development of practical application in daily life, self-education. Listen to the Word. Be a witness to the faith. Upholding the faith while still adapting to the current social norms. Remain constant. To be present and remain faithful. Hold on to your beliefs. Speak the language of love. Joyful music. The involvement of the lay community within the Church Uniting Australian Catholics to Catholics worldwide. A greater involvement of the laity due to the shortage of priests. The youth have strayed from the Church—how do we draw them back? Bringing young people back to the Church. Do not stray. Young families only attend Church at the time during which the children receive the sacraments—how can we successfully encourage them to continue?</p>
<p>[—], [—] -Attracting young people as mainly older people are seen. -Empowering laity in the Church. -Cultural integration though it is good to have separate cultural groups in the parish. -Having a sense of belonging. Like in Hillsong where it is alive and welcoming. -Role of women in the Church. There are well prepared lay and religious women who can contribute effectively. -Pray more and go to Church often. -Have faith in God and not doubt. -More of a missionary and evangelising Church. New method of proclaiming the gospel. -Proclaim Jesus message as it is and not just what suits us. -Respect for Church's teaching authority. -Spread the good news to everyone-lonely and poor people. They can see the light at the end. -Spread the Word amongst the youth and influence them. -Help support educate people in third world countries. Show them faith and hence improve their quality of</p>

life. -Know God through his word. Not only tradition but also learning and obeying Gods word. Taking this to others in small Christian communities with love. -Be transparent in our small communities to get help. -Involvement of youth and activities for them in the Church. Preventing them from getting lost for socialising or going to other Church's where it is more fun. -Family of small group meetings where parishioners can feel open to share and not feel judged. -Talks for families to be kept together and encouraged to live family life and support kids. -God wants us to be patient and humble. -Be prepared for his coming. A feeling of God separating the good people and destroying the evil ones like Sodom and Gomorrah. -Parents need to be held responsible if children do not go to Church. God's love is in the Church. -Build one another's faith through love. -Pray for the priests and religious. -Go out of yourself and serve. -Speak the truth in love.

The structure of the Catholic Church is faulty. From Pope down to parish priest, we have a celibate male organisation where power, glory and ritual have grown to suppress closeness to people, and those very people are swiftly coming to the conclusion that the Church has lost its relevance. On the other hand, Christ emptied himself of all those things to live a simple life and be a servant of all.

The Church needs a stronger focus on Ecumenism; Annulments; Care for people at risk (Domestic Violence, Acceptance of LGBT, Addictions, and Street People) at the local level.

Priests can marry, Female priests, Everyone in Australia deserves the right to do whatever they want. Nuns can get married, World peace, Provide a place for the homeless to sleep, Love one another as God loves us, Mass to be more exciting—not just stand, sit, kneel and sing, Gay marriage in the Church—Love one another as I have loved you! Taking care of the environment, Being reverent and always praying in the Church. Don't humiliate anyone in the public or in the media. Ladies should not be seen as helpless in the media. Masses to be more inclusive. Equality in the Church, Forgiveness, Able to remarry in the Catholic Church, Being an Altar Server should be compulsory, To make more people saints, Less murder and self-harm, Should be open minded about others' thoughts and feelings. He is asking us to be nice, respectful and kind to other people and creation. To take care of the environment/world/ stop greenhouse gas emissions. Do our best, live life to the fullest and achieve our goals. To forgive others. To reflect on God's word and keep God's word in our hearts and minds. To try and make the world a better place. To help the poor. To help with the drought by donating to charities (buy a bail, Parma for Farmer, etc.) Respect creation by looking after one another and the world. Stop polluting our world to look after our oceans and land by recycling and limiting use of aerosols and other dangerous things. Help endangered animals in Australia (koalas) by setting up conservation centres and researching how they can live in other areas. Help the poor and needy by giving to charities. As a school, we can help by raising money in creative ways to help. Have a happy life by not always working and spending time with family and friends doing fun things. Female priests, Outdoor Masses, Make the inside of the Church more colourful, More flowers/plants inside the Church and outside the Church, priests need to be vibrant and outgoing, and in-touch with society. Priests from overseas with thick accents are not always beneficial.

The Church to support families, providing guidance and upholding values. Formation: to be available, advertised, inclusive and ongoing for all Youth: for parishes, Deaneries and the wider Church to encourage and engage active participation of our youth liturgically and socially. A new model of Church that is less hierarchical * genuinely apologises for the mistakes of the past especially that which has occurred through the abuses of power of clericalism *welcomes the divorced into full communion with the Church *enables marriage as an option for priests *allows for the inclusion and participation of women at all levels even to the diaconate and priesthood. *Liturgy that is more relevant and meaningful to the young people, less obscure and more accessible * The Church is the body of Christ, so much more than a building. Therefore, could liturgical celebrations take place in context other than the Church building for marriage, Eucharist? The Church needs to be more proactive, particularly in the area of social justice in alignment with Catholic Social teaching. Re-introduce the practice of the third rite of reconciliation. The seal of confession has an alienating power block towards gaining a true understanding of the sacrament of reconciliation.

To speak for those that are unable to speak for themselves through one way or another- whether they are yet to be able to communicate (the children) or are not allowed (the excluded) as the voices that are loudest do not represent the whole Church. Break down the institutionalised complications and let those who understand the perspective and can advocate for them have the floor as too long we have been crippled by rules and heard only the voice of a particular minority- the Church is run by single, educated men.

Fidelity in the face of scandal ... which the bishops have allowed through their negligence and moral cowardice and mealy-mouthed double-speak.

- Time for mercy, love and forgiveness—Too much focus on gay marriage—We have to stand up as apostles and not sit on the fence in our faith—Fighting against evil and standing up as Christians—Forgiveness—God is asking us to pray—God is asking us to follow the commandments—Keep our belief in Him—Encourage those who have fallen—Help others to voice their opinions—Love and forgive—Evangelise through our humanity

Clergy: * more screening/ discernment of candidates for priesthood * re haul of the existing culture in some seminaries * greater consistency between different priests in regards to information given regarding Church teachings * don't allow priests to 'water down' Church's expectations, rules, teachings to win over people. They are not attending anyway! * Stay true to teachings of the Catholic Church * Acknowledgement from all clergy of abuses that have occurred—don't ignore, brush it off. * Introduce St Michael's prayer at every Mass. We need to pray for the future of our Church, * Introduce Holy Hour before or after Masses. * It is felt that the decline in numbers attending Church etc has a direct correlation with lessening the rules/ expectations of Church. People don't have to go so they don't. * Focus on those who attend. Pray for those who don't but nurture the faithful. * Many priests are not suited to the role—"turn off" our families attending Catholic schools with their manner. Priests need to receive training on effective communication and how to deliver an effective homily. * priests need to realise that they aren't the 'boss' of the parish. It is their role to minister spiritually to the parishioners. Greater input from the laity required. * Clergy expect schools to develop children's faith when most of the parents and even our Catholic teachers don't attend Mass or practice their faith.

To listen to Him and what Jesus has taught us with open-minded and humble hearts, and truly accept Jesus' message of loving one another just as he loved us. To spread the Good News, not only by words but more on action. To look after the children—they are the next generation. We need to concentrate on them—organise Retreats or meetings for them—We need to start from early life (Pre-schoolers). Be bold and defend our faith—by the way we live. Parishes need to be welcoming. We must learn to pray the "St Michael" prayer. Defence of our Catholic Faith. Every Catholic home should have a bottle of Holy Water from the Church. Uniting of people from different backgrounds such as ethnic groups and religions. Honesty, Peace and harmony, and hope. We can show the people around us we care for each other. We need more young priests for the future. To stand firm in the Faith and our teachings, to let the Holy Spirit lead and be the radical Christians this Church so desperately need. Sadly, I think God would be "relieved" that something hopefully be decided by our Church Leaders, and as the "lay people" in Australia are being now given an opportunity to express an opinion. This can possibly open up "Doors" previously closed. There are so many "good" devoted priests, brothers and nuns who have sacrificed so much in their lives—that can now feel support is coming! Act of love and faith to show everyone on the street and everywhere to keep peace and order all around Australia. Above all, the clergy to be honest and truthful to the parishioners. To be united and put all wrong doings and bad experience behind and start fresh again More pray God is asking us to pray very hard. Many bad things are happening—like gay marriage, abortion, marriage breakups, people going on drugs and a lot of greed. God is asking for all these to change and go back to obeying His laws and not rebelling against His will. Also, we don't see many kids and young people going to Church on Sundays. To stay firm in the tradition(s) of the Church, to pray for the Pope, to try and have access to our Churches 24/7 (ideally), and to be a stable example of worship and praise for the rest of the world. God is asking all Catholics to reflect about their faith, to question and immerse

ourselves in silence (guided by the Holy Spirit) to pray, seek and understand the truth and truly seek Him by making a fair and reasonable, informed decision. God is also asking us to listen humbly and speak from the heart. Renewal of Faith—Increased relevance of our Church today. An end to war, terrorism, family violence and injustice. Better care of our fragile planet—better use and sharing of resources. Better care of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our World community. A better understanding of the Gospel meaning. Respect, understanding, inclusiveness and justice for all. To remain faithful to the Church, to support each other as members of the Church. To uphold the truth with LOVE.

-Improve scripture/liturgy connection to young people -bring about large scale change for refugees, minorities -recognise the importance of diversity in community and leadership -minimise hierarchical and patriarchal gaps in the Church -harness the diversity of the people of the Church - reflect on women's roles in the Church -what do we do about the lack of priests -make sermons more engaging and relevant to today -more focus on God not Church—consider the people in our community who are suffering from mental health issues -consider the inclusion of women in decision making/ more senior roles -classes held for children to really engage and educate them about what being a Catholic believer means and looks like -the barriers between Church hierarchy and the general community need to be broken down -more diverse leaders with a difference in age, background, experience and experience outside the Church -to be inspired via the homily not only to the reflections of the priest but those with real life experiences -clergy—priests from other countries are very difficult to understand/ use someone from the parish who can deliver an interesting homily -possibly more upbeat music to engage the congregation

Faith education; youth/adult formation. Unity—one mind in Christ. Bring back disconnected, hurt people to community. Transparency—address abuses squarely. Adapt to changing times. School principals bravely uphold Mission Statement. Proclaim Catholic Social Teaching. Respect women as equals, their gifts, leadership qualities, inclusion in decision-making. Focus on families as active contributors to the faith community. Promote small-group work to break down anonymity in large parishes. Third Rite of Reconciliation—revisit ruling, reintroduce. Holy Communion for divorced and remarried, de factos, other baptised people. Spirituality: meditation, adoration, reflection, silence before Holy Eucharist, in daily life—stop, revive, survive. Millennials 12-year-olds want their needs met. Ministries: Bereavement, Visitation to shut-ins, Healing, Listening, Hope.

Topics for urgent discussion were brought up as follows: 1. Youth. What to do? We need to do something! 2. Exercise Faith. We must pray to get the answer about the governance. To have faith without prayer is not the same. To have both faith and prayer is more real! It means to really believe what we are praying. 3. An inclusive Church. The Church should be more open to divorced Catholics and gay people. 4. Think about ways of encouraging 'lapsed Catholics' to come back to the Church especially young people. 5. Shortage of priests in Australia. How can this be overcome? E.g. married priests, women priests. 6. Change of Governance—including concept of parish but not just parish structure, have a 10-15-year planning/listening model.

To reconnect to God. To be more involved in Church life. For Catholic schools to be more active in Church life. Acting with authority to repair/ cleanse the Church after Royal Commission. To turn back to God and make him central in our lives. To hold fast to our Catholic teachings and our moral truths in this pagan climate. Schools: Recognise and serve the person of Jesus in every child and affirm the person of God the father in every parent. Support for parish priests in accountability to the parish. To guide our children to God and his ways. Catholic school teachers to be more involved in Church life. To aide parents within the Church to recognise their unique calling. Change useless structures that don't help bring people to Church i.e., policies, attitudes.

Discussion around Inclusivity-Boundaries was held as follows: God would expect us to have assurance that Bishops will conduct plenary councils again more regularly and that the laity can be included in regular decision-making especially including women; that all in the Church would live the hymn 'Come As You Are', with forgiveness, kindness and love as the foundations; to welcome all people as Jesus did, especially regarding the divorced and homosexual people; that feminist issues

<p>and restrictive policies and liturgies be re-shaped, since all of these can be hurdles to the Gospel command of love. Being labelled 'Catholic' does not make you a Catholic in the language of Christ. Prayer needs to be more encouraged as it is a major force for good and the path to destruction is wide. Women should be given greater roles and should take Mary as their model, and so bring a new depth and another perspective to the Australian Church. The Church is moving backwards and living in fear which is a poor motivator, so no more Latin Mass nor the negative spirituality of Opus Dei. The third rite of Reconciliation should be brought back as this was experienced as a very positive step towards enriching individual Catholics as well as building community. God wants us to talk much more with others, (go 'beyond ourselves'), e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and hear of their spirituality; A good development in the Church since Vatican II has been that attendance at non-Catholic liturgies is now permitted; Nevertheless, more in-depth interaction on an intellectual level with non-Christians can lead to confusion in the Catholic mind, so much more education is required in the faith; the laity also need much more and ongoing education in the sharing of the faith to be able to carry out the New Evangelism; to know how our belief system stands up against other systems.</p>
<p>To act like Jesus: to be inclusive of everyone, transparent on everything, to serve the poor.</p>
<p>Have more joyful music. Over the centuries Catholics have had a treasury of great Christian music. Mass is the centre of our faith but sometimes the music is so slow and plays like a dirge. There are times during Mass for Hymns of reflection and thanksgiving, but the hymns of gathering and sending forth should be uplifting and joyous. In 2009, the ACBC approved a list of 'Recommended Hymns' for use in parishes. It stated there would be further revisions to this list. This list has not been revised and it is now timely that this revision should now take place. While there are over 1000 on the list, many hymns were discarded and many more could be added. Young people move to other parishes where they enjoy the music. The youth should be PART of the committee for selecting music. This is not about 'Rock and Roll' music of the 70's but music that the young and even oldies can enjoy. St Augustine famously said 'To sing is to pray twice,' but if the song is not popular and the congregation don't sing, then they don't even pray once.</p>
<p>Members of the group thought that God would be asking us in Australia, as a Church, to be more welcoming and parishes to be more inclusive with its people. We would like the clergy of the parish to be more interested and involved in the Plenary Council. We think God would be asking us to be more accountable and transparent on all levels. We think God would want us to have a sense of unity with more communication between clergy and laity.</p>
<p>Fidelity to the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church. In short- fidelity, fidelity, fidelity. I see a need for something like EWTN in Australia to catechise Catholics anew. We don't seem to get any catechism other than what we learnt at school.</p>
<p>There are lots of things drawing people away from the Church and away from faith, such as: secular values like money and power, other religions and other Christian denominations. In order to respond to these challenges, the Catholic Church in Australia needs to be more invitational, open, welcoming, hospitable and better at communicating. We need to build real community where people feel they belong and are cared for, so that when people do come to Church there is something for them to look forward to and to build their faith. In light of the child abuse scandal, from now on God is asking of us to prevent any further abuse and deal with it if it does happen again. We must be more transparent. Our Church is hurting and people feel betrayed. We must rebuild trust and hope.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We need to fill the Churches 2. We need priests who believe in the teachings of the Church 3. We need to publish the Church accounts 4. Youth groups such as young Vinnies 5. Young adults 6. promote Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for very young children 7. Make our parishes more welcoming 8. For Catholics to be led by the spirit to reach out to others and this is not a personal faith it needs to be shared. 9. We should not pander to the politics of climate change. Genesis says we are custodians but our focus should be saving souls. 10. We need to have Catholic schools that teach the Catholic faith. 11. To grow the Church, to spread the word of God and make new friends. 12. We have lost the Church because the clergy have abandoned us.

God is asking for more young people to be active in Church. To do this, we need more support for the youth, making Church relevant e.g. Music, more focus on Catholic religion for those who study it in years 11 and 12, more readily available programs for young adults, formation (easy access for groups to form and self organise) and training for youth, ministries and lay people. We need to build the reputation of the community through teaching parishioners on being authentic and disciples that live out our faith in everyday life. We need more personable priests and engaging Masses and spiritual events. We need to create strong roots in the community and encourage an international community. Need to use the talents of everyone and to increase our involvement in the wider community. Our Church needs to be inclusive and talk about all sensitive topics. Need to reach out to the margins e.g. LGBT, homeless, refugees and be a voice for them, encourage interfaith dialogue. For Mass, we should consider more modern hymns/songs and to use technology to enhance the Mass, not draw away from the Mass. We should have more dialogue about vocations and increase the role of women in the Church. In terms of family involvement, it should be more widely encouraged, and for parents to set a positive example to children and involve families in Church services.

I think God is asking us to have a Church for all where everyone is welcomed, included and valued equally, wherever they are on their life journey (e.g. sexuality, marital status); that the liturgy of the Mass should use language which is common to all people, as unknown words (e.g. "consubstantial") alienate people and fosters a "us" and "them" atmosphere. I think God is asking for a clergy who is not "above" the people, but PART of the people of God. I think God is asking us to reach out as a Church to others outside our congregation and be "Christ" to them, particularly the marginalised e.g. homeless, refugees etc. Offering a free meal an hour before Saturday night Mass where parishioners bring crockpots of e.g. spaghetti bolognese to provide a meal for those who are struggling, along the lines of the Loaves and Fishes restaurant in the inner city.

He is constantly asking us to "listen" and live our lives according to the Gospel. He is asking the Congregation to step forward and accept more responsibility in the life of our Church and is also asking the priests to encourage that active involvement. He wants us to prepare for the Eucharist by reading, reflecting and absorbing the readings prior to attending Mass. This will make the whole occasion much more meaningful.

To initiate changes that is relevant to today's Australia.

Our group felt 4 responses, 2 covered a lot of territory, I'll start with them; 1) 'Let me heal my people, let me inflame their hearts, let me be their physician, let me seek out the lost.' This is directed for priests to be able to be more relaxed in their pastoral care role. To treat every single person with the love of Jesus allowing the priest to follow the impulse of the Holy Spirit in dealing with each person, i.e. Does a priest really have to abstain from giving someone communion if they know 'technically' the rule says they shouldn't receive? Priests should be given greater flexibility in their role of pastoral care to be able to show compassion and mercy. To truly be 'in persona Christi'. This more relaxed less rigid attitude can then be employed in reaching out both ecumenically and with interfaith dialogue too. This should be at a parish level, embracing that we are all people of God. 2) 'Make reparation for the deep wound in My Body that still festers.' This is in relation to the sins of child sex abuse, the scandal of the cover-ups by the Church. This whole area is felt very strongly about and leads into the problem of clericalism and lack of women in authority in all levels of the Church. Reparation; Visible marches throughout all cities in Sydney, maybe finishing in Hyde Park with a service (something deemed the most sensitive for those that have been abused). Bishops, priests, laity but no fine vestments, not much to tell who is who. Solidarity. Let's be humble, say sorry, make reparation and promise Australia that structures are in place so it can't ever happen again. The damage done is so serious. It was thought something should be in place not just as a once off event but regularly, annually (depending on what's decided on). Tied up with the abuse is the clericalism that fed it. Structures need to be put in place everywhere within the Church run by professional lay people, totally separate to clergy. Women need to be equal and their presence in all Church governance needs equal to the male presence. Women shouldn't only be able to be acolytes

but also deacons and yes, priests. There's a whole hurting humanity because some people don't want to go to a male priest for reconciliation. We are all Christ bearers. Who is the most important here? Surely it is the lamb that is lost. 3) Unity, everywhere and in everything. This encompasses conversation, collaboration, listening and humility. 4) Generally, the teaching, Faith education, liturgy on the Holy Spirit to be more profound (It seems to be lacking).

The following topics were brought up for further study: 1. Support Pope Francis in his bid to change the Church. 2. Developing a flexible and open Church. 3. What we as individuals can do to build up the Church. 4. How deal with the shortage of priests in Australia: priests from other countries; married priests; women priests; combine parishes. 5. Encourage youth. 6. Handing on the faith to youth. 7. As a grandmother, I feel we should pray for the young ones. Protection from modern gadgets. Be aware and pray for young people.

Listen and engage with the community particularly in light of Vatican II. Building a stronger Catholic faith community with a more coherent and influential voice to policy makers to policy makers in matters that affect our beliefs and values. Parish community: stronger, prayer, for school and parish to be together more and support each other. To support our parish, help nurture young people. To unite together as one. Church needs to adjust to changing times as it has done in the past. Many have become alienated or left the Church. Why? Standing together against euthanasia and abortion. Implementing Vatican II: moving forward with honesty and love; Jesus is the mediator; Each believer is called to holiness; Structures of encounter. Increasing the bond in our parish. Youth: discover ways to bring our children back to the Gospel (Sensus fidelium). Having 'little liturgy' (Children's liturgy). Using good music. To teach morals and standards in today's society. Faith: stronger faith, to have Jesus as the centre of our lives; to pray more often; Catholics faithfully being loving and compassionate towards others beliefs but at the same time be well informed and steadfast. The society of Australia to nurture faith specifically Catholic faith that is vibrant. To make God's people knowledgeable on matters of faith and to challenge the young in faith e.g., theology of the body. Younger generations are concerned with materialism and accumulation of wealth, success and personal gain because God is not central in their lives.

First responses: 1. Abandoned women 2. Change of Mass wording 3. Priests to have the right to marry if they want to 4. I think the Church should allow women to be able to have a profession and to become a priest 5. I feel the need to start at the top and for the bishops to look at their role and where they need to change. 6. More respect by children and adults in Church for the Church. 7. Dress code for Church. 8. Pilgrimages to poor countries especially where women are oppressed. 9. Youth to do community work in the parish and get to know others. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION
—More care is needed for women who are abandoned by their husbands. They should be allowed to receive Holy Communion. It was pointed out that they can get an annulment through the Church.
—The words of the Mass are always the same and so there is nothing to interest the young but this is also the case with the adults. There needs to be much more variety that makes attendance more inviting. —Bishops need to change, not be rulers but be servants of the people as Jesus told them.
—Respect in Church should be shown by having a dress code as in clubs or when meeting a dignitary, e.g. showing too much skin or skirts too short should be avoided. —The youth within the parish should be guided to do community work, e.g. by setting up a CYO or Junior Vinnies.

* Encouragement of the Youth more to Mass. *catering more for children to be included in the Mass but also to have liturgy explained to them e.g. Sunday school/children's liturgy group *Have children involved in the music liturgy *More opportunities for families to come together within the Church context. * For families to focus on more on each other, their community and the elderly. They are often too busy and drawn to other commitments e.g. sport, shopping, etc. when they should be at Church. *to ensure our elderly are included in our families and wider communities, and cared for by us- not forgotten in homes either alone or in care facilities. *God is asking us to reconnect with him more, focus on our faith.

<p>We believe that God wants us, in the Church, to operate in a more united and inclusive manner. To develop processes of conflict resolution where difficulties occur between clergy and laity or between different parishioners.</p>
<p>To remain strong in faith. Not to be swayed by opinions from the Media and non-Christians. The Church has remained strong through time, and then numbers entering the Seminary are on the rise. I feel this is an indicator from the Holy Spirit that all is well and in good hands. There is no need for change.</p>
<p>God is asking people in Australia to be loving and caring to those who are disadvantages whether that be with the drought, homelessness or someone going through a tough time. God always wants us to be kind, loving and to help those in need.</p>
<p>Lose the bling. Gold, silver, purple are remnants of power demonstration which are no longer appropriate.</p>
<p>To manage our faith with less clergy.</p>
<p>I come to know how to answer the Plenary Council (questions). God gives the answer what I ask in my prayer. To attend Church. Support the younger generation. Belong to. To observe the people's work in the parish. Try to do more as a Catholic. To create atmosphere for younger generation. To support the next generation in their faith. To keep talking and listening. To protect our planet and those on it. To work towards justice, peace and reconciliation. To be inclusive of ALL people. To encourage one another and WORK together. To speak out. To be more caring. To be concerned. To be more prayerful. I think we have to pray for world peace. Try to forgive one another and forgive yourself. To bring to life (evangelise?) more within parishes. To work towards providing a greater unity with families. To catechising their children, families and each other as well. Be respectful of everyone, see the face of Jesus in everyone e.g. the homeless, the odd, the marginalised, etc. God is asking us to get involved in the local community and help those who are part of our village. To show by example, why we follow Christ. To be more outward instead of inward with their views and acts of service. To know and love God more deeply (to have a deeper encounter with Christ). To live the joy of the Gospel.</p>
<p>God is asking of us to bring freshness into the Catholic Church so to encourage and ensure its longevity and relevance and through more active participation from its younger generations; through a more open-minded acceptance of the changing Church by its practising and ageing faithful populations; and through the concept that being a priest is a career role instead of its current thinking that a man must eliminate all earthly physical interactions so to fulfil his spiritual role.</p>
<p>Our question to the Plenary Council is; Why has the Catholic Church in Australia allowed the sacrament of Reconciliation to become the forgotten sacrament? It is our observation that the percentage of people attending Mass, who receive Holy Communion has never been higher. This appears to indicate to us that people are craving the closest relationship possible with God, but for reasons best known to the themselves, are not going to reconciliation. We cannot recall the last time we heard a priest encourage the congregation to come to reconciliation. This is also borne out by the little amount of time that is allocated to reconciliation in a parish. We are surprised that the Church does not see this as a crisis. To us and the people we mix with, the answer is simple. The Church must reinstate the Third Rite of Reconciliation, without reservation immediately. This allows easy access to everyone, and removes the stigma of the confessional, and allows everyone to enjoy a closer relationship with God. Let us listen to the faithful, let us answer their needs, and give them the Third Rite of Reconciliation.</p>
<p>To deepen our faith and increase our community spirit. God is asking us to incorporate young and old and involve the laity in parish life. We must involve the youth as they are our future. Lead by example in a time rocked by scandal and support our priests. Parishioners rely on one another and our parishioners have had many experiences where without their parishes' support, they would not have coped. Inclusiveness and support are required in today's time. God is asking us to change.</p>
<p>God wants us to be more accepting and open to all walks of life, especially those of different faiths and orientations. Particularly, in a time where there is so much debate about what the Church</p>

opposes and what is considered equality, we need to take into account the context of our teachings and adapt them to our current time—the Bible certainly wasn't written for a modern audience with today's values and ideals!

FIRST RESPONSES: 1. Youth; 2. Faith education for All; 3. Liturgy; 4. Celibacy/Married priests.

MINUTES OF DISCUSSION: On youth, at First Communion the children shouldn't receive the wine which has been turned into God's blood but they are too young and react immaturely. Youth should be catered for in all parishes. There are many differences in the experience of being Catholic between today and when we were young in the 40's and 50's. We had processions on St Patrick's Day, Corpus Christi and Christ the King. We sometimes walked miles for monthly confession. We had nuns and brothers as teachers and a lot of prayer during the day such as the morning offering, the Angelus, the daily Rosary after lunch, Grace before and after lunch. All this was well-accepted by ourselves and we liked the nuns. We respected it. Now the teachers are themselves parents—the children don't have the example of the nuns. Today the parents are both in jobs. If there was a non-Catholic spouse in our families, they would cooperate with having the children observe their religion. The issue of paedophilia in the news today was discussed and it was realised that at the time it happened bishops swept it under the carpet as that is what people do with things they are ashamed of. It was also realised that two-thirds of the cases that came before the Royal Commission were perpetrated outside the Catholic Church and that it remains a small minority of priests and brothers who offended. It was suggested that celibacy was to blame for the fact priests remained emotionally and sexually immature and if they were to have the choice to marry and have a family, they would not be preying on the young. It was also discussed that there was nothing wrong with ordaining women if they had the calling and the talents. The Church could do with the faith education of priests who have left to get married and let them back into ministry. It was thought there were too many rules in the Church that were unnecessary and that Jesus would not care about, e.g. we used to be taught we'd go to hell if we ate meat on Friday or attended non-Catholic services. These were seen to be lies. Man-made rules should be abolished and we should be asked to live by the Gospel and the Ten Commandments. Recently a good teaching was given: 'Ask what Jesus would do'. In earlier days we loved attending Antioch and the CYO. How can youth be brought back? We could use their kind of music, institute groups again with outings, scripture teaching. We should contact the High Schools and advertise there. The Bishops, to go forward, should be liberal, welcoming. Youth stay away partly because of the lifestyle of the WORLD. Nuns are missed as they modelled a Catholic lifestyle. Today's teachers are more caught up with the way of the world, concerned their children must miss out on nothing. The fact that there are now young boys and girls serving on the altar is a good positive sign for the future. FINAL STATEMENT: Encourage youth.

FIRST RESPONSES: 1. GOVERNANCE: Women should be able to become priests; priests should be able to marry so they understand Family Life-Commitment; More focus on youth; Disband Opus Dei; Less clericalism. 2. BETTER PASTORAL CARE: More shelters for the homeless; Divorce—people are unable to receive Communion; Annulment—people struggling after divorce; Children of State Schools treated differently. 3. SPIRITUALITY: God is asking us to pray, say the Rosary as a family, be honest and kind to others, take care of your family and assist them to be good Catholics. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION: —Opus Dei is a disgrace. People are affected, it causes rifts. A daughter heavily involved and now not speaking with her brother due to her involvement. Says she is 'in love with God', but she has six children. Mother thinks the religion is interfering with family life. Feels it is contrary to Catholic beliefs. They are fanatics and derogatory to women. —Most people present had the following problem: 'My wife and I have been Catholics all our lives. I had two daughters, both brought up as Catholics who married Catholics. I have 6 grandchildren. None of them go to Church.' Two people present said they had been away from the Church in their early twenties but came back to marry and bring up their children as Catholics. They assumed that the Catholic School would take care of their religious education. —Reasons given for children not attending Mass were: a negative experience with a nun-teacher at high-school; no time; having two jobs; sport involvement; Sundays used to be special but are no longer. Our children blame us, the older generation, for going with the

changes of the economic world and sports programs. Mass is found unattractive, e.g. one teenager answering his grandfather why he was not coming to Mass: 'The priest is a bloody idiot!' Another story: 'My granddaughter, 10 years, went to reconciliation prior to receiving Confirmation. Her sins? Fighting with her brother. "You are a very selfish little girl," said the priest. She will not be going to reconciliation again.' Sometimes children from Public Schools are treated differently. —Some youth go to Hillsong or Shirelive, attracted to the preaching and the music. —Two copies of 'Australian Catholics' periodical were brought in and recommended for reading both individually and by families. —One participant felt skeptical about whether change would happen through the Plenary Council as the numbers of attendants will be so heavily stacked in favour of the clergy so the views of the laity will possibly be ignored. It was also pointed out that the Pope would be involved in finalising the agenda. —It was felt that the morals of our country have changed since we were young and that Australia's God is money with the younger generations living in that morality, shift work being the norm. It was commented: The children have to make their own way to heaven. We pray with the grandkids, not our children.

Be respectful and help others and listen to others by saying "tell me more ...". Be aware of the importance of elderly families and youth in the parish. Be forgiving and move to be a more accepting parishioner. Be open-minded about our faith. Respect the diversity of those around us. Encourage others in their faith, particularly the younger generation. To share our faith with others. To be a place of peace and to present an alternative to consumerism. To work together to bring about the Kingdom—be Jesus to others. To welcome others into our community. To love one another. To lead the way on social justice questions! To keep the faith, and to assist and honour the priests' appointed to our parish to make this parish a "better living example" to God. To get involved in helping those in difficult times. God is asking me to introduce myself to others from my parish and listen to their story without judging. Pray hard and get close to Him. To change, bring the young ones closer to God. To repent and Get the Act together. Sort out the mess in the Church.

In reminding us that He can neither deceive nor be deceived, and that His patience is our opportunity to educate ourselves and our children in His ways and in what He has revealed. He is asking the same as always, namely: To take up our cross and follow His son, Jesus Christ, who became man so as to make us His sons, who died and rose from death through love for us, and who intercedes for us before Him; to embrace the beauty and necessity of His one true Church and the Faith that leads to prayer; to pray without ceasing; to pray for the gift of wisdom through the Scriptures and to seek the truth and *freedom for excellence through His Son Jesus Christ; to accept that truth is truth even when it's unpopular; to strive to increase our Faith in Him because He is our Creator, our God before Whom we shall not have strange Gods; to know Him, His attributes, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints that we might be fully alive, and that our salvation is of Christ His Son; to know that He is the God of graces, the God of love, forgiveness and mercy; to know and recognise the true meaning of mortal and venial sin, that we are all sinners and must face judgements when we die; that we must properly form our conscience, repent and believe in the Gospels or face damnation; to know that He thirsts for us and gave us His sacraments so that He can be near us and we near to Him, and for our salvation into eternal life; to attend Masses joyfully and devoutly and worthily receive the Blessed Eucharist regularly; to understand the real meaning of the Mass and our Sunday obligation, the true and Real Presence and the sacraments and how to be properly disposed to receive them; to adore Him in Eucharistic adoration and to seek right worship; to love Him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul and with all our strength; to humbly serve Him in this life; to know and keep His commandments so we might be salt to the earth and light to the world; to love our neighbour as ourselves and evangelise in order to bring our neighbour to a loving, faith-filled communion with Jesus Christ, who taught us "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"; to know and live the Beatitudes; He is calling us to be saints, to live His Will and earnestly seek His Kingdom just like the Saints; and that we must know the importance of obedience to His Church's teachings, of forgiveness and of doing good works faithfully in order to prepare to meet Him face to face in Heaven. In other words, He is asking that we constantly examine ourselves

with knowledge and humility in order to save our souls into an eternity with Him, reminding us that He alone is our one true end.

1. Recognition of Women, Women in Decision-making in the Church. Women in leadership roles at all levels in the Church. Women as clergy and in leadership. This was by far the number 1 need for change. Women are invisible in the Church. Theology of the Body presented by lay people.

2. Royal Commission—Church lost credibility because of Clergy sexual abuse. No bishop seems to be accountable. Church being moved to the margins of society. Leaders, especially bishops need to address the way the bishops failed the Church. Church needs to show leadership and help people through their anger at the Church. Church must be much more transparent about the response to the Royal Commission. Not enough to say sorry. Say what sorry for and who was responsible and they accept the consequences. We need to have glass doors on our confessionals.

3. Evangelising—No significant initiative to evangelise people. Church attendance dropped dramatically. Schools not the answer. Church needs to share the faith better. Evangelising Immigrants—Invite Muslims to learn about Christianity. Assist the Church to be more attractive to families and children. Outreach to young people. Outreach to people in our area, especially those moving into the high rise in our parish. Church does not know how and it is not a priority.

4. Church must change—Become an inclusive Church, a Church of all the baptised. So much change in society and Church not in touch across so many areas of our culture. Scary what has to be done for the Church to change. Strengthen belonging to the Church—Assist all people to belong to our Church. Communion for non-Catholics at funerals. Hostile media and secular culture. Promote the good news of the Catholic Church. Genuine dialogue between Church leaders and laity. Need to be more loving, less judgmental. An inclusive Church Including the divorced and those left out. Acceptance of Homosexuality. Establish a better business model for the Church in Australia—full time jobs for lay people. What would Jesus Say? Teaching to be attractive to do what is good. Church to become truly Catholic and Universal. Increase the diversity and multiculturalism. Promote a genuine dialogue between the Bishops and the people. Bishops have their say but seem to live in the past and not aware of what is happening. Invite us to address the Council. Will the bishops listen? 5. Catholics deserve more -Review the way the Church teaches and the way it supports Catholics. Bishops have failed laity and failed to see they have failed. Faith building programs. Lack of leadership. No direction or vision and how to get there. Lack of Bible studies offered in parishes. Need engaging sermons. Hymns and singing to improve—need for common hymnals. Priests from other countries—Need help with how they talk so they can be understood and help with what they say.

Consider ordaining married men as priests. That will allow the priests who had to leave the Church when they got married to be priests in good standing. This will reduce Eucharistic starvation, and the closure of parishes.

I believe that God is calling people to create complete peace within the world. It is such an important time with lots of war and atrocities occurring and many disadvantaged people. He is asking us to create peace in society within a range of different contexts. Between nations, between people, between religions, between the people within our countries, between society and the environment and between ourselves and God.

More relatable and more activities for young people. School friends say that Church is boring—youth should go back to school and say what was fun at Mass this weekend. Life stream of Mass in every Church—different countries. Having time to meet priest—priest stay around for everyone to talk to. Priest coming out of pews during sermon. Priest having a family. More young people coming to Mass and not think it is weird for young kids to go to Church. Women's right is important. Modernising prayers. Teaching of Catholics to match the changing world. Some topics are more accepting in our world now. Acting out the homily. Easy to understand sermon. Gospel is not easy to understand. Father involves community in sermon by asking questions. Unpack the many metaphors in the gospel. Energy in singing and clapping, similar to gospel worship. More activities for young people in school and Church community involving food. Get parishioners to write prayer of Faithful via a

<p>prayer box. People volunteers to come and talk about the reading. Priests should be younger—20-30. Instead of wine, another drink should be served.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be more involved as a community and to take responsibility for the spiritual life of Church participants. This involves making the Church less clerical, allowing lay chaplains/trained professionals with a mission to deliver sacraments to the community such as baptism, Marriage, and Anointing of the Sick—especially in the physical Church itself, not just hospitals. This is essential if the Church is to progress and heal and hear the call of the Spirit. This work should also be paid work for those with a vocation to ministry who have studied and trained in this area.</p>
<p>We feel God is asking us to restore credibility and trust by focusing on fundamentals: faith formation and concern for the poor and marginalised. The Church should also explore new and appropriate ways of revealing God's message to the wider society.</p>
<p>That young children at school become more exposed to the Catholic faith and its teachings. The present degree of learning in our Catholic schools is nowhere good enough if we want to seriously promote Catholic knowledge, ethics, and principles in our community.</p>
<p>To stop getting caught up in man-made rules and regulations and live the message of the Gospels.</p>
<p>1. The Church must change—Review the Catholic Church in Australia like Vatican II. Address the state of the Church. Repair the damage done by the Church. Change the image of the Church to one that is compassionate, caring and active. Promote the role of the baptised lay people in the running of the Catholic Church. Vatican must see the need for a different Catholic Church in Australia. Address the issues that cause division: separated brethren, divorced and remarried Catholics. Why is the plenary Council NOT universal for the Church needs to change internationally?! 2. Engage Women—Involve women in running and leading the Catholic Church. Engage women in decision making. 3. Address Royal Commission—The Bishops and clergy must be accountable for what they did and for what has happened. It is not good enough just to say "sorry". Something has to happen because they are so sorry! Repair the damage done to "wounded" Church. 4. Share our Faith—Help Catholics to evangelise. Show people how to share faith in Jesus within their family and with others. Help us understand why our Catholic children are not attending Mass. 5. Be Inclusive—Church should be more accessible to society in general and in public places. Church to seek out people on the margin, who Jesus went to. 6. Be cautious—Church and people to conform with what Jesus wants us to do not Jesus conform with us. Help Catholics understand why things have changed in the Church and what did or does not work in the Church. Conclusions from Discussion -Examine the role of the Church and the way the Church functions to improve the Church. Role of the Bishop should be addressed. Keep the members of the Church informed. Point and aim for the goals rather than protect the name of the Catholic Church. More visible Church presence in public space. Equivalent to Spirituality in Pub, or God over Coffee. Change in attitude towards contraception. Make it clear to people that conscience determines what one does and does not do. Examine position of priesthood for married men and for women. Expand penitential Rite and make 3rd Rite available. Women should have a far greater role in decision-making in the Church. More female decision-making and involvement in decision-making and more women as the public face of the Church. Revise the way the Church compensates people so it is transparent and compassionate. Involve women in the process and take it away from lawyers. Use the evidence from the Royal Commission. Repair the damage of the 7%. Proclaim the goodness of 93% of religious. Employ chaplains in High Schools and youth ministers (female) as in other denominations. Bishop has a responsibility for faith in young people. Assist people to grow in their faith. Look at our similarities rather than our differences. Change the way Divorcees are treated. Better education for couples before they get married and follow up for a few years. Consumerism, Media, Financial concerns -all need to be addressed by the Church.</p>
<p>21 November Group of 5: 1. Role of bishops should change. Bishops need to be totally transparent! Their lack of openness about child abuse has had an impact on victims and discredited the Catholic Church in Australia. Bishops should have demonstrated strong leadership in addressing the crisis of</p>

sexual abuse but didn't. Bishops should foster a spirit of loving kindness not judgement of others with their views on abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality and divorce, etc. 2. Inclusion —Acceptance of people of different sexual orientations. Currently the Church's views are contradictory to modern society and civil law and discriminates against minorities which causes isolation of individuals. 3. Women— Women should be part of the decision-making in the Church. Allow for the ordination of women in the Church and opportunities for women to be leaders in their communities. 4. Priesthood —Optional celibacy. Allow priests to marry and have children. Free priests for spiritual guidance and take the financial burden off their shoulders. Discontinue practice of celibacy of priests and nuns and allow them to marry if they wish. 5. Parishes— Pay lay administrators to operate the finances of the parish. Catholic laity to take on the financial burden of the Church. Less focus on obligation and more on service. Bigger participation of youth in the parish and more support for them. More activities of celebration. Livelier liturgies for young run by parents as families. More inclusion of people with disabilities. God wants us to embrace and care for our most vulnerable in society and in our community. parish should be one of warmth, friendship and a sense of belonging to the parish community. Introduction of BEC (Basic Ecclesial Communities).

22 November Group of 7: 1. Bishops — Bishops need to note that we are all the Church thus a circle not a triangle. More transparency from the bishops. Bishops are responsible for the loss of two generations of Catholics in Australia. This requires a total rethink on their part. Catholics are speaking against the administration of the Catholic Church in Australia and the Vatican. Bishops should reflect Jesus' teaching and life. 2. Leadership in the Church — Good leaders are needed including laity and clergy. Simplify the rituals and traditions of the Church. Women to be equally involved in the decision-making in the Church. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM DISCUSSION Those at the head of the Church need to be sacked as they are responsible for the loss of two generations of Catholics and the cover-up of child abuse. They have lost their way with the congregation. There is a lot of anger about their poor response to the sexual abuse recommendations. The relevance of religion is lessening in society. The Church needs to show Catholicism has a relevant role in society.

To be inclusive of everyone, To include women in every level of the Church, TO BE HONEST AND TRANSPARENT about abuse ... scandals, etc. Stop telling people they cannot participate in the sacraments, etc. because they are divorced, gay, etc. Allow young people to be a Big part of the dialogue of what is wrong with the Church. Not the ones that are going to Mass but the ones who feel the Church is totally irrelevant. SPEAK UP on social justice issues. BE KIND and stop pulling the card. That Father knows best. To Stop judging people who have other views from the institutional Church. E.g. those who divorce and want to remarry, or be allowed to go to communion, etc. BE HONEST AND TRANSPARENT with abuse scandals, etc. etc.

FIRST RESPONSES: 1. God is asking the Church to make straight its path and journey back to God; 2. God is asking the Church to repent for its wrongdoings. Each of us has a place in his upper rooms. The Church cannot afford to lose us; 3. 'Go now to love and serve the Lord': try to follow the good road and set a good example so others may follow; 4. All the Catholic Community need to evangelise, not just by words but visual deeds; 5. More involvement by laity in conducting parishes; 6. Prayer meetings with teachings where all are welcome; 7. Simplification of liturgy—bring in meditation, put up a notice 'SILENCE' in Church. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION: -We should live the faith by the practical example we set. -More involvement by laity in conducting the parish. -Simplification of liturgy. -Silence in Church. -Teach people how to be missionaries. -Conduct pilgrimages to poor places in the world.

FIRST RESPONSES; —Spread the message of hope—Evangelisation by example—We have to be bold in our belief in Jesus and not be ashamed to push Catholic Scripture teaching in Public Schools— Clarity of the message—We have to be proactive in the teaching of Catholic Scripture. Advertise if we must but tell people what we do—Parents will listen but we need to inform them about what we do in teaching Scripture to their children (communication)—Discuss topics relevant to kids, of ALL ages—Show unconditional love to others; many other. Forgive and accept forgiveness—guilt sends

us bonkers. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION: 1. Better communication with parents in public school. 2. To be bold in our faith. Make ourselves known and our faith needs to be passed on via the lessons in the schools. 3. We need to advertise what we do. 4. Pass on the message in layman terms: be clear. The Church has a beautiful message to pass on but it is sometimes lost in the language that is used. 5. Discuss topics relevant to different age groups: make it available through teachings, groups ... Make the message relative to the groups and the listeners. 6. Evangelisation: by talking to others about our faith, but above all by example. 7. Spread the message of hope. Stop the negativity that is poisoning the world. 8. Forgive and accept being forgiven. Feelings of guilt lead to shame, that in turn stops us from seeing the light of God. 9. Faith, hope and charity.

FIRST RESPONSES: —Find ways to bring Catholics back to the Church—How can we attract youth? What do we need to do? —As we move into the modern world, we want to keep what is good, the sacraments and the sanctity of the confessional—Is it time for a greater involvement of lay people now? —How to encourage the young ones to believe there is God? —Organising more time for reflection, meditation and knowing Jesus. Attracting parents through the children. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION: Ideas for bringing people back to the Church: Spiritual groups for men, for women, the young, the married, couples, youth, family groups, family retreats, music played with joy attracts people. Ideas for attracting youth: Through the school organise faith activities for young people. Use singing, music ministry, (modern music for young people), youth leadership. Ideas for moving in the modern world: Training for lay people, use of the Internet, get resources, every parish have a good website which has the latest Church notice, interesting articles, publish papal documents on Environment, Social Justice, have Resources with Books for Advent, CDs, Modern Music, Lent, etc., Hymns, all of professional quality.

FIRST RESPONSES: —Focus on reaching the youth in a positive way—Laicise, secularise the Church—Help to bring the light and joy of Christ to our land, to the children—Change celibacy for the priesthood—Spread the word of the Lord not only by words but by actions, giving the example. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION: 1. Choice of marriage or celibacy for clergy. 2. Skip the politics and power, unite Churches! 3. Create good programs to reach the youth.

To be a welcoming and humble Church where each person can have their say and listen and engage in dialogue in a consensus approach to being Church.

I believe God is asking us to make an effort to show compassion and kindness, even when we are challenged by actions and people that do not always demonstrate these qualities.

The leaders to be humble, transparent and more welcoming.

In a nutshell: self-renewal and renewal of the whole Australian Church, so as to deepen our understanding of what it means to be the body of Christ in the world, and so that we become a contemplative, humble and compassionate community of equals, seeking to serve God in others. As a local animator of the Plenary Council in my parish community I led a number of listening and dialogue sessions with a very diverse range of participants. If I could sum up their major concerns in a few words, it would be these: —yearning for a deeper spirituality and for a sense of belonging in a community that supports one another in times of need but also reaches out to care for others; —a desire to go back to the essential teachings of Jesus; —a persistent critique of the power of the clergy, and desire for changes in the system. These conversations have helped me enormously in my own discernment of the question, “What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?” I have composed my submission over a number of months, and revisited it on numerous occasions. The process of discernment is ongoing. I will attach this submission at the end.

"Gods" aren't asking anything of Australia. Australia needs to ask more of religion though. The Catholic Church refuses to protect children. It expects (and demands) to be held outside of Australian law when it comes to mandatory reporting. It is a business, it needs to follow the laws of the land (and pay tax). Don't wonder why attendance is falling when major religions in Australia refuse to change as society changes. You opposed marriage equality. You oppose LGBT rights. You oppose keeping children safe. You are digging yourself into oblivion (which is fine for me, but you

<p>might want to do something about that yourself). The Catholic Church (along with every other major religious group in Australia) simply needs to "grow up".</p>
<p>To love and obey our Lord Jesus Christ, to forgive ourselves and others for their sins, along with do not judge others and to live in peace and harmony</p>
<p>To remain true to the faith and practise and follow the principles of our Catholic faith. To actively participate in our local parishes and to spread the word of God to non-believers of Christianity. Also, to continue the work of missionaries around the world and to help those in our local communities and parishes who are less fortunate than ourselves—the needy, the homeless, those struggling with mental health issues, the lonely, the unemployed, those affected by drugs and alcohol, and those who are straying away from Catholicism for whatever reason.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility to address growing needs across demographics. • Flexibility around the edges of our solid core of faith. E.g. Divorcees, LGBTQI community, Rules around the Eucharist—handling of Communion to the sick, access to the tabernacle; openness at weddings, funerals and other significant gatherings. • To address the Church hierarchy which is seen as an ivory tower, where Church leaders can hide behind a fortress wall—fire shots and dodge the return bullets. We no longer seem to see the Church hierarchy out and about and doing community work. • Continue this two-way dialogue between the Church and “the executive” rather than the one-way “conversation” where we the people are told what to do and expected to remain silent. • The Church to accept that the laity are already and will increasingly do the functions that have traditionally been carried out by clergy and religious. We need to be respected in this and allowed the conditions to do it effectively. • Relevant and dynamic ways to observe our faith—to portray a dynamic and attractive picture of Christianity o For many, Mass attendance is still a duty not a desire o Lessons from the evangelical Churches o Sunday school type opportunities for children (separate service with music, games, dancing) but remaining relevant to our faith—and is not solely about the entertainment. • Authenticity o To do what is right, not what is easy—take unpopular stands. o Young people see through non-authenticity very quickly. o Stand up and be counted—“Stand where others sit and sit where others stand”—get in the game. • To allow Him back into our lives—to be a presence in our lives; making God a priority (which can manifest in different ways); attendance at Church; more involvement in Church • Helping people in need in the community and getting to know our community through actions—social justice. • Greater knowledge and understanding of the faith o the basis for our beliefs; o knowledge of the history of the Church and scripture. o Delivered as education not pontification. o We need knowledge to fight back. It’s become ‘trendy’ not to believe, and non-believers are often better-read / better-informed than we are. o A stronger sense of what Christianity is about • Intelligent and forthright engagement with the secular world—not shamefaced, but not strident and aggressive either. • Rapprochement of some kind between liberals and conservatives in the Church. • To accept women into the priesthood as a gesture of acceptance of minorities • To accept women into the priesthood to dilute the male hegemony • To consider the issue of celibacy of priests • To openly recognise, accept and apologise for the child sexual abuse, and cover up, that occurred within the Church and thereby rebuild trust. • To be fairer / more just to ALL people in Australia. Compassion. • Centre our spiritual nourishment around social justice but not removed from the core of our faith.
<p>Think more on allowing priests to marry and allowing women priests.</p>
<p>When all I have ever done for you is good, why have so many of you turned away from Me?</p>
<p>To own our faith and live it as models for others in an open way with pride in what we believe in and stand up and be counted for all to see in our community, our workplace, places of worship and leisure.</p>
<p>God is asking that —we are an inclusive community (women, LGBTIQ community, single men and women,) —we are a community committed to social justice activity at a local level —we have local leaders that engage with and empower people to have relationships with and a focus on issues in the local community—we develop a genuine and continual connection between the wider</p>

community and government committed to action to address social justice issues (both locally and at a broader level)
To not be hesitant and meek after the Royal Commission and get the parish priests back engaging with families and stressing the importance of family life as the bedrock of society. I am concerned that the left of politics is pushing through laws which will result in a loss of freedom of speech, and more importantly, will detrimentally affect our children's education and upbringing. The Church should reinforce the importance of families as a bulwark against the new laws that we are facing and are being imposed upon us. Stress that parents as best place to guide their children, not the State. Lastly, emphasise the Rosary for families.
We think God is asking of us in Australia that in the forthcoming Plenary Council the Bishops work in cooperation with priests and laity to bring into being an Australian Catholic Church that is more faithful to the love, humility, and caring shown by Christ: that it will be more welcoming to all genuine seekers of faith, more transparent in its processes, more respectful of the role and rights of individual conscience, more alert to the pastoral needs of 'the people of God', more inclusive, especially of qualified women, in its deliberations and delegations, and that it will institute processes of education and changes of structure that safeguard the Church from endemic unquestioning attitudes to clerical authority and that it will tackle clericalism's historic abuse of power, by fostering the well-being and theological education of all its members and seekers.
To proclaim His Gospel to everyone, especially the young ones. Let the children come to Him.
To go back to teaching the Catholic Doctrine of the Church and to encourage young people to encounter the person of Jesus Christ.
INITIAL RESPONSES: PRIESTHOOD, YOUTH, ROLES and LEADERSHIP. PRIESTHOOD -priests who are passionate about the Mass—make the Mass interesting and engaging. Relate Bible to real life -Have Catholic Church hierarchy far less driven by Canon Law -Allow priests to be married and have families -Parish priests to be more accountable and answerable -To be more in tune with today's issues -To have a greater bond between the parish priest and the congregation, where the priest is the guide, not in charge! -Greater examination of those called to the priesthood. Conservative views to become more progressive. YOUTH -Provide different experiences at the Mass which cater for different people's interests and talents, e.g. singing and dancing, prayer groups, involving children - Greater attention to attracting young people to be active in the future of the Church -Involvement of the youth—more engagement e.g. music choices, and social opportunities -To outreach to youth—connect with what they require of our Church. ROLES, LEADERSHIP -It would be great to see more opportunity for Social Justice within parishes (local community) -More active role of women in the Church—leadership roles -More involvement of females within Masses and Church roles -To give women a greater/more important role in the life of the Church -To meet people where they are—needing healing: disconnected, disillusioned, with the Institution of the Church -To be open and relevant to all members of the Catholic faith -Increase in the leadership of lay people in the Church - Greater role of lay people in the life of the Church -To allow lay people to have a greater role in the life of the parish. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION RE YOUTH Outreach and connect with what they require of the Church: -relevance -the Mass is not seen as relevant -Church is not just men therefore female youth need to feel included -flexibility of Liturgy -music that speaks to people -not getting anything out of it -need to have priests who can relate Scripture to life -traditions and practices need to be life-giving -provide different experiences of the Mass—different ways to pray, dance, song, drama - need to be in tune with today's issues like homosexuality, divorce, need to be welcoming as people often reach out to the Church in times of need -priests need a better education and involvement with lay people in the world -priests need to interact with others, women in particular, to develop the emotional maturity -parish priests to be more answerable to others -parishioners need to feel that there is a relationship of equity and collaboration -Many priests are dysfunctional which impacts greatly on making connections with the people -Married priests and families to be less driven by Canon Law—not relationship driven—Canon Law protects priests.

<p>Love and compassion for our neighbours—those within Australia, those outside and those who wish for Australia to become their home. He is asking us to take better care of our children and climate.</p>
<p>On the basis of many submissions ignored by the Bishops in the past and unsure about how the Plenary Council will really work, we share a high level of scepticism as to the value of this exercise. However, as life-time Catholics, we feel that we are called on to stay involved—not to give up and drop out like so many have done before us. So we raise our voices, ask our questions and pray our prayers that we be accepted as rightful partners in the work of the Council. Like many other people in our (more mature) age group, we are disappointed that the Church seems to be mostly irrelevant in the lives of our young people. We have watched the next two generations of our large family grow up as notional Catholics—they have been to Catholic schools, received the sacraments, married in Church and raised families but the Church has little relevance in their busy lives. When they do attend Church, they are confused/turned off by what they perceive as an obsequious tone and archaic language and the use of Old Testament readings that they can't make any sense of. And, from the females of all age groups in the family, "why are they referring to us as 'us men'?" Should they have happened to be at Mass recently when the second reading started: "Wives be subject to your husbands ..." they would have expressed abject astonishment that the Church is still using that kind of reading at the very time that government agencies are campaigning to stop rampant domestic violence. And, of course they see the sexual abuse crisis, which seems to have no international boundaries, as a devastating betrayal of Church Leaders' claims that they are Christ's representatives on earth. With the lack of priests, a growing reality to be reckoned with, we believe it is "crunch time" for the Australian Church to reform itself. Our hope is that the Plenary Council can provide fresh impetus for that change to start happening and that includes the Council itself being structured in a way that demonstrates Church leaders are finally getting serious about interacting with and including "the faithful" in dialogue and decision-making.</p>
<p>I think God would like us to protect the world from climate change. Also, to be more loving and kind to each other, and less racist, and sexist, and less focused on gaining wealth, more focused on gaining spiritual wealth.</p>
<p>As a Catholic, our responsibility is great, because to be Christ's witness implies first of all, we should try to behave according to God's doctrine, that we should struggle to make our actions remind others of Jesus and his most lovable personality. We have to act in such a way that others will be able to say, when they meet us: this man/woman is a Christian, because they do not hate, because they are willing to understand, because they are not fanatic, because they are willing to make sacrifices, because they show that they are at peace, because they know how to love. Some Catholics are embarrassed to say they are Catholics and if we do not change and stand up for our faith Australia will surely fall deeper in moral decay. Catholics, we will be letting down their children and grandchildren and GOD if we do act as a matter of urgency. The world was changed by 12 men!! The world has more than one billion Catholics, what are we are afraid of?? Jesus said with God all is possible!! We have been in many parishes and regrettably, we must say Mass is not celebrated every day, in particular Mondays, and no early Masses for the workers. To be able to reach out, we all have to work together: - Bishops/priests/schools/catechists/families/media should be encouraging us to get to know our Faith more by reading the life of Jesus/Gospels/Catechism/ attend Mass some weekdays and Feast days.</p>
<p>Slow down and welcome everyone whose left the Church to come back</p>
<p>God is calling us to listen; to be people of prayer so that from this personal relationship with God, we become available to others.</p>
<p>My recommendation is to Archbishop Mark Coleridge and the Bishops' Commission responsible for organizing the Plenary Council about the number of lay delegates at the Council. "I recommend that the Bishops' Commission give priority to lay delegates at the Plenary Council by inviting the maximum number of lay members possible."</p>
<p>After a time of listening and sharing of our discernment on post it notes, the topic for our Listening and Dialogue Session was: God wanted the Church, as the People of God, to listen to the signs of the</p>

times—to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit for our time. Listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit means hearing from lay people including women, youth and the marginalised. The Church needs to adopt Christ’s simplicity in order to engage and communicate with this generation of people. Listening in the Church needs to be interactive as listening in a family is interactive—it is not one way but includes hearing all voices. It is essential for the Church to talk to students, to our young people, to hear from and listen to them in order to involve them in this place and in this time. This means not just hearing from and supporting the small number of young people who fit into existing groups or moulds but outreach to all our young people. Our Creator-God created diversity in all species and in all cultures and peoples. The once moral high ground the Church held, and spoke from, in a “top down” model of Church no longer works as the Church’s credibility has been damaged. A one-way communication system is no longer valid.

The group talked around a number of topics and issues but the common thread running through the conversation focused on ways in which damage to the Church might be repaired and faith built up again and reinvigorated, so that school children, young people, new parents, the faithful would come to see their faith as something much deeper and richer than imagined, be inspired to learn more and be more willing and able to talk about the Catholic faith; the initiatives suggested were also seen as a positive measure for appealing to those who have had no connection with the Church or who have left the Church. Problem: priests perceived by general public as potential child sexual abusers and the Church as hypocritical; priests have lost their place and the Church has lost its role in society. Solution: A more visible, improved and transparent profile for priests—parish admin + management to be undertaken by lay /paid staff so that priests can focus on priestly activities as shepherd to their parishioners i.e. * visiting families and sick + follow-up recent baptisms to invite new parents into parish; * priests should engage more with parishioners esp. young families, those at local school and try to make them welcome into parish community. * priest to engage more with school children, youth, young adults and be more active in faith formation in them; * all priests to be trained in public and persuasive speaking; * homilies to be related to Gospel readings + application to lives today; homilies must be unambiguous, example of what Jesus wants + be clear to understand; moral issues facing society should be courageously dealt with from pulpit, e.g. no guidance given before same sex marriage vote, leaving many confused about Church's position; *consistency on Church doctrine and teaching, is an absolute must in confessional; there should be no skirting the issues. * notwithstanding shortage of priests, make it mandatory for priests to have professional +spiritual development so they are properly equipped to deal with today's society incl. young people; * should be more reverence incl. established code of dress in Church; * bishops need to ensure consistency in modes of worship according to Gen Instruction of Roman Missal and best practice for pastoral care in all parishes. * emphasis to be placed on positives in Church—good done and still doing in society through its organisations; * married priests and female deaconesses should be considered; * group did not agree but some argued priests should not be above the law and ? seal of confessional should be removed; * priests should live simple, sober life and not be wasteful in use of community resources; Problem: Although Catholic education is in great demand, school enrolments are at capacity, this is not reflected at weekend Mass attendance. * RE should concentrate on Jesus' teachings, less emphasis on other faiths; * children need to understand and love their faith ... cont'd next ques ...

After discussion around many topics, it was clear that role + activities of priest in local parishes, his relationship with Catholic schools received most focus. Parish priests were seen as the key, not only to improving the perception of the Church in the wider community, but also having a pivotal role in encouraging young people and new parents to engage with local Catholic community. PROBLEM: Following Royal Comm, priests have tended to say less and some have shied away from giving guidance on contentious issues from pulpit, leaving parishioners confused about Church teaching. Priest numbers are down and many people have left the Church for various reasons. These issues need to be addressed at diocesan and grass roots levels. * parish should be more involved with wider local area, using events to provide pamphlets, refreshments and to encourage discussion

which promotes advantages of belonging to Catholic parish; Church should also be helping out in local area when needs arise; * some said that there needs to be better music (like Hillsong) while others disagreed and thought that more uplifting music would be inspiring; also needs to be more public gatherings, combined with other Judeo Christian group e.g. at Showground. * for consistency sake, and to avoid getting parishioners offside, new pp should not initially undertake to change things in parish until he has had time to assess it; * although the Church is an hierarchical structure, one way of reaching out to those who are disenfranchised from Church, is to draw ideas from grass roots faithful, who are better able to recognise difficulties and challenges facing (young) people; * not a great deal of social connection occurs when parishioner leave straight after Mass; often people are alone or may know no one. Have social events after Mass, create a coffee shop within the parish campus + add a personal touch to Church with prominently placed notice board, with coming events, Bible / discussion groups etc; * could have videoed interviews of interesting parishioners posted on Church Facebook page/website; many Italians or other immigrants will have interesting stories of their lives and faith journey in Australia. * society's perception of Church is that it is wealthy; also, since Royal Comm, many think Church is hypocritical. This could be rectified by engaging PR agents and more public transparent image in media + TV; * sexual abuse of children by clergy + Response to Royal Comm. are constantly in news. Church needs prof. PR to make public other facets of Church life + good works; also, Church does not respond publicly when untruths are put out in media, press, etc. * Church needs to invest in improving its image by producing podcasts, YouTube info showing good works Church does e.g. in outback + in areas where disadvantaged are struggling to survive; * all priests should train in public speaking and in areas issue which may arise ... cont'd below

God is asking us to ensure and encourage our priests, religious and lay teachers to teach the traditions and truth of the Catholic faith, and that we (lay people) must discern and voice our faith and concerns more openly. Something should be done about clergy who have lost their way. Make sure seminarians have a greater understanding of how families function so they can be more helpful in their clerical role. We need a very honest leadership in the Church without hidden agendas or abuse of power. What is the magisterium doing about clergy who are disobeying the Church? Why should they be allowed to preach error? Repent from your sins and be sincere and committed to the Gospel. Our younger generations don't appear to put God in the centre of their lives. They are invested in the things of this world. They seem focused on career, money and having a good time. All they achieve is on their own strength. They fail to give God credit for all the blessings they receive. Suffering is part and parcel of life but people know God won't abandon them in time of need. God is asking us to stand firm, trust in the Word (Jesus) and not change it. Persevere in the faith of the apostles. Improve the education of children in the faith; a genuine and solid faith filled teachings that will move the children to a full participation in the Church. We need to see Jesus in one another at Mass. Be more of a family and show compassion to the Church community. Get involved in the Church- more deeds than words.

To form the parish as a community that meets not just for sacraments but to share lives; whether it be in the form of Bible study groups or having social events like bus trips. To share our faith with other within and outside the parish.

- The Royal Commission into the Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse was highly critical of the Catholic Church, and has led to an erosion of authority, trust and a questioning of values.
- The Church appears to have lost some of its humanity, and is seen as being all about power and being part of an elite, not about sharing or serving the community.
- What the Church should be is still best summed up by the Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes* (the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World). The Church is in the world and for the world, not focused upon itself. The institution will only change when the people making up that institution first change.
- Pope Francis is giving a good example of renewal and mission. Renewal starts with the individual, not with the institution first.
- At this time in Australia, God is asking us to honour him—he is jealous God.
- Also discussed was the role of women in the Church and society today. Some said that women

should play a more active role, while others felt that the key role of women was to be nurturing. • The role of the Church is the same as that of the small communities of followers of Christ 2,000 year ago—to be the light for the rest of society, the salt and the yeast in society. • We shouldn't be shy or afraid about future changes in the Church. Christ didn't shy away from change. He said what needed to be said and did what needed to be done. We also must be prophetic not pathetic. • The structure of the Church should have its foundation in the family. We have institutionalised the Church today.

Our meetings touched on a variety of Topics; all fitting under the umbrella question "What is God asking of us in Australia at this time". Clergy: Greater in number if able to Marry and/or allow Women—Allow ex-clergy to still be actively involved—change training methods for seminarians—Respect Laity and listen to suggestions—Mandatory WWC Police checks—diminishing numbers, so what will their role be in the future? Overseas priests need to be made aware of and accept Australian traditions and culture. Community: Pastoral care within each parish—parishioners to be made more aware of local areas of genuine need—engage youth in these local areas—Inclusiveness of all and acceptance of how God made us—communication and respect to each other—Catholic Preschools—Social gatherings for families—more discussion of Religion and Bible stories at home—too many charity appeals. Integrity: Church needs to be honest, open and transparent—needs to deal with victims of abuse properly and offer support—better media coverage—include Laity in decisions re changes. Laity: Important future role for Church to survive—be more involved in Liturgy and Governance—allowed to give Sermons—generally friendlier and more welcoming in their own community. Liturgy: Make it more interesting and engaging—modern music and song—simpler sermons—involve more Laity and ex clergy—promote the Rosary—make sure Youth have a better understanding of the meaning of each part of the Liturgy. Women: More responsibilities—key Church roles—included in decision making. Youth: Practical involvement—Organized Groups and gatherings (more Christian friends)—Learn more at school about Catholic Church and religion—to be attracted to participate in the Church and Liturgy with U tube and modern music. Our main Focus areas; from meeting; and suggestions were: Pastoral care: Visitations to the lonely and sick (at home or in hospital)—follow up visits after Funerals—communion to the sick—phone conversation ministry—Local Church hierarchy to be more aware of local areas of need—Greater support for victims of abuse—TV Masses—organized Pilgrimages. Our overwhelming area of concern was how to successfully pass on the Faith, encourage participation, regain their trust and unite Youth, who are the future of the Catholic Church; and, this overlapped with the areas of Laity and Liturgy Youth Groups to be formed in ALL parishes and a coordinator be employed (not a volunteer) so they are more accountable—Youth groups to include those who do not attend Catholic Schools—Ages 10—16 ; and ; 16 + , and begin with a modern Liturgy each time (to develop Spirituality)—Youth choir—Youth functions; Dances, BBQs, Outings—sometimes to also include whole Family (Parents and Grandparents)—Christmas eve Mass an important Family event—Teach Catholicism more at school, beginning with Preschool—awareness of the meaning of "Consecration"

- Be more Tolerant and inclusive. —Not my will but Yours will be done—Most of the time the Church seems more driven by its outcomes (its image) and canon law than "Your will be done"—There is a lack of care, respect and love. -My formation came from my mother thru her example. Very little from the "formal" Church. If I relied on the church "small c", I would long have been lost. I can see why people reject the church "small c" there is very little example to inspire rather a call to duty than to love. -Priests dictate people's lives—what is right what is wrong—there is no real oversight, they decide what God is and what God is not, very little room for a personal relationship with Jesus. — Married priests should be allowed. —Priests need to come off their high horses and mix with the people. —The Church needs to be a place of welcome, a place of healing, spiritually and physically—A place I can bring the broken-hearted to. —more focus on connecting with God and others thru Bible and other studies or sharing groups. Not random, but properly established and consistent throughout the Church, not spasmodic events based on individual initiatives. Church is more focused on operations that reaching out. —We need a cultural change, more overseas priests that challenge our norm. —Vestments liturgies to be more representative of our times, than built around norms of

<p>times well gone by. They seem to more speak about the role of the Church and its position than Christs Mission. -Focus is wishy-washy depends who is at the parish or diocesan helm. —Make sacraments more meaningful and relevant to current age. —More actions less talking about it. It seems Mass is the miracle (answer to everything) excuse to avoid any real engagement with our local and wider communities. —The Church seems to be a place of who is in or who is out (similar to Jesus' time. —More community and Christ-centred. —Let the Spirit guide us, not Canon law. —Don't run the Church as a business. —More true fellowship and embracing of multicultural traditions.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to give good formation to Catholics, especially the youth. We need to teach young people and everyone what we truly believe as Catholics. Many parishes do not offer catechism or means of formation, and this is absolutely crucial. If we are taught doctrine, why the sacraments are important and what love really is, then perhaps more and more people would be very faithful to the Church. We need to penetrate society with individuals who are on fire with love of God. Not a counterfeit love that many people accept in our day and age. People are misled and often ignorant because they do not have anyone to explain to them how to use their freedom to do good. We are sold a lie from the media and from the bad examples in the Church and society that love is about 'live and let live', 'if this is what you want then go for it', 'I just want you to be happy'. Of course, we want our friends and family to be happy, but contraception, abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, premarital sex and a relativistic understanding of morality are simply not going to satisfy the deepest desires in our heart. We need to be demanding. Our Lord was demanding of those he encountered, he challenged tax collectors and adulterers to live a life of true love and they did! He was so compassionate and understanding but he was honest. In the Church today, I feel like we go for extremes, we say 'no!' without compassion or we give in to the pressure of people who do not realise they are offending God. We need to be stubborn with affection! We need to make the faith attractive, or—I should say—present it in the way that it deserves to be presented, because the faith is incredibly attractive. The problem is simply, a lack of formation. God is asking us to make formation readily available; the kind of formation that unites our intellect, will and heart into loving, serving and living for God.</p>
<p>As a Church, I believe we should acknowledge men and women of Australia who have given their lives, in some cases, years, as priests or Religious serving God and His Australian people, and after much prayer, have had to leave these positions. There has never been recognition of their work and they have been cast aside and not to be mentioned. They have married us, baptised our children, offered our Masses, taught us about God, buried our dead, and supported our families. I am saddened by this fact. I wonder what Jesus would do if living in one of our parishes in Australia [I certainly am not referring to those people who have damaged the lives of so many children.]</p>
<p>The same thing God requested his disciples to do over 2000 years ago. Love him, love our neighbour as ourselves and receive the sacraments as intended. Our institution is over 2000 years old because of its consistent and stable message and teachings. This does not change based on geography.</p>
<p>To be more able to take independent action for changes. To listen to the laity, and take their roles seriously. To engage all Catholics in major decisions about the Church. To revivify the Church, and make it relevant to today's world. To open the doors of potential influence to all members of the Church to make the official Church responsible to all for their actions/inaction.</p>
<p>To teach the faith in schools as 95% leave the Church after school. Christ was a salesman servicing sacramentally the market. The Catholic Church is not a business as that is a lack of faith ... Mature age vocations have been abandoned.</p>
<p>God is asking us to feel his presence on a daily basis. To pray more. To go to Church more. To witness more and to live a life that is Christ-like.</p>
<p>1. To encourage religious debate. 2. To bring the Church to the Classroom. 3. parish priests should be more present and involved with their local school and its students as well as being engaged with their local community. Priests need to link more, to provide a connection between Church, School and Community. 4. That we are provided with liturgies that are life-giving and joyful. 5. Allow priests to be married, how else can young men be encouraged to enter the priesthood. 6. That churches</p>

provide or encourage (a) small group discussions e.g. Bible study groups—need to bring the Spirit alive, get people talking about the Scriptures "the word of God" and argue "the case for Christ" through study of the Scriptures (b) joyous uplifting music and hymns—use taped music if no talented musical leaders or musicians are available (c) find a way to get families involved and become more engaged in Church. 7. To make the Church and its faith community a "one stop shop"—similar to the style of the Evangelical/Pentecostal Churches—not just Mass on a Sunday. Include access to social activities to build faith community

Several things. I am a Catholic nun, but I work two days a week with the Uniting Church and I have learned much from them ... we could learn from them the following: *They have Bible Study one evening per week *They have play group twice a week *They have a drop-in coffee shop for anyone to come and have a cuppa two days per week. Great for lonely and needy to have someone to talk to as they sip a cuppa ... run by volunteers. *They have Tai Chi and Yoga *They have board games one day for the lonely, unemployed, etc... *They always have refreshments after their Sunday services. I believe we need this fellowship. Many are busy, I know, but the lonely and needy need this communion ... we should do it for them. It should be part of the Eucharist to offer hospitality and fellowship afterwards. Also, *I believe our liturgies should cater for the variety of musical tastes. Some traditional, some modern. *I also feel deeply called to be a Deacon. I do not want to be a priest. Deacon's care for the poor and needy. Our priests are too busy to do this. Deacons can preside at baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. This would support the priest greatly. Deacons may, with the permission of the priest give the homily. Therefore, we would have women's wisdom in the Church proclaimed. I believe if we allowed women deacons there would be a flood of vocations and more importantly the needs of the community, especially the poor would be better met. Many thanks for reading this, Sr [—]

The nature of parishes has changed from places which were the spiritual, social and cultural hub of a parish to a place which has become more mission orientated. Often, there is a tension between what occurred in the past and what is happening in the present. I believe often we are trying to build parishes in a way which allowed them to be at the centre of the community within easy walking distance of people's homes towards a place where they have become Centres of service which offer a sense of Catholic Identity and liturgical celebration. It is much easier for people to become anonymous Christians in this setting which can also produce a sense of functional efficiency in how our Christianity is lived. The challenge I believe is that we need to provide opportunities for people to be formed in how to live their Christian life in their own environment. Essentially, we are called to be people who form people for mission who are confident to share their faith by the way they live. I think this would allow people to discover they own sense of calling to witness to Christ and the kerygma. One of the welcome developments over recent years is the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) which has allowed many people to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. This has not played a part in gaining a deeper immersion into the spiritual and liturgical life of the Church but it has also engaged many parishes to take seriously their role as formators in the spiritual life. What is evident, however, is that it has highlighted how much time and effort is undertaken in preparing people to receive the sacraments. This is echoed in the way we approach many of the sacraments for children. However, what is evident is that the Mystagogia is not engaged as a way of helping people to gain a deeper appreciation to the ontological change that occurs to them at baptism. This may be because of our emphasis on seeing all sacraments of being efficacious and achieving what they intend but I feel this is a missed opportunity which places all our efforts on initial formation but then leaves the on-going formation to the resolution of the individual rather than as an opportunity to deepen their life in Christ. I believe it was St John Chrysostom who saw that the period of Mystagogia was fundamental to the formation of the Christian and helped them to more deeply understand how their experience of Christ introduced them to the lived tradition of the Church. I believe this needs to be lived in assisting people to see that baptism is the fundamental way in which people are incorporated and formed as members of the Church community.

Called to radical reform to expand ministries and deliberate participation process.

<p>To concentrate on practical ways of helping the hurting and the needy, and to reduce strongly the emphasis on ceremonial, ritual, and non-inclusive practices and language in everything...that is, to love all people.</p>
<p>How to encourage Catholics to appreciate, treasure and grow as a Church community. Too many Catholics seem to see Mass attendance as the platform of acknowledging their faith and do not engage as a community of faith-filled people.</p>
<p>- Communal confession if you don't have mortal sins. The priest should make the ultimate decision regarding this. —Change the sacrament of marriage so that divorced people can be accepted in the Church and receive communion. —The Church should not have complete involvement over birth control. —No change, just love and help everybody. —Giving priests the freedom to marry. Open their eyes to the value of family life. —Have humility, forgiveness and help your neighbour. —No great change; love and help each other always. —To make changes you need to think about it long and hard, talk about it extensively, rethink it and then decide. -I would like to see that the Church would take a closer look at the needs of the faithful and wish that there would be no visible sign of jealousy within the priesthood and that they would always give good example. —Divorced people to be allowed to receive Holy Communion. Priests be allowed to marry. —To have a more open minded and sacred Church, more understanding of the needs of the world today and embrace our youth and the new generation to have absolute respect for their ideas and values. —To pray more. —To be more accepting, to love and respect and to have access to communal confession. —To change the law regarding birth control and give priests the choice to marry. —To have more faith and peace. —To always have faith in abundance. —God asks of us what he asked 2000 years ago, i.e. To love one another as brothers and to help each other in all our needs. —To encourage our youth to become more spiritual and attend Mass. —Giving priests freedom to marry would stop child abuse. —The challenge is how we as a Church help in maintaining/sustaining the faith—Work to increase faith through the children. —Consider ongoing training for parish priests and assistants (workshops, seminars, discussions). —De-romanise—Make this an Australian Church. —Reduce the amount of pomp and frippery. Lower the hierarchical barriers. —Encourage more priests from overseas to come to Australia, as there are few people in Australia joining the priesthood. —Make the homily more relevant and interesting and short, but substantive, so parishioners can be attentive and remember the Gospel being preached. —Make the Church relevant to the needs of the community, especially the poor and marginalized. —Love in the community. Lack of love. —Find out why people are leaving the Church. —The importance of a welcoming committee at the beginning of Mass. —Priests to break the ice and welcome new faces. Ask their names! —More cohesion between ethnic groups in parish. —Pastoral support for parishioners in need. —Optional celibacy. —Priests should be allowed to marry. —Accept women in the priesthood.</p>
<p>1. God is calling us to recognise women more in the wider Church and in particular to involve them in leadership roles. Women have more to offer the Church than they are currently being given the opportunity to contribute especially in the wider Church. 2. God is calling us to have priests to be better formed in seminaries so that they have better people skills. Priest should be more active at after Mass gatherings and other social gathering to better connect with parishioners, get to know them better and be more part of the community. In that way, the priests would be more able to address the issues that parishioners have and give them what they need. 3. God is calling us to respond to the damage done to the image of the Church exposed by the Royal Commission by positively preach the Christian message of love. Women would be helpful in rebuilding the Church's image and tell the "good stories" about the Catholic faith. 4. God is calling us to be thankful for our priests that have served the Church faithfully and honourably and are being unfairly tarnished by the scandals. 5. God is calling us to act urgently to the current crisis facing the Church with damaging publicity and falling Mass attendance and other religious observance. 6. God is calling us to have priests who give sermons which are inspiring and more relevant to the issues that people face in day to day life rather than more theoretical issues or broad generalisations. 7. God is calling us to have fewer priests who are "ultra-conservative". 8. God is calling us to embrace more the non-Catholic</p>

parents and others who live in divorced or other irregular family arrangements who are in our community.

1. God is asking us to go to Masses daily and to do that weekday Masses should be coordinated between neighbouring parishes so that they are not all held at the same time, which tends to be about 9am. 2. God is asking us to get more involved with the [-] parish groups to build up community in the parishes and to do that parish groups should be advertised in every weekly bulletin otherwise it is difficult to remember what is being offered in the parish community. 3. God is asking us to go to use the sacrament of reconciliation more frequently but at the moment the opportunities to participate in the sacrament of reconciliation is limited to only Saturday mornings at other churches in the [-] parishes. The sacrament of reconciliation should ideally be available for 15-30 minutes before every Mass at every church in the parish and especially at the 8.30am Mass at [—] [—]. 4. God is asking us to pray and participate in Eucharistic adoration more frequently. At the moment, the [-] parishes only offer Eucharistic adoration on Fridays and Saturday mornings at other churches in the [-] parishes and not at all at St [-]. 5. God is asking us as parents to become more involved in the teaching of our children in the faith. To do that effectively, we as parents need to be better educated in the faith to pass that onto our children. The [-] parishes should create study groups where our parents are better educated in the faith. 6. God is calling the Church as a result of the scandals in the Church to be more transparent in its dealing with the clergy. 7. God is calling us to reach out to the poor who are neglected. At the moment, the Church has many organisations that reach out to the poor in the community which is admirable, like the St Vincent De Paul Society, but there are also poor who are not being reached who need to be. The Church needs to be more compassionate to those not being reached currently by its formal charitable works. 8. God is calling us to improve the image of the Church in the eyes of the general community in light of the scandals of the Church in recent times. 9. God is calling the Church to better explain the role of the sacrament of reconciliation and role of “Catholic guilt” in the minds of lapsed and dis-engaged Catholics. To better explain that reconciliation should not be looked at from the perspective of fear of God for our sins, but rather as an expression of love from God through forgiveness.

1. God is calling us to have more modern music at our Mass and not the traditional music that does not appeal to the youth of today. 2. God is calling priests to be better trained at seminaries to give more relevant homilies at Mass that inspire the congregation. 3. God is calling the Church to make better use of social media to reach the youth as the youth are heavy social media users and can be influenced by social media. 4. God is calling our parish to have a full-time youth coordinator to focus on encouraging and forming the youth just like occurred in the Catholic Youth Association previously. Youth should have an outlet where they can receive formation and socialise amongst other Catholic youth in the parish. 5. God is calling us to more positive despite the negative publicity which has been generated by the Royal Commission into children sexual assaults. 6. God is calling more people to be aware of the [-] prayer group which operates every Monday from 10am to 11am in [-]. It should be advertised in the parish bulletin. The prayer format is: -Invocation of the Holy Spirit—Recitation of the Holy Rosary -Prayers for our Holy Father, the Pope -Reading and meditation; and -The Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. 7. God is calling more parishioners to be aware of the Lenten groups run by Sister [—] in the parish every year. It should be advertised in the parish bulletin.

I think God is asking Australia to forgive and concentrate in healing, we cannot change what happened years ago, and we have to start this journey as individuals first, we have to change ourselves we cannot change others. Everybody is asking the Church to change, but we are the Church, as individuals we are part of the big picture, if we concentrate in forgiving and loving each other and trying to live at peace with one another, we are part of the Church body, Jesus asked the Father for unity to make one in body, we have the power of the spirit as individuals, we were created in God’s image. So with tolerance and peace, we can achieve more and the body can start the healing process.

To try to encourage people who are practicing to do so fully. To try to encourage those not practicing to come back or if those who are discouraged to come back but with encouragement and example.

The fundamentals of Christianity have not changed nor have the laws of God. The Ten Commandments are the basis of all laws both in heaven and on earth. We must not lose sight that crime in any shape or form be dealt with properly. We also need to protect our faith and how we practice this faith. If there is a contradiction of these two, then the Holy Father must address this for the future of the Church as a whole and not only the Church in Australia. We must come to terms with the fact that some things need to change to protect the innocent. Not all priests enter the priesthood with honourable intentions, as not all doctors, dentists, scout masters, teachers, etc., but those that are weak and cause hurt must be dealt with within the confines of the law. These people cannot be allowed to harm the innocent. No one deserves to be betrayed by those who are seen to be trustworthy. The sacrament of Reconciliation is not in place to protect the unlawful. Somehow, we must be able to meld the two, "The sacrament" and "The Law". Wrong is wrong and in the end, God chooses whether to forgive or not, and each of us must face our past in the eyes of God with our intentions at the time of our death—but does that mean that those committing crimes are able to continue to do so protected with the fact that no action will be taken. We as humans are given the freedom of choice—we choose to either take the right path in life or the wrong. The wrong has its consequences and should not be dismissed. For the innocents will suffer forever. My opinion is that we need to overview the significance of "Mortal Sin"—a sin against our fellow man. In any other situation, this sin would not be acceptable. Let us not protect those that have taken a vow of the Church to break its Laws in the most despicable way. Not only in Australia but for the whole world. We have the most beautiful Religion, created by Christ and as followers of Christ, we must also be strong and say this is not good enough. God's love does not waiver or change nor do his Laws. I want to feel proud again for being a Catholic and not defending our faith from those looking for an excuse not to practice. What is God asking of us in Australia at this time? He asks us to be strong and confident, love our faith and practice with the humility and goodness that he showed whilst he was on Earth. Christ was goodness personified. Let not these bad apples spoil his work and sacrifice for us.

God is very merciful and he wants us all to be united and help each other. To start that it would be a great thing to reduce fees in Catholic schools to a very small rate like public schools and try to help and understand parents that have difficulties paying, not give them a hard time. Have all teachers in Catholic schools be Catholics, not atheist and teaching kids against our faith or mocking kids that stand up and defend what the Bible tells us word by word. As a mum of 5 children, all in Catholic schools, I am finding challenging and upsetting all the stories my kids come home with about teachers who are not of the Catholic faith, not even of any faith, mocking our Bible and our Catholic Religion and telling kids go have fun while you are young, there is no such thing as sin. When we teach our kids all the old-fashioned teachings we learned as children to be God-fearing, to have respect for themselves and others, it is very hard to have some atheist tell my child else.

To be inclusive and loving and community focused! Self-righteousness, self-importance and arrogance primarily by the "religious" are destroying any hope of credibility. For the most part, there is little or no trust in the Catholic Church institution or its leaders.

1. God is calling us to be supportive of priests whose numbers are decreasing and whose average age is increasing. The Church should consider the appointment of "viri probati" being married consecrated men to help priests as well as giving women greater leadership roles. 2. God is calling us to support families in our parish, and in particular to support parents to bring up their children in the faith as the parents are the primary teachers of their children. This should be done by organising activities that involve imparting the faith to parents but also with a social/recreation element which involves children. It should be outside school hours. 3. God is calling us to serve and evangelise others but to do that we need more formation in the faith. More online educational support should be provided as well as face to face teaching and formation of the faith in the parish because at the

moment there is no faith formation in the parish other than at Sunday Mass and during sacramental preparation activities. 4. God is calling us to resist the persistent championing of LGBTI rights in the business community and to do that by championing the rights of the traditional family in the business environment. 5. God is calling us to support the St Vincent de Paul Society in the parish and the other initiatives like [-], being parishioners who donate a meal to other parishioners in need. 6. God is calling us to learn from the examples of St Vincent de Paul and be Christ to others in good works and reaching out to others in need. 7. God is calling us to recognise in the Church more the critical role that women play in the fostering of faith of children, nurturing the family and leadership in the Church. 8. God is calling our priests to be spiritual leaders first and foremost and to develop a deep spirituality based on scripturally based Catholic tradition. This will then lead them to inspire the congregation with both word and action and draw the congregations' hearts into the gospel message. Priests are to work as collaborators with the laity, especially women, in the spreading and living our Catholic faith and help break through the clericalism which has been referred to by the recent Royal Commission as being an issue. 9. God is calling our parish priest to make more use of the assistant priests and deacons in the parish and to delegate to them more pastoral activities so that they are reaching out to youth and those lukewarm in faith. 10. God is calling us to listen more intently during the homilies at Sunday Mass, however, some of the priests give homilies that appear to be under prepared and very generic. Some priests do not project their voices and do not speak clearly so they cannot be heard. All priests should learn to project their voices and be more animated and should have compulsory attendance at courses that teaches priests to give homilies which are engaging and well prepared.

1. God is calling us to be more positive in our approach towards our faith and not defeatist. 2. God is calling the priests in the parish to be more available to the parishioners after hours and to give out their mobile numbers because at the moment the priests cannot be reached after hours in cases of emergencies, like the anointing of the sick, because their mobile numbers are not available. Incidents have occurred in the past where priests from a neighbouring parish were called because the priests of our parish could not be reached after hours because of the need for urgent anointing of the sick. 3. God is calling the teachers in schools and the laity to be better educated in the faith to then be able to pass on the faith to children. The laity need to be taught how to encourage children and lapsed Catholic to practice their faith. 4. God is calling us to set up and run weekly Bible study classes for Catholic children which involve fun activities for children like the [-] Bible Study groups ([-]). [The bible study group] is run by [-] Anglican Church at [-] every Friday night. At the moment children from our Catholic Primary School attend [the bible study group] because our Catholic parishes do not provide an alternative. Parents often drop the children at [the bible study group] and then collect them after dinner and take them home. 5. God is calling us to reinstitute youth groups like the ones previously run by Fr [-] in the [-] parish which featured pancake days, bowling and movie nights to spread the faith to the youth in the parish. 6. God is calling us to reach out to the youth from the surrounding state schools who attend catechist classes and the sacramental programs because otherwise there is nothing else available for them to bring them closer to the Catholic faith. 7. God is calling us to set up a youth group in the parish and not be dissuaded if at first interest is low because persistence is required. 8. God is calling our catechists to be more passionate and to pass that passion on to the children that they encounter. 9. God is calling us to do more outreach to the elderly in our parish and set up a dedicated group of volunteers of both men and women to minister to the elderly. At the moment the outreach is limited to Sister [-] visiting the elderly and a senior's lunch. Often the elderly just want company and to be taken out to the shops etc for an outing. 10. God is calling our [-] parish to have better representation at the [-] pastoral council. 11. God is calling [-] to form its own parish committee. 12. God is calling the [-] parishes to be more transparent with the parishioners with regards to financial affairs, goal setting and the initiatives and achievements of the pastoral council, which should be provided via yearly reports to all parishioners.

<p>1. God is calling all Catholics, both religious and lay, to be deeply spiritual and to show that in our attitude and conduct towards non-Catholics to redress the shameful conduct of priest and bishops who caused or contributed to the scandals within the Catholic Church which has scared the Church. 2. God is calling the Catholic Church to be less clerical and more pastoral and transparent to address problems which have arisen in the past. 3. God is calling our parish to set up many varied and different prayer and study groups to cater for different demographics within the parish. 4. God is calling for the makeup of the pastoral council, finance committee and all other committees of the parishes to be known to all parishioners and how they can be contacted. 5. God is calling for yearly feedback to be sought and provided to the priests of the parishes and the pastoral council. 6. God is calling the [-] parishes to have at least one yearly combined social event to promote unity between the different parishes. In addition, God is calling each of the [-] parishes to have their own yearly social event that is based around a Catholic feast day associated with their Church to promote the faith in a more meaningful way. 7. God is calling our priests to be more forthright and fearless in stating Catholic teaching. 8. God is calling our priests to give well prepared, inspiring and thought-provoking homilies at Mass at weekend and weekday Masses. 9. God is calling the [-] pastoral council to exchange ideas with the parishioners and institute progressive ways to evangelise and form deeper faith in our parish community. 10. God is calling the Church to recognise women as knowledgeable and capable leaders and give them more opportunities to use those skills.</p>
<p>To win back our disenchanted children and grandchildren to the faith we were taught to live by, and bring them back to Sunday Mass as a family.</p>
<p>We believe that God is asking the Catholics in Australia to increase the formation given to all Catholics in the area of virtue: both natural and supernatural virtues. To struggle to live the natural and supernatural virtues in our everyday lives is to reach the fullness of what it means to be human and to live out our faith.</p>
<p>God is asking us to return to Him and to His Son. The Church has often become about what I want. It is primarily about giving glory to God. When we come to know and love God, all the other things, like social justice and looking after the environment etc will follow.</p>
<p>To lead a good, honest simple life. Try not to get caught up in materialism.</p>
<p>The same thing he always has, to love your neighbour as yourself. This includes refugees, Muslims, victims of child abuse ... And to love him above all. This means putting our 'neighbours' (child abuse victims, refugees ...) first, before considerations of how it will affect the Church and how much it may cost.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to reflect on our faith. After so many scandals and shame, it is time for the Church to get back to basics. A time for humility, especially for priests, bishops and cardinals. A time for reaching out to those deemed unworthy and a time for greater compassion and understanding of human frailties.</p>
<p>1) I think God wants his sons and daughters to gather together to earnestly consider how he wants His Church to be. Considering that, I think that God wants His people to continue to gather together regularly to praise and glorify Him, to partake in communion with each other the gifts of the Eucharist, to carry the love that this ritual brings beyond the doors of the Church to his or her world. God wants his people to be working towards a personal relationship with Him. 2) We should encourage the Pope to ordain female priests. 3). We should encourage our priests and Bishops to speak up against the current (ongoing) trend in politics where self-interest is the normal, where 80% of political spending appears to be going toward the capital cities and where our resources are being sent overseas. 4) We should have at least one Cardinal in every state and they should travel throughout the state celebrate a public Mass on special days. 5) The Church in Australia needs to be seen more and lead more in the public arena. 6) God wants us to follow His teaching from our Christian beliefs. 7) God wants us to be a good person in all ways, through faith and prayer. 8) God wants us to pass on our beliefs to our children e.g.: Respectful and being flexible. 9) God is asking the Church in Australia to consider allowing priests to marry and/or ordaining female priests. This would help to address the shortage of priests in Australia. Our group acknowledges that further studies and</p>

<p>analysis needs to be done on this matter. However, Australia currently draws on priests from South-East Asia, the Sub-Continent and the Pacific Islands. How long is this sustainable for? There are concerns about language barriers to the extent that some parishioners move parish because they cannot understand their parish priests because he has a poor command of the English language.</p>
<p>1) God is asking us to have the courage of our convictions e.g.: Wearing your ashes from Ash Wednesday as a badge of honour to show who you are. 2) Fighting for the rights of refugees who some say are bludgers on our community. 3) More tolerance towards the old and the young. 4) Inspiring children by setting examples of Christian beliefs. 5) Divorced people should be able to receive the sacraments. 6) Not enough basic prayers said in school or in the family. 7) Gay people should be able to come to Mass and join in on the parish. 8) Priests should be able to be married. 9) There should be more reverence in the Church. 10) Greater compassion for those in need or those who are less well off. 11) Be prepared to listen to the views of others with an open mind but support your Christian beliefs. 12) Having the courage to stand up for your Faith. Don't be backward in coming forward, do what is right. 13) To strengthen the Church by recalling lapsed members. 14) To adjust to fewer priests by laity becoming more involved. 15) Less pomp from the hierarchy who are supposed to be our servants. 16) Female priests. 17) Relax laws with contraception. 18) To remind ourselves that life on Earth is very temporary. 19) Strengthen religious education in schools. 20) When showing our concern and welfare for each other, include not only earthly well-being but preparation for eternity.</p> <p>Our group topic was leadership: 1) Leadership should apply to all walks in our lives e.g.: within our parish, families, work lives, other social gatherings. 2) Lead by example based on your Christian beliefs. 3) Leadership means being understanding and respectful of contrary views. 4) Call out bad or non-Christian leadership. Hold these to a high standard. 5) Being in the 21st Century we need leadership with modern thinking but not losing the basic values of the Catholic Church. 6) Our group drew upon their experiences with our first parish priest, Fr [—] ([—]) and the qualities that he possessed.</p>
<p>Be more inclusive especially: • Divorced persons and married former priests who feel alienated; • Non-believers • Handicapped • Other religions • The young • Those for whom language is a barrier.</p>
<p>Love one another and to accept each other and not judge. To make Mass a more joyous occasion to introduce brighter music and lyrics more suited to the new generation.</p>
<p>To find ways to address disenchantment that laity and clergy have with the Church.</p>
<p>• Church must be open to listen and not dominate; • Bishops should be more aware of people whose marriages can be very destructive; • Sexuality needs to be explored honestly and openly; • Gender inequality; • Infallibility.</p>
<p>How to make the Church/religion more important for the younger generation.</p>
<p>Improve religious education in all levels of schooling including teacher training and seminaries.</p>
<p>We believe that God is calling us to build God's justice in our society and our Church. To do this we need to create just structures within our institution.</p>
<p>To re-examine our Sunday liturgies.</p>
<p>To be bold and reach out with new eyes/hearts to listen, reclaim and renew ourselves, our families, parishes and country—to evangelise.</p>
<p>• To listen more to the voices of the young people as they are the future of the Church. • Faith formation and appealing to the hearts of young people. • The awareness of supporting and bringing the children from the detention centre (Nauru) to Australia. • More encouragement and outreach to youth.</p>
<p>God is asking us to read the signs of the times. The institutional Church in Australia is under great stress—numbers in Churches on Sunday are in serious decline and there is declining use of sacraments of the Church, especially reconciliation and marriage, with fewer funerals being conducted in our Churches. Vocations to the priesthood are in retreat. These declines are greater than the decline in the number of people self-identifying as Catholic in the 2011 and 2016 Census: 25.3% (2011) and 22.6% (2016). The institutional Church in Australia is NOT attracting people to be</p>

<p>full and active participants in the life of the Church. God is calling us back to Jesus and to his mission of love, compassion and justice. Pope Francis is urging us, the People of God and the living Church, to return to this Christian calling. We believe that, of the many issues that may be behind the decline in Church attendance and active participation in the life of the Church, one issue that stands out for us is the liturgy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on a new structure of priesthood • Educate children on vocations through their Catholic parents • Music and liturgy to attract young people • Lay preaching • Push for married priests as an option • Bring back priests who had to leave due to their becoming married
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of the times—are we connecting to these in Australia? • To recognise that there are vocations other than celibates • To have the courage to address what we must • Reconnecting to the message of Christ—along the way we seem to have lost the way with our pyramid of power. Return to the servant model.
<p>God is asking us to read the signs of the times. The institutional Church in Australia is under great stress—numbers in Churches on Sunday are in serious decline and there is declining use of sacraments of the Church, especially reconciliation and marriage, with fewer funerals being conducted in our Churches. Vocations to the priesthood are in retreat. These declines are greater than the decline in the number of people self-identifying as Catholic in the 2011 and 2016 Census: 25.3% (2011) and 22.6% (2016). The institutional Church in Australia is NOT attracting people to be full and active participants in the life of the Church. God is calling us back to Jesus and to his mission of love, compassion and justice. Pope Francis is urging us, the People of God and the living Church, to return to this Christian calling. We believe that, of the many issues that may be behind the decline in Church attendance and active participation in the life of the Church, one issue that stands out for us is the priesthood.</p>
<p>God is asking us to read the signs of the times. The institutional Church in Australia is under great stress. The Church has lost its moral authority. Australian society is a secular society. Australia society is facing many challenges on many fronts—mental health, domestic violence, homelessness and un-affordable housing, inequitable distribution of wealth, growing inhospitable attitudes to migrants and asylum seekers, inability of our political leaders to address major issues such as climate change and energy security. God is asking us to dream a new Church—a new expression of the mystical body of Christ. What would the Church look like if we were able to re-create it anew today? Would it be a Church of which people would say: “Look at how they love one another and all people!”. What would the Church look like if we all took Christ’s message of love, peace, justice, forgiveness and compassion seriously so that we gave effect to Jesus’ words—“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)? We suspect that if the Australian Church, in determining its priorities for action, gave preference to providing practical assistance to those members in our society who are most needy and vulnerable, and then the Church would begin to be seen to be living Jesus’ message and bringing life to the world.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reclaim the message of the Gospel, live the truth of Jesus in our contemporary Australian society. * Embrace the new cosmology, bring science, religion, wonder and awe together. * Care for the climate and the planet. God's creation is crying out to us to be good stewards. * Clericalism is a root course of problems in our Church and in our mission to live the gospel. * Lay women and lay men must be included at all levels of Church leadership. The Catholic Church has a toxic image as a juvenile "boys’ club" more interested in power, exclusion and status than living the good news.
<p>God is asking us for renewed commitment to catechesis in primary and secondary schools, with the focus being on the Church’s understanding and commitment to the Mass. By emphasising the role of the Mass in the Church’s life we are reinforcing and deepening our understanding of; a) the person of Jesus Christ, his Birth, Passion, death and Resurrection and how this shows forth the inner life of the Blessed Trinity. b) the Real Presence in the Eucharist and it’s centrality to parish life. c) the indispensable role of the sacramental priesthood d) the role of the sacraments—especially</p>

<p>Reconciliation—not just counselling but absolution. e) the reality of sin and its effect on each one personally and on society at large.</p>
<p>Strive to become Saints by following the fullness of the Church’s teachings, as taught and revealed by Christ.</p>
<p>PLENARY COUNCIL POST I was a convert to the Catholic Faith from the Anglican Church in 1996, in a Marist parish, [-], [-]. My deceased husband was a practising Catholic but this is not the main reason for a conversion to the Faith. In a series of small steps starting as a university Medical student, I found myself surrounded by Catholics. I was later challenged in my faith by a Moslem when I realised in a sudden burst of inspiration that converting from Christianity to Islam would be the “worst thing I could do in the whole universe”. I later became a Catholic although I was in fact a regular Anglican who was happy with other Anglicans. My mixed Protestant background included a Presbyterian School, but I eventually came to realise that there was a lot missing—the Saints for one thing, the fuller appreciation of Our Lady another, and a greater understanding of the sacraments. Later I married another practising Catholic. In 2017, I completed a Master of Theology from the Broken Bay Institute. From this background I have grown to understand that every worshipping Church has something to contribute to the Body of Christ. The orthodox Churches do not differ too much from the Catholic Churches. The Coptic Church and Orthodox appear pretty similar. The Anglicans have great music and a fuller appreciation of scripture. I learnt the Ten Commandments at a Presbyterian Sunday School. Sooner or later I think the challenges from the falsely based Islam (Hagars’s son Ishmael, forceful and violent conversion, rejection of the Resurrection, etc.) will force all Christians to regroup and unify. I have also come to understand that God wants all Jews to be converted once we gentiles have sorted ourselves out. 1. Please do not let Scripture and the Bible be downgraded in Catholic schools, amongst students, parents and teachers. Please emphasise and evangelise for the sacraments. 2. Please “Turn the Tide” and “Reclaim Religious Freedom in Australia”. 3. Please do not let gender issues distract—they are not important. 4. Please do not get worked up about married priests. What about the Orthodox and Maronites! 5. Go and listen to The Graham tour, 13/2/2019—Darwin. Billy Graham converted a lot of Christians. [-], [-] (retired ophthalmologist). [-] [-]</p>
<p>To all bishops, may I give you some items that I see are important? 1. Deacons/ male or female 2. New translation for Missal and Office Book 3. Complete Gluten Free Host Available. Jesus would not Differentiate what flour is used. He would say come to me all you who love me. We continue to pray for the success of this important occasion. May God Bless us all, Sr. [—]. An additional point. For years, our parish used the Apostles Creed! Since near the end of January, we are required to say the Nicene Creed. None of us are in favour. Who is the parish? The priest or the people. IT SHOULD BE BOTH. We don't need a dictator but a healthy parish spreading the love of Jesus together.</p>
<p>I frankly do not know what He is asking of us. No Divine Light has hit me. However, I know that there needs to be: 1. A major reform of how the Church is run. It is not communicating with the laity and the rest of the world. The hierarchy also need to be held accountable in human terms as well as when they face God on their death. 2. All aspects of our teaching and our beliefs need to be thoroughly examined to ensure that they are relevant to today and the future. The fundamental teachings will not change. However, the way we teach them need to be examined and changed IF NECESSARY. The teachings also need to be explained to the non-Catholics, not just made known to them.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be conscious of being in the moment. To be grateful and generous to be aware of those around us that might seem fine but need our attention. In the last few decades, we went from a community to living individually. This prevents us from knowing what’s happening and if we were more of a community we can more readily reach out with compassion. It feels like we as a community are putting our attention to external distractions (like our phones) but for our community to be conscience of our faith and to understand what it means to believe them, we need time to look inwards.</p>

<p>To transform Catholic parishes from simply maintaining themselves to becoming missionary communities of Jesus Christ. A good reference book recommended: Divine Renovation and the guide book by Fr. James Mallon.</p>
<p>To take our faith more seriously, in other words is to realize that GOD is real and to thank him for everything we have. To care for each other as much as we can, to be aware of those in need around us and to do whatever is possible around us to offer assistance. We are asked not to forget the knowledge from our ancestors pass on to us that taught us about God and His son Jesus Christ. We pray that Catholics and non-Catholics will look ahead at not just pursuing the career in their lives, but also to find a little bit of time for Jesus. To thank Him for showing us the way and even living among us.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to reform the Latin Rite liturgy as it is practised in almost all parishes. Specifically, I think God is asking the Church in Australia to join with the Church elsewhere to suppress the Novus ordo or, at the minimum, to look to develop a more traditional Holy Mass based on the Vetus Ordo. The Holy Sacrifice is a farce on any given Sunday as it does not faithfully reflect the fulness of the Catholic Faith, and leads the faithful to error, indifferentism, relativism and ultimately apostasy. Lex orandi lex credendi lex vivendi.</p>
<p>To reject the Spirit of the Age and go back to the true faith, the Holy Catholic Faith. Today the Catholic Church in Australia looks like any Protestant 'Church' and, for that matter, much like any humanitarian agency.</p>
<p>To pray and face the challenges that the Church is going through. Suggestions would be more education for every day Catholics to understand more about what it means to be Catholic. The necessity for people to understand the value of getting to Sunday Mass and really wanting too.</p>
<p>To be united with all religions, races and cultures, and to accept all by spreading his Word and acting with Faith. To be able to speak up and project our ideals, disregarding what is constantly being misled by the media. Also, for us to not get caught up in the unrealistic lives and sinful acts of celebrities, seeing them as an idol.</p>
<p>I think God is calling Australians at this time to pursue his call to our holiness. Through bringing more people to the Church and teaching and making people understand the scriptures and gospels of the Church along with God's messages too. As the messages of the Catholic faith needs to be more appealing, understood and learnt in this modern day in age as the scriptures were generations ago. As well as people today don't really see the true beauty of living out the faith and how much God loves each and every one of us.</p>
<p>I think he is asking that together as a Catholic united group in Australia, we all should close the gap of the conflict between other religions and instead we should understand one another one another as individuals as well as a community. I also think he is asking that we also should provide a in depth knowledge and understanding of our religion in general, especially for the youth since as they grow up they will start to question who they are, there identity, values, morals and religion. Thus, educational regular meetings that are held for the youth as well as others from other religions and all ages will be granted answers to questions that they themselves cannot find.</p>
<p>I think God is asking the same thing that he has always asked—that we love him with all our hearts and that we become holy as he is holy. Concretely, that requires that we get to know Christ through his Word, a sacramental life and by experiencing his love in our relationships. We need: -more prayer: we need experts in the art of prayer who can teach others -holy priests who are supported in their weaknesses and not left alone. I believe in priestly celibacy but Our Lord did not live it alone—they were always sent in twos. The laity need to be more aware of their duty to care for their pastors and to foster vocations amongst their own children. -support for families: we need to educate couples about their call to holiness in the family and to facilitate "spaces" or programmes where this can occur, taking into account all that professionals can also tell us.</p>
<p>INITIAL SUGGESTIONS: EDUCATION: Necessity of formal Catholic education as well as pastoral care in primary schools; YOUTH: Different story in High Schools—lack of interest on part of kids and teachers. Worse in State Schools; They need an option: ethics is fine but they need the option of</p>

scripture and the option of Studies of Religion as an HSC subject—but where do the teachers come from? How does this fit in with our and others' view of the world? Lack of attendance at Mass—how boost young people attending? The success or not of those in the 4 dioceses, e.g. Dan White—awareness of kids in Catholic Schools, their needs, spiritual, monetary. Have more opportunities for youth to be engaged in Catholic Masses. PRIESTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE, COMMUNITY, LITURGY, BE TOLERANT, BE AN EXAMPLE, FAMILY and TOGETHERNESS, WOMEN—Empower more females to be involved in the Catholic Church. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION ON YOUTH—Challenge of the younger generation is how to focus on becoming a better person, how to fit into society, how to know their God. Have to be told faith is a gift. -Education is required, a place where questions can be asked and answered. There is not enough ethics being taught in High Schools. The youth have difficulty as the World has lost its way. Need for Catholic Community, e.g. In Lebanon there was a gathering of all the youth of an area with all the priests and teachers of the faith to do questions and answers. One person used to ring a nun-aunty to get answers about faith. We have to have priests and faith-filled teachers available for the youth. —At Mass, be flexible and have lay-people share about what the readings mean to them, not always only the priest. Some present had attended an evangelical Church and were struck by the eagerness of the youth in receiving the faith message (kerygma), and the flexibility of the gatherings. It's too heavy to run a parish by one priest only and ours is a big parish. A paid position should be a must as lay people now need an income. This needs financial support from the hierarchy.

To use all our God-given talents, grace, and natural means to defend, explain, and pass on the entirety of the joyful Catholic faith to the next generations, without in any way diminishing the settled doctrine of the Church given to us by Christ. We must focus on the centrality of Jesus Christ in the Church. Other things — like opinion polls, cultural attitudes, and a materialistic and promiscuous culture — should not influence what we believe and pass on to future generations of Catholics. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His moral doctrine (such as the very clear precepts He has passed on to us regarding the indissolubility of marriage and the intrinsic value of every human life) does not change. All my fellow young practising Catholic friends are in complete agreement about this. I believe God is asking us to courageously and innovatively defend and explain our faith, in order to evangelise the people of Australia, so that they all can freely come to know and share in the love of Jesus Christ. God is not asking us to debate or discuss heresy at this difficult time. This should not be the focus of our efforts (for example, having an internal debate about priestly celibacy, women's' ordination, or the morality of sexual acts outside of marriage — all of which are part of the settled teaching of the Church and cannot be changed). If the Plenary Council were to go down this path, that would be a very serious (albeit well-intentioned) mistake. Of course, we must be able to explain the teachings of the Church (and empower the next generation to do so with effective religious and philosophical education) while also showing the positivity and joy that comes with being followers of Christ. To sum up: God is asking us to be charitable and defend the truth. The Catholic youth of Australia wants the Plenary Council to discuss how best to do this.

God is asking us to be far more inclusive of people and far less judgemental. The Church of 'yesteryear' where there were absolutes and a deference to clergy/religious has quickly passed, yet there are considerable elements within the Church (particularly those in power) that are clinging to a rigid hierarchical structure. The pace of the world today is so rapid it is hard to keep up. The youth of today are accustomed to instant responses and immediate communication. As a Church, if we do not recognise and embrace the positive aspects of the modern world than as a Church we will continue to suffer and potentially 'lose' the young. We believe God is asking us to: —radically examine our liturgies—redefine the role of bishops/priests in the Church—embrace the notion of equality—dramatically increase the role of women (beyond, but not excluding, the religious) in the Church. This means more than tokenism on committees, but giving women a real voice and significant 'power' within all aspects of the Church. —seeing the Church as a Church of and for the laity where Ordained ministries have a role to play, especially around the sacramental aspects of Church, but where the Ordained Ministry is not the dominating and controlling force within the Church. —show

real leadership in the world where dialogue and consultation are paramount and an appetite and ability to change is readily evident—see the depth of spirituality that exists within the broader community that is expressed in a variety of ways. The Church is being called to help those, especially the young and the hurt, 'outside the Mass goers' to embrace their expressions of faith/spirituality and hopefully bring them to a greater/closer relationship with Jesus and the Church. —see that Jesus is among us and often comes to us 'disguised' in the other person—see the power of prayer, reflection, the Eucharist and the other sacraments. Equally understand that these aspects of faith and worship need to be done, at times, very differently. Catholic Schools are doing a great job at providing opportunities for their students to experience prayer/reflection in varying forms. Social Justice Action groups are doing powerful works that need to be recognised and celebrated and NOT seen as a threat or a diversion from 'the old order' of things. —walk more closely with the person of Jesus and to take the radical steps that he took including challenging the authority of the day. We think that God would be challenging the direction the Church seems to have embraced in recent times: the transliteration of the liturgy, the return to old clerical dress by many of the priests, the lament of the younger generation not attending Mass regularly, the 'numbers game' determining the success of Church connectedness', etc. The Church would do well to reflect on Einstein's position: "no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it."

I think God is asking us to go back to basics.

FIRST RESPONSES: PRIESTS, PARISH, CHURCH. RE PRIESTS:—Interact with laity more—Visit jails and educate in faith; ask for a time out for a prisoner if they have lost a loved-one—Go to the city to speak to the poor and educate about God—At Christmas, have a special Mass for people in need, e.g. homeless, poor or with special needs—Have a small lesson before and after Mass for little kids—also have a Mass for kids too. PARISH:—Organise a song with actions by a small group of children at the end of Mass—Have more songs involved—Have story-telling plays so that people can understand the Mass—Have children's Bibles available cheaply (\$2 or \$3)—Have more quiet time in Church to say our own intentions and we can come closer to God at Mass—Involve more children in Mass—Have more children's liturgy—Create a little (shorter) Mass for younger students who don't yet understand what God did and who He is, so that they can learn the first steps and then progress on to how older people learn at Mass—Have discussions on Mass/readings to have more people's answers, not just one—Inspire others to join Mini Vinnies donators—To have more opportunities to go to confession more regularly. CHURCH:—Encourage people to attend Mass as it is the Sabbath and more people should go to church—All retirement homes/hospitals should have a priest—Have Catholic Schools in all parishes—Have more evangelisation so more people believe in God and are educated in faith—Donate money to the poor, give warmth, clothing and food—Involve women in more roles—Ask people to show more reverence at church—Ensure children can understand the faith and liturgy—Church should be for all people and any people so spread the message -As lay person to acknowledge what God has done for me. To feel the presence of God and feel He's always with me and confides in me. —We need to nurture our faith—Bishops could go out to walk around at night and give out food to poor and have some students with him—invest more in the religious curriculum in state schools—Encourage more programs and projects to people in need.

I believe that the Lord is calling us back to basics. To be open to unlearn and hear the gospel afresh again which requires a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit to be able to hear the Good News anew. One thing I believe that will assist us becoming more attuned to the Spirit's voice is being a Church committed to listening daily to the Word of God. I think we've been somewhat lost as a result of not being encouraged in the past to have scripture central to our daily bread. We as Catholics are always encouraged to receive the sacraments. It's something always focused upon, but rarely are we encouraged to meditate on scripture. Not sure why, as the Church considers them both as equal importance. This has caused us I believe to lose our way to some degree from where the Holy Spirit is calling us as a people and instead we've been like lost sheep without a shepherd. I'm forever grateful for my Spirit filled Protestant brothers and sisters for influencing me to centre my life more on scripture and being taught to listen to the Word of God which has transformed my thinking and

<p>born such fruits as Hope and Faith in my life. Which brings me to the point, that the Nicene Creed which is prayed with our other Protestant brothers and sisters, talks about 'One holy catholic Church' stating little 'c' not big 'C'. The text states we are One Church with our Protestant brothers and sisters but unfortunately, us Catholics often act like we are the Church and our Protestant brothers and sisters are not. This disunity is not in line with God's mind. We are together one and we need each other and it's not until we wake up and accept this truth and do everything to love and learn from each other that we will be lacking as a Church and as missionaries. Ezekiel 37:1-10 talks about Ezekiel being called to prophesy over the dry, dead bones and he obeyed the Lord. '... and while I was prophesying, there was a noise, a sound of clattering; and the bones joined together ... and the breath entered them; THEY CAME TO LIFE AGAIN and stood up on their feet, A GREAT IMMENSE ARMY'. I believe Pope Francis is one of these prophets prophesying to the Church our need to take heed of unification through Charismatic Unity, rather than being focused on Theological Unity. The Holy Spirit is a monogamist, He only has One Bride. As Catholics, I yearn to see us draw together in mission and prayer with our Protestant brothers and sisters. I believe now is the time, we are ready in Australia. The Holy Spirit is doing a similar call in our Protestant brothers and sisters in Australia. There is a sense of yearning and missing each other. So in conclusion, coming back to the Word of God through the listening to the Word, through the grace and help of the Holy Spirit. And secondly, coming together with our Protestant brothers and sisters in Fraternal Love, wanting to listen and learn from each other and seeking to do mission together through the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>Establishment of an Institute to defend, educate and proclaim the beauty, efficacy and healthiness of Catholic teaching in sexuality, please see my uploaded file for more details.</p>
<p>To be open, to be responsive, to listen, not react simply to protect the Church, to be transparent, to admit fault, to respect parishioners and not expect blind faith or that they should accept less than the best because they are lucky to be Catholic.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking for us to be accepting for everyone no matter their own beliefs and faith. To help and support our family and friends but also strangers in need of help. I also believe He is asking for us to listen to each other and not to judge, to offer peace to those around you. And to keep the faith strong in yourself and in him.</p>
<p>I have observed many faithful do not know or understand their faith very well. The parishes need to have teachings on reverence, devotions and Eucharistic Adoration, among other things.</p>
<p>Help one another in various ways: Mind, body/Being a second hospital/health/medical working in with the system—mind, body, emotions, spirit-emotionally, spiritually, religiously. Be together, but separately united. Pray for each of us. More interaction with society's affairs. More prayers for help, thanksgiving, forgiveness and courage. Wine at Eucharist. More talks and testimonies in Mass/Church Hall. To love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and soul. To be doers of His Word, not just "advocates" of Social Justice (and not just social workers). I think God is asking us to truly look at JESUS on the cross His Son and ask ourselves what did Jesus do for us, for you and me? What can we do for Jesus today in our time, in our Church? To be people of Mercy, we have to first learn the true meaning of Mercy, Love and forgiveness from the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to focus on rebuilding our Church community and be aware of the needs of the local Church and our needs. Strengthen family values by gathering families in the Church, teaching children the Christian values. More ministry and home visits especially to the people who are isolated in the community.</p>
<p>To open our hearts to all Australian residents to encourage us to love and tolerate one another.</p>
<p>To restore Catholic practices and strengthen the Catholic identity according to the norms set out in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Magisterium.</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us to be more accepting and forgiving. We have a diverse society. We are surrounded by people who have endured much hardship in their lives-sexual abuse, divorce, rejection. It's time to be more inclusive and forgiving.</p>
<p>Cast adrift independent schools.</p>
<p>Church has lost touch with Australians.</p>

How I would very much like to see the Catholic Church in Australia in the near future. Full churches, of committed Christians. Ordinary people, bringing Christ to their family, work place, social life and leisure. Pre-requisite: Religious freedom of Christians; recognition of parents as first educators of their children. Suggestions: 1. Doctrinal education. St. John Paul II started to attract young people by speaking clearly and in a demanding way. Many people are far away because of ignorance. Well planned Catechism teaching from the early stages, to teach children to love God and desire to follow Jesus. Well prepared: doctrinal, with practical applications, motivating, encouraging, with specific examples, to the level of the people. I find some times they give interesting information: they need to bring about a deeper transformation in the long run. Activities such as theology on tap attract young persons: encourage these, and especially encourage to invite those who are farther from the practice of the faith. At present, I am teaching a course on the creed to 8 young women aged 24-36: they realise that what they learn is not just information but has to transform their lives because of the love of God they learn about. 2. Parenting courses: Many young parents live far from their parents and get little help. These courses (many of them organised by Family Enrichment Australia) have been satisfying this great need for several years. 3. Dress code: a sign of faith in the divine Presence. Dress code is demanded in some RSL clubs, and in churches of various denominations; also in Rome in Catholic churches. Could something be done here? To begin with, Eucharistic ministers' induction could include a segment on this: as a sign of respect for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Readers could also be given a more demanding dress code. Gradually everyone could start getting the point. Some priests have shown videos of how to receive Holy Communion; how cleans the hands should be, care with the Sacred Host, etc. I heard a priest explaining he would start having larger hosts in his church so that people could receive on the tongue as he was tired of giving communion over phone and other messages written on the palms of hands, or just not clean hands. It made sense and was well received. 4. More time for confessions in the parishes. I noticed towns in Victoria when I visited their beautiful Churches, with no confessionals, and people asked to go by appointment. How difficult this must be for someone who wants to return to the fold. It would certainly cost me so much that I doubt I would personally do it. Perhaps, if someone made appointment for me... I would. I know the priests are few and stretched, but confession time is a necessary investment of time that produces good results. Fishing takes time, but some are large fish! Bishop Fulton Sheen teaches a lot about this.

I think that God is asking us to be tolerant. There is a lot of hurt and conflict in the world and the only way forward for us is to learn love, tolerance and forgiveness. No matter how difficult that seems to us.

God is asking of the Catholic Church in Australia, fundamentally, how it can be more relevant to the everyday lives of practising, and non-practising Catholics, to attract and retain parishioners, and draw back those who have lapsed, or are wavering, or disinterested, and have filled their lives with other faiths and other pursuits. The search for relevance must start from a traditional base, centred on fidelity. Pandering to the latest fads or moving in a progressive way without acknowledgement of and integration with tradition, leads the Church into dangerous, uncharted and uncertain waters. Focus must be on the young—to be imbued with the Holy Spirit—the knowledge and understanding of truths, traditions, rules, and the reasons behind them. Greater, not lesser emphasis should be placed on this course, to provide the feeling of faith and security, that the Catholic Church remains true to its origins, in connection with God and the Holy Eucharist. The Church needs to show commitment to and reflection on multicultural issues—to embrace ethnicities in a multicultural Australia, and shed the vestiges and perceptions of staid, Anglo-Celtic elitism, racism and separation. Climate change should not be neglected, and makes the Church relevant in contemporary Australia—adopting practices consistent with minimising carbon output—for example, solar panels on Churches, energy efficient practices, and reaching out and supporting communities and individuals adversely affected. The Church must heal, and be seen to provide remedy and salve, to those so damaged in the Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse. Healing includes rooting out all evil, complete transparency, and the clear and unambiguous implementation of new and

<p>protective practices. That said, the Church must show courage in standing by its traditions, including the seal of confession, and the power to resist the blanket secular imposition of non-discriminatory practices, such as the forced acceptance of those who may practice homosexuality and educate at Catholic Schools. The Church must argue rationally and passionately where those traditions remain fundamental guide posts and tenements to what it means to practice the Roman Catholic faith. Whilst acting with appropriate restraint, the Church should embrace music, drawing on its traditional Latin origins, combining the modern with the old, to help recover the mystery, the mystique and the connection to thousands of years of reverence in the Holy Eucharist. In summary, the challenge for the Church is to make it, again, a part of daily, family life, a practice of faith that is shared with love and joy between each family member, and celebrated as a community each Sunday.</p>
<p>As a group of lay women, we welcome Plenary Council 2020 as a means of speaking out against an inadequate Church system in which the laity have become the victims. There is a need for the Church to become a more inclusive gathering of the People of God. Church leadership at all levels needs to be more inclusive of women particularly with regard to decision making; seminary formation; liturgical practice; theological reflection; evolutionary awareness unfolding a new understanding of the Incarnation and Paschal Mystery; inculturation of priests ordained overseas; breaking open the scriptures in order that a feminine balance of empathy, sensitivity, compassion, nurturance etc may put a new heart into what is often a cold, cerebral response of dogma and orthodoxy to aching human needs. As Pope Francis exhorts us, we must find ways to respond positively to the call of Vatican II "to overcome the divorce between theology and pastoral care, between faith and life". Our shepherds need to take on the smell of the sheep!</p>
<p>GOD asking us: —to help the Church to lead us to the renewed and closer relationship with GOD—all of Christian to strengthen our Faith, to live, pray and action towards his WILL in our daily life (and everywhere in our wider community)—to bring Good News to non-Christian people</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us to be a compassionate presence in our world that is alive with the Good News of Jesus Christ and has a desire to share that faith and hope and love in a way that invites others to recognise the Spirit's presence in their lives, and God's extravagant and unconditional love for them. We are called to relationships of mutuality and sharing of our gifts in service of others. We are called to listen and act to challenge injustice, and to contribute to the wellbeing of others, especially the poor and marginalised, refugees and asylum seekers, and all who are discriminated against because of lack of education, or language or gender, or sexual identification, or disability or any other aspect of their person or situation. As a Church, we need to be rid of clericalism that distances pastors from their people, and exhibits a sense of entitlement and superiority. We need to allow women to have a greater voice in Church matters and to be part of decision-making through a presence in key boards and committees that are central to local and wider Church life. We need greater transparency in Church matters and decision-making processes, genuine consultation and feedback. Many lay people, including ex and married priests have a wealth of knowledge, spirituality, expertise to offer the Church and they need to be invited to share their gifts in meaningful ways within the local and diocesan Church. We need to respond compassionately and justly to victims of sexual abuse and be seen as responding humbly and with resolution to the findings of the Royal Commission. we need an outreach to youth and to families and to have Sunday liturgies and other parish activities that are youth and family friendly, relevant to the call of the gospel at this time and in the varied situations and expressions of life and spirituality of our time.</p>
<p>To question and listen to the responses from us about where we see our faith. We seem to be feeling so distant from the traditional ways and how the clergy expect us to be.</p>
<p>God is asking us to renew our baptismal vow. He is asking us to renounce the world and all its vanities, lusts and passions and turn to Him and serve Him only.</p>
<p>To go back to tradition. To remind the world that the Church and our faith is not of this world. To bring hope.</p>

<p>I think God is asking us to listen to the many people in our society who no longer see the Church as relevant to their lives. People living in 2019 have many pressures in their lives and a deep desire for spirituality. However, the traditional responses that once spoke to people, do not communicate the message of Jesus and the treasures of the Church in the real lives of people today. Because the words used do not resonate with their experience of life they ignore what the Church has to offer. Because adults are no longer hearing the message and feeling the need for the Church, children are growing up without the experience of the Faith that only parents can give ... we have always called them the first teachers of the Faith.</p>
<p>To 'stand fast' in the faith that has been handed down to us as would-be fathers and mothers, by doing ALL in our power to ensure the Universal Church also 'stands fast' to the traditions handed to Her, ..by the following measures. (1) Ensuring males and females wishing to serve the Church, as priests or nuns, WITH homosexual tendencies, are excluded from entry, and, if found with these tendencies after entry, are promptly dismissed. (2) That there be NO ordination of women to the priesthood. (3) In selecting teachers for Catholic High Schools, giving preference to teachers who believe, and practice, the faith, over teachers with apparent or 'perceived competence', in ALL teaching subjects, They are there, in essence, to replace the brothers and nuns of yesteryear.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us Australian and Christians to stick up for him a bit more in our society. Unfortunately, we have been very absent and turning the blind eye on so many changes in our society that are against Christianity, for example, people mocks Jesus, God, the Pope and the priests/nuns at Mardi Gras celebrations and we say nothing about it, we allow it to happen by staying silent. Christianity is all about love and by implementing respect to God everywhere in the world and spreading the good word we will be acting like disciples to Jesus. We are raising a society where our children and grandchildren will think that making fun of our religion is fine as they can see that we are doing nothing about it!</p>
<p>To ensure that the Church remains true to the principles he showed us through Jesus and the community of the early Church</p>
<p>Women, who comprise more than 50% of Church membership but have very little voice and status in the Church, feel that God wants them to take the opportunity to speak out clearly and honestly about their experiences, ideas and concerns in relation to the Church in Australia. Our Background Statement, which is the first attachment to this questionnaire, established the credentials of [-] to speak for its members. These members have discussed the Plenary questions in groups and responded from these groups and as individuals to the committee preparing this response. See Attachment 1.</p>
<p>As part of Catholic Church as a member, what I feel is "God is asking of us in Australia is to love and serve Him more and more. In today's life when no one really cares about God, we the Catholics have a duty and obligation to serve Him more and lead others to God. We can consecrate our Australia to St. Michael the Archangel, so with the help of angels we can love Him more and more. We can start perpetual adoration in the Churches (wherever it is possible). It will give us more protection and power.</p>
<p>I think that at a time when secular doctrines no longer recognise God, one day, or at least a Sunday should be dedicated to honouring God, the Father in a special way under the title of "Father of All Mankind". This will either be the first Sunday of August or the seventh day of August. I think it would be apt to honour, praise and venerate God, Our Father in Australia at this time. This celebration will encourage us to return to God's love and mercy through His Son Jesus Christ, the true Messiah and through His Holy Spirit, His gift to us. Ref: The Father Speaks to His Children. A message given to Mother Eugenia Ravasio.</p>
<p>We Australians need to get a sense of what Sin really is. I am worried that so many of us shun/ignore the prevalence of sinful actions, attitudes towards self, neighbour and the environment. The few parishioners that attend Mass are not by and large evangelised and made aware of what Christianity stands for in our present sex crazed, avaricious money-hungry Australian scene. I am caught up in it.</p>

This nation needs God again; in our homes; businesses; Board Rooms (banks, etc.) parliaments and public services institutions. And I dare say in our churches/communities. GOD HELPS US please.

I think God is asking us Australians to do something to stop the continuing decline in the number of our youth who stop attending Mass on a regular basis on leaving school, or even earlier. I've heard many times that the young ones (say 10-15) think Mass was boring. I think the Church as a whole need to take action on this issue, making the Mass more easily understood by the young. A refresher course on the meaning and traditions on the various parts of the Mass would be timely for not only the young but for all Mass goers (e.g., a booklet could be prepared for distribution, say during Lent) A lot of the readings at Mass, particularly from the Old Testament, are in a language such that the message in the reading is beyond the comprehension of many listeners. Maybe they could be written in our current language whilst still contain the message. In other parts of the Mass, surely we could find clearer words to use other than words like "incarnate" and "consubstantial". Another way that would possibly reconnect the youth to the Church is through music. I remember reading that in Indonesia and China, Christianity was making headway through the use of music. Some parishes that I have visited over the years are still using hymns introduced some decades ago. While these are still popular with older parishioners, they are generally known by the younger ones. They are not taught in the school. At school Masses, they use more modern hymns with a "beat" more to their liking and so they get more involved in the Mass. Unfortunately, these modern hymns are rarely sung at parish Masses and so the young don't interact I'd like to see more parishes use the Children's Mass Missal at their school Masses. My wife and I attended a number of these at our grandchildren's school and the young ones certainly got involved and didn't appear to be bored! I'm sure there are many more things that God is asking of us, but my wife and I consider that reconnecting the youth with the Church is very important. The youth are the future of our Church.

I believe that God is calling us, inviting us, urging us, first and foremost, to become a deeply prayerful Church—a 'Mystical' Church. Other extremely important topics should be scrutinized, e.g., the empowerment of women and the laity, simultaneously, but Prayer should be considered to be of major importance from which new life in the Church will flow—God working through us. Karl Rahner once observed that Christians of the future will be Mystics or there will be no Christianity. A Mystic is one who seeks by Contemplation and self-surrender to obtain union with or absorption into the Divine. At its highest peak, prayer becomes Contemplation. Our ancestors were Mystics—the Desert Mothers and Fathers, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, etc. However, since the Reformation, the Christian tradition has focused on doctrinal differences rather than the spiritual journey and transformation, and so, we are out of touch with our own mystical tradition. Today, education and religion are often hostile to Mysticism; Seminaries teach few practices to access Mysticism, still. Fifty years ago, Cistercian, Thomas Merton reintroduced contemplative prayer; other Cistercians: Keating, Menninger and Pennington introduced a practice that could be accessible to present day Christians and could lead to Contemplation—Centring Prayer. We are built for Contemplation, it is a universal call. I have heard only one priest, in a parish Church, mention the word 'Mysticism' in my eighty years—Catholics are being deprived of their heritage. To survive the crises we are currently facing as a species—climate change, pollution, warfare, hunger, hatred, we must draw on the deepest gifts we possess—Mysticism is among the finest. Once we are absorbed into the Divine Consciousness, God can work through us for the good of the world. Carl Jung believed that 'Only Mystics bring what is creative to religion itself'. (I have borrowed the above material from books and articles written by Matthew Fox, Dom Bede Griffiths OSB and others I cannot recall.)

1. To determine what we need to do to embrace those who feel unwanted by us. 2. To promote action to encourage the return of those who have left the Church. In both cases above, the action taken should not diminish the foundation of our faith. 3. To promote the concept that it is not enough to believe in God and lead a good life and so make the Mass unnecessary; that the Mass is part and cannot be separated from God.

To make the Church as accessible and understandable to as wide a group of Australians as possible. The energy and inspiration needs to come from lay people, with strong support from priests and

<p>nuns. The job will be challenging, to avoid distorting the true message of our Church, but the work itself will strengthen the faith of those involved. The job will also need creativity and tenacity, because the Church now faces a new world of distractions, temptations and troubles. So we need to work together and make the most of our talents, with faith, hope and love.</p>
<p>I think God would like to see our Church to do more in protecting the living out of our Christian faith and to see more Christians, wherever possible to take actions as and when necessary to contribute to the voicing of our views and concerns to the government on issues affecting religious freedom. Secondly, I think God would like us to look into the moral decline in Australia and find ways to nurture good morals to Catholics from very young age, to become responsible persons, to do good parenting, be good examples for our children on the faith journey.</p>
<p>God is asking each of us to demonstrate the love of Jesus as we go about our lives. The failings of the Church, identified in the Royal Commission, showed a Church of people lacking in basic compassion. It has overshadowed the work and lives of the many ordinary faithful who try to live good lives and be witnesses of Christ.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to stay faithful to the teaching of the Church, and to proclaim the truth to those around us. I believe that he wants us to know and understand what the Church teaches, so that we can better help our neighbours to understand and to come to Christ. I think that he does not want us to remain silent in the face of evil, but to be prepared always to give a reason for the hope that is in us.</p>
<p>The call of God was brought by Jesus the Word of God to the place and nation into which he was born. He himself said that a prophet is without honour in his own country; and the Gospels make it plain that many people rejected him. But many others were moved, by his words and by his marvellous and merciful acts, to accept him; and some committed themselves to be his disciples. Had he not given his life on the Cross for the sins of everyone, and had he not then risen from the dead in glory to rejoin his disciples, his message would rapidly have become a fading local memory, known only to the curiosity of historians. But Jesus kept his promise: he commissioned the twelve as his apostles, and he sent the Spirit of God upon them. The men and women who after the Lord's ascension became the first Christians were secure in their commitment to God and (through their understanding sustained by the faith that God had inspired in them) to the Lord's teachings. They accepted baptism, and were guided in their lives by the teachings of the apostles and their successors. As in Palestine and the remainder of the Mediterranean world in the first century, so in Australia in the twenty-first century, God is asking us to repent of our sins, to accept the divine gifts that the Church offers us, and to adhere to and live by the truths about faith and life which (as instructed by its divine Master) the Church has taught from the beginning. Throughout our Christian life (in our own various ways, and as best we can), God asks us to proclaim those truths to the men, women, and children of this our Australian society.</p>
<p>1. Inclusiveness and equality—to reach out to all- to welcome all: • Marginalised—first Australian people, refugees, migrants, prisoners, homeless and the poor, divorced and remarried, those suffering from health issues particularly mental health related. The marginalised have a right to pride of place. • Women—total equality; remove all artificial barriers, access to all roles within the Church. • LGBT community—to value authentic love in all forms. • Youth—engaged in youth liturgy, fellowship and mission, learning “on the job” not just “catechesis”. • Clergy—of the people, of the culture. An end to clericalism and elitism. Inclusion be recognised and implemented in Church structures, formation and operations. Encourage and empower the faithful to be engaged in all aspects of God's mission and in the operation of all the activities of the Church. Recognition that historical patriarchal structures are not relevant to today's Australian society so all genders and backgrounds have equality in the Church. 2. Engaged and outward looking—A Church that is engaged in Australian Society and reflective of our culture. • Community focused parishes—building the body of Christ through local decision-making and parish relationships- local ministries, responding to needy e.g. drought victims, disaster relief, aged, destitute, sick. • Increased presence in community services—reaching out with love through greater involvement in health care, aged</p>

care and similar services. Build on our good work in schools, charities, aid and mission. • Driven by Joy not Duty—focus on service to all God’s people not on hierarchy, canonical powerbases, clericalism or other forms of elitism. • Clergy engaged with and skilled to support the community—Clergy and religious actively engaged in (not isolated from) and able to relate to the lived experience and culture of the community. Formation to include counselling and relationship training. We must listen to others and be able to empathise with them. Our actions drown out our words. 3. A Church for today with an eye to the future • A Church led by the spirit as it develops in today’s world—A Church that understands and is informed by its history and traditions (good and bad) but is not bound by that history and tradition. • A Church and faith community that rejoices in its differences—both today and in the past, able to self-challenge for reflection and growth; guided by witness in faith, not by compliance with human manufactured rules and structures. • Contemporary Liturgy in language and form—technical and archaic language replaced with language of the people, focusing on true celebration and the provision of different forms of service e.g. sung, not sung, home, youth Masses, re-introduction of third rite of reconciliation. • Formation—focused on contemporary theology and service, priesthood open to married people.

FIRST RESPONSES: Social Justice; Faith; Youth; priests; Openness; Laity; Church Music; Environment; Indigenous. MINUTES OF DISCUSSION: —Be a more welcoming nation to people fleeing persecution in their homes—Be more accepting of the less fortunate through charity and kindness, think of others before ourselves, help break the cycle of poverty, share the faith, recognise them as individuals—Continue this nation's drive to an equal, safe and free community—Connect like Jesus did to children, the poor, the sick and suffering, especially mental suffering as it's taboo and shouldn't be—Engage students at a younger age in active social justice—Build structures to allow lay people to help—To hold faith as an important factor in everyday life, as it's been pushed to the side, to hold at a deeper level—More evangelisation and reflection days, to guide people away from trivial issues of the Church and onto who we truly are as Christians, on relationships, family and friends, God and Church—Continue to work with the young, encourage them in numbers, in individual faith, in thinking of others earlier in our lives—Are priests today lonely, feeling disconnected, particularly if retired? If priests were allowed to marry, this would be a powerful move to strengthen the male role in the Church and masculine Catholicism. At one time, priests could marry but the historical implications do not now exist while religious ones do. Women in the earliest days served as deacons, so with the shortfall in the ordained, could women become deacons to serve the faithful and God? —Re: Openness, God asks us to include and accept everyone: a) because we are all made in God's image, b) because we never know what is going on in people's lives. God is asking us as a nation, to be more forgiving of others, despite their wrongdoings. —There needs to be opportunity to speak more openly about topical issues—Allow people to feel equal and to have faith and courage—Bring awareness to things usually kept quiet: depression, anxiety, other illnesses—Promote lay people more as they also are doing the Lord's work Re: Music: The Church has always had a rich educational tradition. I would love to see a revival of the works of the Fathers. Will our religious music last us for another 2000 years? The tradition has been pushed aside and new music has not represented the sacredness of the Holy Sacrifice. Introduce appropriate music New and Old. —We must be stewards of our environment. God asks us to not mess with it, but care, conserve, not be wasteful, e.g. medical ethics. —To support our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

To make the Church more accessible to younger children/youth and to provide guidance, especially if the parents are not believers or practising Catholics. Increased transparency with how things are run in the Church, especially concerning wider Church issues in the diocese, at state and national level. To take advantage of technology and social media as an outlet for evangelisation and engagement. Scripture classes in many non-Catholic high schools are not engaging with students, turning many away from the Church. Topics should be relevant to the age group and foster a discussion so that students can be guided into an experience with God rather than having a belief system forced upon them. Studies of religion in Catholic schools are similar in that they are not engaging with the lives of students. Being more interactive could help in this problem. The Church

should be a stronger guide and confront pressing issues in society and give guidance on how Catholics should talk about and respond to these issues. People are being turned away from the faith because they feel like they are repeating "core values of the Church" but that the values are "wrong". There is misunderstanding even among Catholics as to the Church's position on issues and more importantly, the reasoning behind the Church's stance. Holding more large events that bring Catholic youth together such as ACYF.

Members of [—] parish [—] met to consider and respond to the questions asked of us in the Plenary 2020 process. While much of our discussion centred upon areas for improvement, we were concerned that our input not be construed as negative as we recognise that there is much which is positive and should be affirmed. 1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? What God asks of us hasn't changed—we are asked to love the Lord your God with all our heart, and soul and mind and to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40).

I notice that many different grades of clergy must attend the Plenary Council, but for the rest of us there is one title "Lay People." I am very happy that we have a period of consultation to tell our stories and suggest improvements to the life of the Church. I hope that wise lay people are able to be present and participate in the Plenary Council. I think the Plenary Council should examine the reasons why 90 per cent of Australian Catholics are not coming to the sacraments. Of those who do attend, a small percentage are acting and speaking as Catholic influencers outside their family and parish community. • One reason for Catholics leaving the Church when they leave school are that they now face adult problems with only a child's faith to support them. • Another reason is the secular society where many desire the goods of capitalism with no place for God in working life. When I was young, we were members of the international Young Catholic Workers Movement. Each week we met and talked about supporting our faith at work. • Another reason is birth control since the time of Pope Paul VI. I believe that Catholic Social teaching is an important witness to maintain the good of family and society, but natural law is not generally understood or accepted as a basis for family planning. It appears like mission creep into areas beyond the teaching of Jesus. • Another reason for lapsing Catholics is physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse in Catholic families. There is never any preaching in parishes about these matters. • Clericalism still exists in many Catholic lay people when only the priests take responsibility and speak in public about Catholic perspectives and issues. • Many of us have been silenced by our society. This needs to be examined in the light of the Gospel.

To use the media to get our message out. We need to market the Church in the best possible light in positive terms and to avoid the negativity that the Church has received lately. There are great stories to be told what the Church is doing and we need to get them out there. We don't seem to be attracting the young which other so-called religions are doing.

I believe and we should all aim to Love him, serve and be happy with him in this world and the next—goal heaven, leading holy lives, leaving as Jesus did in the gospel ... Teaching the truth and not watering it down—causes lots of confusion ... To be well formed in the catechism ... Preparing children/parents/very well for receiving the sacraments, reverence, adoring, genuflecting, posture, silence, dress code ... Having Sunday classes for children after Mass, introducing in school, children to adoration for maybe 15min weekly. Or more if can be done. Devote each day to specific causes e.g. to pray for the Pope, sick, vocation, for families, for unborn, souls in purgatory ... To have strong family traditions e.g. Sunday Mass weekly, 1st Friday and 1st Saturday devotions, procession of Our Lady, Corpus Christi with the whole community through the streets ... To ensure that there are specifically trained, practising Catholic as specialist Religious Education Teachers in all Catholic schools. Offering weekly Mass and regular confession. Saying the Angelus at the ringing of bells. More welcoming at all parishes, going way out to help new parishioners, and members of the Church in their needs. Priests making home visits to his parishioners. Life to be protected no matter what state of life. Having family clubs, to build positive peer groups.

To bring the Church up to date.

<p>I feel that the Catholic Church in Australia is in crisis and those that are concerned about this need to express this concern. More importantly, those who have decision-making roles in the Church at present need to be listening to all the concerns expressed by those making submissions. I am sure God wants meaningful changes to be carried out.</p>
<p>To turn to tradition. If you observe the youth within the Catholic Church, they are hanging up their guitars and moving to Gregorian Chant. We are following Archbishop [-]'s movement towards authentic prayer and praying the office and Angelus every day. No more will praise hands, guitars and "speaking in tongues" provide satisfaction for the youth. They demand authentic, Orthodox, Catholic teaching and would like to return to the faith of the Saints. It is imperative that the plenary council answers these demands.</p>
<p>The consideration of married clergy. The consideration of equality—female clergy. Prayer is no longer considered an essential part of family life—how can we counteract this?</p>
<p>We are called to KNOW God, love him and serve him.</p>
<p>To encourage the youth to understand where God is in their lives. This could be done by making Mass on Sunday more meaningful and relevant to them. I think if we can get them to Mass on Sunday that would be the start of a real relationship for them. The current formal of Mass on Sunday is 'boring' for them and takes too long. Speaking to them, they say there is too much repetition in the Mass and the words and prayers become a formality and therefore meaningless. I think to get them more interested, we have, in addition to the current 2 or 3 Masses in each parish on a Sunday, and extra 2 or 3 Masses, which only include an Introduction (remembering our sins and praying for mercy), the days readings (Gospel and homily pre-recorded by the priest), holy communion and finally the Our Father and Hail Mary. This should take around 20 minutes. These can be done by an Acolyte or Minister of Communion e.g. my parish has an 8:00 and 9:30 am Masses, and 5:00 pm Mass on Sunday. The additional ones could be, say, 11:00 am, 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm. This could be trialled as a pilot in say 10 parishes for a year. I feel that youth believe that by not going to Mass on Sunday, it is a sin so why bother with the other things expected as a practicing Catholic?</p>
<p>Follow his ways, Be just, Give to others.</p>
<p>To love one another as He has loved us. This means "everyone", regardless of differences. Also, I believe God wants us to better look after His creation (planet earth and the universe)</p>
<p>That we become an inclusive Church. One that welcomes or welcomes back many who are divorced; left the religious life or priesthood for completely innocent or personal reasons; have been abused either sexually or physically by criminal priests or religious; have accepted that they are of the LGBTIQ community in our society. The Australian Catholic Church needs these people and will not grow until inclusiveness is the norm and seen to be the norm.</p>
<p>Having worked in various capacities for the Catholic Church in my professional life, I am in a position to observe changes over almost forty years. Clearly, the most significant factor is the sexual abuse crisis—both the extent of the abuse of children and young people by clergy and other Church personnel, and the extent of the cover-ups by men in high places who should have known better. It could well be imagined that this crisis would have led to significant and painful soul-searching and an eventual 'return to tors'—to the essence of what it means to be a Church of, and for, disciples of Christ. While such things as World Youth Day, public processions on Palm Sunday and spirited opposition to e.g. same sex marriage draw media attention and are perhaps helpful for some Catholics, I'm yet to see the Australian bishops unite to beg pardon by seriously addressing the shortcomings that allowed the abuse to occur. Instead, what I see in my diocese is a highly corporate, administrative approach to the day to day workings of the Church. The language is telling. Ministries have become operations; income streams are all-important; the Church in some dioceses is mixing it with other corporate developers and positions such as diocesan CEO appear without warning. I have seen loyal and diligent employees subject to the change management process in the name of a diocesan Church, overseen by men who ought to know better. Actual commitment to the Church—or to a relationship with Jesus—is almost a liability, presumably because those with this commitment are inclined to ask hard questions and to refuse to be silenced. The twin Gods of</p>

'compliance and governance' are the new deities. Certainly, compliance and governance matter, but not at the expense of gospel values and the wellbeing of competent and dedicated individuals. There is an alternative, and it has been well articulated by none other than Geraldine Doogue, who said that in the wake of the Royal Commission, she hoped that "for maybe 12 months, the Church might suspend all unnecessary activity and just listen". Clearly that's not been the case. I hope that the Plenary Council goes some way towards fulfilling this modest hope. I dream a smaller (in terms of assets) Church, a more contemplative Church, a more prayerful Church and most of all a Church which calls on the gifts of the People of God, the baptised, to serve the People of God and the wider community. Those gifts would be independent of gender, vocation or sexual orientation. So, I believe God is asking us in Australia today to demand that our Church remain a Church, infused with the gospel of Jesus, not simply an organisation whose 'brand' is a cross and whose 'good works' are indistinguishable from those of many other secular organisations.

To make changes to modernize the Church. We have to move with the times.

Why is it that a significant majority of Catholics who have received all their Formation sacraments through the Catholic school system are considered "lapsed". The process appears to have failed to evangelise them. To them, their "religion" is just something to note on the census. It is not lived. God's seed has not taken root in their hearts. They do not go to Church. They do not pray. They do not reflect on scripture. They are of this world, not God's. Many sadly, do not even know that they actually are Christian. My personal experience is that of the 10 or so Marist Brothers schoolmates that I still keep in touch with (from 35 years ago), I am the only one that is active in my faith. They are all good men but they have no interest in issues of the spirit. Like many "lapsed Catholics", they pay to send their children to Catholic Schools so the schools can do the obligatory "spirituality bit". Much like they would outsource a cleaner to clean their home or pay someone to tend to the lawns. The Church should accept that the process of en masse confirming school children whilst boosting the Church numbers for the census is failing. Confirmation is a most precious sacrament. It should be reserved for adults who can make an informed, adult decision to commit and who undertake appropriate spiritual formation. This will make their commitment real, deep, rooted in the heart and meaningful.

God is asking us to create a Church which fits with our sense of being Catholic; which acknowledges past failures; and which provides due warning and/or consultation over change and official pronouncements, respecting the largely democratic nature of Australian society.

I think the ordinary members in the Church, also in the hierarchy, should be engaged in the major human rights issues that beset us. Like the torture of refugees on Manus and Nauru and on mainland Australia. It should not be keeping silent ... or seem to be passive. Bravo to the people who make JUSTICE TRENDS. We should take their cue and get out on those demonstrations and those rallies. REALLY. No more passivity. The Church has to resolve and atone for its ill-treatment of women and especially children, and then take up the cudgels and fight with the oppressed and the marginalised. An activist Church.

The world is in turmoil, fraught with disasters and catastrophes. Prayers were once said in the 1940s, 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s after Mass. They should commence again. North and South America, Europe, New Zealand and Australia were once Catholic countries but many in those countries have stopped praying and are now into hedonism, making time for football, parties, games and TV when it is prayers that are needed. The Divine Creator, God, should be paid homage. Pronouns relating to any member of the Trinity should be universally changed to Thy, Thou, Thine, Thyself instead of you, your, yourself and all such pronouns relating to God should be capitalized to Him, He, etc to stand out.

A return to teaching the core principles of the faith rather than trying to liberalise the Church. The priests give very vague homilies with good ideas but no practical ways of living the faith. They are also too scared to teach what the Church teaches about gay marriage and abortion which is why the faithful do not have a clear idea on the Church's teaching. The Church needs to be a steady source of values and morals not just moving with the times for fear of losing members.

To improve Christianity in Australia and make it a great country again. Christians need to unite to defeat the evil that is creeping in to our schools. Teachers and Parents need to practice their faith to give a good example to the children. Priests need to work closer to their congregations for the people to realise what they are trying to achieve. Sermons need to be relevant to what problems people are experiencing--not a repeat of the Gospel that has just been read. Long sermons are a waste of time and people are soon tuned out. (Max 7-8 mins on Sunday) Our Lady's presence among us should be constantly highlighted by regularly describing the various apparitions that have taken place and the resultant effect on people. We believe that many young people and adults are not particularly interested in the Old Testament readings in each Mass. They would respond more readily if some readings covered great people in the more modern times e.g. Mother Teresa, the recent saints, Mandela, etc. who have answered God's call to do such wonderful things in his name. Persecution of Christians worldwide is probably worse now than in the ancient times. It is starting in Australia and could quickly spread if not checked by prayer and politicians showing the courage to combat it.

God is asking us for a renewed commitment to teaching our young people to be souls of prayer. For this, we need authentic witness to be given to them by the hierarchy and their parish priests and teachers in Catholic Schools. I have not heard a sermon encouraging me to say the rosary for a number of years, or explaining the rosary to young people?—I've never heard that at all. After Mass on Saturdays, it is recited in a number of parishes—and this is a very good thing. How often do we see young people saying the rosary in these gatherings? It contributes to the rosary to be seen as something that old (usually foreign) ladies say in funny accents, rather than something that could appeal to young and strong men and women who want deeper answers to the issues that are relevant to their lives. Besides a catechesis on prayer like the one in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we would do well to have programs in parishes and schools that help us to see prayer, and deep prayer at that, as a way of being authentic and mature human beings. The Rosary is an ideal entry point into a deep prayer life—a door that is always open. Prayer personalises doctrine—this is something that I've seen time and time again. It makes what might seem to be very obtuse doctrinal issues breathe with a life and relevance that resonates in the lives of people—young and old. They could be taught the inextricable link between the two—pray and doctrine. These are brought together in the rosary.

I think God is asking us to increase awareness about the family i.e. from early age, children have to be brought up being trained on how to live a successful marriage, how to raise their children in the faith, what is marriage about in terms of Catholic belief. This is to be actioned via early school intervention i.e. training sessions for year 9 and above about love, marriage, raising children, forgiveness, sacrifice, faith and prayer. Add to this an engaging and fun engagement program and pre-marriage program where couples enter the commitment equipped. Also mentoring program for after marriage, each couple has to have a mentor couple allocated by the Church that the couple can fall back on in case of crisis, also the mentor couple is to do regular follow-ups. I think God also wants all the clergy and teachers and catechists to be unified in the teaching and what they deliver and teach as the public has fallen into total confusion by each priest giving a different answer to queries and bishops having different opinions. A unified catechism compulsory to follow. A total review of Catholic schools' teachers esp. of RE classes as students are being fed answers totally contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church. Catholic school teachers should be models but what we see is the contrary, they laugh and talk during Mass, and answer questions according to their opinion and not what the Church teaches.

To pray, listen, think, discuss, then submit our findings.

Thoughts for the Plenary: 1. A quest for Personal holiness * a return to Mass and the sacraments esp. by young people and young families * a focus on orthodox doctrine and a life of prayer in seminaries * support for young married and those contemplating marriage * a focus on the beauty of the sacrament of reconciliation * the implementation of cradle-to-the-grave groups within

parishes * a focus on tertiary education in faith, doctrine and scripture for lay people within parishes and elsewhere.

Liturgy: Most homilies I have heard over the years are about morality and little focus on the God who transforms and initiates the new life in us. Occasional mention is made of this God but dominantly back to what we have to do. In time of crisis, often the only thing we can do is gaze at God. Our liturgy leaves little space for silence, adoration, praise and thanksgiving. The consecration is barely over and we are asking again. EVOLUTION: Instead of waiting till we get absolute certainty about evolution, let's trust the mounting evidence. How does the Spirit at work in creation shape our liturgy, sense of God, our morality? Creation is moving into greater complexity, fullness, relational it yet. How does this shape the way we live? WITH PEOPLE ON THE MARGINS. With regard to communion for the remarried or for gay people, one important factor that is never considered is what are the fruits of these relationships? Good trees only bear good fruit, Bad trees only bad fruit. Math. 7: 17- 20. Are people in these relationships closer to God? Closer to their partner, closer to themselves and to creation? POLITICS: With politics at its lowest ebb now down, as a community, live the values of God's reign that draws others to want to live like that. They sense a vision of a different world that resonates with them. Thanks.

1. Increase involvement of laity so as to reduce the workload on a diminishing priesthood. Expand Secular Franciscan Order. 2. Encourage non-practicing Catholics to become involved in other Church-related activities. Create more parish and diocesan organisations that focus on making our world a better place—protect the environment; provide meaningful help to the poor, sick and otherwise marginalized. SEE ATTACHED PAPER.

God is asking of us: kindness towards and acceptance of all others. The letting go of past grievances. Moving forward together as one people of God, joining together as convergence, rather than a divergence.

What is God asking of us? I believe God is asking us to heed—seriously heed—ALL the concerns raised in submissions. From my conversations with practising as well as non-practising Catholics, the most immediate responses are:

- Introduction of married clergy. This is a disciplinary, not a doctrinal, matter. Already, there are instances of married priests. Many of the best pastoral men leave the priesthood because of the celibacy rule.
- A greater role for women, including discussion (at the very least) of women's ordination. I believe this is not a theologically closed issue (as demonstrated by other Christian denominations).
- Generous compensation to victims of sexual abuse with no strings attached in order to counteract the cover-ups which have brought such disgrace and opprobrium on the Church.
- Church Governance. The laity has little real voice in matters of Church governance. The very structure of the Plenary Council provides stark evidence of this. A number of further issues relate to the Church's views on sexuality which are out of touch with current attitudes. To repeat Pope Francis: we cannot remain with "the illusion that things will return to being how they were before."
- Same-sex marriage. There is widespread support for this in the community and among Catholics, especially among the younger generation, who accept the fact that sexual orientation is not a decision and that committed love between two people should be celebrated in sacrament.
- Contraception is taken for granted by most Catholics of childbearing age. The Church should own up to this rather than take the hypocritical option of 'turning a blind eye'.
- Priestly training. I believe the above matters will not be properly addressed by clergy trained under the present system. I refer to the address given by Dr Geraldine Taylor to the National Council of priests Convention on 11 September 2018. Social Justice. While Church authorities have the right and duty to preach on issues in the public domain—and should do so, they should not engage in political activity, being ever mindful that not all the faithful are of one mind on political issues. The Australian hierarchy has largely been silent on significant moral and justice issues such as refugees, climate change and homelessness but expended great energy and expense in its political campaign against same-sex marriage.

Sacraments and Liturgy:

- There is much demand for reintroduction of the third rite of Reconciliation. Many who do not attend confession say that they would participate in the third rite.
- Return to the ICEL version of the English Liturgy, prepared by experts over many

years to final sign-off stage. The current English translation of the Mass is inelegant and unpopular.

- Reintroduction of Intinction of the Host.

Having listened and read much about the Plenary Council 2020, I would like to submit that God is asking us in Australia at this time to be up to the following 2 challenges: 1. that as the Catholic Church to be relevant to this time (i.e. 2020), and 2. That we and the Church leaders (i.e. ALL of us) have the courage both to acknowledge this challenge of relevance and to take the action needed to be relevant. By this I am not suggesting that the doctrine of the Catholic Church be changed in any way. Rather, the challenge for the Church is to be relevant to the Australian Society (and in this being relevant to the world in which we live). Due to word space restriction, I am unable to provide wordy suggestions, but I suggest this relevance is for all of us but of particular relevance for the young, youth and 'unchurched' of us in society (I am a practicing Catholic). Such examples are how we come together in community, how we live our life as a Christian and we as Catholics come together to praise and worship God within the Catholic faith. And in taking up this challenge to be relevant, the Church Leaders (and all of us) need to have the courage to take the steps to make this happen (which includes determining the 'indicators' to guide us and be able to see that we are acting as God is asking of us at this time. Further, this courage needs to include an acknowledgement by the Leaders (as for all of us) that there is the need for this change and that God is asking this of us at this time (well overdue I feel).

Courage, sincerity, honesty, patience, humility, gratitude.

The Catholic Church in Australia faces many challenges at present (and these are very likely to increase in the future). Many of these challenges are the result of scandal-ridden institutions and the near-total secularisation of society (which is at best apathetic to or embarrassed by religion or at worst incredibly hostile). Notwithstanding these challenges, I don't think the fundamental aims that God is asking us in Australia to fulfil today are any different to what has been asked of Christians in all nations and times—that we love God with all our being and that we love our neighbour, including by spreading the Good News to all people. The key to achieving these aims has not changed since Jesus instituted the Church—we have been given knowledge (Scripture and Tradition) and the sacraments. It is thus critical that the Church in Australia (as elsewhere) strives to ensure that Catholics understand the Faith and, more importantly, how to live it day to day. The following are some observations and suggestions: —How well do Catholics understand their Faith? How many Catholic households have a copy of the Catechism? How can we encourage Catholics (and others) to develop their understanding? —How well do Catholics understand why they need the Eucharist and what it means? Corpus Christi celebrations and Benediction has been beneficial and should be encouraged. —Lax practices or liturgical abuses are common and need to be corrected (potentially serving as a teaching point for the importance of the Eucharist). —Confession is neglected yet it is critical to the Eucharist—again this may be due to a lack of understanding. It should be appropriately encouraged (including before and during the Mass as is common in other countries and helping to link it to the Eucharist). —The rate of young people leaving the Church or being lapsed is increasing. Stopping this trend needs to be a priority—recent initiatives have been welcome but much more is needed at the senior high school and university levels. —Ongoing priestly formation seems neglected—some rarely attend spiritual retreats or undertake further theological studies once they leave the seminary. There also appears to be a lot of loneliness —perhaps there needs to be more initiatives to enable priests to develop support networks. —Guidance on homilies should be developed to enable more appropriate and uplifting homilies (as well as mitigate the risk of poor catechesis). —Church music should also be sacred and uplifting, not mundane (and much of it is in parishes around Australia). If sacred music is popular enough to be sampled in the latest Hollywood blockbuster or hip-hop album, why do people seem to think it has no place in the setting it was inspired and designed for i.e. the Mass. —Inter-parish events should be encouraged. I think it is worth remembering 'One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church' in the Creed. This highlights the importance of sanctity, unity and tradition.

We are living in a new time and our theology needs to echo this new time. In 1988, Pope St. John Paul asked the following question "Does an evolutionary perspective bring any light to bear on our theology, the meaning of the person as the Imago Dei and upon the development of doctrine itself?" In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis provides many signposts towards a response; he challenges us to expand our thinking by allowing a new wisdom to shape the understanding of our faith, our world and our images of God. We need a new theology that can 'converse' with the scientific discoveries and new cosmology which surround us. We are being asked for a new model of Church—a change of paradigm from an authoritarian hierarchical, patriarchal model to a communion of communities in dialogue, discernment and decision around both ecclesial and social concerns. A faith community embedded in, reaching out to and challenging the wider Australian community as Jesus did in his time and society. That there be a comprehensive overhaul of the governance of the Church at all levels: Australia/ACBC, Diocese, parish. Explore ways that women can have a significant role in the Church at all levels—in the early Church women led house Churches but that ministry has been lost over time, even denied. We are being called to Honour, recognise and affirm the mission of the Baptised—listen to our experience of living faithfully in a changed and changing world. —Listen to learn rather than advise and correct. The faithful elders, the young adults, the youth who are future, the women who have been denied voice for so long, Indigenous Australians, different Ethnic groups, Refugees, the Divorced, The LGBTIQ community, priests who have left, those disengaged with Church, those who no longer feel welcomed. Relevance of Church: That there be an in-depth exploration of all issues around making the Church relevant: To women who currently are denied full participation at so many levels; To youth who are immersed in a culture that sees the Church as antiquated and locked in values of a past age; To those who are 'different'—divorced, LGBTIQ, priests no longer engaged in priestly ministry, new and not so new arrivals from other countries and/or religious traditions; To those who are denied human rights here and elsewhere.

Obedience to the Church. The parish priest needs to obey constantly to the bishop of the Diocese not to the PARISH COUNCILS. Pass on the Faith to the people. Allow catechesis by lay people to catechise in the parish. A post baptismal catechumenate in schools. A post confirmation catechumenate to all those that have done their Holy communion. The Church has to fully recognise its Charism groups such as the Neo Catechumenal way, Opus Dei and many more to do Catechesis and pass on an adult faith as per Vatican Council II. Pastoral councils to be formed again as per Vatican Council II. Bring the Holy Eucharist to the squares. Popular missions also.

Respond to the inequities in our society—economic, opportunities, social. Work to create a compassionate society—one that sees need and is able to act. Form structures and a culture within the Church that is about outreach—build an inclusive Church and an inclusive and forgiving society. Return to the values of the early Church i.e. Fellowship and worship in small groups, knowing your neighbour, welcoming of newcomers. If the Church needs any hierarchy, then let's have leaders with less 'power' and more humility to know and serve the group, like a shepherd with their flock. Less emphasis on pomp and ceremony, robes, rites and more emphasis on building a loving and caring community that is enabled to take that love and care outwards. A Church that makes the effort to dialogue with those of difference, with those who do not know, to engage and teach and not to simply preach and judge—that is not how Jesus lived. A Church that models itself on the life of Jesus.

1. God is asking the Church in Australia to be more aware of its place in the global Church, especially within the Asian region. Instead of the ACBC and Australian Church being a part only of the Oceania Region, the Catholic Church in Australia should request to also be an active member of the Asian Region and the Asian Bishops Conference. The Church in Australia needs regular contact with Indonesia and with other Asian countries, where the highest majority of immigrants and asylums seekers are coming to Australia from. Formal interactions should occur between dioceses, parishes and nations in Asia. Australia should also actively participate in the Asian Youth Day and other Church gatherings in the Asian region. 2. A National priestly Formation Seminary process should be established under one united formation program, eliminating the multiplication of seminaries and theological institutes across the country. 3. The appointment of parish priests should be advertised

widely and a process established so that priests can apply for positions in any diocese in Australia, without impacting their incardination. Parishioners and diocesan representatives should then interview, select and recommend the appointment of a new parish priest. 4. A Diocesan Parliament (Diocesan Council) should be established in each diocese that includes lay and clerical representation and an open and transparent process in making decisions within a diocese. Before changes or actions can occur by the diocese, changes should be written (akin to a parliamentary bill) and be debated by a Diocesan Parliament. Once the parliament approves the act, then it could pass to the Diocesan Consultors/Deans for consideration prior to ratification by the bishop.

Allow priests to marry, make our Church a place of welcome for LGBTQ and divorcees and allow to receive Communion. Be true Christians, Encourage teachers in our Catholic schools to attend Mass and the sacraments. Live by the 10 commandments. Revitalize Mass and make it more appealing for children and youth. Uphold our social justice commitments in supporting refugees. Celebrate significant feast days. Encourage more vocations. Becoming more and more like Jesus going out healing the sick, feeding the poor, the lonely and the disadvantaged. Look at what the Salvos do. Take note and learn from others.

In this Plenary Council God is asking us to engage with all of the people who the Catholic Church has managed to ostracise over time because the Church has failed to live the Christian message in its actions, values and attitudes. I've made an earlier submission. I've been to a contact session and listened to others. I've also contacted my local newspaper to try to get them to help to access the 4 out of 5 Catholics this Plenary Council has chosen to ignore by failing to have a process in place to actively access and engage with them. It's easy to talk comfortably with our peers but this is not the time to feel comfortable!! I gave the newspaper the details of the person who I understood was a higher order contact person—[local politician]. She has some local clout so I thought something would happen. I'm guessing that's not what the organisers want to happen. If you are serious about the success of the Plenary Council you need to ask yourself the question—what have I done to ensure there is a voice for all Catholics? My son and his family live in [-]. This has not even been mentioned at their Church. So we've failed to access even the people inside the Church who may wish to contribute let alone the 80% who are not Church goers!!! The Plenary Council is 2 years away and we are rushing the construction of its foundations—what we build on will not sustain the Church into the future. As a parish priest, Fr [-] once said—'the Catholic Church is one generation away from dying—fail to pass it onto your kids and it dies'. The Plenary Council is an opportunity to re-engage with all of those people who deep in their heart believe in Christ (and probably live a more Christ like life than some of our clergy) but who have fled a Church who through its actions or inactions has increasingly looked so un-Christlike. I think as it stands the Plenary Council will be a Massive failure. It will tinker around the edges on Child Sex abuse or park the issue given the matter is being 'dealt with' this week in Rome. It will advance the interests of Church insiders -married priests may happen. It will listen only to women inside the Church who already consider themselves subordinate to the male-controlled power structure and will pay lip service to a more meaningful role for them. And it will collate all the feel-good stories it is collecting to evidence its success and it will have failed Christ and the rest of the Catholic world!! It's not too late to adjust the process and to target those who have not and will not have a voice—but do you have the courage?? I suspect not!

1. Words that speak of a future Church: a. Unite b. Pilgrim c. Recognise Jesus d. Courage i.e. Speak boldly f. Listen humbly g. Hear h. Hope and joy; 2. We need to be people of prayer. 3. Any change in the Church needs to start with each one of us and our relationships with God and our neighbours. 4. We need to listen, welcome and support all new ideas from all in the Church. 5. All age groups need to see and experience an inclusive Church. 6. The Church needs to be and to be seen to be more authentic. There is need for all age groups to experience a sense of belonging and of support in their efforts to live the Gospel, to spread the Good News and to help those in need. 7. We need to find out how to include young people in the life of the Church. 8. We need new models of how to engage Catholics at all levels. 9. We need to look at ways to include more non-ordained in the ministry of

<p>the Church. This will include looking at the role of the parish priest. 10. We need greater opportunities for formation in faith for adults including scripture and the catechism. 11. The concept of voluntary celibacy for the priesthood needs to be discussed and the advice and desires of the faithful (vox populi) must be submitted for action. 12. There needs to be a shift in the power structures of the Church. The pyramid needs to be turned upside down with the laity on the top and the hierarchy to be truly at the service of the people. 13. Consultation for a new bishop to a Diocese needs to include lay people. 14. It is important that the Bishops vestments be simplified especially the wearing of the mitre and the practices involved during Liturgies. 15. That the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation be offered in every parish. 16. That good and faithful ex priests, now married and living a committed life within the parish have their priestly faculties restored if they so desire. 17. Ongoing Formation/Renewal for priests is essential and set times for Supervision should be a requirement throughout their ministerial life. 18. Appointment of a parish priest needs to be for a set period of time in a parish. 19. Newly appointed parish priests must show consideration and respect for the already lived culture and practices in the parish and consult with the People before making any changes. 20. That the structures in parishes in relation to administration of finances be enforced so as to prevent any misuse of funds. 21. Inclusion of women in the structures of the Church at all level: parish, Diocese and Curia. 22. Inclusion in the sacramental life of the Church must be given to divorced and remarried members of the parish. 23. That the role of Diaconate be opened to both male and female. This should not be a gender-based appointment but rather on the individual's qualities/gifts and their desire/calling to this service in the Church. 24. That ongoing consideration be given to the Ordination of women.</p>
<p>To reach out to all, especially the marginalised, refugees, asylum seekers, homeless, poor. Be compassionate and inclusive, regardless of sex, ethnicity, and marital status. Build strong parish communities where people feel welcomed. Incorporate and empower young people to take ownership of their parish. Be supportive of our bishops, priests, religious. Be proud to be Catholic.</p>
<p>To think carefully about the direction the Church seems to be heading without any thought about being relevant for the future. Jesus reached out to all people and died so that all people may have a life of hope even though they may not be perfect. Too many fundamental type priests are busy proclaiming that everyone is headed to hell if they do not get to confession before they die. I think this is an insult to the love and compassion of God our Almighty Father in Heaven. Pope John 23rd said this idea was rubbish and called for the 2nd Vatican Council which liberated the Church from fear and opened up a spiritual life of hope and love.</p>
<p>Be bold in reimagining the tradition; the old structures that have served the Church well are in need of revitalisation, re-creation and reimagining. I believe God is calling us to let go of structures that are no longer life giving or life affirming, such as the closed clerical world Pope Francis speaks against. I believe God is calling the Church to be brave and daring in opening its arms to welcome everyone; to be courageous to see rules as norms that offer help and general scope for assisting; to find a language in prayer and worship that is close to the language of the people but which encourages people to life up their hearts. I believe God is calling the all the baptised to take up their vocation as the People of God and exercise their ministry as the Spirit leads, to be Christ in our communities of faith, and to be Christ everywhere outside the Church. I believe God is calling us to be radical in our commitment to be faithful stewards of creation.</p>
<p>He is asking us not to turn our backs on the Church because of the many rotten apples who have been exposed. With God's help, justice is now working her way through the ranks of those who have brought so much shame to our faith. He has also given the laity a voice through the Plenary Council 2020 to ensure the hierarchy no longer continues to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to the pain and grief of the victims and to restore faith in a Church that appears to have forgotten God.</p>
<p>To love one another as Jesus loved us :).</p>
<p>God is asking us to be more aware of refugees and their plight. We need to pray for them and be more accepting. Technology has changed the way we all live our lives but it can also drag us away from God. We all need to be reminded regularly that technology and especially social media must be</p>

<p>used as a means only spreading positive messages. Technology can never replace human one to one contact. God is asking us to consider this very carefully. We are called to love everyone but this does not mean that our integrity should not be compromised in regards to current issues of gender identity and other popular social issues. God is asking us to hold firm to the truth. It is very popular nowadays to pick and choose Jesus teachings. God is calling us not to disregard any of Jesus teaching just because it may not suit our lifestyle. God is asking us to be courageous about talking openly about our faith and not hide it. God is not asking us to throw out our Church traditions but to look into ourselves for change.</p>
<p>To become a humbler Church which is less focused on externals. That we reach out to people who feel excluded from Church and make them welcome. That we take up the Pope's theme of sin as an illness and that we are all in need of healing. That we look at parish structures so that there are more ministry opportunities for lay women and men. That we are more active in caring for the poor and speaking out against injustice. That we revisit the translations of the missal and lectionary to make them more accessible and inclusive. That we look at the formation of priests and adopt more of an apprenticeship model with students residing in parishes not seminaries. That we look at our models and structures of leadership to ensure that no one has absolute power and that there is accountability at all levels.</p>
<p>I cannot answer this question, I can only say I can see that through the Spirit we are slowly being drawn towards the Lord through unexpected ways. I can feel closer to my creator through scripture and I can only hope others can feel this, for the past sheds light towards the future and we have grown distant and forgotten our God. I would come to think maybe our Lord asks us to listen and open our hearts to His will and direction.</p>
<p>1. To look out for the people in the wider community and try to do what we can to alleviate their suffering. This could be through supporting charities such as the homeless appeal. I also believe we should look out for those in our parish community doing it tough. 2. To be more open-minded to people who may not follow the doctrines of the Church, but consider themselves Christian. 3. Think of each other and give to those not as fortunate as you are. 4. To evangelise and bring back his people home. 5. To be more engaging towards the youth on a daily basis. 6. I think God wants Australia to be inclusive and compassionate.</p>
<p>Majority of the group said God is asking us to be peaceful and loving people, and to help those in need. Some said He is asking us to pray more and go to Church every Sunday.</p>
<p>I think God is asking for Australia to remain convicted in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. This includes upholding celibacy of male priests, greater reverence in the Mass and encouragement of the importance of the sacrament of Confession.</p>
<p>Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Specifically, to petition the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to make an inclusion into the Litany of the Holy Rosary: <i>Turris civitatis, ora pro nobis! Tower of the City, pray for us!</i> The inspiration for this came from a prayer of St Josemaria Escriva, as follows: "May the Mother of God be for us '<i>Turris civitatis</i>', the tower guarding the city. The city which is each one of us, with so many things coming and going inside us, with so much movement and at the same time so much quiet; with so much disorder and so much order; with so much noise and so much silence; so much war and so much peace." (From Msgr Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer. <i>A Profile of the Founder of Opus Dei</i>, by SALVADOR BERNAL, Scepter, London, New York. 1977.)</p>
<p>Deeper faith.</p>
<p>A unified Catholic teaching based on the truth of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Be truthful about the faith not worrying about what the people reaction. Be Jesus-like, make available Faith formation in the parishes for all ages, especially for Children (similar to the Knights of Mary groups in the Maronite Church)</p>
<p>Several issues: — See attached Submission for details Reconciliation Communion Marriage issues, with particular reference to and Divorce Involvement of Women in the Church Structural Hierarchy Moral/Ethical Christian Voice and Leadership on Current Social Issues —Immigration —Gambling — Corporate Greed</p>

1. Church should consider abolition of compulsory celibacy for priests, 2. Women should be considered for ordination, 3. 3rd Rite of reconciliation must be reintroduced as well as Rites 1 and 2, 4. Divorced and remarried Catholics who have a prayerful, well informed, and clear conscience should be welcomed at Holy Communion, 5. The laity (particularly women) should be very involved in the administration of the Church, leaving priests to do pastoral work in a humble and caring manner.

Australia is a blessed country—a world leader in many fronts, and certainly a regional leader in Asia-Pacific and in Oceania. This privilege is so bestowed by God for this country to bear fruit and be a vanguard of faith and witness to the Gospel particularly in this region. I believe God is asking us in Australia to let the seed sown by those who brought the faith to this country and the Catholic migrants through the decades— they have planted it in rich soil—to grow and spread its branches so many can live in its shade. Specifically, God is asking us in Australia to be united to the sources of nourishment so that the seed can properly grow and bear fruit. This I believe, is fidelity to the traditional teachings of the Church as guarded by the Magisterium in communion with the Holy Father. This is practically shown in the primacy of our recourse and care of the sacraments of the Church, the sources of grace instituted by the Founder of the Church, Jesus Christ. A secularistic worldview has overcome the majority of Australian society, including members of the Church. I believe God is asking for a revision of this worldview, that it be supernatural, that it be sacramental, that it be Eucharistic.

[-] Parish Draft Statement—We have met, prayed and grappled with the question of what we think God is asking of us in Australia at this time. Ultimately, we think God is calling for our Church to be a more inclusive one that places people ahead of rules akin to what Jesus lived and preached when he challenged Judaism to place people ahead of the law. The sexual abuse scandal has revealed how much our Church leaders lost their way. We were appalled with how our Church leaders placed power and assets ahead of the protection of our nation's young people. Regarding the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, we agreed that: * Bishops and Leaders of Religious Orders should work with the Vatican in establishing a tribunal for canonical disciplinary cases. * Church leaders need to establish a transparent process for appointing Bishops which includes the direct participation of lay people. * Australian bishops need to promote more women to leadership positions in the Church. We considered that our present Australian Church suffers from being 'overly institutional' rather than a 'community' based Church. Members spoke of its clericalism and exclusiveness but saw this manifest not in our local parish but in the national Church. Again, this was linked to failures of our bishops and the concentration of power into too few hands. We call upon the Australian Church to: *Remove the present Mass text and replace it with the 1998 ICEL missal *Strive for greater ecumenical ties with other Christian Churches *Introduce a female diaconate *Protect the seal of confession but re-introduce the option of the 3rd Rite of Reconciliation for pastoral reasons * Re-examine the presentation of sexual morality in the Catholic Church regarding same sex attraction, masturbation and divorcees remarrying. *Allow divorcees who remarry outside the Church to receive communion. We believe God is calling all those baptised to be more engaged into the life and mission of the Church. We lament the Church's failure to truly live up to the hopes and decisions of the Second Vatican council which called on the laity to share in the salvific mission of the Church (Lumen Gentium, 33). We perceive the years that followed Vatican II as somewhat of a lost period which should have enlivened the laity and engaged them in the decisions about how the Church operates. God is calling the laity to have a meaningful role in our Church. We spoke of the need for our national Church to be more invitational, welcoming and accepting of alternative views. As a pilgrim Church, it needs to regain the trust of its members and focus on attracting young people to the body of Christ. We hope for a Church that can change with the times, proclaiming the good news and the dignity of all people and creation.

God is the power of the universe. We need to acknowledge that we have evolved as humans in our thinking and understanding of the world. God wants us to free ourselves of institutions and embrace the wonderful values of our religion and the teaching of Jesus and other clergy. Allow priests to be

full humans and enjoy all that life offers. Stop places antiquated social rules on people in order to control and create guilt. We are not sinners; we are beautiful creatures of God. Teach children the values, not the religion.

People leaving the Church • There is not a clear understanding why this is occurring. Professional, large-scale research is needed. • We need to find out why so many people find the Church so irrelevant? Has the Catholic Church lost its way or is this just part of a prolonged slump? Priests and bishops being able to relate to their parishioners • Needs to be a process in each diocese that allows parishioners to bring issues regarding parish priests to the bishop. • If priests were allowed to marry they possibly would have more empathy with parishioners and understand the demands of married life and children. • Issue of bishops living in the past—not being of the people. Bishops need to serve an “apprenticeship” as parish priests. • Priests from overseas also need to have training in Australian culture and parishes so that they can serve the people. Church is focused too much on the laws/rules rather than individuals. Humans have gotten in the way of the message. “Law and tradition should not be more important than the people and their needs and hopes”- Fr [-]. Broken trust • Broken trust with the laity...cover ups of scandals • The position of women in the Church—no formal positions in liturgy. • No positive image of the Church. Inconsistencies. Example—murderers can confess and be forgiven but if you marry the wrong person there is no way out. No follow-through on youth events • WYD 2008—a big ‘flop’...incredible resources dedicated to it—both financial and human. Enormous good will on the part of Catholic Schools staff but the Church hierarchy did nothing subsequently to follow up to make the Church relevant to our youth. • ACYF—2017 in Sydney it was a golden opportunity to do something about the Youth in the Church in Australia... Opportunity missed with WYD 2008. Organisers and Church hierarchy were asked/urged to plan for after ACYF. Was told that it would happen...nothing happened. • Lack of participation after children receive sacraments—we don’t see them again... sacraments are often (generally believed) to be undertaken in order to get children into Catholic High Schools. Sacraments are a golden opportunity to involve people in the parish. Need for better and more authoritative teaching • If the Church teaches something it should be able to convince people of its validity. • People in the first world are more questioning than they used to be. People coming to the Church from “outside” and also younger people (i.e. under 45) have not been brought up in the Church’s tradition of blind obedience. Issues such as marriage and remarriage, birth control etc are inconsistent and confusing. • The Church has to adopt a different approach on how to explain things and not to continue to expect blind obedience. People speaking for the Church need to be skilled and informed communicators, not just those in positions of authority. Need for more openness about financial matters. Need to build community.

God wants us to love, respect, have faith in Our Lady's intercession. Put Him first in everything you do. Stay as one family. Married people should practice the faith in the house. PUT GOD FIRST and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. God is asking for more Catholic action in our schools e.g. confessions, special feast Masses, stations of the Cross, Rosary. I feel most kids are lost in this day and age. Religion teachers should practice the true Catholic faith. God is asking for us to be more penitent e.g. fasting and prayer. God is asking for us to be more pastoral to our brothers and sisters.

- We need to get more young people to come to Church to learn more about God and how to love others. —Schools need to look at God as a listener, instead of a genie. —It is important, especially in our day and age, to stress the significance of ecumenism and unity of Christians. —Put more resources into hosting more youth events. —Encourage faith from a young age so that children grow in faith. —Encourage evangelisation so that youth can know their faith better and are able to stand up for their faith when challenged, and be able to spread God's word through preaching and example. -Need to keep traditions and values and have a firm stance on important issues and raise awareness of them (e.g. abortion). —That the Australian people who don’t believe in God because they think that God is not answering their prayers may know that God is always answering their prayers. —Need more people to come to Church. —That the youth of Australia create a better

<p>connection with God and the Church, so they are more accepting of the Catholic Church and accept people who go to Church or youth group.</p>
<p>Renew the priesthood using the example of St John Vianney. Then they will be able to renew the Church like how St Vianney did in Ars.</p>
<p>Nothing, we are not being asked anything from God. He's happy with us just being ourselves.</p>
<p>To be more accepting and loving to those that may not be of the same faith or no faith. Unfortunately, Catholic Christians these days are known more for what they are against than what they are for. Jesus himself said in John 13:35, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Also, I think God wants the Church to come alive, to worship in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24), the Church has become steeped in tradition and religiosity and so have the followers of the Church, I see it every Sunday at Mass.</p>
<p>From box at Church: 1. I pray that the Lord Jesus ... and that he helps every other person in need. Amen. 2. Change the Catholic tradition for the youth and future Church goer to give more modern approach like Hillsong to get more opportunities. More young people are looking for more interesting events and Churches these days are outdated as the world is established by entertainment.</p>
<p>* The role of religious and clergy in helping us live out our faith needs to be reviewed, and made more accountable and transparent. * Retain the Youth of the Church after they have gone thru primary and secondary religious education.</p>
<p>1/ An upholding of the Mass in its present form to continue inspiring the faithful. 2/A more natural married priesthood such as that during the first millennium of the Church's history. 3/ A native priesthood—in general, Australians tend not to take foreigners too seriously. 4/ priests must provide leadership—a flock needs a shepherd! 5/ We must have a professional priesthood lest local laity power groups dilute Church teaching to their own tastes.</p>
<p>This group found it difficult to respond to the question. We came very late to having these sessions (February 2019) and hadn't really been given much information about the purpose of the PC. We only really had the opportunity to have one session (this one being reported on) which didn't give the group enough time for reflection and meaningful discernment (i.e. and second, or third meeting would have been helpful). Doing our best to provide feedback that might be helpful, the group seemed to focus on two themes: 1. God is asking us to be accepting and inclusive, to come together. 2. God is asking us to take more responsibility for our faith formation, as children and as adults. There were 11 people present—2 facilitators and 9 divided into two groups.</p>
<p>To be not afraid in this time of the denial of God as God is always with us. To Pray, Pray, Pray. Prayer is the oxygen of the soul and without it we cannot be close to God. Bishops, priests and religious nuns should constantly encourage the Faithful to pray the Rosary and to frequently spend time in Adoration of the Holy Eucharist. Exposed on the Altar in parish Churches. The Holy sacrament of Reconciliation is much neglected in these times and the Faithful should be constantly urged by Bishops and priests to return to the practice of 'Monthly Reconciliation'.</p>
<p>To connect with the reality of today's society and provide realistic and in-touch spiritual sanctuary and support. This should be inclusive (i.e. welcoming to LGBTIQ, divorcees, etc.).</p>
<p>I think we need to engage more with the youth. The secular society is driving our youth further and further away and it's becoming a popular opinion now. We need to find ways to turn this around.</p>
<p>God is us to heed on the call, priestly/religious vocation.</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us to stop the slide of moral standards in Australia and not to alter our Church to keep pace with this slide. Our Church should be a beacon of light to guide the way back to a moral, family orientated Australia. Our bishops do not set a good example and preach forgiveness and acceptance of sins. Acceptance of sin can never be correct.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to be more authentic, humble, open, transparent, and merciful. God is asking that the Catholic Church be a place of encounter, not exclusivism. I attend daily Mass and it is becoming a "thing" that priests no longer preach on weekday Masses. I think this is a real shame.</p>

What does it cost to give a 3min reflection on the gospel? We need to put more emphasis on the Word.

We think that God is asking us what we are going to do to change things for the better in our society. Some of these things should be youth engagement and social justice for all minorities.

Like many institutions, the Church in Australia has lost the trust of many people who still or once did, consider themselves Catholic. We need to be a humble Church of God's people, a people who are always welcoming. Our young people on the whole do not engage with us and the media loves to treat "the Church" as somehow different to the Church—the people of God. God is asking us to speak to the disaffected and those alienated from the Church for a range of reasons; it is not just those who were abused—and we need to say sorry and put all the Church's resources on the line in repairing that relationship. It also those who have been let down by the Church failing to speak to them, in going back on the promise of a Church that spoke the loving Christ in the 20th century but seem to have stopped doing so much in the 21st century. It is about bringing the true joy and happiness that the psalms speak of and the living of life to the full that Christ spoke of. We need to use modern means to reach out to all Catholics—practising or not—and those who want a place where they will be welcomed for whom they are- children of God. We must stop being judgmental in our approaches to one another and we must provide a happy and positive environment in fellowship. When we can project an image (and a reality) that shows we are authentically loving, welcoming and living examples of the life Christ wants us to be then we will attract others. But we cannot hide our lights under a bushel. We need to find ways to authentically speak of our loving and welcoming Church. It must come from the people of the Church because for now the world has stopped listening to the leaders of the Church. Therefore, we need to find new leaders who represent the lay people. This may require a shake up in the way the Church operates and is administered. The clergy need to be like the original apostles and have the faithful appoint those who can administer the Church to do so, and allow those who can be the real representatives of the joyous Church to speak for us. The original apostles and disciples were not all people of great learning but were able to speak God's message of love and forgiveness. We need to find a way for our Church to be truly representative and relevant at this time. This means breaking down rules and barriers that prevent our female members to assume full roles in the Church. It means removing the restrictions on who can be our ministers and challenge the current models that restrict the western Church to single (sometimes celibate) men. If the Church is serious about its own survival and relevance we must make some very hard decisions.

To respond fully, openly and completely to the issue of sexual abuse within the Church. The Church should co-operate fully and be open to members being criminally prosecuted. The only way the Church can be healed is by talking about this. No doubt this approach will produce short term problems but long term the Church will be stronger. The Church has survived for 2000 years and the only way that this issue will hurt the Church permanently is if it is met with deceptive behaviour. A related issue is the ongoing violence against women. It is ridiculous that we have to educate men to treat women with respect but it is the reality. The main cause of death for young women in this country is violence at the hands of their partner. The very early Church had a strong role for women and this must be instilled in the Church again. I don't necessarily think female priests are the answer but the Church must lead by example in embracing women as full equals. The other great challenge of the time is climate change. The Church needs to take stand on this issue and use its influence to move politicians to action. If not, there may not be a congregation. Lastly, the world seems to be more isolated, especially for young people heavily involved in social media. Online bullying is a hideous issue for young people and the Church should take a position on this issue and use Church's...

To work together to help the world to live in peace and to know and love Him ... to teach our children His way and to be good people, to love, respect and help everyone in their lives ...

God is asking us to reach out to our current young and future generations whom The Church has forgotten about over at least the past thirty years. God is also asking the Australian Church change to

ensure that there are no future child abuse scandals within the Church. He is asking everyone in the Church hierarchy to strictly carry out their duty with regards to this very serious matter.

I think God is asking the Church to be open to the world of 2020. The changing composition of Australia, the changing social nature of our world means the need for changes need to be acknowledged. To do that, there needs to be a greater listening ear on the part of the structure of the Church to hear different stories of people who wish to be faithful and whose life is in the current society, which it appears the Church structure doesn't acknowledge. This would be achieved by the hierarchy of the Church reflecting on the current social reality of society and opening itself to changes to keep up with the world. This would then flow on to priests' training to open them up to the needs of the current world.

[-] Part 2. I think that at least in Australia there is a serious disconnect between the laity and the magisterium. In geological terms, this sort of disconnect is called a Mohr discontinuity—the rock has been eroded severely and then new rock has been laid on top. The discontinuity is plain to see from the side but from the top, everything looks ok. In Australia, I think this discontinuity began in the 1960s when the women of Australia decided to opt for other forms of contraception besides abortion and douching. It could have had its roots in the laity being without clergy at the beginnings of European settlement in this country. But my impression is that in the 1960s, the magisterium both here and overseas simply shrugged their shoulders, ignored us and left us to our own devices. And we have, and we have got on with it. Now the Church is something that a small proportion of us do on a Sunday for the sacrament of the Eucharist and other times for the other sacraments. The only adult education for the majority of the laity occurs when their children receive the sacraments for the first time. There is very little if anything that links the laity and the magisterium together in a meaningful way. The positions of bishop and cardinal are almost meaningless for a lot of us. I think that God is asking the magisterium and the laity of this country to grow up, to accept the current situation, to accept that God loves us as we are, not how others think we should be. We should be practical about what can be achieved. We should not tell the Catholic women of Australia that they made the wrong choices 50 years ago. That generation of women should not be ignored or declared irrelevant in the future of the Church if for no other reason than that will extend the discontinuity. In light of the abuse of children by Church personnel, I think a lot of women are glad that they did not have more children to serve as prey for paedophiles. I think that if you were serious about what Catholic laity think as part of a run up to the 2020 plenary council, you would prepare draft papers on a series of issues including those that I have referred to, and circulate them for people to read and react to. You would then conduct consultations within the parishes so that by the end of this year we would all have an idea of what a plenary council is, what is going to be discussed and how decisions will be made and what role if any the laity will play in that. But I don't think that is going to happen is it? That would require those on the other side from us to have strong stomachs, a sense of social justice and the humility to listen and act in some sort of way that reflects the democratic nature of Australian society and not the autocratic nature of the Catholic Church magisterium. Good luck.

How can the Church survive and thrive in Australia?

Lay Catholics should be encouraged to listen more attentively to the word of God primarily in the Liturgy of the Mass and also in recommended spiritual reading and undertake further catechesis where necessary. This will help to discern the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in their prayer life and in carrying out their daily tasks and responsibilities. We will know God's will for us when we get to know the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ and learn to develop a friendship with him. Only then will we be motivated to be more proactive in carrying out the new evangelisation which is an integral part of every baptised Christian's vocation.

He is asking us to forgive Him. He is asking us to have mercy on Him. He is asking us to give Him a second chance. He is asking us to be a reflection of Himself. He is doing this through the work of the Royal Commission. He is doing this through the work of the Plenary Council 2020. He is asking us to have the same mercy on Him as he has for us. He is asking us to remember He was one of us and will

always be so. He lay down his life for us; surely, we can lay down our arms for Him. In the silence of the tabernacle, he is waiting for us to open our hearts again to Him. Love wipes away pride and restores humility. That is what He is waiting for us to remember. His life is in our hands once again. Let us raise Him up with love. Let us forgive together. Let us remember who we are. The children of God.

I think God is asking us to look after our environment. I think God is asking us to care for those less privileged than ourselves. I think God is asking us to treat women equally, including in Church leadership so that all positions are equally available. I think God is asking us to transform Church leadership. Including allowing marriage of priests, bishops, etc. I think God is asking us to legitimize and celebrate same sex marriage in the eyes of the Church.

City life has become impersonal and a lot of people have no support structures often leading to confusion and loss of hope. Informal structures will spring up if people take time to be interested in each other, to be prepared to reach out. Our busyness and indifference are an obstacle to this. "Bugger you Jack, I'm alright" is too true an attitude just now. Item 2. Young marrieds, either with or without children need policies which support and encourage families to see children as a blessing not a financial burden. More of Peter Costello's "Two for you and one for Australia". Item 3. Aged Care and Disability support will become ever more needed and will have to be funded properly. Item 4. Overseas Aid has been progressively reduced over many years. At present, Australia is extremely mean. We could and should be a lot more generous and use our aid to build up local skills in developing countries rather than awarding contracts to Australian companies to do the work.

"What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?" In the past six months, I've been part of a number of groups reflecting on this question and its implications for the Catholic Church and indeed for our country. The discussions have been wide-ranging and challenging. The reflections resulting from this question have put me in mind of Australia Remade, the portrait created two years ago of the kind of Australia being dreamt of by hundreds of people across the country. Using the structure of Australia Remade, this response describes three pillars, which I see as fundamental to an Australian Church striving to embody the gospel in the 21st Century. THE THREE PILLARS OF A GOSPEL CHURCH: 1. Growing understanding of the mystery of all becoming, the deepest meaning of our lives—whom we call God. Commitment to the study of emerging/evolving theological reflection in communities in seminaries in universities in schools. The development of liturgies which reflect changing understandings grounded in life based in the language of the people The consistent use in Churches, communities and schools of a holistic, rather than outdated pietistic, spirituality. Homilies shared and led by Church members who possess an understanding of contemporary theologies who are part of the community who witness to emerging understandings and questions. 2. Community—inclusive, open, transparent, a commitment to a gospel Church humble, open and attentive to God's way, standing in opposition to rampant clericalism—status, entitlement, privilege and power. The promotion of all voices in the Church ... women's and men's, the voices of those who have been oppressed, the voices of those made silent, the voices of those who have been excluded because of Church laws regarding matters such as divorce and remarriage, the voices of both young people and older Church goers who have become alienated by monolithic, hierarchical and patriarchal structures which they see increasingly as irrelevant to their lives a commitment to shared decision-making, which proclaims in both word and structure the legitimate place of women in the Church, which gives high priority to inclusion, delegation, collaboration, and shared leadership the reformation of liturgies which speak to the living realities of the community which use inclusive language to include the feminine in ritual and liturgical celebrations. "A discipleship of equals" which makes available all sacraments to women which declares celibacy to be optional for those who are ordained which decentralises Church structures which embraces the whole community in decision-making—the inclusion of the *sensus fidelium* in all deliberations and responses which declares reconciliation to be a sacrament for adults, not children the allocation of resources to both women and men for theological, pastoral, scriptural and spiritual training at tertiary level and in seminaries. 3. A community and life for others—the Church of Luke 4 and Matthew 25. A Church which

proclaims the God of the margins asserting "life to the full" for all creation a Church which strives to embody the dangerous memory of Jesus in its rituals, its proclamations and its priorities a Church which acts with courage in its practice and rhetoric on behalf of those who are poor and oppressed throughout the world participating in the healing of a broken world and broken lives a Church which, in word and action, speaks out against violence within and beyond devastation of earth sexual, domestic and family violence injustice suffered by First Nations peoples burgeoning weapons stockpiles Australian immigration and asylum seeker laws compulsive consumerism widening gap between rich and poor, a Church which engages with the world using its influence and credibility to engage in advocacy utilising conferences, gatherings and ritual to highlight injustice and the call to compassion and justice.

Everyone's experience of and the Church and the Church is unique and it is important the plenary council hear responses from as many people as possible.

I think God is asking us all to listen ANEW to the gospel, to Jesus' life and example of love, compassion, care, gentleness, forgiveness and service to others. I believe we need to put Christ back in the focus, the centre of HIS Church. Jesus said I AM THE VINE. We are his branches so all we say and do MUST stem from Him; all dialogue, decisions, planning for the future of the Church must be based on Christ, not Church politics, power, perception and control. I feel God wants us to embody Christ's example and be a Church more conscience-driven and less establishment-focused. He came and showed us how we need to follow in His footsteps. He IS the Way, the Truth and the Life, after all.

More Community building and catechesis, like the Capuchin young adult group and Immaculata Sisters Friday night gathering. I feel like we as young people have nowhere to go and feel welcomed too.

I think God is asking us to read the signs of the times in Australian society very carefully and seek to influence in ways that are based upon witness in action and word. The Jesuits have been wonderful sowers of the Word in their missionary work, as they have sought always to "inculturate" the Gospel. Other religious orders have done likewise and many Australian Bishops and priests, who have deeply touched people, have similarly worked in this way. Catholics often refer to it as having "the common touch". It is a gift that manifests itself in a balance that prefers kindness and acceptance over exclusivity and judgement. Having worked in Catholic education for 35 years, the need for such emphases seems to me greater than ever. A recent example where our leaders in Australia erred in judgement was in the title of the critically important and constructive Pastoral Letter in regard to Marriage, published during the debate and public discourse leading up to the plebiscite on marriage law in Australia. The title "Don't mess with marriage!" was interpreted by many intelligent and faith filled young people as aggressive and judgemental, and sadly disengaged them from the letter and the invitation it held to understanding the Church's deep belief in the presence and wonder of God in the sacrament of Marriage. Did that title sound like the voice of Jesus? This disconnect from the common people leads me to the conviction that God is seeking a more "co-responsible" approach for the Church in its leadership, vitality and sustainability for the generations to come. It is hardly a new thought and a theme Pope Francis often promotes. Co-responsibility exists in many guises in society and organisations. There are three areas I suggest the Plenary Council explore. First, as a father of two daughters and a son, it is striking the Church excludes half of their talent pool from its formal positions of leadership. In my experience, it is the girls and women who seem to promote and nurture faith in the family from one generation to the next more than anyone. This is a strength, holy in design. Is it not time to have the voice and decision-making of women more directly influencing us as a Church? Second, we need to dialogue closely with the Maronite and Melkite Rites of our Church in relation to married priests. Having taught and worked with students, families, and clergy from these Rites, we have among us here in Australia different models of Church that are successful and their long tradition worthy of deep listening and reflection. Third, there is a need for the Church to engage more purposefully with the new and emerging PJPs and Communities of Christ's Faithful. They represent another change to the face of the Church and it is vital these groups

<p>are part of the fabric of the Church in this country and not a loosely affiliated cluster of NGOs with a vague Catholic root.</p>
<p>a. To guide, educate and encourage our Youth (7 responses) • To clearly guide and educate our youth in the Catholic faith from primary school to university • To employ more religious coordinators in schools to guide the students in the practice of the faith since these young ones will be the future leaders. • To have good religious teachers in Catholic schools • To encourage youth to be more involved in the different ministries in the parishes • To be vocal and firm in protecting our children from “gender theory” • To emphasise the teaching of the faith clearly and strongly in all Catholic Schools • To have school retreats and Bible study activities so that when High School students finish school they know their faith. b. To be more like Christ (8 responses) • To be merciful and loving in accordance with our faith to all our neighbours • To love and be kind to the needy • To help and visit our neighbours • To keep the Commandments, regularly attend Mass to receive the Eucharist and avail ourselves of Reconciliation. • To deepen our faith and be more prayerful • To pray more to bring souls back to God • To persevere in faith and work in service to others • To know more about God, giving Him what is due to Him—thanks and glory. c. To proclaim, educate on and evangelise the Catholic faith—Personal and Laity (8 responses) • To encourage and explain the benefits and beauty of the sacraments and Mass—to deepen our own understanding and to more effectively reach: o Lapsed Catholics o Our Christian brothers and sisters in other denominations o Non-believers • Invite non-Catholics to our prayer groups • To be true witnesses to the Catholic Faith with courage—standing up and speaking the truth with love and respect. • To be bold in the practice of the faith and evangelising others by example • To evangelise via Catechist teaching and speaking at opportune moments • To support and encourage our clergy to be strong leaders and vigorous in leading our Church as Christ and the Holy Spirit guides. • To spread the Good News to all • To be more charismatic—to promote the invitation of the Holy Spirit as our guide to all—Clergy priests/Bishops (5 responses) • To be strong and vigorous in leading the Church • To encourage and explain the benefits and beauty of the sacraments and Mass—to deepen the youth and laity understanding of the faith • To hold firm to the Catholic faith—root out secular ideologies in the Church and don’t compromise the truths of the faith • Provide accessible catechesis to adults—priests to hold sessions in the parishes to explain the catechism of the Catholic faith. • Teach/catechise to Catholics, particularly on sex marriage and condemnation of contraception.</p>
<p>Catholic Church has been given people the impression of being traditional, conservative, liturgy oriented and restrictive. We need to renew our Church image to grow with the world. We need the people to know that our faith, instead of causing restrictions to their daily life, actually helps to support the fundamental values of this generation. To achieve this objective, the Church needs to provide more resources to achieve this objective.</p>
<p>Catholic Church should make clear and reflect the true image of God the Trinity to more people including Catholics, Catholics who have left the Church and Non-Catholics. Therefore, our Church may lead people to live out the true God in our lives, our words and our actions, harmony and peace with one another may one day exist.</p>
<p>Attract more people to come to Church and know God. There may be a low sense of belonging in the relationship with the Church.</p>
<p>Break out of the Denominational straight jacket. Face up to difference between Catholic and "Roman Catholic". Examine the difference between "being a Christian" and "being Christian".</p>
<p>That the Church be relevant to the needs of the Australian people at both Diocesan and parish level ... by homilies relevant to the lives of the people, liturgy/intercessions, parish priests act in collaborative manner and not feel they only are the Church, by involvement of parishioners at all level of governance and involvement in life of parish, by doing away with clericalism and involvement of women, language used by everyday English—e.g. 'consubstantial' (Nicene Creed), 'prevenient grace' (feast Immaculate Conception), strong acknowledgement of wrongs in the Church, broad membership on parish council.</p>

For priests to receive formation so that they are able show compassion, respect, kindness and hope, not be judgmental, when presiding over funeral liturgies where the deceased has committed suicide.

The Catholic Church in Australia is facing a crisis. There is significant disrespect for certain elements of it, a number of its views and the way it communicates with its parishioners. This crisis is not just due to the catastrophe of sexual abuse and the Royal Commission, but also because many of our priests, particularly those more recently ordained, are out of touch with the communities that they serve. They often cause offence, seem much more conservative than Pope Francis and as a result we lose our congregation. God is asking us- • To ensure that the Church survives, improves and grows. • To recognize the need for urgency in addressing this crisis. The Plenary Council's timetable does not reflect this urgency. • There needs to be a two-pronged approach: to educate existing priests, especially those more recently ordained and to educate seminarians so that they have people skills, can demonstrate empathy and caring and can deliver a relevant, structured and timely homily. • To have formal personnel structure and review processes of the performance of priests and Bishops, as would be the case in a corporate, with input from laity. • To have stronger representation from women in Church structure and decision making. Women are the primary influencers of Church attendance and commitment within families. • To have priests who give sermons which are inspiring and more relevant to the issues that people face daily rather than lecture from a theoretical viewpoint. • For the Church to better publicize and promote the outstanding contributions made to our society by its agencies- hospitals, schools, aged care, women's shelters, refugee aid, hospices and so on. The Church has a duty to do this to support its many employees, being the equal largest non-Government employer with 220,000 employees. The Church also needs to demonstrate a positive contribution to society in the face of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse. • To demonstrate compassion, understanding and sorrow to victims of sexual abuse and provide full assistance to them. • To embrace non-Catholic parents, unmarried parents, divorcees or gay people who are in our community and wish to participate in Mass and parish life. • To reintroduce and promote the Third Rite of Reconciliation so as to encourage more parishioners to participate in the sacrament, as neither the First nor Second Rites are attracting many parishioners.

I think God is asking us to revitalize the Church by, firstly, encouraging regular Church-goers to get to know each other well through local activities such as parish retreats and study groups. Secondly, the parents of children, especially the parents of children attending Catholic schools, need to be encouraged to participate in Sunday/Vigil Masses along with their children. The parents of children attending Catholic SRE at public schools should be similarly encouraged. One way of starting this process could be through special invitation to families to participate in the liturgy in specially designated monthly family Masses. In time, these families could be encouraged to participate in parish life more fully and especially, to attend Sunday/Vigil Masses regularly. I believe God is asking us to act as spiritual communities which are actively engaged in assisting the wider community of which we are a part. This means encouraging the growth of parish-affiliated or geographically local groups which are inspired by the desire to meet community needs. It is vital that lay members of such groups have decision-making powers about their group's activities, in consultation with parish priests. The damage to the reputation of the Church through the revelations of the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse needs to be acknowledged and countered by this kind of positive involvement of Catholics in their wider social communities. We need to think about how to make individual parish Churches more welcoming to young Catholics and to Catholic converts of all ages. There also needs to be recognition of the fact that the Royal Commission on Child Abuse has left many non-Catholics with a disgust of the Church that is not tempered by any acknowledgment of how widespread child abuse is in the general community. Many non-Catholics have very little understanding at all of the Catholic Faith, which seems to exacerbate the situation. Of course, Catholics are shocked and disappointed too, but understand the situation as the failure of individuals rather than of a whole institution.

To include lay people in the decision-making structure of the Church. That is, to dismantle the patriarchy which rules the Church. We must include lay people including women as cardinals to create an equality of all people in this structure.

- Universal call to holiness—we need to remind people that our faith has a purpose—to become one of the saints in Heaven! This is not a calling limited to priests and religious, but to all of the faithful. —Formation of the laity—this requires active and ongoing formation of the laity that can be done in a social way—e.g. family clubs. —Apostolate—have priests, religious and teachers in Catholic schools emphasise that the laity has a duty to make disciples of all nations. —Formation of teachers in Catholic schools—we need to ensure that teachers in Catholic schools are well formed to pass on the Catholic faith—suggest ongoing training and development. —Catechism—encourage parents to form small groups and teach the catechism to their children in their homes. —Availability of Mass—provide daily at Mass at convenient times e.g. in the morning before work (say 8am) or late at night (say at 8pm) for people working late. —Availability of Confession—promote the purpose and need for confession in Church life and make it easy for people to go to confession by having it at convenient times and providing brochures on how to go to confession. Also have priests actively invite people to go to confession. —Prayer—help people to pray by teaching mental prayer, promoting the Rosary etc. and to help them to love praying. —Catholic resources—encourage each parish to set up a CD stall (e.g. through Parousia media) and book stall (e.g. through Scepter publishers) to make it easy for the faithful to access quality Catholic spiritual reading and resources. —Devotions—introduce saying the Angelus at 12pm for children in all Catholic schools; offer daily Mass in all Catholic schools; and invite students to attend benediction and adoration. —Support for married couples—provide ongoing support and coaching for married couples to improve their marriages including through ongoing support and understanding of natural family planning. Celebration of the Mass—incorporate all of the richness of the Mass into each Mass—ornate vestments, incense, bells, faithful reading of the texts, reverent gestures, etc.

To be honest. To love. To share. To connect. To listen. Stop hiding behind canon law written by men and colonisers and to reach out and connect.

In my opinion, God is asking us to make every effort to get to know Jesus Christ personally as much as possible. The way to do so is through knowledge of what our Faith teaches, personal prayer, and availing ourselves of the sacraments. Anything that facilitates the above will be for the benefit of each individual, and through the Communion of the Saints, for the whole Church, in Australia and worldwide. In this submission I would suggest that every effort be made to facilitate attendance at Holy Mass, both on Sunday and Holy Days of obligation as well as on weekdays. I have observed and in suburban Sydney, the majority of Masses during the weekdays tend to be at 9 am or 9.15. While convenient for retirees and mums after taking the children to school, it leaves out any person working. I have noticed that one 6.00 am Mass in Plumpton, in Western Sydney, has a very large attendance both of young people and parents, before they go to work. Holy Mass in many parishes on Saturday evening and Sunday are at the same time. If for work and family reasons these times are not possible for someone to attend, fulfilling the Sunday obligation becomes very difficult, sometimes virtually impossible. Proposal: That times of Masses both weekdays and Sundays be better coordinated in suburban large capitals, to provide more varied choice and encourage the faithful to attend more frequently.

I have noticed that the times when priests are available for confession in parishes are minimal (sometimes as little as 15 minutes weekly). I have also noticed that the large majority of faithful receive Holy Communion, possibly unworthily, if nothing else, because they are not regular Sunday Mass attendants. Very rarely have I heard in the homily a reminder of the need to be in the Grace of God to receive the Blessed sacrament. Proposal: To encourage priests to spend hours in the confessional every week. It is quite easy to predict that initially there will be very few penitents, but with time and insistence on this point from the pulpit and in parishes' bulletins the faithful will come back to use the sacrament of Reconciliation more freely and often. As far as I am concerned, it is

more important for priests to give time to make the sacraments available than run committees, no matter how important these may be...

For this to happen, the faithful need to learn, therefore to be taught what our Faith teaches. There is a great lack of knowledge and understanding of our Faith among the faithful. Most Catholic homes do not have a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Faith, and in my view, a majority of Catholics in this country have not read the Compendium of the Catechism, let alone the Catechism itself.

Proposal: 1. That the Catechism be promoted at all levels, and copies made available at reasonable prices -through bookshops, parishes, schools, etc- and the faithful be encouraged to purchase and read, either individually or as a family. 2. That classes be organised, by parishes, schools, or individuals properly informed and formed, to teach the Catechism. 3. A possible goal could be: one copy of the Catechism in every home, one copy of the Compendium for anyone in the home capable of reading it

FIRST RESPONSES: 1. Modernise by having hierarchy open up to laity:—Welcome and value women in lead positions;—God is asking the Church to offer priesthood to women and married men;—Have more lay-leaders in ministries for the future;—Optional marriage for priests;—There be an equal voice in the Church for Laity especially at the PC2020;—We need to keep up with the times, think of future and our kids;—That the Church evolve with the people and youth, acceptance of all who attend;—parishes to be amalgamated, have a paid youth worker, increase attendance, increase/improve atmosphere, have people be attracted to come weekly, have the best priest possible leading the parish. —To show concern for the environment and social justice issues, e.g. especially things relevant to our community like homelessness, overcrowding but equally overseas. —To embrace and show love to people who have been divorced. —To speak the truth and challenge falsehood in authority. —God is asking us to continue believing and have faith in the Church despite the accusations and convictions of the clergy. —Accept the LGBTIQ community. —For the Church to say sorry for sexual abuse. —To listen to people from other religions and find common ground, Australia's multicultural society promotes discussion. —Increase our sense of joy in the Church. —Talk about faith and what is happening in Church, open, truthful and compassionate. —With not enough priests, others are overworked, hence quality is diminished, hence laity must be brought in to service. 2. CHRISTIAN WITNESS—Positive communication about the Church with others;—Constant prayer, get to know Jesus more fully;—To live our Catholic lives in accordance with Jesus' teachings to the best of our ability;—Evangelise, reach out to all, show/lead by example and in our actions and kind deeds;—Be involved in worship and not be afraid to express feelings;—Increase our knowledge of the Bible;—Obey God's wishes;—As lay people go to a parish where you can grow;—Forgive 'more than 77 times 7';—Be creative in thinking of ways to get people coming back to Church;—Growth in Community/welcoming others to our community;—Less talk, more action with our faith;—Sharing our faith with others, especially with children;—Engage and pay youth workers and encourage youth to attend Church;—Respect others and nurture faith in our children;—Have faith in God's plan for us even though journey is difficult at times;—Build and nurture relationships;—Be the face of Christ by giving kind, charitable, forgiving, welcoming, non-judgmental service, without hesitation;—To put our faith into action, let the wider community know what Catholics are doing to help people, e.g. St Vinnies, CatholicCare. Not many people are aware of their services; —Show and express love to all religions and people.

God is asking Catholics in Australia to be more compassionate and giving to those in need. The destructive issues confronting society such as drug use, homelessness, domestic violence and generally greatly deteriorating standards are increasing across the board in many aspects of life. Whilst the many Catholic agencies and charities currently provide important support to combat these problems, more needs to be done. Arguably, there has never been a more important time for the Church to lead by example. To have a voice and use its wealth and position to really influence Government policy and outcomes. Despite the recent damaging abuse issues, the Church must stand

<p>up for all that is. God wants his followers in Australia to show the way with Jesus' love and guidance at the forefront.</p>
<p>God is asking us to take care of the family unit. Children need to be brought up and loved properly so that they become well balanced adults ... This in turn will help them when they have their own families and children...</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to make more and better use of the sacrament of Reconciliation. I think the use of proper confessionals (priest and penitent in separate rooms and not visible to each other) could help people feel comfortable to say what is in their heart and not worry about being overheard (like the old confessionals one sees in Europe). This would also protect the priests from any accusations of inappropriate behaviour.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to go back to learning our Faith. I think we need better explanation of our doctrine so that there is understanding and freedom in our homes, schools, youth groups and Church.</p>
<p>He is asking us to be better people by trying to live virtues such as generosity, sobriety, charity, industriousness, fidelity and loyalty, forgiveness, sharing, order ... by each person living virtues ... we will find ourselves in a better society and in a happier environment.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to focus on our spiritual leaders so that they receive enough input to be themselves vibrant in their interior/spiritual life and to be able to help/encourage/lead others.</p>
<p>I think He is asking us to get to know Jesus better and to understand why we are here alive on earth.</p>
<p>So many Christians have songs on YouTube and they are popular ... I think God is asking us to use this medium to bring Jesus to more people...that more Catholic singers put themselves on YouTube.</p>
<p>To be with people who are in some kind of need. For those who preach Christ Jesus to be real—to not hide behind the institution of the Church but to accept all people as worthy of God's love and so worthy of our love. To accept all people to communion—it is stupid to require people to be perfect before they come to communion which is actually for those who need God's love. To not convict those who marry for love a second time whilst welcoming those committing white-collar crime, paedophilia, family violence, etc. is the mark of a prejudiced, patriarchal, powerful Church. God asks us for humility.</p>
<p>To be relevant. To speak English, not a translation. Does the Church think Jesus spoke Latin? Return to believing people are body and spirit together. Write the Eucharistic prayer in more accessible language. Use less words and more reflective silence. Thank you.</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us to take a reasonable time to reflect upon and lament the terrible sexual and emotional abuse that has been inflicted upon so many innocent people. Not to "fix" it immediately and then move on to the next agenda item. To sit with survivors and allow for true healing through encounters of fairness and solidarity and if necessary, working through the real, ugly shame of it. I believe that in the shadow of this crisis, that God calls us as a Church to no longer sit in judgement of the "other". To go to the margins and ask for the forgiveness of LGBTI people, women, divorcees, single mothers and those deemed unworthy and transgressive, to be part of us and our celebrations. In our shared brokenness, God asks us to rediscover community, family and celebration. God asks us to follow Jesus as the perfect model of how we should live and to see Him in those on the fringes. Let us acknowledge the horror of abuse of power and trust to humble us and find our way back to Jesus, who above all things, was love—pure and simple. No more smiling for the cameras—let's start to live authentically in the mess.</p>
<p>Improved communication. Particularly between the clergy and practicing Catholics, non-practicing Catholics and those outside the Church. The world has become very secular and the Church is not countering this narrative nor helping the laity to do so. At the moment, it seems that there is no consistency in the message from the Church. To be more open and realistic in the changing world. The Church/clergy needs to be able to discuss topics with the laity openly and honestly and both should be able to air opinions without fear of being disrespected. Both the clergy and laity to practice what the Church preaches. To also be truthful, open and honest. Be inclusive of all. Better</p>

<p>faith formation, for all ages, allowing a better awareness and understanding of the Church's tradition and liturgy to allow the laity to be the best we can within the teachings of the Church. And to give those that wish, the tools to evangelise. Parishes to be communities and socialise within the parish and with other parishes. There should social groups within the parish, particularly for children and youth.</p>
<p>That the Christian religion becomes much more relevant in society and that the Catholic Church plays its lead role once more.</p>
<p>To be explicitly welcoming of LGBT people. Not just with empty words, but backed up with genuine action and witness. For example: The Australian Church could say that "Church employees who are in or enter into same-sex relationships, civil unions and marriages can do so without fear of being fired".</p>
<p>To act and be authentic Catholics. Act with fidelity to our faith and dedicate ourselves as the body of Christ through the Eucharist. Church leadership and members need to practice more patience and understanding ecumenically. Individuals and leaders fail to realise when to speak and when to listen lack of proper discernment.</p>
<p>I think God is asking to follow in Jesus' footsteps, listen to his words, but more importantly, to act in love. To evangelise.</p>
<p>We believe that God is asking the Catholic Church in Australia to increase the doctrinal formation given to all Catholics, and especially to the youth. In this way, each person will understand the true meaning of being Catholic and thus live out their faith better in their everyday lives and foster a desire to share the faith with their families, friends and colleagues. With doctrinal formation, one can live a unity of life where one's faith is very much integrated into all aspects of their lives and not just as an 'extra-curricular activity' that they do or attend on the weekend. We need to realise that our faith is not merely to go to Mass on Sunday, but to live as other Christ's here on earth, in today's society, in whatever situation we are in, religious or lay.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the recommendations of the Royal Commission seriously, and find ways to recover the moral authority lost by the scandal of child abuse and its cover-up. • Empower lay Catholics, especially women, by involving them in decision-making at all levels of the Church. • Revitalise outreach and mission to those with no religion, and baptised Catholics who are not regular worshippers. • Maintain and deepen spirituality of lay Catholics. • Find ways to ensure all Catholics have good access to the Eucharist and other sacraments, including consideration of married priests and changing diocesan/parish organisations and structures. • Use social media to better spread the Good News and also promote the 'good works' of the Church. • Promote marriage and family as the building blocks of society and the Church, and cater for young people of all age groups.
<p>To modernise thinking to respond to the world today. And amend outdated practices that have helped facilitate decades of abuse and cover ups within the Catholic Church.</p>
<p>A resurgence in Christian worship</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to open our hearts and minds to him and to see him in our fellow Australians. Also, to be compassionate in responding to the hopes of Aboriginal Australians, asylum seekers, refugees, victims of child abuse and Church leaders who have been wrongly accused and vilified by the media. Solidarity to the core teachings of our faith would also show loyalty to the Church we proclaim Christ founded.</p>
<p>God is asking of us in Australia to be grateful for the peace we have in this beautiful country and get on with being kind to people and animals. He is asking of us to pray for the vulnerable in our society and to love one and other. He is asking of us to be patient during this change going on within the Catholic Church and to resist the negative forces.</p>
<p>God is asking of us Australians to love one another as God has loved us.</p>
<p>The clergy be consistent in their delivery of the Mass and other services. I include, in this, the time taken for the Mass to be celebrated—it seems sometimes you end up with 3 homilies. Each priest that comes into the parish seems to have a different practice or method. My parish has had quite a number of new priests over the last 20 years or so who have made many changes and then more</p>

often than not the next priest changes it back. A new priest should take the time to get to know the parish and practices and consult with the laity before making any major changes. Priests should become part of the parish community -they should take the opportunity to speak to people after Mass and get to know the parish. If they want to make major changes to practices or the Church building, there should be consultation with the parish community and the opportunity for parishioners to voice their opinion. Priests be better matched with their parish. My parish has a large diverse ethnic community and we've sometimes had priests outside the ethnic groups whose English has been difficult for those with English as a first language, let alone those whose first language is other than English.

I believe God is asking us to show more reverence in Church and to turn back to tradition. We must turn back to tradition and focus on the real presence of Christ in the Holy sacrament. We must understand the role of the Catholic priest and not abuse the purpose of the Eucharistic ministers. In turn we must be more reverent in the Mass. We must encourage more frequent confession within the Church in order to receive the sacraments in a state of grace as we believe this fact is unknown to many people.

To show Jesus' kindness in everyday ways, through kind acts, showing forgiveness, generosity, friendliness and compassion.

Preamble: I am not one of the privileged few who 'hears' the voice of God. I am giving what comes to me in prayer, reflection and motivated by my love of the Church. It will be the task of others to discern their relevance. 1. Faith: God is asking us to have 'a personal relationship' with Him. — Ticking a box in the census does not make me a believer. Nor does baptism unless I participate in the life of the parish community and the worldwide Church. —The large majority of 'believers' are those who have made an adult commitment through groups such as the Cursillo, Ignatian Retreats, Charismatic Renewal, Emmanuel, Neo-catechumenate way, Opus Dei and similar. 2. Priests/ Religious: Their core purpose is spiritual—to introduce others to Jesus. —This could take various forms including 'giving a cup of water -Mt10.42', teaching, nursing, interceding, visiting the sick, caring for the homeless, lobbying for justice, accompanying the lonely, —They are essentially servants, that respond to needs in the Body of Christ and humbly help. 3. Employment: Catholic Institutions together employ a significant number of people. Active Catholics should be preferred to non-Christians to better promote Christian principles and must be compulsory in nurturing institutions like schools, colleges, universities and hospitals. 4. Profession: Catholics are well represented in the field of Education but underrepresented in Law Enforcement, the Judiciary, Politics and Public Service and perhaps little/ no representation in the fields of Entertainment, the Press, Media and Television. Through school and college, these fields should be encouraged—it can be called evangelisation.

1. To be a Church of service and support in the faith journey of all members of the community

- Engaged in the world and listening to and learning from lay people.
- Bring Christ to others through our love, humility and actions not pious words and compliance with man-made rules.
- Clergy and religious actively engaged in and able to relate to the lived experience and culture of the faithful.
- Bishops and priests need to be of the people not elevated above them. Formation needs to include self-assessment skills, psychology and counselling. Bishops should have served for many years in a parish.
- Focus on living the gospel message not on compliance with man-made rules and practices.
- Liturgy that is accessible, in modern language, and provides diversity in form to reach the young. Reinstate third right.
- Remove celibacy requirements for priesthood.
- Make the contextualising of the scriptures to today's world accessible to all so they may interpret and apply in the circumstances of their life

2. A Church of inclusion

- Actively use the skills of all; openly and actively encouraging and providing structures to assist people of all backgrounds, genders and situations to be involved in the Church and have true equality.
- Remove all barriers and restrictions on the involvement of women in the Church.
- Stronger and transparent accountability of clergy and religious to community.

1. That Jesus' mission to bring good news to the poor, to set captives free and to give sight to the blind (Luke 4) and his identification with the poor and oppressed of the world (Matt 25) be lived out by the Church in the circumstances of today's world. 2. That a greater balance will exist between the worship of God and the work of God in each parish. 3. That in all circumstances God's love for everyone be emphasised, so that images of God as angry, harsh or punishing be explicitly rejected. 4. That the roles and place of women in the Church be changed to reflect the status of women in God's eyes, that is, that women are created in the image of God as much as men are (Genesis 1:27). 5. That clericalism be opposed and eradicated. In its place we are to form the Church as a community which is served by adopting a synodal approach in diocesan and parish life, honouring the multicultural, multi-theological and gendered dimensions of Australia, and revising the theology of priesthood to better reflect Jesus' priority of service over being served. 6. That the Australian Church be notable for its practice of listening to the needs, views and experience of all, including non-Catholics, non-Christians, same-sex couples. 7. That Liturgies reflect the culture, language and practice of the local Church.

1. Become an inclusive Church • Recognition that “the Church does not have a mission—God’s mission has a Church”. • Refocus on living a Christian life in the Catholic tradition rather than focusing on man-made juridical approaches that elevate and empower the few. • Remove patriarchal attitudes, structures and teaching from the Church. • Include women in all aspects of Church life on an equal footing to men. • Reach out to and embrace the marginalised, including first Australians, people of diverse sexual orientation and divorced people. • Actively utilise the capacity of all the faithful in God’s mission. Openly encourage and empower the faithful to be engaged in all aspects of the Church. • Make the contextualising of the scriptures to today’s world accessible to all so they may interpret and apply in the circumstances of their life. 2. An institutional Church that that is of people • Reduce clerical nature of Church so priests and religious are not separate from the people of God. Bishops and priests need to be of the people not elevated above them. Formation needs to include self-assessment skills, psychology and counselling. Bishops should have served for many years in a parish. • Clergy must be sourced from all areas of society and reflect the culture and gender of that society so they are able to relate to that society. • Focus on service to all God’s people not on hierarchy, canonical powerbases, clericalism or other forms of elitism and exclusion. • Relationships matter. We have to be outward reaching, open to the continuing revelation of God’s wisdom in today’s world and inclusive not exclusive else we risk becoming modern days Pharisees. • To reach out through acts of love towards fellow humans regardless of race, marital status or any other marginalising categorisation. • Being engaged means we must listen to others and be able to with them. Our actions drown out our words and our attendance at Mass. It is through engagement with community Churches, nursing homes, schools, hospitals, charities, aid and mission work that we can act out the gospel message and provide opportunities for people to connect with God’s love.

To pray more and thank God for what we have.

That women be admitted to the diaconate as a first step towards priestly ordination. Unless women are included in the hierarchical structure of the Church, they will continue to exercise authority illegitimately. Women's gifts are currently sidelined and taken for granted. In parishes and dioceses, they operate from a constantly subservient position, because the structures prevent their sharing in the authority which men exercise. This encourages inadequate methods of getting things done, and which unfortunately can result from manipulation and game-playing. There is nothing a Catholic priest does which a woman could not do. Women would not be any better at exercising priesthood than men, and they would not operate within the hierarchy better than men. Women are not better than men. They are different: their talents, skills and approaches complement those of men. Denial of positions of authority and responsibility to women thus reduces the capacity of the Church to serve the people adequately. The practice of not allowing women to preside at Eucharist or to lead the community does not come from Jesus, but from an over-emphasis on tradition which ignores the role of culture in the maintenance of that tradition. We know that Jesus chose 12 Jewish men, the leader of whom (at least) was married, to form the leadership of his community. Later developments

introduced greater numbers, celibacy, and men of other nationalities to fill the roles. Too great reliance on "tradition" mocks the tradition in its most basic form—that of Jesus' own practice. Reserving ordination to men alone calls on a narrow selection of scripture verses. Curiously, the verse on which much of the Church's general claim to act with the authority of Jesus is missing from this matter. Matthew 16:19 states "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." A Church that claims the authority to "bind and loose" cannot truthfully say that it has no authority to change any of its structures. Recent Popes have declared that ordaining only women is God's will. Yet the Church has felt itself sufficiently at ease with God's will to describe and define the Godhead itself in the early Councils. It continues to legislate on matters of faith and morals. How can it be that the Church claims not to be able to admit members of one half of its population to a particular form of service? The arguments for reserving ordination to men alone are so weak that Pope John Paul II had to resort to silencing people rather than allowing debate in the Church. Proper and respectful discussion would allow the arguments to surface, and their worth for this day and age would be able to be discerned. Let the Australian Church lead the way and begin the journey towards the proper exercise of authority by both men and women.

The Church in Australia needs to reach out to all Catholics, not just those who are faithful in practising their faith, by going back to the Second Vatican Council, look at what was discussed and implemented there and move forward to a more progressive Church -- we are in the 21st Century now and the bishops seem unable to realise that unless we modernise and consider what the people are seeking in this age the Church will stagnate. So many Catholics, although they still call themselves Catholics, do not practise the faith and we need to reach out to them and make them part of what God is asking of all of us.

A. That as Church we be inclusive of ALL the People of God. Including decision-making. We are concerned that 1. only bishops have deliberative vote; 2. laity, esp. women and young people, are excluded from exercising rightful place in Church; 3. parish priests are free to choose NOT to have a pastoral council; 4. official texts of Church, e.g. Missal adopt literal translation, limiting ability of many, including some Indigenous Australians to understand: 'chalice' cannot be translated into language of Port Keats. B. That as Church we publicly admit and acknowledge that we, the Church, are a sinful people. Many lives have been ruined through sexual, emotional and physical abuse, and discrimination by clergy, religious lay people holding position of responsibility/trust. C. That Church launch nationwide focus on EVANGELISATION; 1. what we believe—solid catechesis 2. liturgical life, esp. Eucharist 3. how we live what we believe—moral values 4. our life of prayer. D. that the Church at both diocesan and parish levels be and be seen to be relevant to lives of people: 1. involving parish, including women and young people, in discerning and deciding what would contribute to greater good of parish 2. using parish pastoral council effectively.

To develop and live a more informed and rational, spiritual compassionate and inclusive Church reflecting Jesus Christ, and respecting the major advances humans have made in understanding the cosmos.

God is asking for an inclusive and welcoming Church. That clerical patriarchy be truly dismantled. That women have recognisable key roles in the Church and I don't mean at parish ministry level. That women be allowed to vote at high level Church events. That we acknowledge the recent humiliation caused to the faithful by the jailing and conviction of a prominent member of the hierarchy. That we return to the values enunciated in the Gospel in spirit, truth and action.

God is asking that we start again. God is asking the Church to be humble and ask the question of people both in the Church and who have left the Church—How have we failed you? God is asking that the Plenary Council: • seriously embrace the priesthood of the People, not only its ordained ministers • will be open, transparent and listening to all in order to hear all the people of God without fear or favour • seriously considers divergent points of view, not only the middle ground or the 'most popular' • considers all submissions from the people's point of view not the Church clerical view or mindset. God is asking that the Church ACTS on the changes called for in a timely

<p>manner and that the pastoral needs of the people take priority. God is asking of us in Australia to TRANSFORM the current dominant patriarchal Church hierarchy: • into a broad Church that is open and transparent, inclusive, gender balanced and focussed on the Gospel of Jesus rather than dogmas, rules and regulations. • into a Church that embraces service as the model for faith in action (rather than power, position, security and defensiveness) • into a Church where all staff (including parish priests, bishops, etc.) are contracted and accountable to the people they serve and have their contracts reviewed regularly by a broad cross-section of the laity they serve and a professional facilitator of the process God is asking us to TRANSFORM our Church into: • one that is hopeful and hope-filled, trusting and open to the working of the Spirit in our world • one that is humble (rather than displays moral superiority), Jesus and people centric, not the rule and Rome centric and bound • one that recognises that no one should judge another • one that constantly invites and is open to, rather than excluding, separating, judgmental and dogmatic. • one where acting with justice, loving tenderly and walking humbly with our God are the standards of behaviour everyone is charged with upholding. (330 words)</p>
<p>To bring the Australian people back to God. So many Australians, not only do not believe in, but know nothing about God.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To overhaul all “management/Church hierarchy” to get rid of narcissists from positions of power in the Church • For the clergy to understand the CURRENT needs of its people—to move with the times; allow contraception and divorce for example • To bridge the gap between “us” and “them”/the hierarchy of the Church • Understand that when some parish priests change parishes, losing parishioners is often a consequence. • To resolve the inconsistency which exists when ordained Anglican Ministers who are married are allowed to convert and are accepted in to Ordination and appointed to parishes but Catholic priests cannot marry. • For the 21st century Church to become more like the early Christian Church with the focus on the people and to be less clergy-centred. • To eradicate clericalism from the Church. • To eradicate Cannon Law. • To deal with priests who believe that secular laws do not apply to them; they believe that they are above the law. • For priests to understand that they are to serve God and all parishioners—need more humility
<p>I think God is asking us to give an apology and justice to all those who have been abused by the clergy in the Catholic Church. There must be accountability for all the cover ups that took place and this should be done in an appropriate timeframe, there has been too much time wasted without action.</p>
<p>Listen to God’s people, Married priests be allowed, changes to 3rd rite of reconciliation, Do more for families and our youth, To be open to help our refugees, more retreats and religious education, To stand up for our beliefs and what is right and true, To challenge the media for the truth, respect for others, live by example, Gather parish community to get to know one another, To call constantly on the spirit to help us, Finding ways to encourage people to come forward in ministry, Encourage parents to bring children to Mass, People to step out and experience a Cursillo weekend of faith, spirituality and love. To love everyone , Respect to all priests, Help us to respect and love gay people as Jesus does, priest to make time for weekly visits to our schools, The sacrament preparation to be taken over by the parish that is not leaving parents to do the preparation but to join together as a group with a leader to relearn with their children and to have the opportunity to meet others making the sacraments and journey together, Be proud that we are Catholics</p>
<p>I have given this matter a lot of thought and prayer. I believe God is asking us to address the elephant in the room or shall I say not in the room! Looking at most Churches on a Sunday, with few exceptions, the average age of the congregation is 60 and rising. In twenty years if there is no major change, most Churches will be closed. The most active part of our Church is the schools. However, they were set up to do two things, 1. Teach the poor, 2. Pass on the faith to the young. Today, the poor cannot afford to go to Catholic schools and as regards to the latter aim, we have to be honest and say it is a TOTAL FAILURE. The young people coming out of our schools are atheists, agnostics or just not interested. Some Principals/teachers in our Catholic schools are wonderful but for too long, we have employed teachers who have not the slightest interest in passing on the Catholic faith to</p>

the children and in fact are so often very antagonistic to the Catholic faith. The huge bureaucracy has been allowed to keep going and the bishops are too frightened to close the whole thing down and start again. So many parents have struggled hard to pay for their children to go to Catholic schools so that, within the broad educational challenges, they will be assisted in their role as first educators of their children. However, for many years, the schools have been a place where the faith barely exists.

What is God asking of the Church in Australia? This group discerned an increasing gap between the clergy and laity and a disconnection from Sunday Mass; it seems to be less important in people's lives. We then shared experiences and observations that may offer answers to these problems and a way forward for the Church in Australia:

- The Church (building) should be a place of reverence, sacredness and holiness with Jesus a real presence in the tabernacle
- Liturgies need to be modern and reflecting today's culture and society
- People want to be more engaged in the liturgy. It must be a true liturgy of the faithful including greater participation by women
- Give priests a point of reference for their questions and problems—spiritual and secular. Too often these celibate men don't have the talents and understanding or experience to address the complex issues arising in a busy parish; do they have mentors and advisors that can offer advice that accurately reflects the modern solutions?
- Clerics should walk the path that Jesus walked—moral, just, compassionate yet willing to be flexible and adaptable
- Clerics should be a SERVANT of the Church and its people, not a benevolent dictator or an emotionally distant figurehead in public forums not just private ones
- The Church is not meeting the people's needs in a modern world
- The hierarchical model of Church is out-dated. Equality between laity and clergy regarding pastoral, social justice and, especially, governance of the Church would better reflect modern society
- A pastoral approach to divorce is essential; annulment in its current form may not provide the support and future a faithful person needs to move forward after a marriage breakdown
- Education of adults regarding doctrine, modern spiritually and Church teachings needs more work and effort
- A greater share in the decision-making at parish, diocesan and Vatican needs to be implemented
- Listen to and respect community opinions with dignity
- Listen to Pope Francis when he encourages discernment not commands; dialogue not confrontation; flexibility not rigidity;

I am writing this after the conviction of Cardinal Pell. While I have doubts about his conviction, I believe that this points to the deep disillusionment of Catholics that the Church has lost its moral authority

- it needs to reverse the trend towards authoritarianism and stop looking backwards to old practices such as the Latin Mass, more dogmatic and autocratic clericalism.
- discontinue the training of priests in conservative seminaries such as Wagga Wagga
- restrict the importing of young overseas seminarians who lack language and cultural understanding.
- the Church in Australia needs to strengthen the community not the institution. We are the Church
- show understanding to the modern family dilemmas and provide care for the disadvantaged, the environment the local community
- allow parishioners to speak up and be listened to. Be more pastoral.

What is God asking of the Church in Australia? Australia needs a faith-filled Catholic community that is part of a relevant Church. The laity, with special emphasis on the youth involvement needs faith formation and growth opportunities. What does a healthy parish look like?

- It has a strong leader in the parish priest who genuinely listens to the needs of the congregation. The laity is an important part of the parish and needs to be a strong presence and included in the activities and decision-making of the parish
- It needs a LEADERSHIP TEAM of people with complementary skills and talents that includes clergy, and laity reflecting gender, ethnic diversity and age
- This team is selected and appointed by a panel comprising bishop, other clergy AND an inclusive group of parishioners
- Performance appraisal processes and employment/appointment contracts should be applied to ALL team members, including the appointed clergy, with supportive self-improvement practices and enforceable termination clauses

What skills and talents are needed in a healthy parish?

- Pastoral and spiritual listeners
- Open two-way communication processes
- Transparent decision-making processes
- Community builders
- Hospitality
- Faith formation and growth
- Administrative ability

<p>including finance • Close and positive relationship with parish schools • Positive, meaningful engagement with youth</p>
<p>I think God wants the Church to continue in the spirit of Vatican II, in opening to the world of 2020. I feel that of recent years there has been a strong movement away from the ideals of openness set up by the Council, and a desire to return to the security of the closed Church that I grew up with pre - Vatican II. I believe that instead of being open and casting ourselves and the Church, in faith, into the arms of the Spirit, we are rejecting faith and choosing man's way of closing off. I would like to see us being more active in our openness towards 'sinners' whom we as Christians should be embracing, as Christ did, and not rejecting, as we see happening in our Church. And divorced people coming in secret to receive Communion, afraid to be called out.</p>
<p>I think that he is asking us to live in today's world and to become more relevant for the generations who will follow my own. I lived through Vatican II and saw a vision which has never fully be implemented.</p>
<p>God is asking for a renewal of the sense of mission in the Church and of the desire for holiness. In a letter to young people in 2017, Pope Francis announced the 2018 Synod of Bishops theme on Youth, faith and vocational discernment stating, "For each person, the vocation to love takes concrete form in everyday life through a series of choices, which find expression in the states of life, professions, forms of social and civil commitment, lifestyle, the management of time and money, etc. The purpose of vocational discernment is to find out how to transform them, in the light of faith, into steps towards the fullness of joy to which everyone is called." In 2018, in his Apostolic Exhortation, <i>Gaudete et Exultate</i>, he wrote, "My modest goal is to repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities. For the Lord has chosen each one of us "to be holy and blameless before him in love" (Eph 1:4)." We see that this 2-fold goal of vocational discernment and re-discovery of the call holiness as one and the same response to what God is asking of every Christian. We have the Vicar of Christ, the Holy Father, loudly and clearly echoing these in his writings.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to return to a simpler message of Jesus' love. So many of us are shocked about the royal commission into child abuse. We are so sad for victims and the Church. I think Jesus never wanted his disciples to be celibate and for natural human sexual energy to be turned inward as it has with so many priests. It seems timely to expose the secret riches and ungodly lifestyles within the Vatican, encourage female priesthoods and allow all Catholic clergy to marry. I think God is also asking us to truly step into stewardship of the earth—to care for our planet in practical ways. I wonder if the power and money of the Vatican could be turned towards helping clean up the earth- e.g. by purchasing land in danger of being mined or otherwise trashed and relocating refugees or homeless people there and building communities of harmony and replenishment of the earth and hearts at the same time. I feel our heavenly Mother Mary is waiting for us to pray together more for this and to heed her warnings at Fatima and Akita about the perils and dangers of these times. I pray and think a lot about all this and the sort of world we not only desire but desperately need. Changing the world takes courage and resources- let's call on the Holy Spirit to move all our hearts hands and minds towards creating a new, living energy together. Let the Church sell all it owns and invest in the planet entrusted to us. I think God is asking us to really prepare the kingdom for the return of Christ- by cleaning up our innermost hearts as well as the earth. May Your will be done, Lord. Thank you for the opportunity to share what I really feel God within us is asking for.</p>
<p>We think God is asking us to call on the Australian Church for change in many areas, but two in particular. The first is to make changes in parish pastoral practice that will help build a more complete sense of Christian community. The second is to make the Australian hierarchy and clergy provide public recognition of all the works carried out by women in the same way and to the same extent as they would if exactly the same works were carried out by men. In other words, the institutional Church should recognize and celebrate all contributions to the life of the Church in ways that are completely gender-blind. On the first point, we believe there should be better recognition of the equal importance in the parish community of the parish clergy, the actively observant laity and</p>

(who are almost never mentioned) the parishioners who for one cause or another are not active participants in parish life. Those of us who lapse in and out because of obstacles to participation such as marital separation, divorce and re-marriage, or because of clerical hostility encountered during sacramental programs, are asking our diocesan and parish pastors and active laity to care for us as much as the biblical shepherd cared for the lost sheep. It is vital that pastoral activity in the parish be carried out by clergy and lay people working together. Such primacy as the parish priest has in the parish pastoral work should stem purely from his position as the gatekeeper of material resources and his availability as a full-time parish worker. If he is limited in or distracted from his responsibilities as parish priest by having other Church roles or responsibilities loaded onto him as well, this is unfair to the parish community as a whole. Because there is a natural tendency for parish communities to split into smaller groups defined by different weekend Mass times, parishes need to find more occasions where attenders of all Masses can meet and mingle, such as at regular parish-wide social events, parish feast days, and events specially constructed to attract "Christmas and Easter" Catholics. In this connection, there is a need for much more organized follow-up and continuing contact with the parents of children brought for baptism and enrolled in sacramental preparation groups. On our second main point concerning the proper public recognition of the work of women, we see this as essentially an issue of justice. So much of the differentiation that the institutional Church makes between the sexes is obviously a carryover from the fundamental disrespect of women that has been present in most cultures and religious groups since the dawn of recorded history. We are not trying to make this a plea for sacerdotal ordination of women; that is a specific issue that concerns the whole Catholic world. However, there is every reason why Australian pastoral practice in all other respects should be gender-blind. We must see men and women as created equally human.

Australia needs a faith filled Catholic community that is part of a relevant Church. We need to listen and consider the needs of Catholics in the 21st Century and a more diverse involvement of the laity, with special emphasis on the youth, faith formation and growth opportunities.

I think God might be asking to work more with lay people in the Church, their essential role and responsibility to keep, live and pass the faith with joy and initiative in the ordinary.

I think it would be presumptuous of me to attempt to think what God is asking. A lot of people are leaving the Church because of the hypocrisy and betrayal experienced by so many of us who share in the pain of so many innocent victims due to the clergy's heinous sexual abuse crimes and the way in which these people have been treated. These perpetrators need to be charged/expelled/fired/excommunicated immediately. There is no place for evil now. If this is about the future and healing the Church needs dramatic change. The people are the Church, not the priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, pope and the like. They have ruled supreme and failed miserably. Let it be about us. Let's remember Jesus, the son of God, who was unassuming and humble as opposed to the power structure and attitude of the men within the Church. Suggestions are: Don't discriminate and burden women with ridiculous menial tasks—acknowledge their intelligence, contribution and dignity by accepting them as priests and officials (after all they make up the majority of the 'faithful'). This will be the means to end sexual abuse. Allow celibacy to be optional. We cannot pretend sexuality is not a human necessity, therefore allow married priests and openly gay priests, to be included and embrace people from all walks of life such as divorcees and LGBTQI's. It should be forbidden to refuse communion to anybody—this is making a judgement about a person which should be between the individual, their conscience and God. PLEASE abolish all the opulent attire, silk vestments, rings, hats, and the like which have been designed to elevate the clergy as being 'special', God-like and above humankind. Forget about the practice of kissing the bishop's ring and similar practices. This constitutes undignified, demeaning behaviour and perpetuates hierarchy and God-like power. Jesus came to teach and serve the flock. Allow lay people to take the reins of saying Mass, homilies and managing the parish under the guidance of a qualified theologian. The priesthood is not attracting the right calibre of kind, caring, intelligent and professional people. People confused about their sexuality, place in society and paedophiles sadly

<p>have found a home within the priesthood. This needs to be addressed swiftly by encouraging people with partners either male or female into the priesthood.</p>
<p>The Catholic Church is built around the belief in God and in his son Jesus Christ who was crucified, died and rose again. All we know and believe about Christ is essentially derived from the Gospels and the other books of the New Testament. The institutional Church is in crisis- a crisis primarily brought upon itself due to the child sex abuse scandals world-wide and at all levels of the Church hierarchy, as well as other factors including clericalism. Is the Church losing its saltiness? But it is very naive to think that all the wounds are all self- inflicted. There is a worldwide gathering storm aimed at removing Christ and Christianity from the earth. As we read in the Gospels, Jesus may be asleep, but what He wants most from us is faith and He will calm the storm. God wants us to rediscover, reaffirm and recognise God more deeply in our daily lives both as individuals and as Church. We all stand up and pray "I believe in God the Father almighty ... ". But do we? We need to keep this question alive and to focus on it and all that it implies. We can only find God through prayer—humble, childlike prayer. And that is not easy. If we look around us, we see that more and more people think that they can live without God. We must not be afraid to renew our faith through prayer. Let us pray together. In the past, in times of need, or when faced with disaster or war people prayed publicly and loudly together with a deep faith. But today we do not seem to do this, or maybe we are too proud to do so.</p>
<p>Not to change the law but to fulfil it—Not to create a different Catholic Church but to reform it to the one established by Jesus. Many human traditions crept into the practice of the Catholic Church. There must be openness and discussion on these human traditions so that these may be corrected in a proper way.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to be resilient in the face of adversity. He is asking us to take back the public square. The words of the late cardinal Francis George of Chicago have never sounded more prophetic for the Church leadership in Australia than right now—"I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square."</p>
<p>I am aware that there have been major developments taking place in the Jewish-Christian dialogue at the level of the Vatican and the international stage over the past 50+ years since the promulgation of Lumen Gentium and Nostra Aetate. I can only think that these developments are of profound importance to the Church in Australia, even if Jewish-Christian relations are not perceived as a priority by Catholics generally. It is impossible to conceive of a Jew in isolation, without the Jewish people. Likewise, the Church cannot truly know, love and relate to Jesus without taking into consideration the concrete presence of the (his) Jewish people in every era. The deepest wound to our unity as the body of Christ (and hence the deepest need for ecumenical healing), is the Church's "parting of the ways" with the Jewish people and nearly two millennia of a "teaching of contempt" communicated to the faithful, which was officially addressed by the Catholic Church only last century. Such matters are so deeply embedded in the Christian story/psyche, that I can only think that they are vital for Church renewal in Australia, even if not a topic to attract the popular "vote". Careful attention to the Jewish-Christian relationship is essential if the Church is "to live in contact with its deepest tradition" (Congar).</p>
<p>What seems so clear is a lack of knowledge rear guarding God and His law. To use all the opportunities to give solid doctrine at least to the people that still go to Mass on Sunday. All social problems can be discussed in others places and moment.</p>
<p>Unity- there are priests, some practicing Catholics, and other Christians with their own opinions on priests getting married. And nobody understands why we can't. This needs to be addressed. In light of ongoing scandals with priests, also other issues such as mental health, etc., it may be time for change. We are divided even in our own faith. Make going to Church more attractive. Plenty of young adults won't go to Church. But there are lots that are interested in volunteer work, soup kitchens, mediation/yoga, these are all good people (sometimes of no faith/religion). There is a great trend happening at to moment. We need to redirect it to the Truth. Start a movement that says "Pray for..." but not just when there's a crisis/terrorist attack like France.</p>

I believe we are being asked to maintain the faith. I believe we are being asked to be a voice for marriage and the family as we have always known it and to vigorously maintain every child's birthright of a mother and father and to make this consistently, publicly known. I believe we need to be a voice against euthanasia and to show this for the stunt it is. I believe we need to show the difficulties of abortion; there can be understanding about this issue and its nuances, but we also need to convey the message that there are the rights of the unborn AND that it is not always a positive, appropriate or good choice for women. I believe we should stand up for the rights of children in state schools to be taught their faith, in the face of the push to prevent this. I believe there must be a wider conversation about child sexual abuse in the Church. There must be admission, honesty and redress. However, there must also be a way of clearly demonstrating that this is a society wide problem which people of goodwill should be willing to address wherever it is found. I would like to see the Church in Australia—and worldwide—unequivocally oppose the death penalty. I think there should be a statement against it. The issue raises its ugly head when Australians are involved, but it is a constant feature of some countries. It should always be opposed and this should be an instruction to Catholics. It would be good to see a papal encyclical on this issue. I also believe God is asking us to stand up for the poor and disadvantaged, both in Australia and around the world. A lot of the times, these people do not have a voice and we must be a voice with them. Jesus put the poor, forgotten and rejected first and we must strive to do the same. Overall, I believe God is asking us to stand up for our faith. I believe God is asking for constancy in our beliefs and for us to engage in affirmation of our faith to the wider community and for us to encourage one another in this and to be strong in doing so.

Kindness, Respect for individuals, protection of the environment, abiding by the law of the land, support of NGO's Catholic and otherwise, positive action against climate change, educating and care of our children, better care of refugees a treaty with Aborigines, protection of animal habitat, lifting people out of poverty, better care of disabled people and improving access to healthcare for all.

I think God is asking us to put faith into action by making sure that children and their rights are protected through adhering to international and national laws (e.g. UN convention rights of the child and Australian Child protection laws). I've pondered and reflected upon this question over and over again and I believe that God wants us prioritise love over rituals and sacraments. For example, a priest heard from a fellow priest through confession that sexual abuse had taken place. In that moment, the priest should have the duty of care to the victim and report the abuse instead of thinking about the seal of confession. I believe in the sanctity of the sacraments; however, I believe that God designed it to spread love or peace, and not create hurt or pain. I believe that God wants us to evolve as a Church and not be stuck like the Pharisees. Times are changing, and so should we. We should adapt otherwise our faith will be extinct. I believe in our Church and I believe that the Church is in the trying times. I commend the plenary council for all its efforts despite the challenges we are facing. I believe that we are imperfect but we are worshiping a perfect God. I also believe that if damage had been done, we should acknowledge it and apologise for it. Only in that way would healing take place...Healing for the victims and healing for the Church. I know that this Church is strong and I pray that in God's grace, we will find solutions to protect our members.

To reflect on the message of Jesus and what that really means. To respond to profound challenges and social changes with the response to express love, compassion, understanding and support i.e. be more Christ like and show humility. To rebuild trust in the Catholic and wider community. To reflect on what is Church and what it means to be a Catholic in the 21st century. To change current structures and share responsibility and decision-making with the people who make up the Church i.e. the laity. To undertake root and branch reform so that a modern, inclusive Catholic Church reflects the message of Christ and not the power and authority of the hierarchy. To not be so completely inept in responding to the child abuse crisis and show care, compassion and empathy for the victims and their families first and foremost. The hierarchy's response to the child abuse crisis has been a disaster and very far from Christ-like.

To be guided by clergy who are honest, faithful, transparent with information, accepting of all, good leaders, and most importantly humble. A change in attitude towards the laity.
To become more involved in Church and religious life in order to influence the development of the Church and show an example of what it means to be Catholic: show true love, advocate for justice and peace.
To live our lives according to the values of Jesus Christ.
How to reverse the decline in Christian understanding and belief? How to revive the Christian influence in society? How to make Christianity a normal part of being Australian?
CHANGE! Not only in Australia, but across the world. O.k. —child abuse is a major obstacle (not only in the Catholic Church, but across the board). The Catholic Church is among a lot of others, that have covered up, turned a blind eye, etc. and people are persecuting the leaders of The Church. I feel that the majority of the people are so extreme against The Church, not only for the abuse that's been going on for years and the cover-ups, but also the ground swell behind it is that most people feel that The Church is still in the Dark Ages. The majority want priests to be able to marry, if they wish, and just as important, women MUST be equal in The Church in ALL respects (i.e. becoming priests etc.). Until the Vatican and all Church leaders recognise these home truths—it can't move on. A bitter pill to swallow, I know, but I pray that The Holy Spirit will move their hearts and change what has been going on for centuries, after all, today's Catholic Church would be unrecognisable in the centuries after Jesus' death and resurrection.
I think God is asking us to re-think, re-create the Catholic Church. The sexual abuse experience by so many young Catholic children, and perpetrated by clergy and Catholics in positions of power is an opportunity to turn our concept of Church back to its community focus with a much greater role for laity and for women. There is a relationship between the lack of equality and focus on male clergy and the abuse of power which has happened with such devastating impact. There is also the opportunity for the Church to renew its teachings on women and women's role, sexuality, homosexuality and diversity. Out of the large destruction there is the chance to create a new Church with lay people at the Centre and to re-imagine our concept of priesthood, not centred on celibacy or male-ness. I can imagine a Church which is based in equality, in respecting the value of all life, including those who are poor and marginalised and with the diversity of experience such as transgender, gay, lesbian, Aboriginal, refugee and all our complex and beautiful diversity truly being embraced, and empowered to shape the Church.
I believe God is asking me to report a concern I have about something that is going on in my parish. The Assistant priest, after asking for "boys" to apply, has established a group which is called "Senior Altar Servers"—it seems that girls have been excluded. Not only is that but there is a rumour that this is a special assignment that the priest has been given by the Archdiocese. Nothing has been communicated to the parishioners, in fact, us parishioners are not told anything that is going on in the parish. Decisions are made with no consultation. This seems to me totally contrary to what has been recommended by the Royal Commission. It seems to me that the evil of Clericalism is being nurtured in our midst. I believe that Pope Francis has banned this type of behaviour. I feel that this very thing will cause more abuse to occur. I am very worried about the boys who have joined this special group. Where do I go to report my fears?
I don't believe in God, the Catholic Church wants us to believe in God but I don't think there is a God.
Sacraments to be more available, The presence of the priests to be more in schools, encouragement of the family rosary in homilies, continuation of the bell ringing at Mass times and Angelus in schools, continuation of confession spoken of from the homily and made readily available. Can we have priests not live alone? More encouragement for marriage courses. Could we have Mass on Mondays early for workers? More creative ways of giving doctrine of the true Catholic faith to all ages from school, universities and adults. Continue the one-hour adoration in more parishes with benediction at the conclusion. More encouragement for parents to take children to make a visit to Church when school finishes. Churches to be open for visits by all ages.

We believe that God is asking us to be an open, honest, inclusive Church that recognises and values the worth of every person, and that reaches out to the wider community with compassion and welcomes all. "Gather my lambs so that they can join the flock." God is asking for tolerance and acceptance, because everyone has different life experiences and people come from many different cultures. Parishioners' strengths and talents need to be acknowledged and used. "The Church should be more people centred than around the clergy." Clergy and laity need to work together. Too often, priests have a "part time" attitude. Communication needs to be open and frank. Faith formation is crucial. The Church needs to prepare us for secular life.

To have more women in roles in the Church even as high as Deacons.

Not sure exactly, but possibly insulating ourselves against the temptations of a selfish culture, attracting others to our faith by strong examples of living a Catholic life, and diligently passing on our faith to the next generation.

God is asking us to work out ways in which we can overcome the brokenness of the Catholic community that has been caused by the prevalence of clerical sexual abuse and its cover-up. The particular aspect of this brokenness I am addressing is the loss of trust felt by lay people in the honesty and morality of clergy and bishops. In particular, bishops have a currently unfettered ability to appoint unsatisfactory priests to parishes or to cover up clerical abuse by moving the abusing priest from one post to another. Lay people no longer trust them to make proper appointments unless some means of lay oversight is imposed on them. Therefore, I believe that all clergy moves and appointments, together with the full service records of the clergy concerned, should be subject to the oversight and veto power of a diocesan group of mature lay people, chosen through consultation with the Diocesan Pastoral Council. A necessary requirement is that the people chosen have no financial dependence on any diocese. At least half of every such group should be made up of women. Such organs of lay oversight are, in my view, the most appropriate and effective way we could have to restrict the ability of bishops to take the horrendous decisions that have occurred so often in the past. Almost every diocese will contain hundreds, if not thousands, of lay people with long experience of choosing staff members for promotions and transfers, and there is no reason why lay people cannot have the good of the Church at heart as much as any bishop. I believe this proposal is the minimum acceptable extent to which lay oversight should be admitted into diocesan decision making. If there were to be only one organ of lay oversight with veto to be introduced, this one will provide an acceptable replacement for the trust that no longer exists, in precisely the area of episcopal decision-making that has caused the most grief in the past.

1. I think God is asking us to listen to each other and particularly to listen to those who are suffering in one form or another—To listen to those who are marginalised in society. And I think we should be speaking out for them clearly and strongly as a concerned representative organisation in our Society.
2. I think God would accept that Catholic Women are particularly undervalued in the Church and accordingly it is correct to request the Plenary Council to look openly and carefully at all areas where women are excluded as full participants both in Governance of the Church and in all its Ministries. The Cultural norms of bygone eras regarding the restricted participation of women need to be seen for what they are—simply cultural norms and not God-given.

To be strong Catholic Christian leaders and ambassadors within our families, workplaces, social circles, etc. Strongly advocate for Christian leadership by those in publicly elected office. Be active in our faith communities and bring energy and joy to liturgy and events. Support our priests and help to promote religious life. Advocate for the poor, weak and disenfranchised members of our communities, including refugees. Advocate for our planet, the environment, heeding the cry of the earth and responding with sustainable governance and management practices.

God is asking of his people now what he has always asked. The words of Micah ch 6 v 8 ring down through the centuries: To act with justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. How do we respond to this call today? This is the challenge that every one of God's people from the Holy Father down must prayerfully consider. To act with justice: In our parish communities today, there are many people who are alienated and not included. Inclusiveness is justice in action. Single parents

for example. Imagine the distress of a mother, recently abandoned by her husband for a younger woman, who brought her child along to a sacramental program, only to be asked by the then parish priest "Why isn't your husband here with you?" I am not making this up. Rampant, increasing clericalism is not justice. Women in our parish, as in most, do almost all the work but are not recognised as worthy of any position to which they can be installed. I am not referring to women priests. But why not acolytes? How can a child act as an altar server while in our parish, women ministers of the Eucharist until quite recently were literally, physically shooed off the altar? Jesus gave us the clearest instructions about the way of justice, in Matthew ch 25 v 31—46 "In so far as you did it to one of the least of these brothers (and sisters) of mine, you did it to me." This is what God is asking of us. This is the message that needs to be heard from our pulpits. Mercy (or Kindness in some translations) God is a God of mercy. How often do we hear that? "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Is it merciful to deny the Eucharist to any baptised member of the Body of Christ that is the Church? God looks on the heart. Humility before God. I truly believe that our broken divided Catholic Church will never be healed until priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals can stand up before us the laity and say "We were wrong." To admit openly that victims of abuse were telling the truth. That abuse was hidden, denied, covered up. That perpetrators were moved from one parish to another. God is asking for transparency, honesty, humility.

I think the Australian Catholic Church is on the precipice of renewal, and I think it is incumbent on us, the people of the Church to support change and renewal. I think this is what God is asking of us in Australia today. This renewal is born out of horrors that have been the sexual abuse perpetrated by Church workers- these men are not priests they are heinous individuals who preyed on the meek and vulnerable, it has shattered my faith in an institution that I thought was safe and nurturing. God is asking us to attempt to • Dismantle the structures of clericalism that assisted these individuals to commit their crimes. • We need to become a community of equals, no longer a hierarchy. • Good men and women need to be more involved in decision-making at every level. I have witnessed professional good men and women, who's decisions at a parish council level be overturned by a short-sighted priest who has not got the parish welfare in his heart. • Creation of new models of ministry for the laity- God is asking the laity to assume more responsibility for the Church. We are already doing this in isolated rural areas of the country, where it is women in particular who are leading and ministering. • Transforming the Mass into a rich source of Christian faith- relaxing the rules as to who can and can't receive communion. Our rules have done so much to exclude and alienate. Jesus always wanted to bring people in! • Allowing our theologically educated laity to preach—our sermons need to give us strength and spiritual sustenance to brave this confusing and violent world. • Increase spiritual education and guidance to our parents—we need help to educate and guide our children in negotiating this complex modern world. • I believe the shattering incidence of child sexual abuse has not been properly dealt with, it has been swept under the carpet, there needs to be a permanent remembrance set up in every Church to pray for the victims, including a prayer devoted to the victims every week. We need to make a united and heartfelt apology to those that have suffered clerical sexual abuse—perhaps through a yearly day of lamenting and mourning?

The Church is currently going through the ongoing crisis of the sexual abuse of children and vulnerable people by clergy. The crisis just seems to be getting worse and has shifted the Church away from its true mission. I believe real action needs to be taken to identify the root cause of the crisis and ensure it never happens again. At the moment, there just seems to be denial that the crisis even exists and a substantial lack of action. Even worse, there is little or no real compassion for the many lives which have been destroyed by the abuse. If the Plenary Council doesn't tackle the crises head on, then the opportunity will have been wasted. Nothing else really matters at the moment.

I think in the current times we need to be more souls of prayer. To teach people to have to a more personal relationship with God. Some things that may help in this are having more times for Eucharistic Adoration in parishes. Or having led personal prayer time. One example that helped me a lot was during World Youth Day in Sydney. I was part of one catechesis group in a local parish. At one stage before the Mass, we got all the 800 or so young people to quietly pray and reflect for

around 15 minutes. It was super impressive to see all those young people quiet and kneeling and praying. I think we need more help to pray in our busy world. Especially as we can all get too caught up with technology that we can lose the capacity to reflect and talk to God in the intimacy of our souls.

In the face of lessening of religious freedom in our secular society, I see we need to become people with: 1. Greater convictions about the truths of our faith 2. Greater knowledge of what our faith actually says and means 3. Greater strength of character to be able to express our faith and to live our faith in the current and potentially worsening environment. 4. Have the words and the skills to express our faith in a way that is reachable by our secular society without watering down the tenets and demands of our faith. 5. Greater piety to find God in our ordinary life. 6. Greater access to the sacraments with the right dispositions to be able to get the graces we need to live our faith today. It is hard to live one's faith, if one does not know what it means or says. It is even harder to live one's faith if we do not know who Jesus is and if we do not truly love Him and have a personal experience of Him through the sacraments. I expect people will have written about the scandals in the Church, etc. Which are obviously not only in the Church but in society at large. It seems that the lens is more on the Catholic Church because we have been more active in doing something about the child and adult abuse in the past. Please make sure that these issues do not cloud the Plenary Council approach to some of the fundamental issues I have mentioned above. In the Church history, there have been lots of ups and downs, so the current issues though difficult are surmountable with the grace of the Holy Spirit. I think we also need to see what can be done to strengthen the family unit in Australia. To also help families in bringing up children in virtue and piety. Our society has become softer, too comfortable, and we live in a throw away culture. This makes them easy targets to lose their faith or to water it down when difficulties come.

God is asking us to return to his Son's original message and leadership style- Servant Leadership. To include women in all levels of leadership and ministry as was His and God's way. The first apostle was a woman- very deliberate choice. He is asking us to refocus our energy on build communities, which are safe and passionate about Jesus and his message. Just as it was in the early Church. Consider how we can appropriately minister to our Catholic brothers and sisters who are currently excluded to actively practice their faith and receive communion due to their marital status and sexual orientation and the implication for the children of these unions. Transparency and exclusion of those ministers- lay and clerical who have engaged and or covered up sexual abuse. Firm stand that this is in the past and never to be repeated. Care and consideration for those victims and their families.

God is calling us to genuine *communio*, to be an inclusive community welcoming and open to all, modelled on the public ministry of Jesus who demanded conversion as a change of heart turning towards God, not towards what Paul (unfortunately) called "the Law". God is asking us to be a Church of missionary disciples whose leaders and members pray and live the Gospel and proclaim it by befriending the pluralist cultural contexts of Australia, interpreting the signs of the times, dialoguing with our society, re-contextualising the Gospel to the mutual benefit of both through the ongoing conversion of the Church and for the evangelisation of Australian culture and society. God is asking us to reconstruct the governance and leadership of the Church at all levels with peak bodies associated with ACBC, dioceses, parishes and major agencies so that governance consists of its canonical leaders (bishops and priests) and theologically and spiritually formed women and men, and more women, and even more women, in co-responsible roles (but not secular company director/"professional" types who do not comprehend God's mission—there are enough of them stuffing Christian witness and the ministry of the word already). God is asking us to direct our bewilderment, anger and demoralisation about sexual abuse by agents of the Church, especially the clergy, into emulating Jesus who identified with marginalised victims of the religious elites of his time and unreservedly condemned the perpetrators. The corollary of this is always to believe and side with victim and never with the alleged perpetrator even before the matter is finalised legally.

God is calling us to implement the new springtime of the Second Vatican Council as if we believe in it—many have deliberately subverted it—and it is a call to recognise that it is not about a debate about a hermeneutic of continuity versus a hermeneutic of disruption, but rather one of continuity AND change, directed by the Holy Spirit. God is asking our bishops to respond to public policy positively and dialogically so as to avoid the stereotype that some (but not all) of them seem to prove, i.e., that the Church is out of time and place in Australian and global contexts and so should be mocked. God is calling us to consistency in teaching, learning and living the fullness of the Scriptures, Tradition and Magisterium so that advocacy groups of all persuasions have a ‘consistent ethic of life’ and commitment to God’s reign of justice and peace.

Shortened version. See attachment. Micah’s words ring eternal (6:6-8): to do justice, love, kindness and walk humbly with God. Micah’s challenge invites us to be a Church open to transformation and critical self-review. We need to be a listening Church. We all have the grace to discern God’s will together—so I am looking with hope to this plenary council. A number of things need to change in order to be a Church that does justice, loves kindness and walks humbly with God: It often seems as if the Church is always telling people to repent, they are sinners. Can this be balanced with the good news that we are blessed, graced by a God who loves us? People are good, holy, graced by God. There is a positive message to be proclaimed that does not negate the equally true reality that we are fallen and sinful. We need a different, more loving and compassionate, stance towards people whom the Church hierarchy believes have fallen short—people who have remarried after their first marriage has ended in divorce, LGBTQ people, etc. ... Excluding Catholics from the sacraments and the life of the Church does no one good. The Governance of the Church needs to change significantly. It needs to include the laity, particularly women, who are the backbone of the Church. We need a humble leadership who are more in love with the gospel than Church structures. It is time to listen to the stories of LGBTQ Catholics with respect, sensitivity and compassion. LGBTQ people are more than their sexuality and I am confident God sees the whole person. The Church is also invited to do the same. Celibacy is a gift and should not be imposed on all LGBTQ Catholics. LGBTQ Catholics have been forced to live in the shadows for too long, denying their goodness and worth. This has led to much needless pain and suffering. We need a more authentic theology of sexuality in general and LGBTQ people in particular. We need to be authentic in our response to the sexual abuse scandal (and the abuse of power) in our Church hierarchy. We must face the ugly truth that many in our hierarchy (clerical structures and religious) have sinned and our very structures have allowed this sinfulness to flourish. We need genuine repentance and conversion. One step in the right direction is transparency and accountability of the clergy. Our primary task in Australia at this time is to live the gospel message of healing and reconciliation. This is a harsh reality but there is life in dying to our own egos and rising in Christ. We are a people who encounter the person of Jesus Christ. We are a people who believe in a God who calls us to a personal relationship and to live accordingly. So let’s walk humbly with Jesus, let’s practice kindness and compassion, let’s live in justice.

Making Christianity more appealing to both Christians and non-Christians which should reflect in the pattern the Word of God is delivered to people without mixing it up with Church-established doctrines.

I would like to see priests do what they are ordained to do i.e. say Mass and absolve me from my sins. All other functions of the Church can be carried out by the laity or some person appointed to the task. I see the priest travelling to distant venues to attend meetings, etc. that is taking him away from his primary roll which I have stated above. I would like to put forward a consideration that attending Mass on a Friday (such as Saturday night Mass which was once not heard of) could fulfil a person's obligation of attending a vigil or Sunday Mass. If this was considered, I would hope it would relieve some of the pressure for our parish priest and elderly Assistant priest in so much as one less Mass on the Saturday or Sunday.

The Holy Spirit is urging us to return to frequent adoration, and especially a return to the sacrament of confession. The Spirit is calling for courageous men and women of faith to step up and defend the

faith in truth and love. We are not called to compromise but to listen to others in their own experience and suffering and help them to Christ. In addition, the Catholic schools need to stop watering down the faith and hiring teachers who not only do not practise the faith but actively belittle and ridicule it within their classrooms. This goes especially for the position of RE (religious education) teachers. Schools hire anyone for RE in the hopes that it will fill timetable gaps. I can guarantee you from experience that this is where we are losing our young Catholics. Young people see that even their RE teacher doesn't take the faith seriously, so why should they? Lastly, the Spirit is calling us to make our Churches and liturgy beautiful again. Truth, Beauty, and Goodness (God Himself) attract our hearts at their very core. We need to reclaim this beauty in God's house and in our worship of Him. Commission more artists who make beautiful paintings, sculptures, icons, architectural features. Promote and encourage polyphony, chant, and majestic hymns. The Mass is not some neighbourhood shindig but a coming together of the community to honour and worship God. The liturgy is not about us but God, let's please reinforce this! +AMDG+

A lot of the issues of the Plenary council (and answers) come from the Plenary council prayer. "Come Holy Spirit." First we must listen in prayer, humbly asking God for light. John Paul II asked that we learn the art of prayer. Only in true dialogue with God, will we discover His will and develop union with Him. We have to do this in families and in parishes urgently "[...] bless and unite all your people in Australia." We need an openness to others, meeting them where they are and gently helping them find God with our prayer, friendship and big hearts. Showing concern for others will lead people back to God. Mother Teresa used to say more people are won over by kindness and affection than eloquent arguments. We need to live unity within the Church and not destroy each other. If you can't praise don't say anything - St Josemaria Escriva. "Give us the grace to see your face in one another." Charity is what moves people, we need to learn to spend time every week in charitable acts. But the best place to learn is at regular Mass and confession. Frequent use of the sacraments needs promoting. It's the only way to become real friends of our friends. The engine room of renewal is in Mass. "[...] to speak boldly of the truth." From our bishops and priests, we need to hear the Truth of the Faith, not watered down. Youth like to be challenged with idealism, giving one's life to God is a great challenge of love. Pope Francis loves demanding of youth in World Youth Days. Don't be scared of telling people of God's beautiful law such as fidelity in marriage, generosity, respect for life. Also, lay people need to speak of God in their workplace, they need to be encouraged and taught by Church leaders. "Give us [...] a discerning heart to hear what you are saying." Priests need to become spiritual guides again so the laity can discern God's voice. How? In the confessional, from pulpit. Trained laypeople too can lead real prayer groups in front of the tabernacle to find God's will. Encouraging the reading of the great Spiritual writers actively. "Lead your Church into a hope filled future." Need to access all the lapsed Catholics actively inviting them home, e.g. teaching the truths of the Faith, organising testimonies on people who've returned to practicing again. As a Church, we have to preach Hope to a hopeless world. We have to be convinced we've got the message people need to hear. "That we may live the joy of the Gospel." As a Church, we need to discover that the teachings of the Church are truly joyful and satisfying. This will again attract people back as they see God just wants us home with Him, that He's not a tyrant, but a loving Father. I emphasize people need to be taught the Faith again e.g. Catechism in the home, from the pulpit and school.

God would be asking us to be a witness of His love. To show others that the faith we share, individually and as a Church community, in a God who loves us, brings us joy and hope for the future, and gives us the nourishment and strength to make the choices we need to make every day to live our lives justly and with good conscience.

I think God is asking us to: i) Open the Church administration and hierarchy (not ministry) to women religious and lay people, ii) Proactively hand over known child abuse cases that have not been provided to the police, iii) Tell the story of all the good work the Church does, iv) Support priests in isolated dioceses and parishes, v) Ensure rural areas have priests that are suitable to the local community—able to be understood and in touch with local concerns.

God is asking us to speak clearly about the teachings of the Catholic Church and how faith is relevant and helpful at every level of society and for every individual. Our Church has and always will be unique. We have Jesus Christ present spiritually and physically in our Churches. God is calling us to robustly and confidently inform the world, with a spirit respecting the absolute freedom of others, that our Church contains the answers to many of the social ills of today. In particular, some of the age-old practices that our tradition has shown bring people closer to Jesus Christ must be invigorated, e.g. exposition and adoration of the Blessed sacrament. The warmth and faith of parishes that live these practices is observable. Advocates amongst the young should learn to spread the beautiful wonder of the sacrament of Confession. Without greater practice of this sacrament, how can the Church produce the saints that we need to act truly like salt in our changing culture?

We are the Church. I feel God is asking us to unite and share equally in the ministry of his Church. Women should take a more active role at the top and we should not be governed by men. Our Church is in a lot of turmoil at this time and people are very let down. We are the Church, not just the Clergy, therefore we must be equal. I would love to see the Church return to Orthodoxy, to the precepts and teachings of our Lord. No more trying to fit in with the World. We have only one Master, Jesus Christ. Females in lead roles. Married priests. Schools are the face of the Church—our Church's future. Our Clergy to take a more active role in our schools—work side by side with students/staff. 3rd Penitential Rite. Greater input by parishioners in decision-making when arranging baptisms, weddings and funerals. A more family oriented and family friendly Church that understands that children have parties and sports on Sundays and so parents can't always get the whole family to Church. Married priests. Female priests. Married female priests. Priests with children will have an understanding of family commitments. Less emphasis on stand up, sit down, kneel at exact times. For children, they're scared they'll make a mistake. 3rd Rite of Reconciliation. Women in leadership roles. Leaders of the Church to model good practices of leadership—collaboration, modelling of treatment of people. Third rite of reconciliation. Females in Church have senior roles. Married priests. Schools are the Church (not Mass, as it is). Clergy need to be visible in schools. 3rd Rite of Reconciliation. Clergy to be more visible in parish/Catholic Schools, both Secondary and Primary. Female Clergy in the future. More inclusion of Youth. Be more of a Community Church. Helping the poor and refugees. To make God real to our Youth. Encourage them to use their talents with the Church community. Our children in our schools are the future of the Church. Refugee help. More Youth—Testimonies of how God has worked in people's lives—Modern day accounts to attract the Youth and what God can do for you/them. To pray more. More prayer and worship services. I think God is asking us to clean up His Church and return to authentic Catholicism. We should be a light to the world, not conform to it.

I believe God is asking us to be faithful and committed to our faith and spread the Word of God to people, especially to those who do not believe in God.

God is asking us to put the teachings of Jesus before the dogma of the institutional Church. Were He to come to Earth today, Jesus would not recognise His Church with its palaces and princely robes. Jesus is asking us to love one another as He has loved us. He has asked us to 'feed [His] sheep'. He would want us to share our resources more; to take a more active role in supporting capacity building programs and projects overseas and in our Indigenous communities. He would want us to fight more openly for social justice.

To pray more. Recite the rosary more often. Strengthen our faith. Focus on our families. Work together/eat together. Attend Mass together. Say no to gay marriage. Evangelise. To identify ourselves. To use our culture and traditions to strengthen the Church—especially the migrants. To recognise older members of the Church who may feel neglected with a new "culture" of the Church. To go back to the teachings of the gospel.

God is asking us to be real. A community that works together and is not dominated with the attitudes and thoughts solely of those who exercise power and authority. That all people share the responsibility of being Church. That priests look beyond themselves and treat all with respect and minister to all within their parish not just a chosen few. That fairness is exercised when priests have

<p>a complaint against them. By this, I mean that if a priest is sanctioned because of a complaint, at least call that priest to give his side of the story. I know of priests who have had their faculties removed simply because of a complaint. Where is justice exercised if the priest is not given the opportunity to speak if not questioned by those who hastily act to remove them? This is a grave injustice from the so-called leaders of the Church.</p>
<p>I truly love my Holy Catholic Faith. I also have great concerns and reservations for the direction of the Church pending the outcome of this Plenary council. In an ever increasing and sinful world, where even within the Church we have cases of cardinals, bishops and priests living homosexual lives, scores of Catholics living outside the sacrament of Marriage, and the complete absence in the belief and following of Jesus for countless numbers of Catholics, and increasing rapidly. I am concerned for the Plenary Council's decision to the point where changes and teaching will again be watered down, as was the case in Vatican II, to erode further the reverence due to Our Lord Jesus Christ. I hate to think this, but I believe that the Holy Church is in a death spiral, no doubt through the demise of the Freemasons, whose aim it is to tear apart the Holy Catholic Church. Changes to the Churches' teachings will only again further reduce the reverence due to Our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus did say that the gates of hell will not prevail against his Holy Church, and we must believe in this, and I cannot see Jesus allowing this to come about. His time of intervention must be coming soon, for He is certainly not going to allow his faith full and his Church to be hurt for too much longer. I believe that Jesus is asking us to open the doors of hearts and to surrender everything in our lives to him, and ask him to take care of everything. Become people of forgiveness and love of our fellow man, and finally take up our crosses and follow him.</p>
<p>We all need to reflect on oneself at this time and get back to basics as outlined at the Vatican II and we all must be informed and take responsibility to renew the Church. The whole people of God in Australian need to be focused on the work of renewal, we can be the 'light on the hill' to both our nation and to Catholics around the world. We must take up the challenge together to make innovative and substantial changes in how we live out our Gospel centre lives in our nation</p>
<p>We think that God is asking us to recognise that: • Living the Gospel asks more of us than just our personal relationship with God; • We are called to live the Gospel by our outreach to others, especially the poor and marginalised; • The practice of our faith demands, not just a personal response but a communal response; • our parish community must examine how it, as a community, is connecting with the poor.</p>
<p>God is asking everyone to be their best selves, do unto others as you would like them to do to unto you and look for the goodness in everybody.</p>
<p>To be true to the word of God, free from the distraction of the culture of life being about one self rather than being selfless.</p>
<p>To be a good person—with faith, hope and charity. To lead a good life. For the Church to be involved in works of good such as social justice and environmental causes. To have a committed relationship with God.</p>
<p>May our Church be more like Jesus taught. He welcomed and embraced everyone, the poor and broken, the sick and infirm. We must all be more welcoming to our Catholic faith and there must be a focus on loving God and loving your neighbour. There needs to be more depth and variety in homilies. We need to stop the domination of ultra conservative groups: Ultra-conservative groups' intervention e.g. anti-abortion can often be less effective and cause division. And remember 'going to Church' is when 2 or more are gathered together in Jesus name, NOT just in a Church building! We are all the Church.</p>
<p>* Our Church must never allow sexual assaults to ever be covered up or people moved from place to place. The hierarchy who act this way must be held accountable. * We need to take a serious look at the priesthood and how the priests are trained. * It is paramount that women be given a greater role and participation in our Church. * The Eucharist, the sacraments and especially Reconciliation need to be examined so that they are relevant to the baptised. * That our youth somehow become engaged into the life and mission of the Church. * That the language of the Eucharist encourages</p>

participation and faith development in all the baptised. * Our young are very conscious of social justice and so our Church should be seen as an instrument to better the poor and marginalised. * Our Church be a welcoming Church open to all. ALSO: = Re-establish trust in and reputation of our Church after all the abuse issues. = Look at the processes around divorce, annulment and remarriage. = Marketing the Church. = Address the burnout of older people who have been "keeping parishes running" for so long. = Move towards a more realistic explanation of creation based on what we now know as opposed to what people knew when the Old Testament was written.

Jesus said "Love one another as I have loved you". Rather than focusing on rules and regulations, let there be a much greater emphasis on love of God and love of neighbour. We need to go back to our beginnings, to the early Church, when Christians were recognised by the love they had for one another. If the focus is on LOVE rather than rules and regulations, then that implies a much greater emphasis on relationships—firstly our relationship with Jesus, God incarnate, who loves us unconditionally, and then our relationship with self and others. There needs to be a much greater leadership role for women in the Church, women who by their very nature are life-giving, nurturing and compassionate. Let's start with ordaining female Deacons (Deaconesses) whose primary role is one of service. This provides them with opportunities for contact with people at a grass roots level, resulting in a better understanding of people's pastoral needs. These women should also have a voice at a decision-making level of the Church, bringing to such meetings firsthand knowledge of people's spiritual, emotional, psychological, social and physical needs. We also need to be a listening Church. The Church is Christ's family, so we need to listen to one another. Families break down when genuine listening ceases, when members feel they haven't been heard or understood. As a Church family, we need to listen and try to understand one another with our hearts, with compassion, not with our heads/minds. If there is to be healing within our Church family (and God knows so much healing needs to occur), people need to feel heard, and genuine reconciliation needs to occur. So let us take steps to be the loving family, the Kingdom of God, Christ wants us to be.

We believe that the Church in Australia is in crisis. The main indicators of this crisis are the critical shortage of priests, the long decline in Mass attendance, and the disastrous effect on the Church's reputation caused by clerical abuse and the cover-ups by the hierarchy. The opportunity presented by the Plenary Council is a challenge to the whole Church, including the bishops. WHAT DO WE HOPE FOR? We hope that the Plenary Council will launch a renewed attention to Vatican II's teaching on the Church. See *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. The Church is in the world to carry on the mission of Jesus described in Luke's gospel, 4, 16-22. In our current loss of credibility, this model is all the more urgently needed. We hope that the Plenary Council will result in actions which will lead to a Church which is energised and inclusive. There are a number of critical issues which must be addressed by the Universal Church. We realise that these issues cannot be addressed to finality by the Australian Plenary Council in isolation. However, we believe that the issues should be examined by the Plenary Council, and represented strongly to the international Church hierarchy. We mention two examples; a) THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH We believe that women should be included equally in all decision-making bodies within the Church; that the time has come to reopen discussion on the ordination of women—to which we see neither scriptural nor theological objection. Ultimately all roles within the Church should be open to women. b) CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT ON WHICH ALL LIFE DEPENDS. There is no doubt now that climate change represents an existential threat to the human race, and to all of God's creatures. Pope Francis has been a strong voice for action, but the whole Church needs to act as a matter of urgency. See "*Laudato Si'*" and also "*Partaking of God*" by Denis Edwards.

To promote internationally a review of Church teachings where they clash with Jesus' message of love and inclusion. To seek input from the many lapsed Catholics to discern why they left. This could assist enormously in understanding how may need to attract people to the Church. Many people leave the Church not due to lack of deep faith but other reasons perhaps irrelevance of Church rules and practice (vs Jesus teachings), lack of acceptance of marginal groups, lack of acceptance of

divorced people, etc. And of course, the issues of sexual abuse. To seek other models than the traditional hierarchical male led Church. To promote meditation and contemplative practice.
To build a Church in the image that Christ imagined and intended—inclusive of all, responsive to the calls of the marginalised. It was not a Church of arbitrary rules and exclusion or of conservative men more interested in protecting their positions and titles than the people they serve. If Christ and the disciples walked into Rome today, I believe he would say "This isn't what I had in mind."
Catholic Church while declaring inclusivity is not embracing women in hierarchy of the Church. Think of something that will prevent paedophiles clergy ones getting away! Men cover up men.
To be more systematic about preparing parents for family catechesis.
Learn from history. From the Old Testament exile to the current crisis, we have to learn to be a humble people. We have much to be proud of but seem unable to share the good news—no marketing of this to the wider community.
Make our parish life attractive. Make going to Church and attending Sunday Mass an opportunity to encounter Jesus. Help priests to be able to truly give life to the Word of God. Promote the New Evangelisation. Welcome new faith groups that help enrich and make for a healthy parish.
A renewal. A renewal back to the Catholic Faith of old. A re-evangelisation as many Catholics do not know their faith. We need priests that will listen to the authority of their bishops and teach the Catholic faith and not to advocate for same sex marriage or women priests, etc. which is happening in our parish and other parishes. We need for support in our parishes. Prayer groups, men's groups, women groups, teen groups, etc. where people can pray and discuss the faith together and support each other on their journey. Catholic schools need to teach the Catholic faith, not have individuals who teach it is O.K for same sex union, etc. and pass it on as Catholic teaching. We send our kids to Catholic Schools to get the true Catholic teaching.
Let the People of God 'go free'. Parish networks grow but sometimes new parish priests make great changes without consultation. Let the people organize themselves with priests as presiders, arranged by the parish. Look at the gospel in terms of outreach to the whole community. Jesus' message for today's world.
To stick to teaching the Catholic Faith and not succumb to what broader society might think.
I think that God is asking us to make sure we become an all welcoming community. He can see that people are being isolated and need this community to which they can belong.
I believe God is asking us to really take a good hard look at what we are doing...or NOT doing in our parishes, and to start right now to make some changes. People are in trouble. They are searching. They are losing their faith, they are believing the lies of our secular culture and for those want to understand more, deepen their faith or connect more with like-minded Catholics...there are very few avenues available. We need to have more formation courses organised in parishes and small group opportunities. Courses like those put together by Ascension Press or Parousia need to be offered again and again in parishes ... and ALPHA should be in EVERY PARISH! We need priests who don't water down the truth. Our secular culture is imposing their radical, secular views on our children and our Church is NOT standing up ... taking action and informing or teaching them ... and the rest of us, how to handle this dominant (evil) culture we are living in. It is Strong and it is influencing our people and the Church and leading people astray. Stop dumbing down the truth!! The truth will set us free. Teach us why we are against contraception, SSM, abortion. SPEAK ... we need to hear and understand it all. Schools need to talk about sin and hell when appropriate ... instead of pretending they don't exist and anything goes. It won't scare our kids ... who by the way are being influenced and exposed to much, much worse. They CRAVE truth. They need it and we owe it to them to know what the Church teaches. Our school have a huge responsibility there and need to guide our children for the sake of their souls. I truly believe they crave a Church that is authoritative. That speaks of one objective truth in a world of LIES. Our youth need to hear testimonies!! That is I believe the most powerful tool of evangelisation ... really!! They love stories and especially ones that will inspire their faith. They need to be able to articulate their faith when they get attacked by a friend from outside the Church ... about our Church. More youth groups and

<p>special events for them as well. But we need more faith formation for current practising Catholics. If we focus on our own first, we can form disciples and leaders for the many who are not at the same level. We need our faith deepened and strengthened. Lastly ... we need more perpetual adoration chapels. Adoration is powerful!! Also, we need more awareness or pro-life events or opportunities for social outreach with other parishioners. Any opportunities for connection and friendship within parishes are vital. We also need an evangelisation and welcome teams in every parish ... for people who've come for a one-off "try". Lastly, more formation around understanding the Mass. If people understood it, they wouldn't put so much pressure on the Mass being entertaining. Thanks.</p>
<p>1. Teach more about prayer life and the sacraments. Explaining the liturgy and being faithful to our Catholic traditions. 2. Discuss more moral and ethical issues with the faithful in homilies and where possible. 3. Incorporate doctrine in homilies and teachings in Catholic schools. Using the catechism of the Catholic Church as a guide in teaching doctrine. 4. Focus on protecting and cultivating Christian marriage and enriching family life and its importance to society.</p>
<p>To reconnect young adult and even advanced age to God as their creator and almighty. To have a good leader in the Church as example and willing to sacrifice for the good of the Church. To encourage family prayer, improve school liturgy and sacrament education.</p>
<p>To return to the grass level and its origins. The people of God were formed as a community that shared a common goal—that is the love of God and community with one another. Why is it that many people who are Catholics do not receive the support they need? Why is it that those that are not Catholic—or actively atheist receive support in preference to the faithful? I believe in helping all people—but to see people who love God abandoned is quite sad. There are elderly that are lonely / young families struggling to meet financial obligations and raise small children/ depression among men / Catholic schools that are flooded with atheist views from students and families who do not support the Church. I think God would like to know what are we doing to help the people in our community that believe in Him. The Lord had an option for the poor—but He also did not 'hang around' with those who would not listen and accept His word. He even instructed His apostles to leave any town that would not accept them and shake the dust off their sandals. Shouldn't we also—ensure firstly that the people who believe in Him are looked after—rather than becoming a cash cow for atheists?</p>
<p>God is asking us to find the love of people again! Let us put people FIRST! We are becoming people of money, appearances, status and power. We need to go back to basics and follow in the footsteps of Jesus.</p>
<p>Rekindle the spiritual and prayer life of the Catholic Church. 1) Knowledge of the faith, especially sacraments and the moral teachings 2) A personal encounter with Jesus Christ 3) A sense of community and belonging where the charity of Christ is lived for all</p>
<p>I think the message from God hasn't change since the coming of Jesus Christ, to go out into the world and make disciples of men. The latest census shows that our numbers are shrinking. So, in that aspect, we have failed. I think the Church here in Australia, which is made up of all the faithful, needs to be more proactive in living our faith. Instead of being converted, we need to help others discover the message of the Gospels and to know Jesus.</p>
<p>I think God is asking Australia for something very simple: To be holy—How do we do this? • Families should support families • Husband and wife should support other married couples • Priests, Religious need to have a deeper and true understanding of the sacraments and be able to transmit this to all the faithful as well as encourage a deep love for the sacraments. But they can't do this if they are not well formed. • More reverence for the Holy Eucharist • Catholic schools and Catholic teachers should teach students true doctrine and be more faithful to Catholic teachings. How could we better ensure this? How do we measure this in schools? • Lay people should take more responsibility in helping others be holy. Provide avenues for this. Lay people need to have better formation. • More holy and articulate Catholics in media, politics and in other roles that influence society • Being more united to the Pope and the archdiocese. I go to daily Mass in a parish that is</p>

run by a religious order and we do not always get materials and messages (sent to all parishes) from the [-] Archdiocese. • Encourage more prayer in front of the Blessed sacrament.

We think that God is asking of us in Australia at this time to remain faithful, to not be afraid to be part of His family and for a renewed determination to live out our Christian vocation. We in Australia need to be talking about the importance of the family. To be convinced that having a good, healthy, stable family environment is the best thing for the future of society. For parents to take up their responsibility for the formation of their children in the faith so that families be truly the domestic Church that they are meant to be. For people to be reminded that marriage can be permanent and indissoluble; that love means generosity, self-giving and sacrifice. We also need exemplary priests that know and are faithful to Church teaching but more importantly are able to show care and compassion for their flock. Priests that are more concerned with salvation of souls than politics in the parishes. That we be not afraid of defending what the Church actually stands for, particularly in defending human dignity and people's right to life in a secular society that is hostile to anything that can take away "autonomy".

Love one another. Share our experiences in the Church. Keep the faith. Keep the Church alive. Work with organisations like RED CROSS AND VINNIES- to help people. Include people and talk about God. In small groups, talk about God and share our faith. Teach others on how they can become involved. Look after creation. Look after God's people. Listen to him. Take care of our land. Look after the poor.

I believe God is asking for an openness to the Holy Spirit within His members of the Church- this including bishops, priests and laity. With this openness to the Holy Spirit, we can truly begin to start moving, praying, and partaking in the Divine Will, guided by the Holy Spirit. I think God wants us to pray for reverence within our Churches and our Holy Mass, bring back kneeling rails for parishioners to receive the Eucharist on their knees if they wish, take out screens in the Mass. We should be reminded that the Church is a Holy temple, and conversations should not be held within them, particularly after the Mass, when other people are praying. I experience this every Sunday when I try to spend time with Jesus, I am distracted by the chatter of others within the Church around me. Prayer is needed for zealous priests, priests who care not only for the existing members of the Church, but those who do not yet know Christ, zealous for growth and evangelism. I am seeing a lack of this very element in our parish. God gave our parish a priest with these qualities. During his time here, God worked wonders through him, due to his openness to the Spirit. Many evangelical movements were started, particularly for youth and young adults. This priest however, was not given much support by other priests. What I think God wants is this passion. God wants our Churches full and His love to spread throughout Australia, through the faithful. Ways in which we can begin prayer groups, or movements, should be explored, so that we may do this very thing. Perhaps more young adult formations, prayer groups, the promotion of evangelical movements and motivational/inspirational talks and speakers. I think God, also, sees the need of sound spiritual advisors and guidance for His people. Didn't all the great Saints, or many of them, have good spiritual directors? And aren't we all called to be Saints? I know of priests who have no interest in doing this for their parishioners.

God is asking us to allow the Holy Spirit to lead our Church again. It seems that we are now a Church of double standards. Church leaders must be accountable for their actions and live simpler lives, modelled on Jesus. Ornate vestments, accessories and gestures should be eliminated. Women's voices should be heard at all levels of the Hierarchy. Their roles and responsibilities should be re-examined and should allow for more active roles relating to governance, decision-making and leadership. Women have the same rights and responsibilities as the male body of the Church. We must stop allowing conservative Catholic groups to dominate Church decisions, as they do not read "the signs of the times", yet have a powerful influence over Church Rules and Procedures. The Church must live in the present and be responsive to the challenges of the future. Key decision makers should include all parts of the body of the Church. We need open dialogue without suppression of the prophetic voices of Theologians and teachers. We need to re-examine the role of

the Laity as Baptised people. The Laity is crucial to the Church's survival at every level but have no voice. This needs to change and the role of Laity at parish levels needs to be institutionally recognised. We need to stop placing unrealistic demands on our parish priests, and look at ways to continuously support them. They should live in community and enjoy the fellowship of fellow priests to strengthen them in their mission. Pastoral councils should be mandatory. The selection and formation of priests must be re-examined. Proper psychological assessment should occur and not be ignored. Priests should have real life experiences before entering the priesthood. Those who come from other countries should be helped to understand Australian culture so as to properly respond to the needs of parishioners. God is also asking us to allow Pastoral concerns to come before Principles and Laws. Those who are most in need of the Church's compassion and mercy are deliberately excluded by the Church. Christ died for all, not just the righteous. He offers his body as a sacrifice for all with no exclusions. The Church should follow his example. Gluten-free hosts should also be allowed. The annulment process should be simplified and the 3rd rite of reconciliation reintroduced. The Church should also reconsider its stance on contraception. The Church Hierarchy must also closely examine and relinquish its power, domination and control of the laity who make up 95% of the Church. Control and domination profoundly affect the life of the people who have no voice. The compassion of God seems to be lacking in today's Church. There should be more equal representation of the laity at the Diocesan level, including women and youth. Parishes should appoint these delegates. Bishops should appoint lay people as their delegates and allow them to vote on key issues. We need a transparent process of selecting Bishops, including parish consultation.

I went to a function on the weekend and 2 Catholic women, one in her 40's and one in her 50's did not know that confession is still part of Catholic practice! There is a lot of confusion and ignorance in the community, so I would like to see a new and simple education programme, like the one used over 50 years ago ... I have heard older people speak a "Penny Catechism" which was a brief summary of the Catholic faith in simple language, which children learnt by heart and still remembered in their old age with affection ... Our Catechism and the Compendium is helpful, but perhaps too detailed for children and many adults to make time to read. Today there is confusion about: "Is it ok to miss Mass on Sunday?", and "Hasn't confession been made obsolete? Is it a sin or not a sin? What is sinful? What do I go to confession for? What do I say in confession? " It seems many adults have not got a clue what to do or say, when they go to Mass, a funeral or a wedding, when to sit or when to stand, whether should they receive communion or not and why not?". If the adults don't know, then neither do their children. I think we need to go to basics and perhaps have booklets at the Church that could be given out at funerals, weddings, baptisms encouraging those who are using the Church for all the sacraments, to be given out to family and friends, for their instruction and convenience so as to be better able to participate in each sacramental ceremony ... so they can follow what to do and why ... basic and simple ... perhaps on the back of the booklet have printed a website offering more information, if they would like to learn more ... How to pray? ... Questions ... Answers .. like "What does a person do to become a Saint? i.e.: St Mary of the Cross. For working people who can't get to Mass, perhaps a video link of a live Mass.

I think God is asking us to be unified and I don't see unity when practising Catholics and non-practising Catholics attend a funeral, wedding or other sacramental celebrations. Those who are not practising are out of step with the changes in the liturgy because they do not know when to sit, stand or whether they should receive Holy Communion, many don't think that is necessary to go to Confession anymore. Last night I typed my first submission and I mentioned that, perhaps a booklet with the appropriate information for each sacramental occasion could be made available, perhaps in different languages! Today I was discussing this with a friend and she had just come back from a wedding in Singapore where the Church she attended had a very large screen and all the relevant information was shown. First thing written was, to turn off mobile phones, when to stand, sit and who should be receiving Holy Communion, plus the Hymns. This could be done by all parishes having

a standard "Power Point" that the parishioners could use for each sacramental occasion, even made in different languages. I think this would assist the unity in the Church community.

To embrace acceptance of all people. To allow our Christian values to join with those of other religions who also uphold basic goodness at their heart to unify in love, not hate.

1. Eucharist: a. There is a crisis in the number of priests. And this will become even worse within ten to fifteen years. Yet nothing meaningful seems to be being done. i. Celibacy is obviously an issue. Ordaining married men (especially in rural areas where the lack of priests is already critical) is a necessary step. ii. Invite back married priests—at least some of those who left the priesthood to marry have indicated that they would welcome an opportunity to return to the ministry. b. Crisis in Mass attendance. i. Near 70% in 1950s, now just over 10% and still falling. ii. Resolve the debate around access in favour of food for the journey and not a privilege for those “inside the tent.” iii. Abolish the nonsense idea that gluten free hosts are incapable of being consecrated—this is yet another way in which certain people are excluded ... unnecessarily. 2. Young people: a. Two lost generations. i. Humanae Vitae cannot be saved and it is a mistake to even try. The ruling alienated most of a generation (and then their children). Now it is almost universally ignored. And it was always wrong. ii. The sexual abuse cover up — and the cover-up even more than the original crimes—paints a picture to young people of a Church that rails against a whole range of sexual practices, even IVF for infertile couples, but protects paedophiles within its own ranks. b. Exclusion of women. i. Young people simply will not accept a sexist, patriarchal structure ii. In any case this represents a scandalous waste of talent/resource. c. Role of Opus Dei and similar regressive groups in shutting down the discussion and openness that is necessary within the structural Church. 3. Power, dominance and control, a. The medieval / feudal structure that continues the idea of fealty and the divine right of princes and kings needs to be demolished, i. The hierarchy must be accountable, ii. Challenged in the Royal Commission the only response from the bishops was to expand the role of the bishops conference so that it had more persuasive power to “influence” bishops in individual dioceses, iii. The Royal Commission response to proposals offered by the bishops to add processes, procedures and strategies was simple and direct—“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” iv. The Catholic Church is the Church of the Gospels. Many of Christ’s most strident criticisms were aimed at the legalese within Judaism and the arrogance of its Chief priests and Pharisees. v. Unfortunately the Catholic Church has collected at least as many rules, regulations and restrictions during its 2,000 years. It desperately needs to re-discover what is important. vi. The persistent focus on who is excluded and what is not allowed has alienated many people, including their families and friends.

1. Justice: as a Church, we can't begin to heal and seek peace, unless prompt justice is given to the victims of sexual abuse. We need to stand up for the preyed upon, and not the predators. 2. Perseverance: a few wayward priests do not define Catholics as a group. Those of us who remain true to our beautiful faith must persevere and carry on its life-enhancing traditions despite the turbulent times we live in. This Council is a powerful example of just that. 3. Proper Catechesis: teaching Scripture accurately so people are fully aware of their faith, and exactly what it means to be a Catholic. 4. Conveying Relevance: The Bible is more than just a bunch of stories about people that lived millennia ago. It is the timeless, eternal living Word of God that is and will always remain relevant to all people regardless of the cultures they live in. It is the ultimate guide to life, if people only knew how to apply its wisdom to their daily lives. 5. Leading by Example: the greatest testimony we can give fellow Catholics and non-Catholics is how we live our own life. Reflecting Jesus's message in the biggest to the smallest acts in our daily lives, in good times and in bad, is a more powerful example than going around preaching words that aren't backed by deeds. 6. Engaging the Youth: they are the future of the Church. If they are not taught to find meaning and purpose in this glorious faith, then we, the present generations of parents, priests and elders, would have failed in our duty to transmit the faith. 7. Lifelong Introspection: this is something I believe is required of everyone, at the individual, family, parish and community level. In this present time, it is so easy to veer off course without even realising. Regular introspection can help us to course-correct. 8.

Support Systems: connected to the point above, when we go off-course as we often do, sometimes we can't find our own way back. Or sometimes, life can get lonely. Church is a starting place for people to get help, but outside of Church, I'd suggest the following initiatives that may already be in place in some parishes, but should be available everywhere:—Local family groups, for praying and socialising together, are a great idea, especially for new immigrant families. —Access to Catholic counsellors. —Family mentoring—where older couples and families could guide new couples and first-time parents through the struggles of marriage and parenthood. 9. Being Joyful: not as in merry-making or grinning mindlessly, but rather, having an inner joy and calm despite the troubles we face, knowing that we are beloved children of God, who is always with us.

My answer could be summarised in one word. Pray! However, to expand on this, what God has always asked of us, as he did the chosen people of Israel and now asks the Church of God is essentially the same; repent and believe in the Gospel. I believe God is asking Australians and especially her clergy to step up to the plate and get back to basics. The Church globally is in crisis and this is evident in Australia. It is a crisis ultimately of personal sin and a lack of sanctity. From the Pope to the parish janitor! Australia has so many good and holy people who are weary of a worldly and mediocre Church and who groan for one renewed in its reliable traditions and truths. A Church unafraid to be Catholic. Prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, fasting, alms giving, regular confession and reception of communion in a state of grace. Doing good and admonishing evil but always in a spirit of charity. A commitment to the Rosary for love of Christs Mother and meditating on Her Son in the Gospel. Faithfulness to the magisterium, doctrines and the Catechism of the Church. Passing on the wisdom from the lives of the Saints. Speaking out firmly against heresy. These means are tried and tested and they work. In parishes where these mainstays are on offer, there is standing room only. Where the clergy have moved away from this model numbers are generally dwindling and the congregation ageing. Our liturgies should be reverent and rich offerings to God centred on a devotion to the Eucharist. Not banal pseudo-entertainment and meaningless sermons designed undermine orthodoxy and appeal to the lowest common denominator so as not offend parishioners. Today, people spend vast amounts of money and time on self-improvement. They are thirsting for a challenge. Authentic Catholicism is a challenge. When parishes conform to the world rather than seek to form it, they drive people away from the Church. Why? Because in marketing terms there is no product differentiation. So why bother going to Mass? As the Pope remarked in one of his first papal homilies, if we do not preach Christ, we are just another NGO. The market for the souls is immense and yet instead of being fishers of men we often shy away from that challenge. We should not be afraid to rock the boat of St Peter. If a few Judases fall out, so be it. God is calling us at this time as he always has to take up the Cross and follow Him.

In this time when Globally there is an attack on the Church and so much lukewarmness within the Catholic Church, where is our resolution to rise with faith and good works to restore The Way of life that has sustained and enriched us. Where is the Church in Forming and educating the faithful in the objective truths of our mission? God would want us to remain faithful and would expect his shepherds of His Flock to be faithful to His teaching. How can I put myself in God's shoes? But I can say that in following Him as faithfully as I can, this is what I would think God would be asking of us Where is the proper Catholic religious education of children in Catholic schools according to the Catholic catechism? Where is the proper religious education training of the religion teachers in Catholic schools? Where is the proper formation of youth? Where are the Catholic cultures and traditions encouraged, things like processions, priest home visits, holy water? Where is the proper formation of married couples especially in communication, family, love? Where is the continuing formation and education of the priest and are they given spiritual direction? Why do we accept the sexualisation of our children and society? Where is sacrifice and penance encouraged?

God is asking all of us to focus on our personal holiness by increasing our participation in prayer and the sacraments, and also evangelise our family, friends and communities.

- Consistency of the liturgy across all parishes and to follow the rubric—Catechists to educate parishioners and Catholics about the fundamentals and basics of our faith—Knowledge of the

sacraments—the importance, what the sacrament is about and how we be a witness to them in our daily lives—opportunities for more ministry especially to the poor, homeless and needy—more parishes to encourage adoration to parishioners—perhaps have more opportunities for prayer and adoration in the local area—remove drums (and also guitar) if possible, as part of choir during Mass—only organs/keyboard and singing should be used—encourage a more solemn and reverent atmosphere rather than being in a concert—keep the traditions of the Catholic Church—bring them back to parishes if possible —organize more events for parishioners and youth to participate—create a tight knit community, for example catechism classes or even talks for everyone to come and learn more about their faith—Continued education for all clergy should be compulsory —altar servers should only be for boys, not girls/woman—more dedicated priests to take their vocation seriously and minister to the Church

As the result of our group discussion, we all agree that God is asking us to teach our children and ourselves the Catholic faith. Therefore, we able to reach others that do not know about him.

I think God is asking us for more reverence, silence before and after Mass in the Church. More thoughtful prayer before the Mass More devotion to Mary and the Rosary, before during or after the Mass. God is asking us to pray to his Son. Celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday in all Churches, it's not even broadcast or mentioned in our Church, most parishioners have never heard of Divine Mercy Sunday. Announcing Holy Days of obligation by priests. Mentioning the devil does exist and more education on hell and purgatory, and emphasis on one-on-one reconciliation on a monthly basis. Emphasis on daily Family Rosary and daily Bible reading and fasting. Priests have to get out in the public and evangelise, it's easy to preach to a captive audience in Church each week. Mary says to Pray, Pray, Pray!!!

As Mother Theresa said "God doesn't ask that we succeed in everything, but that we are faithful." I think that God wants us to fall in love with him and truly live the teachings of his Catholic Church. We should leave the "success" of our endeavours to God and commit ourselves to preach the true and beautiful doctrines of our Faith and embrace the spiritual life. To that end, bishops and all of us should be bold and courageous in preaching the Faith. Young people's hearts can be changed by a robust and idealistic Catholicism. We must simply commit ourselves to faithfulness, tradition, the Church and Our Lord and Our Lady.

... Help parents to teach the faith to their children and bring them to God. This task is becoming more difficult (yet more urgent) as society becomes more aggressively secular and centred on the self, a world that is both philosophically and morally confused, a world that teaches our children that happiness comes from abandoning reason and satisfying their most carnal desires. Parents need more help from the Church to form our children both intellectually and spiritually. Maybe at the diocesan level, we can get more online resources to help teach our children: • Bible study • catechesis • theology and philosophy • Canon law • how to answer common questions in a hostile culture • how to develop a prayer life? At the parish level, we need more things like: • good homilies. For example, homilies that talk about the gospel and God • the Lenten programme "the light is on" • social activities focused around schools and the parish. Children have an amazing sense of wonder and thought should be given to restoring some of the things that, in hindsight, should never have been abandoned like: • restore beautiful Churches • restore good music • restore reverence to the liturgy • return to worshiping God • bring back fish and chip Fridays • restore a genuine sense of Catholic culture • restore the indissolubility of the sacrament of marriage • restore reverence for the Eucharist • restore Eucharistic reverence • restore reverence to the sacrament of the Eucharist • consider distribution of the sacred blood only on special occasions, and never by extraordinary ministers • restore the tradition of suffering, prayer and penance united to that of Christ—especially the sacrifice of the cross (this is especially important for the youth of today) • restore discipline, especially with respect to liturgy, moral teaching and doctrine Finally, here are some things that we should stop doing because they were never a good idea: • ban resurexifexes (*sic*) • ban clapping in Churches • ban Marty Haugen music • ban lame liturgies trying to be "exciting/entertaining/interesting"—children want substance not gimmickry • stop poorly said

<p>liturgies with terrible music trying to be “meaningful” and “relevant”—this does not appeal to children for very long (or most adults) • stop ignoring God when discussing social issues—Bishops and priests should speak out about social issues from a love of God, not because it makes us “feel good” • stop the mockery of mundane things like raising families and developing prayer lives • ban ugly Church buildings—even atheists want beautiful settings for their weddings, so why can’t we build beautiful buildings for the worship of God?</p>
<p>A Place of Welcome—Yaama Gunyaa (Kamilaroi language) “Do not be afraid ... to be an Australian Catholic Christian” The most important image and message that the Holy Spirits speaks to me is the need for people to feel wanted in a place of worship. An invitation for anyone to listen to a good homily, spoken via confident, vibrant celebrants. The Australian Catholic Church, not the Roman Catholic version, needs to walk the land we live on, with its spiritual connectedness to Our Country. A multicultural community needs to recognise, be seen with, our first peoples. Indigenous Australians heard this message from Saint John Paul II in 1986. “I do not hear or see this image in urban Australian Catholic Churches, even though 79% is First Nations people live in our cities and suburbs, as they are rarely seen in most Churches at all”. (Linda Burney Aboriginal Federal MP comments) Reaching out to the fringes of our communities, to risk disenfranchising a usually poorer financially, but spiritually rich will find them only waiting to be invited into our Western view of the world, to hear our side and their side of Australian History. I have not seen this in the Dioceses of Broken Bay, Sydney, Cairns, Bathurst and even Wilcannia-Forbes. For a local priest in [-], NSW to not have official Indigenous welcome to country, it not acceptable in 2019, especially after three years of being the resident priest. Their view of history, spiritually and culture, is part of our spiritual journey. A more caring, society for the environment we all live in. Even Saint Mother Theresa of Calcutta, was welcomed in 1969, in [-], [-] kms further north, so we have gone backwards in being too ritualistic, not warm and welcoming, is the message I am seeing in my travels as an advisory council member of CatholicCare. The ancient Australian past needs its truth to be recognised as from the time of creation, as in our Judeo-Christian traditions and culture. In the Dreamtime, all the land we stand on is sacred, not just the buildings constructed in the last 200 hundred years. We need to acknowledge this fact, especially in every urban, concrete jungle setting. Enjoy our Identity, our Diversity and need to celebrate in colourful new ways. Pope Francis, Encyclicals, Joy the Gospel and Care of Our Planet addresses our core creeds today, to be literally walked through, explored and discovered, via Yanna Yakka as in Dharug, Western Sydney language. Our unique Australian identity now needs to be lived starting with pilgrimages to the outback, as part of our initiation, engagement and encounters for all parishioners and local priests. Some other practical suggestions: Official Opening to Mass -1. Welcome to Our Country, Yaama Guroo, in any local language, as the first sign of genuine hospitality we should offer immediately a stranger, a visitor, an international Christian tourist or refugee from another country. Our identity, our warmth, honest and genuine, sharing this common land</p>
<p>To be a light to others.</p>
<p>To overcome the issues in the media with tolerance and to continue with faith in the teachings of Jesus.</p>
<p>We are called to holiness today and called to grow in holiness. We are called as individuals, as groups, Mass centres and dioceses. How do we do that? Is it by following our conscience? I would think not. Only with teaching from God and reflection, can we grow. Following conscience is the way that has led to movements by Martin Luther, Calvinists, atheism, Communism, Nazism. All are movements by men and form by following ideals of men. Our Catholic teaching on abortion, contraception and homosexuality need to be taught from a Christ-like perspective so that we turn away from the ways of men and turn to God. We need to be taught that the ways of this world are not God's ways. I we didn't believe that then there would be no point in going to Mass. No wonder attendances are dropping. Just like little children we need the teaching of our Holy Mother Church. How do we grow in holiness? Let's start with turning away from sin. I'm a convert of 20 years so my knowledge of Church teaching has been as an adult and I still yearn for more knowledge. I would</p>

think that cradle Catholics need far more than they are receiving at Sunday Mass if they are to develop their childhood ideas. And yet I don't hear about sin. I don't hear about hell. I rarely even hear about reconciliation. But then why would I care about reconciliation if I don't know my sins. It's no wonder reconciliation isn't appreciated when we don't understand our sinfulness. And I mean really appreciated. It is such an amazing sacrament. And even if I confess nearly the same things every time, I know I am drawing closer to holiness. If Pope Francis has to go to reconciliation regularly, then I'm sure we all do as well to really value this beautiful sacrament. The list of teachings that we need is endless. The beautiful topics that inspire us are endless. We need these developed during homilies and extended with reflection days. Topics include: Lives and teachings of the Saints, About our souls, About heaven and hell, Reverence in the Church, Return of the Tabernacle to the feature centre place of Church, Reverence to the Host, Sin and reconciliation, Holy days of obligation. Yes, we can read books on all these topics but that isn't easy for everyone and options for discussion groups helps with understanding topics.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE in all liturgies including the celebration of Eucharist. God is neither female NOR male so why is God constantly referred to as he/father? It narrows our view/ concept of God.

LOOK AT Q&I on ABC TV Monday 4th March SAYS IT ALL!!!

To pray fervently and put Jesus front and centre in my life

To put Jesus at the centre of our life and spread the good news that Jesus has risen from the dead

The Christian Catholic Church in Australia is calling upon us "the people of God" who make up the main part of the Church, to become focused and welcoming to the stranger to one's neighbour and our families. Our Christian life needs to be more relevant in our modern lives and the environment in which we live. We need to actively "live" the Gospel again and be Christ's message to others. Practising Catholic parishioners like myself, however, feel that our clergymen have forgotten in many cases how to "shepherd" their parishioners and some people are asking why? Many parishioners have just walked away and left the Church discouraged by this lacking of relevance of the Church in their lives. Within our Church, there are: • elderly and sick who rarely see their pastors other than at Mass or when asked to contribute more money on the plate; • many Catholic marriages and their home life in Australian are failing and priests are not aware of this until it is too late; • young children and teenagers are feeling abandoned by: o their Catholic schools and the Mass which still does not fully cater for them each week at Church, o their parents who have to work and leave children for others to care for or the parents allow the internet to babysit for them, o the sexual abuse by clergy and irresponsible actions of adults from all walks of life. In the last 6 years, we have seen sexual abuse from those in the highest roles within our Church. Maybe it is time for the hierarchy to change and women take up more roles within this area that previously was for men alone. And these women do not have to be just religious women like nuns. We have seen numbers dwindling in the pews because of these things stated above. We are told by the Gospel that Christ came to call sinners not just the righteous" so why are so many people turned away and abandoned like divorced persons and their families. Lastly and certainly not the least, our environment is faltering because of political abandonment by some claiming to be Christians and many of these are Catholic. This has been disastrous for our Church. Also, within the secular community there are inhuman responses and discrimination to social problems, which our Church has handed over to organisations like Vinnies which has become another big corporation body where over-officiousness and greed has taken over, where poverty remains unchallenged by many, climate change affecting our world, while there is fundamentalism and extremism lives within our Church. Let's get back to the basics of the ten commandments; loving God and our neighbour...all for the Glory of God.

To go back to the BASICS of what Jesus said he wants us to be as a Church: humble, simple, truthful, accountable, inclusive, non-judgemental and compassionate. We as a Church are deeply wounded and bleeding because of clerical child abuse, widespread over a very long time.

Submission to Plenary 2020 Council 1. It is essential to keep Jesus' love as the focus of an embracing attitude and not portray the direction of placing heavy loads on peoples' shoulders. 2. The Third rite of reconciliation must become the default position. 3. We must welcome LGBTQI community into the Church. Families now are embracing both heterosexual and non-heterosexual and all relationships must be welcome and embraced into our Church. 4. Our theology must embrace social justice issues and the position of first nation peoples into our Church, we must welcome all vulnerable and marginalised people. 5. The position of the priesthood is central to all discussion. Matters that must be address include clericalism, celibacy, married priests, return of married and unmarried ex-priests to ministry and the ordination of women to the priesthood. 6. The inclusion of divorced couples (without annulments) back into full communion with the Church. 7. The annulment process must be made easier to assist couples in failed married relationships. 8. Review the directive on contraception. 9. Review the selection process for those wishing to enter the priesthood training process. 10. Implement strategies regarding transparent governance of all parish activities. 11. Review the strategy of foreign priests, it is essential foreign priest adopt Australian cultural values with respect to clericalism, attitude to women and conservative philosophy and theology. 12. Develop strategies to balance the needs between city and country-based parishes. 13. Develop liturgy to be more appealing to children and youth. 14. It is seen the married priests are a future integral part of the Church so strategies need to be arranged to financially support them and their families. To improve this position, it may be a better to allow priests to be part time in that they work in the community in paid employment as this will allow them to experience the real life of the community, this will require more priests and this part time approach may attract more people to the priesthood. 15. More lay and especially female representation at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in addition to the very few female voices (mainly religious sisters) who are already represented but who do not have voting rights. This is also essential at Diocesan and parish levels, updated to represent the current cultural position of the community. We the Church cannot be led by men only as women are acknowledge in society as equal to men and thus it is essential that women have a relevant voice. 16. The liturgy must be must be appropriate to the times. Priests must be trained to interpret the Word to make it relevant to our current knowledge of history. 17. The Church must become a Leader, it has for too long been a follower. The Church is seen as "Dragging the Chain". 18. The priesthood is viewed as untrustworthy, so the priesthood must become proactive leaders in the community or the Church community in the ne...

I think God is asking Australia to continue being a people of welcome and Faith. I think God is asking our Religious and others in positions of authority in our Church to be world leaders in true and deep acknowledgment of, and contrition for, the failings of our Religious and others in positions of authority in our Church.

I think that God is asking us to recognise that: THE CHURCH IS LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY TODAY. There are many reasons but one of them in my opinion is: The language that is used to explain the theological framework and to guide the rituals of our sacramental experiences is meaningless to the majority of people today; we need to re-articulate the theology and the ritual in language that reflects modern theological scholarship and modern understanding of both our natural world and its history. When I ask my peers and my children/young people why they no longer attend Church, the answer that I always get is that "it is meaningless and has no relevance". When pressed or drawn out, original sin, the atonement theory, notion of ritual sacrifice, outdated cosmology, notion of 'priests as our mediator', and the primacy of ritual over care and action all feature. While I acknowledge that in many areas the Church has moved in its thinking and theology, a lot of this is largely unknown to many Catholics, either in or out of the pews. However when I attend Mass, I run a parallel discourse of prayer in my head; one that substitutes a new Gloria to the God that accompanies me on my daily journey of life; a new Creed that expresses what I believe about the God who accompanies me and about Jesus, the Christ and his life on earth, challenging the powerful and working for justice; and a new Eucharistic prayer that celebrates the primacy of Christ and the Incarnation over the OT concept of sacrifice and Anselm's atonement theory.

To become a synodal Church where we trust and listen to one another. To become a missionary Church which steps out of itself and engages secular Australia positively. Lay people and especially women are given a greater role in the ministry and leadership of the Church. Church can adopt a humble but positive stance towards the victims of sexual abuse. By the end of the process, we will know more about and be devoted to the Holy Spirit and to discernment.

I feel that more than ever, there is an urgency to work for Christian unity "that the world may know it was the Father who sent him."

To be a Church which transparent and honest. To live our life as a reflection of Jesus. To live out the Gospels—be people of action that positively influence the lives of others. To have compassion for people who are suffering and are in great need. To have respect for all people—for their diversity of views and the broad backgrounds. To have truth in responding to the issues and problems that present and confront all of us. To stay strong and united in the light of the ongoing convictions of people for sexual abuse of members of the Church. A renewed vision and hope for the youth of the Church. A redefinition of the Catholic Church in Australia.

In the light of the Royal Commission in to institutional abuse and the recent conviction of Cardinal Pell, I feel that we as a Church are being called to demand that the formation of our clergy be critically reviewed. Clergy need to understand they are called to be 'ministers of the word' not businessmen, there are plenty of people in parishes who are better qualified to take on administration. The time that 'Father has 51% of a vote' on parish council has to be gone! The inclusion of women in the administration of our Church, at all levels, needs to be radically overhauled. The voice of women as ministers of the word needs to be accepted. Jesus called people, men and women to be the voice of the Gospel, our Church needs to allow women to take up their rightful role as equal partners in ministry. One simple step would be to allow the move back to using 'Inclusive Language', particularly in liturgies. In the Creed, we are still being forced to say 'for us men and ...' This does not include me, I'm not a man, and only men say it is inclusive. This language perpetuates the notion that men are more equal in the face of God, I don't believe in that, God!

I think God is calling us to be faithful to the Magisterium of His Church. We are going through a really difficult time with the sexual abuse scandal and Cardinal Pell's court case. The Catholic people of Australia need strong and decisive leadership. We need firm answers on questions of morality and even stronger personal leadership by our bishops. I would like to see the bishops come out strongly to defend life from conception to natural death, I'd like the Church's teaching on contraception, IVF, abortion and euthanasia reaffirmed from the pulpit by ALL priests. I'd like to see the Family supported through more ministries aimed at strengthening marriages and parent and children relationships. I'd like to see wide condemnation of programs such as "Safe schools" and "respectful relationships". I'd like priests and bishops to bring back altar rails and encourage reception of Communion on the tongue. There are too many liturgical abuses that are leading the faithful astray. We need to get back to traditional hymns in our liturgies, remove modern music that has no place and will not raise our minds to God. I'd like to see children in our Catholic schools actually taught what is in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. I think it is essential that teachers who teach RE in our schools MUST be practising Catholics and MUST be given regular ongoing education in theology and philosophy. I'd like to see catechism questions set as homework for each child throughout their schooling. Let's get the kids back to confession every 2 weeks and Mass weekly where possible. Parents would benefit from ongoing catechesis as well. Provide spiritual books in the Church to enable quiet prayer and more opportunities for adoration and the sacraments. Priests and bishops who preach heresy against the authority of the Church should be excommunicated. Public figures who claim to be Catholic and yet espouse contrary ideas should be pulled into line by their bishop and if they don't apologise then they too should be publicly excommunicated. It's not fair that ordinary lay people are led astray when our Bishops could do something to prevent it. Now is the time to pull together and strengthen our faith communities, not to water it down and accept ever immoral suggestion made by our society!! The Catholics of Australia deserve more. Our God wants us in heaven with him forever so we need to get serious about leading the faithful to heaven.

In my opinion, I believe the Church needs to make significant changes to survive:-

- Allow women to take up roles as priests
- Allow all priests both men and women to marry or be married
- Allow all couples wanting to marry in the Church albeit male/male or female/female—it's law now accept that society has moved on
- Accept responsibility for those who have been abused by members of the clergy and face the consequences

I wasn't going to put in my two cents worth because the Church very rarely listens, but as it has been on my mind lately I have decided to do so. I have done a lot of travel throughout Australia due to my car racing and I go to Mass in a lot of different Churches. What I have noticed in my forty years of travel is the lack of teenagers at Mass, especially girls. One of the towns I frequently race is [—] NSW where I attend the Saturday 6pm Mass, where my wife and I usually met up with the daughter of a race friend. We didn't see her at Mass during our visits last year and when I spotted her at the track I went up to say hi. She told me that she doesn't go to Mass there anymore as she couldn't and wouldn't support a boys' club who treats women as second-class citizens. This however didn't surprise me as I have thought along the same lines myself. The Church needs women priests but most priests I have brought this up with in recent times think it's funny. At 72, I should be getting closer to my religion, not further away from it. When you consider that we have a clayton's pope who is more interested in causes not related to the Church than fixing the Churches' problems, we can see why the Church is in the mess it's in. We need women priests so I hope someone is listening.

I have been a member of the [—] community for 30 years. Thank you for another opportunity to provide feedback to the Plenary Council 2020. Could you please consider the following for the parish's submission: 1. Priests be permitted to marry 2. The criteria for the selection of people for the priesthood should be broadened to include women and married people (men and women alike) as the present system potentially excludes many good people from the priesthood.

I think God is waiting and wishing that we would stop rushing madly in all directions; following fads, checking our iPhones. He has given us a vast land but we crowd together and neglect the opportunity to move into the space where we can hear His whisper in the breeze that gently rustles the leaves. Whilst we are crowded, we still somehow don't see each other. We rush past others in the street, not making eye contact. A smile at a frail old man would cost us nothing but be invaluable to someone feeling forgotten. I think God is asking us here, to remember the first two commandments and actually put them into action. Many of us have so much "stuff" and every week keep acquiring more. We must share. Something on the plate is only a token. We have to get out of our comfort zones and share time. We already have refugees to whom we can reach out and demonstrate that our religion is not a cocoon that insulates and isolates us. That our religion can cross all barriers if we follow the example of Jesus. The Catholic Church is a lot like its hierarchy. Those at the top think they are too special. The well-heeled, or favoured groups have very little to do with the less well-educated or fashionably dressed members of the congregation. Many of my friends were once "Catholics". They say they felt 'not worth talking to' ...not as equal as the rest. I think God is asking us to remember what being a Christian is supposed to mean.

To be trapped by the falsehoods of the world and become a Church conforming to the requirements of the world rather than those based on the Word.

We stand on the edge of our hopes and dreams with Love and Energy much larger than we can imagine. We attempt to discern the voice of God today, Vatican II gave us the seeds of a rich theology—the "people of God" calling forth the gifts of all the baptised. We urge the Plenary Council to:

- Take seriously the task of bringing to the fore a legitimate Christian anthropology which reflects the true humanity of women as well as men, to publicly reject the divided anthropology taught by the magisterium which excludes women from full participation in the ministries of the Church.
- Encourage and make room for all the gifts of the baptised. Women will not flourish in the Church until they are first and fundamentally perceived as baptised persons
- expect and accept that women will contribute as women—with their unique and shared wisdom. Listen to women! (See

attachment) • work with a new paradigm for the Church: which models a communion of communities engaged in worship, dialogue, prayer, discernment and decision-making in ecclesial and social arenas • support a welcoming faith community on the side of those 'left behind.' (First Australians, refugees, asylum seekers, LGBTQI people, divorced and remarried Catholics, etc.) to challenge the Australian community and call forth love—as Jesus did in his time and place

- participate in and champion activities which nourish the spirituality of hospitality, compassion and mercy so integral and evident in the Judeo- Christian Scriptures
- enliven and practise the Church's own social justice teachings based on the dignity of each person, made in the image and likeness of God, who have the right to participate in decisions affecting them—even within the Church!
- join with the People of God in our journey of ongoing education in faith to deepen our understanding of Scripture as a source of nourishment and prayer
- consider the impact on women and girls in Mass-going families, whose children see only ordained men presiding; proclaiming the Gospel and representing the authority of the Church. They learn through the words and actions of the liturgy that the Church only recognises ordained men as being "in persona Christi" and the falsehood that God is a male person!
- Introduce the 'Third Rite' of Reconciliation as standard practice in each parish community for the reception of the sacrament of Penance
- Revisit the theology of the sacraments, especially baptism and Eucharist—it is a contradiction to say that Eucharist is the "summit and source of our ecclesial life" and then due to the shortage of priests—deny the faithful access to the sacrament.
- Use the authority given by Pope Francis and supported by the "sensus fidelium" to revisit the language of the liturgy
- engage with the scientific community to learn, understand and embrace the urgency of the teachings of Pope Francis in "Laudato Si'" which recognise our kinship with one another and the whole of creation—be a voice for Earth!

> Church to be more embracing of others. > Gluten-free hosts not being accepted is wrong. >Have Catechists explain the actions of the Mass -Why different coloured Vestments, why the Elevation, importance of the Consecration, why the washing of hands. This might answer the comments of "the Mass is boring" because young people don't know what is going on, hence the well-known comment that "the Mass is boring >Allow more involvement of women at Mass and in other major ceremonies. Female priests >Third Rite of confession to be AVAILABLE, not simply not allowed. >Rectify and announce false man-made teachings e.g. No meat on Fridays, Indulgences, sip of water preventing you from Communion, divorced people can't take Communion. >Seminarians to be better prepared for parish life. Not recruited too early. More openness to divorcees, also gay people (which is a result of birth not their fault) > Diminish the amount of Pomp (and the costs involved). Jesus didn't wear Vestments and other items worn by priests of high office. >Embrace other Christian faiths. >Laity to be allowed more decision-making in the Church and parish activities. Some priests don't allow planning or finances to be discussed. >More concentration on social/ spiritual resources for our youth-similar the old CYO groups in the past > ASK THE YOUTH WHAT THEY THINK WHAT GOD IS ASKING. They are the future of the Church.

At the end of the submission

But what has happened to our rock, our Church? Today it appears as a tumbling weed blown along by the ways of the world. At this time, I think God is very displeased with Australia and the world as we dismiss Him in preference to our worldly pursuits. I believe He would prefer us to invite Him back into our lives, our homes, schools, universities, hospitals, retirement homes and most importantly the Churches and His Church. We could begin by going back to our core beliefs of fully acknowledging Jesus' divinity and sacrifice by showing our respect.

Catholic faith is the universal faith that God had put in the very depths of our hearts. Going forward the essence of the Catholic should not be watered down to the demands of the secular world. Cradle Catholics appears to be ignorant of the richness of the Catholic—this should be addressed by praying and educating the Catholics. Not in favour of women priests, God made men and women to be different and the difference should be celebrated. The importance of the nucleus family should be emphasized as the nucleus cell of society. Address the problem of various charismatic leaders in

<p>charismatic prayers groups within the Catholic Church leave the Catholic Church to set up their own churches.</p>
<p>We believe that God is asking the following of us: To have a welcoming Church, to have an engaged Church (a Mass more people can connect with, a Mass and sacramental life people fully understand), to have a Church with a future (e.g. engaging youth) in a more effective way, to rethink what the Church looks like in terms of rethinking priesthood (women priests, married priests) and the role of the laity (laity to have more decision-making and senior positions, including women).</p>
<p>- Going back to basics, what do we believe and why do we believe it? Doctrine, dogmas, traditions etc that may have previously been "common knowledge" about our faith are no longer common knowledge. Providing explanations on these aspects of our faith can be done through homilies, catechesis sessions, parish bulletin/newsletters. —Keeping Catholic institutions Catholic in nature, not only in name. Providing additional training/resources/apologetics or theology talks to those working in the Catholic institutions and organisations. —Providing apologetics to high school students, maybe even adapting apologetics to primary school students</p>
<p>To pray more often and do penance. Ask God's forgiveness for others. Also, to love one another. To do more good and have faith in the Catholic religion and the Church. May God guide us always to do the right thing. That all clergy will heed the call of Mary, Our Lady of Fatima for prayer and penance and do consecration, oblation, reparation and do confession, adoration, pray the Rosary, and celebrate the Eucharist and receive Jesus daily. Allow our priests to fall in love—get married and serve God at the same time—that is to avoid sexual scandals. Allow parishioners to confess their sins directly to God unless they seek good advice which a priest can give. Most people are uncomfortable telling their secrets to another human being. To believe in God. To pray more and pray for one another. We respect other's belief but we need to stand firm on our own. To be united, respect each other. Politicians should pray more for their decisions because it will affect everyone. Catholic Church should be more putting in action what we preach—reaching out more. To repent of our sins. To turn back to Him as our first love and to reject all of the false Gods that have overcome us in our affluence. To recommit ourselves as a nation to Jesus Christ The King of the Universe. To live out the faith in our homes, work and society. To try to see Christ in everyone. To learn to see Christ in ourselves and to love and forgive and be compassionate to ourselves. If God can speak, He will tell the people of Australia to "PLEASE when you visit me come in your Sunday best. Do not expose your entire leg or let me see your bare back or breast because it embarrasses me. Also, if you want to drink my blood—DO NOT drink it from the common cup which everyone drinks from because it is not healthy, since someone might leave a contagious disease in it. See me in every person you meet and do good. There was a time in Australia when one can leave the house without closing the door—yet nothing bad happens. Today because of our kindness in accepting those in need, Australia is no longer a safe place to live in due to many godless bad people. I pray God will open their eyes and do good in the country that welcomed them.</p>
<p>Genuine caring; sense of community; deep and honest and open spirituality; love and acceptance of all; respect for all; acceptance and treasuring of each other's gifts and talents; forward-looking whilst acknowledging the rich history of the Church and of Australia; opening up of the hierarchy of the Church to the richly enlivening value of the laity and this not just superficially stated but openly and vigorously acknowledged; trusting the laity rather than wanting to squash or even destroy them; acknowledging women as equals; trusting women rather than demonizing them; opening up from the backward-looking trend that is trying to take us back to a Church that helped create a Church of abuse; teaching our priests and leaders to love (not hate or distrust or feel the need to negatively control); teaching our priests and leaders to be open; teaching our priests and leaders to have (and to live) a mature spirituality rather than a childish rule-based approach to life, the Church, and the spiritual journey—of themselves as well as all they come in contact with; openness and caring, caring, caring!</p>
<p>I believe that God is asking us to return to the heart of worship and the core teachings of our Faith as dictated by the Word of God. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the life-giving force of our Faith from</p>

<p>which all the baptised draw strength and are able to go out into the world as witnesses of Christ. Thus if practising Catholics (let alone nominal Catholics) do not understand the basic theology and practicalities of the liturgy, we easily move away from the heart of worship.</p>
<p>I feel (not only think) that God is asking us to listen. To be open to being truly changed. True listening means that we are changed in the listening. We are called to listen to what our heart is pulling us to even though this may be challenging and different. We are called to create relationship and connection. With any action or choice we take we must ask: —will this create relationship, connection, community? Or will this choice create division and separation? We must be more open to being changed, to being poor in what we own, the structures and ‘things’ we have. What about our LGBTI community—how are we connecting and creating relationship with them? How can we create more relationship, connection, community ... Choose relationship, relationship always requires vulnerability. Listen, change, relate—experience true communion.</p>
<p>What is God asking of me at this time? Am I not the Church? God is asking me why do I stay in this Church?! God is asking me to be the change I want to see in the Church. I want the Church to be a community that shows radical love for the poor because in Australia today, we are blessed with great riches. To be a community that cares about the stewardship of this planet because in Australia today, we must stop mining coal and do everything we can to reverse the trajectory of climate change. To be a community that repairs the relationship with Australia's first peoples because we cannot create a republic without resolving reconciliation. To be a community that welcomes the stranger, because our treatment of asylum seekers is sickening.</p>
<p>God is asking us to stay true to the traditions of the Church. For too long have we operated with the understanding that going through the motions with a lukewarm faith is acceptable. The more deny tradition, the more dangerous our interpretations of the liturgy can become.</p>
<p>Stop excommunicating traditional priests, keep Mass traditional</p>
<p>To stick to conservative Catholic teaching, don't merge parishes, have more fundraising after Mass with BBQs, and to bring in a youth Mass once a week for example Sunday at 7pm.</p>
<p>The Church is called upon to embark upon radical change to return to a spirit of service and simplicity in keeping with its dynamic gospel mission. Tradition provides a base not the sole contemporary means of finding God. The body of the Church needs to include women and lay people in empowered leadership positions in keeping with the body of Christ that they represent. The Clergy needs to embrace a spirit of poverty and simplicity in subordination to their true calling—serving their flock. Part of this is letting go of control of many aspect of the Church to capable men and women of faith. Our congregations need to be served by ministers who are empathetic with their local Catholic community—not priests and religious imported from foreign lands. We need to encourage a broader pool of talent priests, lay people and religious. Our Church has lost its way and has become too focused on self-preservation, introspection and lost focus on its calling to take risks in seeking God. We need to focus more on the poor and marginalised.</p>
<p>To bring truth and freedom because so many people are looking for it in so many ways. Many are looking without truly knowing for the truth. You can also see how they try to fill it the emptiness.</p>
<p>Firstly, I believe God is asking us to be committed to personal and institutional holiness: each member of the Church following Christ, being transformed through His Word and sacraments and Spirit. As a result, boldly testifying to the people we encounter that God exists, that He is Beauty, Truth, Goodness and Love. Through personal encounter with Christ and with others, we need to work to rebuild the credibility of the Church, so damaged of late.</p>
<p>Empowerment: need to empower the laity and especially women. Reduce Clericalism: The Pope himself has blamed clericalism for helping to support and perpetuate sexual abuse by the clergy. Reform Canon Law: Bishops and priests are our spiritual advisers and are poor at Governance.</p>
<p>That we need to focus more on Christ and His Love. As Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. This means more access to the sacrament of Confession, where we are able to experience the loving mercy of Christ, by being forgiven and absolved of our sins, which put up barriers between us and God's Love. It also means more Catechesis, both in Catholic schools and from the priests in the</p>

pulpit, about how God loves each one of us infinitely, but that when we sin we put up barriers, which (in the case of mortal sin, especially) prevent God's love from reaching us. It also means we need to have more access to Adoration, and be able to spend more time with Christ, truly present Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist. As we can't love Christ if we don't know Him, and we can't know Him if we don't spend time with Him. It also means that we need to have crucifixes in prominent places in all Churches. As Jesus on the Cross shows the extent of His love for us, and we need to be reminded of His love constantly. It also means that we need to learn better from Christ what it means to love. This means taking up the Beatitudes and putting them into practice. It also means that we need to show others the Truth with love. It also means we need to bring Light to those in darkness in our society, especially those living in the darkness of sin and despair. It also means that we must show the goodness of Life, by respecting and protecting the gift of life at all stages, as all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God. It also means that we must begin to live lives fully alive, and be soaked in the love of God, so that we can bring that life and love to others, as we can only give what we have received.

1) To look after the more vulnerable in our society. 2) To show more compassion to people. 3) Do not be so quick to judge people. 4) Have youth involved in community service weekends. 5) Have school teachers as part of weekend Mass e.g.: Little Church. 6) Have more women in leadership roles. 7) Create greater relations between Church and school. 8) To have empathy to those who are struggling with their faith and reach out to them. 9) To try and bring people back to their roots of their Catholic upbringing. 10) I feel that priests should be able to marry as that was the case in the early Church during the times of the Apostles. 11) To try to be the face of Jesus to all we come in contact with by not just conversing but doing practical things to help them.

To engage with the problems surrounding us and how to use our faith to combat them. For example, environment issues. Recognise that women have a voice to be listened to and be able to have roles within the Church at a leadership level. Provide a welcoming and inclusive Church for all. Reflect on policies and practices with an open mind and openness to change. Church should be a reflection of the people. Keeping relevance through adolescence. Distinguish difference between Church and belief. Recognise the value of diversity and other religions and their contribution to our faith connection.

Plenary Council Submission. The land and people of Australia continue to invite and call us all to be open to both the gift and the challenge of us, a very diverse people, being one in Christ. We become increasingly conscious that we are all part of the whole people of God and the whole of creation. As Australians, since the beginning of white settlement, we have struggled with the challenge of being inclusive. Fortunately, we have always had leaders, such as Captain Arthur Philip, who have showed us how to be open, respectful and responsive. Also, Australia has had people, particularly Saint Mary McKillop and others, who have advocated in actions and words for inclusive communities, worlds and policies. The Catholic Church has been an important and effective voice in this advocacy for Australia. Now the Spirit, through the vision and leadership of Pope Francis, is inviting us to be truly inclusive within ourselves as Church. That is a very wide and far reaching challenge but let us begin with our endorsement of that principle with particular attention being given to people hurt and vulnerable, to people with disabilities, to the first and last peoples of this land of Australia, and, especially at this time, to give special attention to women. Let us be conscious in this that being inclusive of these people requires us to be attentive and responsive to their particular relationship with the earth, our common home. Being inclusive means that these people and the earth have an integral voice in the decision making. As the Aboriginal peoples of this land insist "nothing about us without us". This is a call for major conversion in communities, society and the Church. We all are to be ready to have a voice, a say, and be collaborative decision makers. We need to be committed to giving ourselves, time, wisdom, discernment and energy to this journeying together as people of Australia and the Church in Australia. This will cost all of us but it is the journey the Spirit is asking us to participate in as a prayerful and Eucharistic community; asking us from the initial Pentecost through to Pope Francis's challenge for us to be a synodal Church of hope engaging with people,

<p>especially those hurting. As Pope, he urges us to walk this journey with people immersed within the diverse, divisive, war prone, conflicted and challenging contexts of today. How do we make this a reality as community, parish, wider Church and wider people of God?</p>
<p>Reshape the image of the Church, stand up for the Church's beliefs and not let the actions of some representatives change our faith in the Church.</p>
<p>I try to live my life by Jesus Commandments to Love God and to 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. This is what I think God is asking of us today and what the Church needs to lead. I think in recent decades instead of guiding us to love God and our neighbour, the Church has dictated required behaviour and judged and excluded those who do not adhere. We can have faith without the Church but we can't have a Catholic Community without the Church. I would like the Church to foster and build a community based on loving God and loving our neighbour. I want the Church to foster values, not behaviour.</p>
<p>Christians' unity.</p>
<p>To defend our faith and Teachings of our Church in this society.</p>
<p>Daily evening Mass in every single parish for working community. Compulsory daily Mass for children in Catholic schools. Compulsory Sunday catechism class for children in parishes. Teaching Catholic faith in all Catholic schools. Catechism as a subject to be part of Curriculum in every Catholic school. Strong family values and family enrichment—praying together as a family, place importance to family rosary. Pope John Paul II Theology of body broken down for all young adults. Parishes to organise more retreats for families, couples. Providing reasoning and discussion opportunities behind beliefs, rules and practices of the Church to teenagers.</p>
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<p>Guide for Homilies—Why? Many homilies are poor both in content and delivery. They fail to engage the listener as it is a spur of the moment trail of random thoughts (under the pretext of letting the spirit lead them), unrelated to the season or readings and then lastly, fail to advise the listener as to what they might do in response. It is the one hour of the week (or even year) when a priest has the attention of a large number of lay Catholics and consequently is valuable and needs to count (especially as Catholics are drifting away). There are deep messages in both the Old and New Testaments which are very relevant to today and are not expounded upon (arguably because the priest is not aware of them or has simply forgotten). An on-line resource should be established to give priests material to guide them in the delivery of homilies. It should obviously be optional but hopefully the quality of the material will make it irresistible. It will also save the priest time and improve the interior life of both priest and congregation (as well as potentially increasing the numbers of people attending Mass). It can be in a short form (say 10 points to cover) or long form (with detailed expounding on the 10 points).</p> <p>Confession before Sunday Mass—priests should set aside 30 minutes before Sunday Mass to hear confessions and they should regularly remind parishioners of the fact that this opportunity exists (not only via the parish bulletin but also orally during Mass). Progress in the interior life can only occur via regular confession. Most parishioners have lost the habit of regular confession and need to be reminded of how important this is to lead a life of prayer. Priests should help them by reminding them of this. Priests should not be afraid of "wasting time" in a confessional waiting for people. Bringing a parishioner back into a state of grace will probably be the most important thing they do that week, month or year. It will also help priests believe in their vocation and the fact that it is essential to the parishioners they serve.</p>

I am a university chaplain in [-] and I spend my time with young people from a wide range of cultures and faith beliefs. I speak to many young people on a personal level each week. In these conversations, I continually discover noble ideals that they struggle to express or realise. They have a real hunger to learn, and I am continually amazed at the way they respond to the Catholic faith when it is presented to them in a coherent and positive way. As I am writing this, I am looking out the window watching two Mormon missionaries speak to a university student about their faith. This happens constantly in this area. While I do not share their religion, I admire their daring and sense of mission. Many of the young people who I have spoken to feel the same way. The young Catholics I know have a sense of mission, but it is often dormant, because they don't feel that they know how to pass on the Good News of the Christian faith. I believe God is asking of us in Australia to help young Catholics to deepen in their understanding of the Christian faith, and in this way to give them the confidence to share the joy of their faith with those around them. Because this Good News, in all its depth and breadth, provides answers that no amount of entertainment or technology can give. Then young are able to channel their high ideals, and they find that the questions posed by their peers and society in general have real answers.

I think that the Church is asking the Church for a deep spirit of prayer. I feel that we are in times that have lost a sense of the importance of prayer and thus, we often look at other things to fix our problems—whether this be small everyday problems, bigger personal problems or even the problems that the Church faces—however, I think that prayer should be our first point of call, so that we can become connected with God the Father again, and also come to know and realise his great love for each of us, our Church and our world. In prayer, Jesus wants to give us a peace that this world cannot give and I think that in this world of increasing anxiety this is so, so, so important. I believe that the Spirit is calling our Church to a renewal of prayer—both personal and communal—a renewed devotion to Jesus. This calling is a calling of love and in prayer we discover the height, depth, breadth and length of God's great love for us and this is what spurs us on and this is what will give us strength to continue our works of mercy and charity that the Church does. Practically, this looks like: Adoration of the Blessed sacrament in our parishes, teaching and praying the rosary, offering times of prayer in the parish. It is prayer that will bring grace, and God's grace is what will move mountains, especially the mountains that our Church is facing, including a decline in numbers of those attending Mass, fewer and fewer young people being involved, the scandals and politics that have crept in to the Church, etc. Prayer will also bring about more love—and instead of being Catholics who attend Mass on Sundays and during the rest of the week, we live separate and individual lives—this prayer will unite us as a community of believers, people who, God willing, will be faithful to Jesus' commandment to "love one another as I have loved you". It will be this love—that is the fruit of prayer—that others will see, and like the times of the early Church, those outside the Church will be able to say: "See how these Christians love one another!"

While there is much that God is asking of us, what strikes me most is below. Concentrating resources on our Catholic Primary School system will have flow on effects in many of the other areas of the Church's mission and life. At a 2-day Youth Ministry Research Seminar in Brisbane in March 2018, I and more than a hundred youth ministers were surprised to hear that the age at which young people who had previously considered themselves Catholic and no longer did so was only 10-12 (i.e. by the end of primary school) and not in their mid-teens. This seemed to shock everyone in the room. Young people fall away from the faith when they don't have their questions/issues appropriately addressed over time. Perhaps we've treated primary-aged children a little too simplistically—but for every question they have that goes unanswered, they drift a little further away. Then slowly, slowly they no longer identify as Catholic. I think we need to do all we can to provide a forum in which they are accompanied and supported on their faith journey and can feel completely free/safe to ask any question they have. The unique place we have where we can accomplish this is in Catholic Primary Schools. This is a most unique sphere of evangelisation in that instead of us having to go out and evangelise 'out there', they actually come to us—and we've been failing badly: very few of our Catholic primary students leave Year 6 going to Sunday Mass. There are

many complex reasons for this—one of which is that their parents now are of a generation that never practised the faith either, which means it's a tough field to tackle. However, we really need to look into doing all we can to improve the situation there, so that the flow-on effects will continue in the Church's life as they grow. Some possible strategies:—Much better contact between the priests and the school principal and staff. —School/class Masses in the parish Church rather than in classrooms so that the children develop a pleasant habit and experience of entering and spending time in a Church—Regular confession for the students in the parish Church—A tour of the parish Church for students so they can learn what everything inside it is and its significance—Regular Questions and Answers (“Ask the priest”) sessions by the priest or catechists/formed laity for the various classes—Better resources made available for the students so that the faith/religion is not just one subject among others—maths, science, etc. —Establishment of something akin to the Family Educators in the Sydney Archdiocese who seek to form/evangelise the parents. Have the parents as involved as possible in parish activities—even if they're not ready for attending Mass. —During sacramental preparation of the kids, have something run at the same time for the parents—that instructs them about the same sacrament, plus Q&A. —Possibly hiring someone to be the link between the parish and the school to make all of the above happen.

[-] College is an affiliated residential college at the University of [-]. [-] [College] is approaching its 50th anniversary and over that time thousands of young people have passed through the college. The students come from a very varied background of cultures and religions. Last year, for example, we had people from 20 different countries, and among them Catholics, non-Catholic Christians, Muslims, agnostics and atheists. As such, in [-] there is constant interaction between young people from very different walks of life. It is frequent to see a deep hunger among them to discover the truth. The constant interaction with people different to them makes them ask important questions about their lives and the world. And their desire to make a difference in society is very evident. For example, there are weekly activities for local nursing homes and assistance in projects run by the St Vincent de Paul society, and once or twice a year the residents organise a service project in country Australia or developing countries in the Pacific. Here in [-], we constantly see that Catholics have to explain their faith to their friends. Because their friends want to know, and these conversations happen constantly. Many non-Catholics draw close to Jesus Christ because of a friend who is able to explain the faith in a coherent and attractive way. These Catholic young people want the support of older people in the faith, both laity and clergy, to be able to have a positive impact in the lives of those around them. They want to learn and to deepen in their faith. They have a natural sense of mission and ask for the help needed to undertake this mission. After much consideration, prayer, listening and dialogue with young people, we believe that God is asking us as a Church in Australia to give greater support to these young people in their faith. To give them the direction, guidance and the formation they need for their own spiritual development and to spread the message of salvation to all. For example, many of them would benefit from regular Mass and Confession times in Churches. They feel supported when clergy attend to these aspects of their ministry with enough attention. Also, they appreciate it when priests use the Sunday homily to address the real issues they face as Catholics trying to live a life faithful to the Gospel in today's society rather than pushing some personal opinion or agenda. They have questions, and look for answers and appreciate clergy asking on a personal basis what formation they need to share the gospel of life in their milieu.

Be humble, sensitive, and collaborative. To be evangelical, to fulfil her mission, the structure/governance of the Church must change. To be fully sensitive to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, then her structure and governance needs to be collaborative and transparent, not rigid and unyielding. There is obviously a lack of trust from the clerical men in power towards the people of God, and perhaps the old sin of pride. Thus has to end, it's a sinful stance for clerics to take. A culture will not change while un Christ-like attitudes are tolerated. That's a fact. Because of the child sex cover ups across the globe, there is no trust from the people of God towards Church governance ... another fact. And why should there be trust when the structures that permitted these atrocities remain pretty much unchanged? Why should people be part of a Church that is obviously corrupt

and happy in its corruption as it is not prepared to change and be collaborative on all levels? Is perhaps the ongoing disobedience by bishops and priests to embrace all of the Second Vatican Council one reason why we're not progressing? Is this itself a blockage to evangelisation? Where is the laity? Where are the women? Where is the collaboration? Where is the transparency? It's not difficult to be transparent in 2019 ... we all have email. Minutes are usually taken at meetings, aren't they? Bishops and parish priests can't be allowed to maintain autonomous authority, not in 2019, it's unacceptable. I actually think it's sinful. To not have laity including women in governance is suffocating the credibility of the Church and it's making us all feel like crap, it really is. I wish it weren't true. How can she evangelise when credibility is lacking? Collaboration and transparency must be at parish level and go all the way up. We've had a parish council for about 25 years but it's not transparent and it has one token woman on it! To me, this stubbornness of the Church, not to mandate, to be transparent and collaborative on all levels, is petulant behaviour. It's just not good enough in 2019. I honestly don't think it can keep being tolerated and those that think it can have their head in the sand. I've been a volunteer in the parish for 30 years and have 4 daughters. I'm currently in the small Adult Faith and Evangelisation Team. We have a large primary and large college... there's plenty of fish. I take communion to a nursing home and Calvary hospital. I'm in the Vinnies conference. It's getting really hard to stay involved. I feel confused, it's nigh impossible to discern. By continuing in my parish, am I abetting, helping to prop up something that doesn't embrace the Council, it gives me anxiety. The people of God have the voice of God. We are not a threat but we're in pain. What can I do? Maybe the only response open to me is to silently protest and withdraw.

Pray as much as you can

There are several things I believe as a Catholic that God is asking of Australia at this time, including:—Being a united Church, a universal Church that is able to reach many souls —sacraments like confession, frequent Mass times (especially in regional areas) should be available for all Australians to access—There needs to be consistency with the order of the liturgy such as the use of the prayers of the faithful—Greater support for Catholics who are being discriminated against, the manifestation of our faith may cause the public to be 'offended' with some of our beliefs—There needs to be greater support and formation for priests in regional and rural areas—There should not be any need for home schooling as the Catholic school system should provide adequate formation of the youth—Music during Mass must assist with prayer -Eucharistic adoration must be available across all parishes and regular opportunities to pray at Church must be increased—Vestments of priests must be refined, elegant and provide respect towards its meaning—Sunday dress must be lived well by parishioners, a greater in depth explanation on modesty and refinement for male and females—Receiving communion must be explained well, provide cards at Mass to ensure that the Mass is treated with respect—Formation for young people to prepare for marriage must be quality, with greater support networks from couples who have been married a long time. There needs to be a substantial amount of preparation for couples, rather than the online course or weekend course. Priests need greater formation to prepare couples for marriage. Greater consistency across the country is required. —Re-evaluation to the Catholic Education system is required, especially in line with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church—High school and universities need to ensure that there is easier access to doctrine—Sunday schools for children must teach children the faith with focus on doctrine and formation, rather than games, colouring in or songs—Children and parents must be taught the Catechism of the Catholic Church—RCIA programs must support the faith—All confessionals to be done in confessionals for prudence—All Catholic teachers must be 'practicing' Catholics, discrimination given to those who understand and believe in the faith—There needs to be greater formation to those teachers who are giving formation—Greater spaces for young adults and youth groups to share their love of God and doctrine

To prevent as much sacrilege during Mass as possible by restoring a number of liturgical practices, and ending bad ones that have sprung from disobedience. Communion on the tongue should be encouraged, and communion in the hand entirely phased out. Extraordinary ministers of the

Eucharist should no longer be ordinary. Promotion of sacred chant and organ music should once more take place, and the use of profane instruments in liturgy should be abolished. Service of the altar should once again be entirely restricted to males, so as to encourage vocations. On that note, the sanctity of the sanctuary should be restored, and the best way would be to restore altar rails to all parishes.

God is asking for complete transparency from parishes and dioceses in respect of the reporting of incidents of sexual abuse. Parishes and dioceses should report to the People of God at least annually. Dioceses should consolidate reports from their constituent parishes and publish the results within four months of the end of a reporting period.

Do our utmost to rid the Church of the scourge of clerical sexual abuse.

A Church which “acts justly, loves tenderly and walks humbly with God”. A community of faith, embedded in the Gospel, more communal and less hierarchical providing servant leadership which is respectful, encouraging and welcoming, meeting the needs of today realistically, being open to change, standing with and for the poor with courage and compassion. Our Church today is called to: healing and forgiveness. Implement the findings of the Royal Commission on child abuse. Eradicate clericalism. Educate in leadership as service rather than authority education in servant leadership in seminary and ongoing formation of priests. Appreciate that Ordination brings with it responsibility, not privilege. Give women their rightful place, allow women to share their God-given gifts. Provide balance in a predominately “man’s world”. Include women in decision making, in the liturgy and educational and pastoral roles. Build the community of the Local Church: encourage participation in the liturgy; provide opportunities for spiritual growth and social interaction ensure that administrative structures are in place e.g. parish council, finance committee, liturgy and other committees e.g. justice committee, Vincent de Paul reach out in friendship to people around us. Encourage openness, hospitality, friendship.

How can we change this culture of use, death and individualism to one that welcomes the unwanted, grows through community, seeks truth in the face of inconvenience and wills the true good for fellow human being? We as a generation have been groomed to look only to find our own 'happiness' to fulfil us. This has led to a real epidemic of abuse, confusion, relativism and overall selfishness. It cripples relationships and our ability to authentically connect with others for fear of rejection because of the abnormality of a faith life in the modern day. It is a real issue to be pondered over.

The Church must recover the spirit of Her mission. It is urgent and necessary to:

- Re-evangelise people who have been Baptised, helping them rediscover the value of their baptism and their personal experience of faith. This includes people who remain in the Church, but whose faith may be lukewarm or compartmentalised from their daily lives.
- Think about people far from the Church that have completely rejected their faith or don't know the Good News at all and how to evangelise them by announcing Jesus Christ, His resurrection, the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. Our experience of a new evangelisation—We have experienced this re-evangelization (or for some of us a new evangelization), through the Catechesis of the Neo-catechumenal Way. The catechesis, and our ongoing adult formation within our Community help us understand that the Word of God is connected to our own lives—and that it is only through the presence of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead and living among us, that we are able to change our hearts and our mentality. Our experience of Christian Life is founded on the Celebration of the Word, the Eucharist Celebration and Community. We are also re-discovering the centrality of the Pascal Mystery and the Easter Vigil. Our experience is one of a small community whose understanding of our faith is growing gradually, with the grace of God. As we work and grow together as a community, we also see at times the signs of love and unity that can attract those people far from the Church. This new evangelisation and the Neo-catechumenal Way. For this reason, we strongly believe that the Neo-catechumenal Way can be a serious and valid option to engage more deeply with people within the Church, and also to approach secularized people that are far from the Church. It is imperative to catechise and re-

catechise adults, with the resurrection of Jesus as the foundation. With Christ at the centre, we can enter in communion with others—as inspired by the Second Vatican Council. Transmission of the Faith in families and schools—If we are formed with faith (priests, catechists and families), then we are exhorted to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ risen. Faith must be transmitted rather than taught. By receiving a formation of faith (through the Word, the sacraments and our personal experience of Jesus Christ risen in our lives, including within our Community), we are able, with God’s grace, to pass this faith to others including children in both public and Catholic schools. This mission supports, but does not replace, the primary role of families in transmitting the faith. To be a priest, a catechist and a disciple of Christ is not a job or hobby, but a mission. If we are formed with faith, through adult catechesis and within a faith community with Christ at the centre, then we are all able to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ risen. May the Holy Spirit guide you and all of us in the will of our Father. Thank you.

I think God is asking us to provide better doctrinal formation and information for young people, and for people unacquainted with the Catholic Church. Some concrete ways to do this could be:
*providing some sort of easily digestible material at the front door of the Church for people who haven't been to Mass before, explaining what the Mass is and how to go up and receive a blessing at communion. I often notice in [-] Cathedral in [-] that tourists regularly attend Mass without knowing what it is, and wander up to communion, only to be sent away, embarrassed and confused. A basic pamphlet or sign at the door of the Church would go a long way towards making visitors feel welcome, and decreasing the chances of non-Catholics receiving communion. *Providing deeper doctrinal formation to youth groups, Bible studies and RCIA groups. Often, the formation received in these groups is superficial and emotion-based. These existing groups are fantastic opportunities to enrich young people's understanding of the teachings of the Church in a deeper way. As a young person, I've often felt frustrated by what seems to be an assumption that social events and superficial worship are what young people are looking for in youth groups. I would love to have access to something richer for me and my friends. * Greater engagement with the arts and social justice. Both of these are great avenues for reaching people who might not come to a Church, but who care about truth and beauty.

Totally not partially reform the Church and its ministry.

A return to tradition. Lex orandi, lex credendi; if we have a modern/contemporary Church whose architecture and liturgy reflects the fickle and ever-changing styles of modernity, our belief in God will be affected in much the same way—it will be fickle, whimsical, and ever-changing. Similarly, if we have a Church which follows the wealth of customs and traditions laid down before us by the saints of old, with liturgy proven through the centuries (even millennia) to produce faithful Catholics, whose belief in God is constant and true, we today will be affected in that same way. In order to improve the practice of the faithful we need to draw from the richness of tradition of Holy Mother Church. If you want young people to come back to the Church; you must give them truth and beauty, and you find that in tradition. Young people are caught up in a post-modern world that is flippant and devoid of all meaning. We crave stability, we crave direction, we crave beauty, and we crave truth. We live in world that gives us wishy washy theology, bad liturgy, ugly, contemporary architecture, and because of this, we feel lost. Where are all the young people in the Church? They either leave the faith, or they go to parishes that have traditional architecture and liturgy; [list of churches]. If you want to find the young people in the Church, go to those parishes, that's where you'll find them; We know, we're some of them. We crave the truth and beauty that Holy Mother Church has constantly offered her children through the ages, not the nonsense that post-modernists are peddling these days. These parishes offer exactly that; beautiful architecture, reverent/traditional liturgy. In parishes that renovate and change to accommodate and bring back the treasure of tradition, young people flock back to those parishes. There is a wealth of treasures to be found in the traditions of Holy Mother Church. Our Churches (their architecture, their liturgy) are meant to give Glory to God, not give glory to ourselves through whatever is popular in secular society today. To leave our Church boring, bland, and bare, as it is now, not only fails to give Glory to

God, but also dishonours Christ's Bride. Similarly, to think that the post-modern, in-vogue style of architecture and worship that is presently pervading the Church gives greater Glory to God than what Holy Mother Church has built upon, and developed through the ages, is pride-fully foolish. It is our duty as Christians to worship in such a way as to transcend ourselves, and give Glory to God; and the only way to truly do that, is to draw from the tradition of Holy Mother Church.

I believe God is asking the Church to be more available, to offer daily Mass, weekly confession and formation classes. The Churches that offer daily Mass have regular parishioners who attend daily Mass, but so many Churches do not offer regular Mass, Confession and formation. As Catholics, the most important part of our faith is the Eucharist and building a relationship with Christ through prayer, which is only possible when Mass is offered and when the Church is open to allow prayer in front of the Blessed sacrament / Tabernacle. So many people do not know the truths of the Church, the real teaching of the Catholic Catechism. We need to provide people with the true teachings handed down from Jesus, through the apostles and Popes, which is found in the Catechism. Many Catholics today don't even know that the Catechism exists, and they don't know the truths of the Churches' teachings. We need to teach the truths so that people are guided in their life by Christ. Gone are the days that the faith is based on 'feelings', and emotional motivations to pray/ attend Mass. people are looking for the Big answers, 'why are we here', 'what is suffering', 'why is homosexuality wrong', but the Catholic Church in Australia is not declaring the correct answers. We need to provide the truths, as taught by Christ. School children receive a very watered-down version of the faith during their school years, once graduated that's it, no more formation of any kind. This should change so that as people grow, go through different life stages they may learn more about their faith and how to live more Christ-like in their profession, and family life. Priests need to keep receiving formation as well, so many priests today are unsure of the true teachings of the Church, and therefore mislead their 'sheep'.

Missioning in our lives. Live according to gospel values. Evangelise and share the gospel values. Love and serve one another. To frequent the sacraments. To stand up for beliefs in a public forum. Encourage families to return to Church. Follow the 10 commandments. Treatment of refugees on mainland to reflect our love of God. To keep the faith story in our hearts and practices. To encourage our leaders to see the Church as Jesus intended it. Come all and any obstacles. Practice what you preach. Hierarchy of the Church to come closer to earth. Priests should live Catholic beliefs as Christ wanted it. Some extreme views. Some people in high Church going against Catholic teachings. Lapsed Catholics of every age come back to the Church and the sacraments. People seem to decide for themselves what is "good" and dot feel the need to come to Church to see themselves as a good Catholic. As a society, we've lost our sense of sin. Only requested to go to confession once a year. Old rules miss a Mass you go to confession and no communion. Shift in values. Were taught differently. Question what different people of different ages really believe about what it means to be Catholic. Young people- good people reliable- everybody goes to the first communion but what about their second communion? Different pressure on different life stages. Pressures on family that weren't there years ago. Sunday was a sacred day. A family day. Times have changed. More distractions.

That the Holy Spirit works through the whole Church seeking feedback from all members, not just the hierarchy. Kerygmatic proclamation of the gospel. All people sharing their experience of God's word. Let the Spirit speak through you. To release that in our daily loving the Spirit speaks to others. Ours are the Face of God. Don't think of ourselves as individuals, think of ourselves as part of a whole. Be more open in our thinking. We can support and grow the Church. Don't be shy about your faith. Have courage to promote. With the Yes/No vote, people were afraid to vote 'no'. God is with us. God will protect those in need. Prayer- not just asking but praising.

To actually live the words of "The Our Father".

God is asking us to witness in word and in fact that all people are created equal. Then God said, "Let

us make mankind in our image, in our likeness ... 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female, he created them.

God does not want us to be liberal, politically correct and accommodating to the relativism in modern society. God is a yes or a no. He is not half this and half that. He is not, what suits me may not suit another. He is truth and truth is not relative. God's Church has a hierarchy and firstly, we need to begin with His shepherds. They need to be united. They need to understand clearly and constantly be educated or reminded about Christ teaching. Their guidance to the faithful must be clear and direct. They must not be divided amongst themselves. Christ through the Gospel was direct. He was not about being polite or accommodating. He instructed, educated and reprimanded. Christ's shepherds need to be leaders and protectors to all in order for Australia to grow in faith. As a parent I need to be a leader and protector for my children with courage, wisdom, love and guidance for them to grow in faith. Therefore, our clergy need as one (not divided with opinions or lukewarm-ness) to be a foundation stone for all Australians to be built on and want to be followers of Christ.

To listen to the youth. To enliven the Church with more youthful opportunities, songs and experiences. To not just teach young people about religion, but show them in our own actions and choices.

To have the security and confidence to guide Catholics and non-Catholics to the way, the truth and the life which is Jesus Christ. In the first place through the witness of our life and our charity to others, starting with those in our Catholic communities and institutions.

- God is the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end. God never changes. It is people that change. People find it hard to follow God's rules so want to change them or rule God out of the picture. This is what's happened.
- People have lost belief in God, Jesus, heaven and hell. If there is no heaven and hell and no God that will ultimately judge us at the end of our lives—anything is permissible overtime.
- Society has become distracted by the pleasures and stressors of the world—everyone is too busy for Church—sport, work, gym, kids' birthday parties. People no longer live the 1st or 2nd Commandments—putting God first let alone all of the 10 Commandments.
- The Catholic Church needs to be more active in its faith formation. There is a real gap in ongoing faith education and faith formation. Do we really live out 'spreading the good news of the Gospel and 'making disciples of all nations.'?
- How do we welcome new people to Church? Do we have a welcoming committee—greeting people? Getting details and engaging new people? How do we get regular Mass going Catholics to encourage more people to come to Mass? How do we engage more people in roles and ministries at Church?
- How do we welcoming and for everyone—but without diluting the message of Jesus Christ (the Truth). Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6). We need to follow Jesus to get to heaven. Our number one goal is to get to heaven and Jesus has told us how—through him and only through him. Jesus talks twice as much about hell then he does heaven as he wants to warn us and loves us. Many Catholics now pick and choose what they want to hear from Jesus and apply 'hell' teachings as ridiculous.
- We are live in a time where a central part of the Catholic faith (Marriage and the essence of the family unit) is out of line with legislation. Legislation is enforced to equate to be morally good. The SSM legislation change is huge for the Catholic Church and will continue to cause more problems for believers over time if they are to publicly speak their belief or hold their views in the workplace. The tables have been turned and Catholics that uphold the Catholic doctrine and what Jesus actually said are now held to have immoral views.
- We need to bring the Church to the World and not the World to the Church. We need to learn and study everything Jesus said—study the Bible and Catholic Doctrine and understand why we have it.
- How do we bring the Word of God to the younger generation (under 45 years) to make it applicable to help them in making their daily and bigger life decisions, to live the life Jesus calls us to lead when it's becoming increasing difficult to do this—what does living a Godly life look like? If I am a teenager or young person, why should I remain pure and how do I when the world tells me the opposite?
- How do we wake up people to the fact Jesus wants a direct and personal relationship?

God is asking us to lead by example. Reach out to others not by throwing our beliefs at their faces but by living a virtuous life. Sometimes that is the best form of spreading the word of God—by living through his teachings.

Our discussion group thinks that God is asking us as lay people to be more involved in the Church and to break down the hierarchy. The second Vatican council gave us hope, and the child sexual abuse has appalled us. We want our priests and bishops to be involved in our communities at a parish level and to be accountable as leaders just like any other organisation. Whilst we have a broad Church which is not a democracy, we think God is saying that the laity need to be more involved. Women and younger people should be more involved in all levels of the Church. As well as breaking down the barriers, we want to be involved and communicated about the decisions in our Church such as new liturgies and changes in personnel in our parishes. We want to be informed as to the child sexual abuse scandal and be kept up to date as to what is happening to help victims. A common theme in our discussions was no more secrecy. God is asking for consultation with the laity. As well as more open involvement, we would like to see doctrine not applied so strictly. When we do so, there is often an unintended consequence. We are all sinners and things are not perfect in any of our lives. Some examples we discussed were: • a homosexual person is made in the image of God, yet our doctrine rejects him or her. • Whilst we do not consider abortion as right, we cannot direct our protest to the women making that decision. Where were we before that woman made the decision? Why don't we protest at the males who are involved? No, we aim our protest at a woman at a difficult time. • Calling women acolytes "senior altar servers" as they are women and not men. • Not permitting the priest at the sign of the peace to come down to the congregation to make the sign of the peace. • Changing the Mass to use words that are no longer used in English. • The third rite of reconciliation was rejected by the bishops. Did they not know the number of people who received that sacrament? Have they compared the number that receives the sacrament now? Confession is a very difficult process for many good people and the third rite overcame that. We wonder why our Church is aging and with few young people present. The Church has lost its moral authority. Yet decisions keep being made which drive people away and which are justified as the right decision. What we want our Church to do is what Jesus would have done. It is no longer acceptable to run a hierarchy as it was done 200 years ago. It is not acceptable in our Catholic institutions such as schools and hospitals. We ask that the hierarchy come back to the parishes and consult and include the people of God.

I think God is telling us to be still, have faith in the midst of all the turmoils happening on child abuse, gay marriages, transgender issues, euthanasia, etc.

The Church in Australia must reaffirm the role of the priest in the parish and in the Church. Priests must be the leaders of the parish. They must then, be given the responsibility and respect that comes with that role. In our discussions we developed a number of ideas to help the priests in their role as leaders of their parish Community: priests must have ultimate authority in the parish. They must determine how the Mass is said and how the parish operates. As young people, we want leadership from our priests—they have the relevant 'training' and formation to perform this role. For a lay person to perform this role it would undermine the role of the priest. Priests should be seen to be praying. It is incredibly encouraging for parishioners to see the priest pray—that is to lead by example in everything that he does. Priests should be given training in public speaking during their seminary studies to enhance the quality of their homily. We would like to see the Church in Australia reaffirm the teachings of the Church on celibacy and the nature of the priesthood. We would like to see greater involvement from the bishop in parish life. There is not enough visibility of bishops in the Church, as Pope Francis instructs they must be 'Shepard's living with the smell of sheep'.

I think we should promote teaching the faith according to the catechism, uphold morality, encourage reverence at Mass; make more confession time available and more adoration of the Eucharist.

Our society needs God through worship by way of our Catholic faith. The sacraments must be offered and made available for the faithful to participate. At present the Mass is always available on

Sundays in the big cities but not always available through the week. Confession is the sacrament that can be used readily but is not always readily available. A greater emphasis needs to be placed on confession/reconciliation. Our society needs the graces that flow from this sacrament desperately. A renewal in devotion to confession would trigger a renewal in piety in the entire Church.

[-] On behalf of [-]. The [-] proposal is to make a recommendation to Archbishop [-] and the Bishops' Commission responsible for organizing the Plenary Council about the number of lay delegates at the Council. "We recommend that the Bishops' Commission give priority to lay delegates at the Plenary Council by inviting the maximum number of lay members possible." Lay people have been invited to participate in the Plenary Council by contributing, listening and dialoguing in order to create the Agenda for this Council. I believe that a further step is to ensure that the laity also have a significant place in the decision-making at this Council. It is true that according to the current Code of Canon Law, laity have a consultative vote, rather than a deliberative vote. However, the greater significance of the presence of the laity is that they are participating in the process of discernment that takes place at the Council as the whole People of God come together to listen to and be guided by the Holy Spirit.

How to handle the royal commission into sexual abuse? How to arrest the decline in Sunday Mass attendance especially among the youth and their parents?

The formation of parishioners should be the fundamental role of the parish priest, supported by laity across the parish.

1. Children (below 10). It is important that children under the age of 12 understand the importance and beauty of Mass. Children should be encouraged to stay in Mass, instead of going to Children's liturgy and parents should be given instruction on how to educate their children about the Mass. Also, the reintroduction of Sunday School, where children gather to receive catechesis and can learn a greater understanding of the faith.
2. Adolescents. Adolescents are a challenging age to engage with, however, using youth groups to have a greater focus on doctrine and teaching teenagers how to pray, can help keep them engaged. Priests should be involved heavily in the lives of adolescents and teenagers, to promote a greater understanding of the faith.
3. Young Adults. Young adults need to be kept engaged and interested in the faith. If there is a greater focus on young adults helping adolescents and teenagers in their faith, this will help both young adults and teenagers. Using engaging speakers, such as young families or young priests, will help keep the faith attractive to young adults. Also encouraging a greater focus on combining prayer and social life will create a greater sense of community for the young adults within the Church.
4. Those preparing for marriage. Marriage courses are vital to embedding the Catholic faith in engaged couples. When priests are heavily involved in the preparation for marriage, this gives couples the confidence to raise issues and get a greater understanding of the beauty of the Catholic faith. The reintroduction of the marriage courses, such as the ones run at [-], can help couples understand and learn about the importance of marriage.
5. Parents parishes can be a vital support network for parents. The use of talks by experience parents for first time parents, or even Catholic Mother and Father groups can help give support for families, to promote children within the Church and encourage a greater community. The priest plays an important role for parents, being able to help and advice families on helping to raise the children in the faith. Support networks for parents can also teach other families that children are a gift from God and give guidance around sexual ethics, including contraception and IVF, and ensuring that the Church's teachings on these matters are understood.
6. Grandparents/veterans/elderly parishioners Grandparents can play a vital role in the parish, helping to bring a grandchild to Mass, when their parents may not be interested. Also, the parish should ensure that the whole community is well looked after, especially elderly people. Ideas include better access to Catholic nursing homes, where elderly patients are able to receive the sacraments, can help older people. Also, parents and young adults should be encouraged to help bring elderly parishioners to Church.

The Plenary Council presents a wonderful opportunity for the Church in Australia to reaffirm the teaching of the Catholic Church. To this end we would like to see more clarity and direction from the Church on the following issues: The Eucharist. The Eucharist, where Our Lord is really present in the

Mass must be treated with the reverence that He deserves. Some ancillary ways to reaffirm this universal teaching of the Church might be to: Ensure that there is sufficient teaching around sacrilege as it relates to the Eucharist, that is, that Catholics must be in the state of grace when they receive Our Lord in Communion. Teach about the importance of the Eucharistic Fast. 2. Our Lady. We would like to see more teaching and attention given to Our Lady. Further, we would like to see more devotional practice in parishes towards Our Lady, for example: Praying the Hail Holy Queen on Saturdays. Ending Mass with a Hail Mary on weekdays. Praying the rosary once a week. Having a votive Mass of Our Lady more regularly. 3. Confession. The Church in Australia must give great importance to the sacrament of confession and its associated doctrine, namely via: Giving greater emphasis to our fallen nature and need for God's mercy Delineation between venial and mortal sin Teaching more fearlessly about the existence of hell. 4. Sexual Ethics. The Church in Australia should reaffirm the teachings of Humanae Vitae particularly in the areas of: Chastity before and within marriage, Natural family planning, Rejecting the use of contraception and IVF. The Church should provide practical direction on how to adhere to these teachings, with emphasis on God's grace. It is unfair for young people in Australia for the Church to hold these positions without giving clear and thorough formation in these areas.

I believe God is asking us in Australia to listen to each other—in our country, our Church, our families and our neighbourhoods. To listen from the truth of our own heart and to speak the truth in love.

I believe that God is asking the Catholic leadership to show courage and faith in the face of adversity in an increasingly hostile secular world. They must maintain and build the bedrock for the Church that is not swayed by sentiment or public opinion, and hold fast to the true teachings of Jesus and ecclesiastical law. As a young person in the Church, it often dismays me to see a relaxing of Church doctrine or interpretation to 'accommodate youth', widen Catholic appeal, or emulate a trend: an approach that has crippled many protestant Churches with diminishing followers. I think God is asking for more public witnesses to the faith and faith values. For fear of offence, too often a sermon or public foray by Church figures are timid and weak in their statements on contentious issues such as abortion. At the same time as showing steadfastness, Church leaders need inspiration from the Holy Spirit to establish a real faith in people. This needs to be achieved by inspiring leaders, not fence sitting placeholders: Revelations "I know about your activities: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, but since you are neither hot nor cold, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth". Lastly, I think God would ask of us to defend his Church: excommunicate Church leaders that commit heresy, and those that both actively and publicly undermine, deny, or misconstrue ecclesiastical law. Succinctly from Matthew "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

A great improvement of parish life in order to establish a greater sense of community among Catholics.

More reverence for the Eucharist. How to achieve this: A more prayerful celebration of the Mass. Parishes to have adoration more often. Teaching parishes that the Eucharist is not just a symbol. Teaching parishioners where to genuflect and why. Moving the tabernacle to the front and centre of the Church as the focus of the building—not just off to the side. Teaching parishioners of the fast and being in a state of mortal sin and how that affects the reception of the Eucharist. Access to the sacraments: More confession times in parishes. More daily Masses. Each Church should have at least one daily Mass time. Coordinating these with surrounding parishes so that they all aren't at 9am particularly weekdays. I think the Church particularly in [-] is thriving. Youth love being taught the faith. Especially when it's demanding and challenging. We don't want it watered down to make it easier for us. We want the truth and I really think bishop fisher and his auxiliary bishops are leading the way with this.

I think God is asking us to make Him the centre especially by seeking Him in prayer. Practically this could be visiting Jesus in the tabernacle or having adoration available at the parish. I think adoration is important because we need to spend time with Jesus to learn how to know Him and love Him and

also how to love our neighbour as He has loved them. Also I think God wants us to utilise the great gifts that He has given us in the Church e.g. the sacraments, devotion to Mary and the Saints. These help us to become the saints that God has called us to be.

If children at 7 years are being confirmed, then the Mass offered for them should include all correct prayers, with appropriate liturgical music, not dumbed down hymns and Mass settings that don't teach them the prayers or anything about the mystery of God. Weekly hour of catechism after Sunday morning Mass for children, as in other Catholic countries- supported by seminarians. Invite parishioners to assist, there are many elderly who have a lot to offer because they learned their catechism as children. Young single adults and others may be lonely on Sunday morning, or able to offer their service on Sunday rather than during the week. Youth ministry and youth groups to be asked to assist with catechism, invited to the groups in the local parish and beyond, and informed of all the charisms, and lay and religious opportunities available, trained in music in the liturgy, introduced to the Latin Mass, and given resources for prayer life, such as Apps, and quality reading materials. Inform community that a request of 20 parishioners for Latin Mass means that Latin Mass is to be offered in the parish, negotiate with priests able to serve Latin Mass and share the load. The music in liturgy training given by nuns, brothers and priests in the past wasn't understood to be of the extraordinary value that it was. The voice is the first instrument for liturgical music, the organ the second. There are rules around the liturgy and music, Therefore, members of all music ministries should be offered training every 2-5 years, learning basics plus a Mass setting, and some simple psalm settings. Secondly, there are organs needing homes, source an organ for each Church, pipe organs last forever with care, and cost less than the price of an electronic one, suitable for older Churches, or newer built ones if chosen carefully and installed appropriately. Also, offer the chance for one organist to be paid, even a stipend, and 1-2 organ scholarships per parish, funded either by requesting a donation or by parish funds. Scholarship for anyone with Grade 5 or above piano skills, any age. Then, the community throughout the whole of Australia will benefit if and when the organ scholarship person moves elsewhere. Value every parishioner that attends, particularly the elderly because they have so much faith and so much to offer in wisdom, and understanding. If we believe that the Catholic Church has the whole truth, then children in school need to firstly learn about the Catholic faith, the biblical references in the catechism, and the lastly where there are confluences in other great faiths. For without understanding of our own faith, we cannot defend it or develop a respect for other faiths. For communion or confirmation, children to have attended the Sunday catechism for a minimum 3-6 months. Early morning Mass at least for Lent accessible, possibly on bus or train as mid-morning Mass excludes working people from attending Mass daily and is discriminatory.

REGARDING PARISHES: Parish—More encouragement and financial support for Catholic men's, women's, family, youth and young adults' group in each parish. Church building—Ensure tabernacle is behind altar. —Presence of crucifix, which shows true extent of Christ's love for us, in a prominent place in Church. —Beauty of sanctuary and altar for all parishes to help with evangelisation—More sacred images, statues and stained-glass windows to assist evangelisation through beauty—Encourage silence in the Church building. Clergy—Accountability for pastoral and teaching duties of priests and bishops, including clarity of teaching—Ongoing training, education and formation of clergy like other professional vocations. Liturgy—Use of beautiful sacred Catholic music—Priest to speak on application of daily readings to topical issues—priest to follow rubrics and not innovate. —Congregation encouraged to sing during Mass rather than listening to a CD. —More chants being used rather than contemporary youth bands—Orthodoxy and better formation for liturgical etiquette—Renewal of beauty—Reintroduction of altar rails—More Ad Orientem Masses—Use of ancient languages in Mass parts, doesn't necessarily mean a whole Mass in Latin—Promote reception of communion on the tongue and catechesis to support it—Uniformity of worship based on Church doctrine rather than public opinion. Prayer—More emphasis and teaching/preaching on: prayer and fasting; Jesus being truly present in the Eucharist (e.g. more Adoration); The Rosary, Our Lady, her apparitions and her role in salvation; and the need for repentance and penance—More

availability of Confession and daily Mass; confession available before and after Mass—More perpetual adoration sites

REGARDING CATECHESIS, FORMATION AND OTHER ITEMS: Catechesis—Better catechesis of laity (especially catechists and religious educators)—Clearer catechesis from the priest on human sexuality (Theology of the Body and chastity)—A more extensive and comprehensive RCIA program—Consideration of a “Catholic Alpha” course—Catechesis on the liturgy—An easier accessibility of the faith to disabled people—Orthodoxy of the catechesis, based less on experience and more on philosophy and theology—Explicit teaching/preaching on sin and the end times. Formation—Better formation and education of the faith in Catholic Schools—To rediscover the beauty of the faith and true mission of the Church; the salvation and sanctification of souls through authentic Catholic spirituality —For all institutions, offices, bodies that uses the title “Catholic” to be held accountable for adhering to an Authentically Catholic ethos; an audit or an authority to be created to monitor this Ministry—For the Church to embrace to the most vulnerable, disabled and the minorities (e.g. LGBTQI) and offer and promote the ministries for these people in order for the Church to show them love within the framework of Catholic Magisterial teachings. Vocation—Increased presence of seminarians and consecrated religious in Catholic high schools to invoke and encourage more vocations to priesthood and religious life. Catholic Identity—Unity of Catholics and Catholic communities and break down rivalries and competition, e.g. charismatic vs Latin Mass goers, ACU vs Notre Dame, Parramatta Diocese vs Sydney Archdiocese—No more liberal vs conservative Catholicism; just authentic Catholicism.

We simply need to turn to the Bible for God’s message. His message starts with the Book of Genesis, written more than a few thousand years ago, followed by His messenger, His Son, Jesus Christ, through His teachings recorded in the gospels. Jesus’ two commandments are: to love God with heart, soul and mind, and to love your neighbour as yourself. His mission is clear and this was His instruction to the apostles. As disciples of Christ, we follow His teachings. When Jesus appeared to the apostles after His death, he said “peace be with you, as the Father sent me, so I am sending you”, and he breathed on them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. The question that needs to be asked is not what we think God is asking of us as this time, rather how might we and generations to come fulfil Jesus’ mission? However, before considering answers to this question, there must be an emphatic understanding of the issue(s) and reasons of this Plenary Council.

I think God is asking everyone in the Catholic Church to reach out into the deep and meet more people (either away from the faith or non-Catholics). He is calling us to be apostles and to spread the message of the gospel by example.

To keep teaching, promoting and defending the Catholic faith. It really is that simple! The Church has been side-tracked by so-called "social justice" and environmental issues and needs to get back to its core business—assisting the faithful on the road to salvation.

To talk less and pray more. More eucharistic adoration and times of silence. Holy hours available in all parishes.

Welcome God into our lives and our greater community called Australia. Commit to love God and our neighbours. Recognise, accept and follow Jesus as the son of God. For those of us who have received and been educated in the word spread the gospel inside and outside Australia. In living the Gospels well, we become the light to draw others to his mercy and knowledge of being truly loved. As a country we have the largest Catholic education system per capital across the world. Like the olive tree in the gospel we are being given another chance to produce good fruit. Do we examine enough if with all these resources of time and money invested in Catholic school and university education that we are co-creating the community where God is welcome? We have been gifted with so much and to many people now, God is unknown and his presence in many lives is not recognised. God who became man left us the Holy Spirit to guide us in love. Again, how rare is it to see communities in Australia aware of God as revealed by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Australia once known as the Land of the Holy Spirit should in a sense fulfil its destiny as such a land.

God is asking us to build more humble and inclusive communities which help people to grow in love of God and others, and have a focus on the less fortunate and those who are struggling. In order to do this, we need more and better community leaders (a role currently demanded of priests who are inadequate for the task) who are able to empower individuals and groups to work together. We need liturgies which are inspiring and enable us to lift our hearts to God with joy and praise so we can make decisions influenced by the Holy Spirit working in our hearts.

At the moment, we are the broken body of Christ, very much in need of healing and restoration. Gone are the days when we used to sit back and expect the "Church" (as in the clergy) to do the work of evangelisation, liturgy, sacraments and pastoral care. Now with the diminishing number of priests available to look after the flock, we the laity need to take our role in the Church seriously and get more involved in the work of our Church. This also means that the priests have to be willing to let go of some of the things they do. Their main focus should be on pastoral care of the flock and celebrating the sacraments.

God is asking the Church in Australia to begin a process of reconversion and reconnection with Him. For too long, the Church in Australia has become distracted by worldly concerns and has forgotten that its central mission to lead its flock to Christ. The fruits of this worldly thinking are obvious as the Church has become like the salt that has lost its taste and has largely abandoned its mission of converting this country. The Church must admit and confront the fact that the way it has operated for the past 50 years has been a Massive disaster. Mass attendance has collapsed, Catholic schools produce agnostics rather than Catholics and most Catholics in Australia dissent from the Truth on issues like abortion, sexuality and marriage. God is asking the Church in Australia what He has always asked the Church in every place and every age—reject the world and embrace Him.

*To encourage the Catholic Faith with the younger generation. *Not enough activities in the Church that are for teenagers and God centred. *Age-appropriate activities that create fun and bring them together as friends and faith support.

To rebuild a new social fabric for our nation based on marriage and family. (1,450 word submission to be attached)

(1) Mercy—particularly for young people in a new location, outside the protection of the home, when they go out into world may encounter being socially or intellectually compromised. For this reason, I ask that there be at least 30 min of confession before every Mass at every Church so it will become a standard. So, No matter where you are in Oz, you have access to the sacrament of reconciliation. (2) Catechism at the parish and parental level. The family is the mini Church, so we need to equip parents with tools and strategies to catechise their families. While social justice is good, I feel this has come at the expense of the sacramental life of the Church. (3) More exposition of the blessed sacrament with a proper benediction. At least 15 min after every Mass in every parish. The problems of the Church stem from turning away from the source of life, God himself in the real presence of the Eucharist.

We recognise that the Spirit is calling us to a place of poverty before the world, to an ecclesial life stripped of power and influence in society, which thrives instead on an awakening of prayer, community, evangelisation, on the treasures that had made our faith attractive in the past. It is a poverty which recognises that the institutions which the Church built up in this land to provide for her people and others alike are no longer animated by the Spirit, nor serve her mission. It is a poverty which recognises the excesses of power, the corruption and the cruel indifference of the past and the present which are now being brought to light. It is, finally, a poverty which discerns in our dwindling numbers the original call to discipleship, which has been too often intermingled with or drowned out by the voices of the world. Our parishes, which ought to be the places where faith in and knowledge of the Lord are nurtured, are dying. Like so many other Catholic intuitions, they are merely being managed. We do not reach out to the isolated and the lost, especially to those sharing our pews. We repair the buildings, maintain a few ministries for the elderly, and, consciously or not, place all responsibility on the clergy. The faith of the Apostles and the heroic saints throughout the centuries is reduced in our parishes and schools to platitudes about kindness and compassion, which

are neither difficult, nor demanding. Our parishes are hollowed out by apathy, the sacraments are misused or trivialised, and the clergy do to exercise their fatherly leadership. Unlike many other denominations, we fail to ask and expect from our people a devotion to our community which stretches beyond the Sunday Mass. Similarly, while sacramental preparation may point to the treasures of the Church and the attainment of a mature faith, there are precious few, if any, resources to assist a young person to partake of these. Our faith is attractive and beautiful and yet we fail to show that attractiveness to our children and the world alike. The Spirit is calling us, who are lay people, to cooperate with the ordained ministers and to take responsibility for contributing time, talent and treasure to the mission of the Church, to be humble stewards of treasures both worldly and spiritual, and be inspired towards and to answer the call to holiness. The Spirit is calling us back to the simplicity of the early Church: to love God, to know His will, to serve one another and to be united in communion with him in praise and the celebration of the sacraments. From this foundation, which cannot be replaced by any earthly program, institution or initiative, we hope to become again a blessing to society, teaching our children well, answering needs that go unheeded and speaking both truth and mercy, where the world is silent.

That we trust in GOD, follow the gospels, praying constantly for his help in a time of great evil caused by the clergies, shameless paedophiles by their actions, they have enabled the enemies of the Church, to attack the Church unnecessarily by their empowerment and hate. This is likely to worsen as the civil cases against the Church keeping this issue on all section of the press despite the pending appeal. This will drive more Catholics away from the Church. As I mentioned earlier, pray at Mass, Rosary, Scapular and the Way of the Cross for examples of prayer. Importantly, I would say empowerment for parishioners to fight back the attack on the Church with a prayer at the end of all Masses. PRAYER TO DEFEAT THE WORK OF SATAN.

For our Catholic Leaders in schools and parishes to actually PRACTICE and KNOW the Catholic Faith. The former Religious Sisters no longer teach in the schools. Adults don't know their faith and so their children don't know the faith. The younger generation have NO examples within their families and even their schools. An entire generation or two have no understanding of the Catholic Faith. If they have no faith then they have no hope and the risk of suicide increase. At a family baptism the priest asked a question and not one person knew the answer. There were over 70 of us there.

I think God is asking us in Australia to love one another as he loves us. To love our neighbour and also to grow closer to him, to love our lady Mary Mother of God and to Adore Him in the blessed sacrament. Also, be present with him at Mass.

Responses from Teaching Staff: [-] Issues raised with SRC this morning Encouraging students to attend Mass at school such as Ash Wednesday Engagement across Years 7-10 Encouraging students to sing, more preparation for Liturgies Outside of liturgy (more opportunities to connect with the wider community—nursing homes) Consider new hymns that appeal to the youth, more 'upbeat' Homily—does it relate? Priest interaction with congregation —not static Reading at Mass should be shared among students. Youth to Youth (relatable and relevant) Youth Night at [-] Campus involving 7-10 students Bible Study style initiative (with food)

The Church in Australia is called to be a Model of holiness through Discipleship, Faithfulness and Unity amidst growing persecution. Discipleship—leaders (clergy and non-clergy) in the Church in Australia need to model their lives based on the Disciples of Jesus (to live as closely as possible as the way His first Disciples did). Faithfulness—to the Lord's commandments in every aspect of life in the life of all its so-called faithful people, to the point of death Unity—amongst all faithful (clergy and lay) through Obedience and Humility to the One Lord, transcending all non-essential differences. Too long we have too many divisions amongst our faithful, applying labels such as trad, conservatives, liberals, modernist, etc. It's time we stop all of this, and the Bishops to start taking initiatives to voice the need for unity even harder. That Obedience to the Church as Representative of Jesus Christ should be upheld higher than identification to any other groups.

*More prayer. * PEOPLE want to change the rules NOT THE CHURCH. * PEOPLE are the problem! NOT the Church. *We need more prayers for priests. * We need more catechesis. People don't know the faith. *The parish priest must be approachable.

God is asking for everyone, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to follow the commandments given to us by Jesus as he says: —'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' —'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." We can do this through focusing on a few key areas: FORMATION In the same way we are responsible for the health of our bodies, and the bodies of those we have been called to look after, we likewise need to be responsible for the health of our souls, and the souls of those we have been called to look after. Especially as adults, we have a responsibility to actively seek formation but it seems as though this is not made a priority. Through knowing more, we are able to love more. Recommendations—Seek out ways to understand why formation isn't a priority—Promote appropriate means of formation without diluting or compromising the teachings of the Catholic Church —Support priests and religious to give formation —Also support lay people who are capable and trained to collaborate in catechetical formation. EVANGELISATION The proclamation of Christ and His Gospel by word and the testimony of life, in fulfilment of Christ's commands, should be the responsibility of all the Christian faithful. This involves the apostolic activities of priests and religious but also involves the laity. It is easy to leave this to the priests and religious but people often forget that the laity has an important role in this, especially in spaces where it is only through them that people can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Recommendations—Support priests and religious, as well as the laity in spreading the kingdom of Christ all over the earth—Seek out more effective ways to connect with people without diluting or compromising the teachings of the Catholic Church—Encourage interactions with those of different faiths, backgrounds and others we wouldn't normally connect with to share our faith and learn more about others—Increase access to the sacraments, especially Mass and Confession. DILUTING AND COMPROMISING TEACHINGS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. This time of listening and dialogue has shed light on a variety of different opinions and experiences. There will be areas that need change but diluting and compromising teachings of the Catholic Church to appease particular groups is dangerous. Loving others is not synonymous with agreeing with or submitting to others so we need to respond with truth in a charitable way. Recommendations—Don't dilute or compromise teachings of the Catholic Church—Find ways to lovingly correct if needed.

I have never before visualised God sending messages but if I view the world is through my preconceived Catholic filters what I see and more importantly, what I feel is disturbing. The world is degenerating, collapsing and disintegrating from the inside out. Our Church is in tatters, it appears to be controlled and run by individuals who totally disregard the Church's fundamental belief or love and respect and do so by lying. Also, our society starting from politicians to societal personalities is proving to be more selfish and have anti-community ethos. There is no substantial recognition for family and community spirited individuals. Plus, on the broader international scale, there are many unresolved festering wars, conflicts and sanctioned murdering. All this against a back drop of an ever-increasing global population, with an ever-widened gap between the rich and poor. However, with so many people, loneliness is becoming an ever-increasing problem. The world is spiralling downwards at an ever-increasing pace. I believe God is saying to all good men and women; find your voice and perform good visible acts in your communities now. Expand your circle of influence, increase love and reduce loneliness. Otherwise the world will destroy the things most people hold dearest their families and caring, sharing communities.

What do I know? Nothing, really. But it would strike me as fantastically odd that the council, the Australian Catholic Bishop's Conference and other groups, with all their diverse experiences and perspectives doesn't already know. So, I guess the question really becomes: Is the council, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the wider Church willing to hear and potentially upset people by acting upon what the Spirit has and continues to say? God is asking us to live

authentically. Calls for changes to Church teachings are absurd because I do not think people are trying in the first place and the Communion of Saints suggests the teachings work. Authenticity might be, first: are we giving clear, relevant and cogent presentations of the truth people can understand? Second, are people convincingly living in the imitation of Christ? To prevent bad practice or evil from occurring, parishes should be objectively audited to ensure trained people are performing the administration of the parish. Clergy should not be doing things they're not trained for. These should be opened to lay people. As Pope Benedict noted in *Deus Caritas Est*, the good pastor must be rooted in contemplation. Are priests and bishops taking this time to be able to take upon himself the needs of others and make them his own? How can the laity help make this possible for the pastor? Is it clear to pastors and parish leadership what opportunities for there are for greater involvement by the laity to support this (baptism, funeral, sick and house bound ministries, etc.). God is asking us to live transparently. When the body is composed of authentic parts, transparency enables the Church to objectively prove our authenticity, especially at an operational and financial level and counter misinformation. Parishes aren't businesses with trade secrets to compete with others. I should be able to go to a parish web site and download data or a report. What is there to hide? If someone has a problem with how things are run, there's an opportunity for them or others to step up and bring their gifts and talents to the table. I maintain that none of this should be revelatory.

A small group of 5 gathered to pray, reflect and discuss what we think God is asking of us in Australia at this time. In addition to using the guidelines from the Plenary Council website, we read the Gospel (Mark 10:17-27) of the particular day we gathered as a way of focusing our prayer, reflections and conversations on Jesus. Three dreams for our Church emerged during our time together. We believe God is asking us in Australia at this time; 1. to be a Church of love that does not opt for power or privilege 2. to be a mature Church, that empowers Her people to co-create with God the Kingdom of God 3. to be a Prophetic Church, shining a light of truth for the world. These three calls are connected and our thinking was inspired by prayerful reflection on the Gospel and in particular, the following passage: Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." Please refer to explanation of these attached.

*For the priests to be more like Jesus. *For the Seminaries to be more strict about who they let in.
*For more prayer.

To get the lapsed Catholics to return to life in the Church especially by attending Mass on Sunday.

* More Eucharistic Holy Hours/Adoration. * More processions. *Priests to represent Christ at all times.

I have been praying about this since I read this question a month ago. Then last Sunday's 2nd reading, 1 Corinthians 15:58 seemed to answer the question "Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain". Living in Australian secular society as a Catholic and following Church teachings can make you feel isolated from the mainstream culture but our faith is not a popularity contest and we do not need to make things "easier" to fit in with secular society. When we continue to grow spiritually (faith formation) and by "living and sharing" our Catholic faith while always keeping our eyes on Jesus and his Blessed Mother, then the Holy Spirit will help us live with hope in our hearts for the future and we can be the shining light for others across Australia (including the children) who need us, at this difficult time, to stay focused "be a fit instrument" and "keep on working at the Lord's work".

More prayer and greater devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist. More Adoration and Perpetual Adoration chapels. More reverence in Mass and beautiful sacred liturgies and hymns. More emphasis on the Mass being first and foremost a Holy Sacrifice of Jesus. More Latin and Gregorian chant in the Mass. A greater access to the Tridentine Mass. More emphasis on the importance of prayer in living a holy life ready for heaven. The Rosary needs to be prayed every day. We should bring about a culture of prayer. The sacraments need to be more available. The workers in the CBD

whether in [-] or in [-] need to have access to Daily Mass. Confession needs to be heard before and during every Sunday Mass. Ordinary Catholics need to be better catechised and need to be ready to explain and defend the faith in charity. Catholics need to be more virtuous and less sinful. The virtues and concept of mortal sin need to be taught to them. Men's and family groups need to be started up in parishes to strengthen men and families. Sunday schools need to be brought back to teach the children and the adults Scripture and the Catechism. Our Catholic schools need to be more successful in having students retain the faith. There needs to be more genuinely Catholic teachers. And external Catholic groups like Culture Project need to be supported in getting into the schools so that the students are taught things like authentic masculinity and the benefits of chastity. The Church has such a large resource to tap into in the Catholic schools and we should use it. The Church should be involved in guiding the faithful in politics and in the culture. The Church should be more vocal in denouncing abortion, contraception and pornography. The Church should once again be a patron of the arts and promote objectively beautiful artwork.

God simply is asking us to live the virtues of the beatitudes and to find strength in one another as we find ourselves in these most challenging of times which require us to clear our mouths before we open our ears and then assist in making decisions about the future of our Australian Church.

I think God is asking of us to become people of contemplative prayer. As the poem by James McAuley, A letter to John Dryden: "set pools of silence in this thirsty land". I therefore quote a few lines from the book Open Mind Open Heart (20th Anniversary Edition) by Thomas Keating (Introduction: p.7): "There is a growing expectation that teachers of the Gospel speak out of a personal experience of contemplative prayer. This could happen if the training of priests and ministers placed formation in contemplative prayer and practice on an equal footing with academic training. Until spiritual leadership becomes a reality in Christian circles, many will continue to look to other religious traditions for the spiritual experiences they are not finding in their local Churches or other Christian institutions. If there were a widespread renewal of the practice of the Contemplative dimension of the Gospel which bonds Christians together at a deeper level, the reunion of the Christian Churches would be a real possibility, dialogue with the other world religions would have a firm basis in the spiritual experience of the Christian community and the religions of the world would bear a much clearer witness to the human values they hold in common." "There ...

Australia is a multicultural country where there are many people believing different faiths. People normally respect each other and the religion that each individual holds because we want peace and harmony. We try to be inclusive and respect each other. God is within us creature created by God. Our desire to live in harmony and happy is the call God asking Australia. Our Church is an instrument of God so our tasks are to work towards this goal. We need to be in touch with people in our society regardless if they are Catholic or not.

From Mark's Gospel Mark 7:1-13 read in Church on Tuesday 12 Feb 2019, Jesus speaks to the Pharisees who complain that some of the disciples are eating with unclean hands and quotes Isaiah "This people honours me only with lip service while their hearts are far from me. The worship they offer me is worthless, the doctrines they teach are only human regulations. You put aside the commandment of God to cling to human tradition." Jesus died for ALL people, His arms are outstretched to ALL people on the cross. In many churches, there is a crucifix above the tabernacle, ([-], [-] for example) and in looking at Jesus' outstretched hands while at Mass, how can we believe that certain people are blocked to receiving the healing sacrament of the Holy Eucharist as they are practising gay or lesbian people or they are divorced and remarried? The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament of the Church's unity, healing and love. I do believe that the Catholic Church needs to be transparent and enter into more dialogue as to who can and can't receive this great gift and why. Open dialogue and reevaluation of this process of receiving Holy Communion needs to show Jesus' compassionate and merciful heart to all people seeking to be welcomed at Holy Communion. Jesus did not block Judas at the Last Supper. What about the 'Primacy of Conscience' to be upheld in this situation but just what is the Church's teaching? Clear communication is important for us to be secure in the teachings of the Church. Community is another aspect I feel needs to be considered.

The Catholic parish needs to be a beacon of community practices in our secular community. We need to have processes in place that encourage interaction with all stages of aging, the youth to the very elderly. There seems to be a gap when the children and their families have left the local primary school. I just feel that we should all be encouraged to support each other and do parish community work as a way of showing support for each other. Maybe by providing a community bus and encouraging people to share in driving of the elderly to Church or shopping, or the youth to sport. Maybe the youth could share their computer skills with those who are struggling or others perhaps retired can share their professional skills to the youth or whoever needs it in the parish. We need to be like a big family, respecting each other's dignity and getting to know each other and help as needed. An overarching parish community hub encompassing all parish groups could build strong community ties, helpfulness and a friendly spirit instead of small group community with little communication between each other except through the much-valued weekly Church bulletin. I do feel also that the Archdiocese could actively take part in spearheading the enhanced community focus so that it becomes a core theme in every parish in the diocese. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? Discussion summary in themes:
 Personal · Individual connection with our faith and lead by example · Faith with sincerity
 Community · Connect as a community with one another · Put our faith into action helping others—increases sense of community and create a sense of belonging · Create ambassadors—create opportunities that give people a chance to contribute to the community. Church to facilitate this · Good works across the broader community—responding to needs · Celebrate kindness and community contribution
 Forgiveness and Inclusion · Practise forgiveness in our daily lives · Express love in our lives · Be models of acceptance and inclusion · Be non-judgemental · Embrace diversity · Bridge the social divide
 Participation · Focus on youth participation in the Church—inspire youth to connect more deeply with faith and put it into action · Church should be representative of broader society—Increase representation of females including in clergy, married clergy · Church should be easy to approach and feel accessible for broader society · Celebrate different ways of belonging... not everyone who belongs is a regular at Mass. Church repair · Image repair after royal commission · Reflect on the victims of the royal commission and what it means at the individual level, the effect on a life · Church as an organisation should be transparent and open

BISHOPS: Before the Bishops do anything, we think they need to make a very public apology to the faithful and especially to victims of sexual abuse, their families and friends — including holding a meaningful Nationwide Liturgy. Bishops lack leadership in the public space—no presenting of the Christian message to counter the hostile, aggressive culture we are currently experiencing. From the Bishops we would like to see active consultation with priests and laity. We would like leaders to reflect Vatican II. Every 3 years we would like the Bishops to have a performance review managed by a professional but with input from priests and laity. **CLERICALISM:** The culture of clericalism promotes Superiority Entitlement. Leads to lack of transparency in decision making. A separate clerical status should not exist at all. Leads to abuse of Power—laity are powerless, have no say in decisions. **COLLEGIALITY:** Parish Pastoral Councils to be transparent—decisions to be made public and parishioners made welcome at meetings. Parish plans discussed and financial reports be made available to parishioners. Independent Mediator so parishioners can go to them with local Church issues. **ECUMENISM:** Develop relationship with other Churches and learn from them. Be actively involved with other Churches. **MARRIAGE / SEXUALITY:** The Church needs to develop a new theology of the following: Family violence. Annulments—Marriage breakdowns are a traumatic experience—the Church is ill equipped to help. Divorce and Remarriage. Contraception—sensus fidei fidelium—parents' decision—their responsibility, Acceptance of LGBTQI, IVF and adoption. Abortion. Bishops and priests have no lived experience of married life, the relationship and the experience and responsibility of raising children. **MEANING IN OUR FAITH—**evangelisation. We need on-going formation in our faith towards an understanding of scripture to develop an adult approach to our faith and a gospel driven discipleship. At times introduce a short homily on Sunday's readings

followed by the congregation (in small groups) having a discussion on the readings and their meaning for them—so to encourage us to see the relevance of the Gospel message in our lives. At times, have lay people give the homily—many laity with Theology degrees or not who could give inspiring homilies from their life experience. PRIESTS. Male and female—married and unmarried. Celibacy optional. Priests who left Church to marry be invited back to ministry. Women be involved in formation of priests—to help overcome strong male dominance. Work / life experience prior to entering priesthood. Married priests be considered—or ordaining men already married. Ordination of women both to the priesthood and diaconate. Priests from overseas come from a different cultural background —and...

PLENARY 2020: The world is in chaos and change is needed drastically to make a difference. It was always my hope and I was educated to believe that the Church could be like the salt of the earth an institution that would guide lovingly the world in a direction that was life giving. If anyone can engender hope amongst people it should be those who believe in the message of Jesus 'love one another as I have loved you and your neighbour as yourself' but sadly, the message is somewhat distorted. Most people today do not see religion as relevant. The Church represented by its leadership and hierarchy as a whole is seen only to be concerned for itself. How can we engender a hope in our community within Australia so that all Australians could become hopeful about a better future for themselves and their families? Christian community (Church) leadership needs to be brave and challenge our civic leaders, those leaders who are called to make decisions for the good of all the community. The question is How can the Christian communities (Church) demonstrate this collective caring? Collective Caring will be seen only when the Church takes on the most serious of issues and takes the truth to power The Church needs to address the following issues as Pope Francis has done. Nuclear Weapons—continue to be used as deterrents at the expense of providing adequate resources to all members of the community. There has been not one word from any official Australian Church leader about this issue. There is silence and yet it is the greatest threat to our world and people. Currently there is no Church voice in Australia that is challenging the greatest threat in this age ...nuclear weapons and the industry that surrounds it. Arms Trade—Growth in Militarism Is based on the belief that conflicts can only be resolved by using force and therefore states are seeking to increase their military strength. Surely the message of Jesus is one of another way ...non-violence and as Pacem in Terris so clearly sets out right relationships. This use of scarce resources is an assault on us all and yet again. Silence no outrage and these resources are being used to kill innocent civilian people. Why is there not a robust expression of the Churches concern for the growth of militarism in our country, and a concern for the right to life of civilians that are caught up in conflicts? Australia has been relatively free of being a weapons producer but no so now. Our current government is encouraging and providing resources for companies to make a profit on a product that will bring misery and death. Where are the voices of our Church that are opposing these immoral activities in light of Jesus's message of Love??? The Church could be a leading voice in seeking another path towards a peaceful world.

I think God is asking us to take up the same essential mission as God the Father bestowed upon the Israelites, and Jesus together with the Holy Spirit asked of the first Christians. That is to be a "light [that] shines in the darkness". In my own words, I believe we are called to be a bright and authentically Catholic light to the modern world. In pondering what must specifically be done to achieve this mission, I believe we are called to promote the following two ideals: 1. Restore and promote and authentic teaching of the Catholic faith. 2. Provide for and encourage Christian communities, allowing this faith to flourish. The following section poses questions which expand on the above listed points.

God is asking us to include him in our daily lives, in our schools, society and in the political process. Priests need to be clearer on the teachings of the Church and not shy away from the truth. The greatest problem with today's society is sin is not spoken about—the importance of going to Sunday Mass, Lenten practices, etc. should be clearly outlined and communicated so people understand the consequences. Our schools can no longer be called Catholic! The catechism they teach is wishy-

washy. Our children are thirsting for the truth and deserve this within our schools. I believe the Catholic Church has stayed strong because we don't change... our teachings on marriage, contraception, abortion are all strong and valid. I believe we need to remain how we are in our teaching but be more open about things so people understand and the Church can remain strong for our children and grandchildren.

I am a male primary school teacher in a Catholic school (20+ years' experience) and I have never felt more of a disconnect from the Church than I do now. My personal faith is strong and always evolving and this will be a lifelong pursuit, but I no longer connect this with the Church. What I believe that God is asking of us in Australia can be summarised under three headings: equality, family, accountability, inclusion. Equality: Women must be elevated to positions of equality in the Church and this must begin with priesthood. There is no chance that I will ever be coming back to the Church unless women are accorded the same privileges and responsibilities as men within the structure of the Church. This must begin with priesthood. Until women are allowed a full say in the running of the Church—at the highest level—I and numerous others cannot see a place within it. Family: Masses which are delivered by elderly men who have no idea or concept of family life, yet who continue to lecture the congregation on family life, make no sense to me. Priests (both women and men, of course) must therefore be allowed to marry and have a family. If the Church is to be a part of modern society then the Church itself must allow itself to become modern. A modern Church will attract modern family units—traditional families, step families, blended families, and same sex couple families. Accountability: Just as the Church asks its congregation to do, the Church itself must atone for the sins of its past. This must go beyond apologies and compensation (although these are essential). Individual clergy must be called to account for their actions and inaction and, where lawfully appropriate, must be cast out of the priesthood. If I was found guilty of any of these crimes of sexual abuse that are sadly rampant in the Church's story, aside from the legal and punitive ramifications, I would not be allowed to practise as an educator for the remainder of my life. It would be fitting if we applied the very same laws to clergy. Inclusion: as a young schoolboy brought up in the Church and the Catholic school system, I was always taught about the importance of inclusion, acceptance, of the fact that God loved all His people no matter what. Yet, when I look at the Church's attitude towards homosexual people, I see a gaping hypocrisy. I cannot reconcile the teachings and words of Jesus with the words of those in power in the Church. In short, the Church no longer speaks for me. I seek my inspiration and the nourishment of my faith elsewhere. The Church needs to turn back to the people it has excluded and welcome them back in without exception. I believe that God is asking much of us in Australia. If the Church intends to survive, it needs to turn to these challenges in its future.

I honestly don't think God is asking us to do anything different to what he initially asked of us in the Ten Commandments. It is our interpretation of these that may need re-visiting. In essence, they are easy enough guidelines to follow and yet ... Perhaps we need to look at the problems we face these days—stress, anger, abuse, mental health, lack of respect, etc. —and look at why they are happening and not just how we can fix them, but go back to grassroots level and understand how we can prevent them. What is not happening these days that allows these issues to take hold with such prevalence in our society?

Whilst there are so many individual issues and problems needing to be solved at the moment, I feel one area which has been truly lacking in my life has been education about the faith. I was a teenager in the 70's at a lovely Catholic school after having attended a local parish school. I didn't know it at the time but I was basically ignorant of many of the Church's teachings. My parents taught me many of the truths, but it has only been in the last ten or fifteen years that I have started to understand the many teachings of Catholicism. I have been blessed to be able to find the resources necessary to help me. Therefore, my main area of concern is ignorance of God's teachings and ignorance of Catholic teaching and reasoning. I feel very strongly that God wants us to come to know Him, using all our faculties, especially our gift of intelligence. He wants the Church in Australia to be taught His truths. I think all teachers in Catholic schools need to be educated in the faith more fully. In addition,

<p>parents should be educated more fully, especially at times of their children's sacraments, perhaps with the use of online courses and hard copy information booklets. We need to spread the news of God by arming ourselves with knowledge.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to have a greater sense of unity within the Church in Australia. We must allow room for the Holy Spirit to move within the ministries and groups that we all serve in and for a greater respect of each community and person that is serving God in some way. I am 23 years old and have been involved in youth ministry since the age of 14. I always felt as a young person, we were looked down upon by older generations as though we didn't know anything about the faith when we spent countless weekends attending meetings learning how to pray and receiving faith formation that was engaging for us. We were judged and criticized when we didn't sing to the standards of some parishioners during either the youth Mass or when participating in some other way. As a youth coordinator, I felt belittled in the lack of acknowledgement and respect people had for the role. The lack of support made me feel like I was alone and unwelcomed into the parish which made the job difficult. Priests and bishops need to support the youth because you need to know that there are youth and young adults trying to live a radical life of evangelising in this world, but it's so much harder when the first people we're trying to evangelise to is within the Church and very active in our parishes when we could be evangelising to those who are yet to meet God. We must come back to the source of it all through prayer. I believe we need all bishops, priests and religious to share the importance of the Eucharist and get the Church to realise that Jesus is well and truly alive amongst us today. I don't think people realise what we truly believe when we're in Mass and that the bread and wine truly become the body and blood of Christ. We need more Churches having opportunities for the sacraments of reconciliation and having an opportunity to be before Jesus through Eucharistic Adoration—not just in the moments where the year of mercy come around. More perpetual adoration chapels would help strengthen each area because a place where God and the Holy Spirit freely dwells is one that can strengthen and give great clarity to each ministry within the area. We need our parish priests to support these initiatives and to realise that once the youth are guided in these things, they will come and support them! I believe we need the bishops and priests to help stop division within the Catholic Church. The labels put on people such as (traditional, charismatic, Latin, etc.) MUST STOP! It needs to be shared that we as the Church need to see that each of these are important and should be respected and not spoken about in a way that brings down a person or ministry. We have to build each other up and stop tearing each other down.</p>
<p>To completely redress the exclusion of women and married men from ordained ministry and decision-making processes in the hierarchy of the Australian and global Catholic Church.</p>
<p>To reduce clericalism. To have more focus on what Jesus would have said or done and less focus on rules. To include women in the hierarchy and management of the institutional Church, which includes the need for ordained women. Make celibacy optional.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to go back to our Christian roots and our essential essence in following Christ. The teachings of Jesus and the early Church should guide us. The Gospels are compelling. Too much attention and resources have gone into maintaining assets, possessions, power and perhaps even status. We must be humble and giving people. We risk dying out as congregations dwindle in size and age considerably. Young people are seeking to do their good works elsewhere, but not as part of the Catholic Church. I see young families attending Mass only around the times of their children's baptism, Reconciliation and Communion and then eventually Marriage. Although I notice even fewer young Catholic educated people (from strong families) are marrying within the Church.</p>
<p>Our parishioners had a number of different ideas in answering the question the Church is asking. Some called for a more welcoming Church and a place where compassion is at the heart of everything, while others were hoping to see the Church engage more fully with its teachings, and that that be reflected in the liturgy. At [—] [—], we believe that God is asking us in Australia, at this time, to renew and refresh the Church. The Church is a place of hope and values, a place to learn compassion and the value of service and a place to reflect, as individuals and as a community. The Church is a place of both appreciating what we have, and making sense of the world by following the</p>

path of Jesus. To this end, we need to be a Church of inclusion. We need to reach out to all the members of our community, not just to those who agree with us, but to anybody that needs help. The community needs to see us as a source of inspiration and progress, not as a place of isolation and regression. It is striking that so many people who have enough faith to have their children baptized don't find time to attend Mass. Obviously they don't find the sense of personal engagement to make it a regular weekly event. Perhaps one major reason for this is that the Church is not seen as a friend who reaches out unconditionally. Perhaps as well, the Church is seen to focus on things which are not the focus of its lay members. This modernizing of the Church does not mean abandoning the beautiful celebration of the Mass, the ritual and spirituality of the service is a gift to us all. But it could mean things like re-aligning the sermon to focus on a reading's relevance to modern life instead of the theological and historic background. To revitalise, the Church needs to reach out into the community, showing the world what it stands for and does to help. One practical step in revitalising is to emphasise instruction in the faith in our schools. Education or catechism should be given attention, as this is the foundation of our knowledge of the Church and the Eucharist. Another practical step is to look at successful parishes and diocese, where attendance and involvement is high, to look at what makes those places vibrant and encouraging. The Church needs to meet its followers in the modern world. To paraphrase the introduction to *Gaudium Et Spes*, the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men, women and children of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted. These are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the Roman Catholic Church.

I believe that God is asking us to update the Church, to re-engage. The world has changed but the Church's method of approaching it hasn't kept up. The focus continues to be on moral authority when the world has been taught to question and challenge. At the same time, the handling of the child abuse allegations erodes the Church's authority as it claims to put children first while helping Church members evade the law and break the Church's own moral teaching. The Church should focus more on teaching by example by doing Christ's work and less on preaching dogma. Many people visit the Church to get married and baptize their children and then never return. The core of their faith is there (the Holy Spirit) but they don't see that the Church is providing anything that benefits them on a weekly basis. A two-step approach is needed. Firstly, get people in the door—reach out to the community by helping them and doing God's work, make them curious. Secondly, get them to come back by giving them a reason. Although the core of the Mass is a beautiful celebration it needs a level of understanding and spirituality so to a newcomer it is not likely to be the primary motivator. One reason to return is that the Church itself is a beautiful tranquil place so it gives a break from the pressures of the world a chance to contemplate. Another is engaging with the community, extending a welcome to all, especially newcomers. The sermon is the point in the Mass which changes each week. It is a chance to engage but it tends to focus on explaining Bible stories, too often by showing how they fit into other Bible stories rather than how they fit into today's life. A good sermon is relevant to the listener and makes them think. It is an opportunity to bring Christ's teaching from the 1st Century to the 21st Century. We can clearly see that what we are doing today is not working, the congregations are getting smaller. To continue approaching the world in the same way will not reverse this it requires an effort to refresh the message. The teachings of Christ are too valuable to leave them frozen in time. Christ's teaching was all about change; it seems that the Church is now resisting change.

The Church in Australia is admittedly hitting a crucial point in time. With the various recent scandals surfacing throughout the world involving the Catholic Church, many people want answers, both practicing and non-practicing Catholics. The state of society currently is very sensitive and easily aggravated by all kinds of things, but especially by Truth. Good Christian values and practices that were never questioned in the past are no longer accepted, from marriage being between a man and a woman, to questioning if you are even a man or a woman based on how you feel, to babies in the womb being aborted under the banner of 'my body, my choice', to women being ordained as priests to attempt to solve a shortage issue but not address the underlying root of the problem. At the end

<p>of the day, I believe the souls that push for these changes don't always have ill-intention, but like us all, are broken humans, but sincerely believe that this is the way they will find happiness. The human heart will always long and seek for Communion and many people outside (and within) the Church are not convinced that they can find this fulfilment in God. But as we know, we are the one true Church. We have Jesus truly present in the Eucharist. We cannot and should not keep Him in our own Catholic bubble. The Church exists to evangelise. If we claim to be faithful and go to Mass every Sunday but do not live as Christians in our daily lives and reach out to our neighbours with love and compassion and uncompromising Truth, then we are not living as children of God. The Church exists to bring people to Heaven and should continue to act and preach what will make us holy, not what will silence and please the crowds, no matter what hostility it faces.</p>
<p>Pope John XXIII was an inspiration; he cut through the quagmire the Church had evolved as a hierarchical institution over the centuries to bring in fresh life; to simplify the message of Christ: "to love one another". The importance of relationships became core: our relationship with our God, with others and with self. It rang so true to me; was exciting, was life-giving and so godly. It inspired so many of us to live our lives accordingly, to contribute to our world and use the gifts we were given for the betterment of others and our world. But how long did the messages of Vatican II last before they initially were eroded by Paul VI and then pulled back by John Paul II and then Benedict? And all along we are being told we (all members of the Church) were the Church but we're being dictated to against our life experiences of right and wrong. I love attending Mass but I feel no compunction to attend. I feel God, my Creator, in nature and give thanks for the gift of life. What would I like to see of the Church structure: Step into the 21st Century; eliminate the Byzantine expensive costumes and the fawning of the hierarchies; tell the wonderful news Christ taught and scrap the Church laws and the distortions this brings to the message of Christ. Downsize the institution of the Church and bring the laity into full decision-making and administration. In fact, perhaps it's time for the laity to take over. It's time we are all treated as adults, are given our rightful roles for which we take our responsibility seriously. The relegation of the laity out of full membership and responsibility for the Church has sadly gone on too long and necessary changes are going to be difficult. I hope and pray these things will come to pass ... otherwise????</p>
<p>The Royal Commission into sexual abuse has been painful but can also be seen as God talking to us, calling us as a Catholic Church to repentance and renewal, to 'a change of heart'. In this sense, it is not unlike the reform message of the biblical prophets of old. We believe God is calling us to renew and nourish a more transparent, accountable, inclusive and humble Church. Ironically, this is the same message that Pope Francis has been teaching for years with his call for the Church to be more a "hospital for sinners than a museum for saints", a Church that is inclusive, accepting people in their brokenness and offering them support, comfort, mercy and ultimately salvation. The realization of this kind of change is difficult given some entrenched positions, history and the diversity of political and social views, made even more complex with the deluge of social media in the last decade.</p>
<p>To stay true to our faith. To be kind and act out our Christian values in the community, especially staying mindful of reaching out to those who are lonely, less fortunate and in times of hardship. Even on a small daily basis to remember others and lead by an example.</p>
<p>To show more compassion and empathy to other people, creatures and the earth. Be more careful with our resources, less greedy, more generous—take more responsibility for our actions. Less about what can I get from the community but how can I contribute and improve things.</p>
<p>To be more accepting of everyone even those who may think differently. To try and have an open mind about the future of the Church for example, the possibility of having priests marry, women playing a larger role within the Church.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us A better approach to open faith dialogue and/Catholic presence. Having an open environment to talk about the faith and learn about it through fraternity and formation. For instance, open Catholic festivals that celebrate the faith or feast day of the saints, or support and strengthening of Catholic retreats to form the lay faithful. In addition, having youth have an easier and engaging access to Catholic teaching online. For example, Catholic videos that debunk any</p>

misunderstandings of the Church. An easier and bold action for people to access within the church or online presence of the Church's perspective and its teaching. Also, to form more Thomas Aquinas' and saints, Aka theologians to do more apologetics in conferences, etc. Forming better religion teachers and politicians.

To keep to the faith traditions, stand firm in Truth and to return the Church back to Christ. To love all unconditionally but not lacking truth.

More spirituality in Church and in its leaders. This is a thirst and inner journey that the history of the Church can speak towards. It is through the Spirit that the challenges that face the Church and the world need to be addressed. Constant apology and acknowledgement for the wrongs of the past from an institution of individuals. Mistakes like this can happen again. This should be part of the liturgy and a permanent prayer of the faithful. Equal representation for women in the Church. Many of the Disciples were married, e.g. St Peter. Many of the leaders and early supporters of Christ were women. The women were the first to see and recognise Christ after the Resurrection. Half of God's humanity are women. Priests and bishops need to recognise that their expertise lies in pastoral, Catholic and spiritual matters. In other (worldly) matters, they should be listening to parishioners. I have seen priests and bishops over rule professional parishioners in matters that they have no experience, usually to the detriment of the parish, and they leave for another parish. Parishes should be run by the laity. The Church should be a leading example in social, climatic and structural change.

Pray!

There is a need for a recovery of reverence in the Church. This can be assisted by a widespread increase of adoration of the Blessed sacrament, notices in every Church exhorting silence from all and focus on the presence of Jesus whether He has been placed at the side, the back or the front of the Church. Having more Churches open each day after morning Mass—even if it is only the porch with some kneelers, and the Blessed sacrament visible through thick unbreakable glass. Teaching children to genuflect or bow EVERY time they come before the tabernacle, teaching acolytes to do so as an example to us all. There is a need for a spiritual Communion—not the social emphasis in the Church. From the spiritual Communion arises strength. Teachers, priests, bishops need to cease Pollyanna sermons and speak of the sufferings of our era—angst, stress, how to counteract the anti-Catholic hostility, post-abortion grief, addressing children of broken families. An increase in the emphasis on mercy in the Church—here the Divine Mercy devotions are very communicative across cultures. There is a need to reach out to the migrant communities in translating important information to them. One elderly Italian lady has no idea what Plenary 2020 is, but when I told her in simple English, she was very keen to submit but does not have enough English. I took her ideas to our meeting. And she wanted to add, please find a way of teaching young people the faith. If they do not know it, how will they survive? Also advertise loud and strong all the good things the Church has done—enlisting the support of young cyber experts in doing so—using the example of soon to be saint Carlos Acutis. And please could the Blessed sacrament be restored to the central position in the Church again?

I believe that God is calling the Australian Church to a new type of 'structured community' that is moving beyond the dominant top-down command model of leadership that has been the model with there on the first part of your document, you said sadly those who have power privilege and status in the hierarchical structure have yet moved to a conversion of relinquishment, would that not be inputting have not yet moved anyway the Roman Catholicism for many centuries. This model has been growing progressively problematic for many Catholics over the last 70 years. Vatican II brought a new understanding of Church as a relational community with its emphasis on its image as the "People of God". Along with it came the rediscovery of the teaching on the un-contestable dignity of human conscience. The teaching of 'Humanae Vitae' created a huge chasm between the hierarchical teaching authority of the Church and the *sensus fidelium* of a huge majority of the lay Church. The sexual abuse issue and the failure of the hierarchical leadership to embrace the reality of the 'structures of the Church' being implicated in the clerical abuse of minors has been a tipping point. I believe the hierarchical leadership is on the edge of a precipice. The Plenary Council is the

'last throw of the dice'. God, I believe, through the Presence of the Spirit is calling the Australian Church to a conversion in the way it lives both charism and structure. The Spirit is calling us back to ponder anew the leadership way that Jesus embodied and spoke of in Mark 10, 32-45/Matthew 20, 20-28/Luke 22, 24-27, and the foot washing in John 13, 1-17. Modern biblical scholarship has this exhortation and symbol act of Jesus addressed to a male-female group of disciples in John. For me, the Church leadership has developed the leadership of power and authority that Jesus is actually critiquing in these texts. It is this model that has now become a great chasm between laity and hierarchical leadership. The lay community, so long 'submissive and docile' to the Church's 'command and control' model of leadership, has slowly awakened over the last 60 years. They are letting go of an attitude of servility and submission and are being empowered by the Spirit of God to become 'living temples of the Spirit' in embracing a shared leadership model. It is a relationship of a "community of friends in the Lord". Sadly, those who have power, privilege, and status in the hierarchical structure have not yet moved to a conversion of relinquishment.

To renew the Church, remove the structures of the Church and become once again a community of believers and followers of Christ with all equal in our love of Christ and contribution to the Church, whether lay person or cleric.

To reflect deeply on His mission for us, the Church in Australia, and seek to be more outward looking into the world in which we live, our community and society in which we exist, to bring people to an understanding of His great love for each and every human person. With the Church having demonstrated and continuing to demonstrate untold failures for decades in protecting children, the weak and vulnerable people—it is no longer being listened to or respected in society.

The Australian Church is a Church in crisis, reeling from the impact of reported abuses and especially from the conviction of Cardinal Pell. Even before the Royal Commission, there have been an increasing number of disenchanted people, especially the young who have left the Church which has become meaningless in their lives. We the people of God are the Church. It is not the 'exclusive' institution that it has become. Our wounded hierarchical Church needs to return to the discipleship of Jesus to create a culture of inclusivity, letting go of its sense of superiority, privilege and power. Many are hurting in our Church where they are voiceless and there is no place for dialogue or to express what they have experienced, or their needs. This means changing the way we think and act so that all may feel safe and welcome, regardless of what they believe, look like or have, their sexuality, gender or marital status. Women who are the pillars of the Church have no voice—we need to address the issue of the role of women in the Church, so that they can freely share their experiences and contribute in decision making. The moralistic and righteous criteria for belonging to the Church are off-putting. There needs to be processes with opportunities for open dialogue, enabling the different voices of people to be heard, listened to, supported and to feel welcomed. Many are 'hurting' especially when they are ostracised or left out in the cold because of their marital status, gender issues—unable to receive the sacraments, etc. This means we need a concerted and proactive effort by the Church to move from the position of control to participation and collaboration. We need to address the culture of mediocrity, hypocrisy and complacency that has led to abuses. We need a compassionate Church which portrays the acceptance and love of Jesus our model!

1. Heavily encourage Eucharistic Adoration in the parish. Push parish priest to have Holy Hours in their parish at least once a day or once a week. The Church of Australia needs to come back to the source and summit of our faith. Emphasis on Eucharistic Adoration in parishes encourages the parishioners and the priest to direct their focus on developing and sustaining a relationship with Jesus. That this is the most essential part of our faith. That we are giving the world the Good News. That Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead out of love for us. Pushing for Eucharistic Adoration opens opportunities for people in the Catholic Church and those who identify with having no religious identity, who are seeking peace and purpose, have the chance to come face-to-face with the One who wants to satisfy their hearts deepest desires. Bringing Jesus to the centre of the parish life allows those with faith to recognise that God is the one who does the conversion, we are simply

the vessels that bring others towards Him. 2. Parish life renewal involving faith formation for the laity on Jesus, Liturgy (why we celebrate Mass the way we do), apologetics (teaching the laity to defend the faith), Bible study (for young people and elderly). These are ways for people to grow deeper in their faith. 3. Emphasis on ways parishes can support the families going to Mass. Family groups to support families wanting to raise their children in the faith and having a support of other families wanting to do the same. This allows the families to feel encouraged in bringing up their children in the faith. To have a community of other families who are doing the same. If we don't hear crying babies or babies making noise, where are the future generations of the Catholic Church? Through parish playgroups, Parent groups, Mother groups, Father groups, Mother-daughter/Father-son events, etc. that meet their faith needs. E.g.: For parents: How to raise their children in the faith in a growing secular society? For children: How to speak to your parents about issues with the faith? Mother-daughter/Father-son groups are a great way to bond the parents with their children. Teaching their children to live out their femininity and masculinity and giving the parent a chance to bond with their child. Parishes encouraging their parishioners to support the families in their parish allow them to feel welcomed in the community and bring up the future generation of the Catholic Church. Focusing on parish renewal goes back to serving the person as an individual. It maintains a zeal in the parish priest and parishioners. When people are looking for answers and a means to encountering Christ, the first place they are going to look is a Catholic Church and the activities that happen in the Catholic Church that will meet their faith needs. 4. Recognise the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge the Father and the Son. However, I feel that the Holy Spirit is forgotten and He gives the power we need.

Transparency.

Place women in leadership including women priests. Train lay people for parish leadership and pastoral care. Allow married priests. Invitation for all to participate in liturgy, including youth. Less formal structure to Mass and more open inclusive structure. Encourage creative expression of faith through liturgical dance, art works, and drama. Changed attitude to divorce. Less money for Catholic schools and more for adult faith formation. More emphasis by the Church on environmental issues and social justice and less focus/preoccupation on sexual matters. Explore issue of Sunday school classes for children whilst Mass is on. More reaching out to other denominations—Ecumenism. Review the role of Catholic schools—less emphasis on status and rankings and more emphasis on young people being active participants in the broader Catholic community of faith. Expand the lay diaconate and make it easier for people to become lay deacons. Fund adult faith formation and spiritual development. More democratic decision making. Change Church teaching on divorce.

I think God is asking that a greater reverence been shown towards the Holy Eucharist in the manner of its reception. Presently, the common practice of receiving in the hand, I have prayed, actually impedes or damages one's belief in the real presence. If however holy communion is received on the tongue and especially kneeling, then it says to the communicant that there is something going on here that is different; I wouldn't kneel and receive regular bread on the tongue, but at Mass I am kneeling and receiving on the tongue... I have prayed and am certain that a practice and direction in the Church in Australia to receive holy communion on the tongue, kneeling would give great glory to God, help many come to terms with the real presence, and would do much to solidify Catholic culture in Australia.

Parish-based community development—the future for Catholic life in Australia. Seeking to draw on the knowledge and experience of the laity, listening to the laity, affirming people in their spiritual journeys, encouraging participation, encouraging decision-making by the whole faith community A structure: Level 1—parish Groups e.g. social justice, pastoral outreach and visitation, youth groups, SVDP, etc. Level 2—Parish Councils to report on their activities every 12 months and hold consultation forums every six months. Level 3—parish Clusters Pastoral Development Workers—foster skill development and collective action. Network parishes, identify common issues, organise skill development in pastoral care, link parishes with broader community agencies. Level 4—Deanery decision making—consistent with the idea of subsidiarity. The laity/ clergy partnership would make

decisions on what would enrich their faith lives e.g. role of women, the nature of the liturgy, married priests, etc. There are about 9 deaneries in the [-] Archdiocese. A rationale: Have a focus on adult education in relation to Spirituality of the Person. See Spirituality in term of people seeking meaning and purpose in their lives through the arts, creativity, creation (environment), relationships with each other. This is distinguished from Religion as defined as an organised system of practices, beliefs, rituals, etc. Parishes currently have a particular focus on this aspect, i.e. sacramental life. A budget: Let's say in the Archdiocese of [-] there are 130 parishes (rounded). If this were broken into 22 clusters, each with a community development worker (\$80,000 i.e. salary plus on-costs), the required annual budget would be approx. \$1.7million. In comparison, CatholicCare [-] has an annual expenditure of about \$50m. Shift some funding from elite Catholic high schools towards Adult Education of Catholic Laity.

I think God is asking us to rise up to the spiritual warfare facing the Church. I think it is important as Christians we band together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and stop the infighting between different denominations. I believe there is such quality in learning from other Churches and traditions. I believe to be a true Christian is not to judge but to welcome fellowship.

To seek His will in genuine prayer and discernment for the direction of the Church in Australia, while remaining faithful to the Pope and the teachings of the Church. To be faithful, and trust the leaders that God has ordained to lead us through His providence. To ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all things.

To love Him—to grow in relationship with Him. How? To live the message of Matthew 25:40 and following. In a time of struggle and persecution, I believe we are being asked to go back to basics—to be faithful to Christ, His Church and its teachings. We need to encourage heroism in the Church, promote further devotion to Eucharistic adoration, the Blessed Virgin and encourage the faithful to seek God's mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation. There also seems to be a movement of youth and young adults genuinely seeking orthodoxy in the Mass, including preaching, music and the liturgy itself. Added to this is the thirst for solid, heroic preaching from their priests. It is no longer necessary to try and bring young people back with new ideas and incentives—they are seeking the truth in its fullness and some of the most dynamic, fast growing youth groups are those that have been exposed to this way of preaching and worship. As a result, our priests do not need to be reluctant in their approach to this change in the climate as it is encouraging to know that young people will support and affirm their priests in their preaching of the gospel and their fatherly example—we need not be concerned about this new wave of orthodox youth as it seems that they all seem to be thirsting for the same thing, wanting the same thing. Parish councils and more importantly, the clergy need to get behind this movement rather than try to repress them as they are the great hope of the failing Mass attendance and future of the Church in Australia. The view that this is pre-Vatican II and "medieval" is one that does not help young people, it discourages them. Those who get in the way of what the Spirit is doing amongst the youth should consider the gravity of what they are doing and think more about the future of the Church, rather than what they think the Church needs to be (ultimately what they want). Young people are living in a culture saturated in relativity and are finally starting to see the evil of not having truth in their lives. If it is now that they are searching and yearning for the truth we need to give it to them without reservation. Failing Mass attendance is proof that what is currently happening is not working. Some of the most populated Churches in [-] are the ones that preach orthodoxy, have large youth gatherings, are heavily involved in fundraising and mission, support their priests and know that their priests support them. Looking to the Maronite Church in [-] as a case study shows this. Furthermore, we should not be concerned with the views of what some may be using this platform for, that is, an attempt to change Church teaching and belittle the role of the priest in the Church.

He's asking us to wake-up, to climb out of the self-imposed coma. He is the only God in recorded history who became human, then died and rose to life again. Just to show us it could be done. A complicated process but a simple concept. The reason He did so is even simpler: He did it for love.

An emotion even a child understands. So, wake-up, climb out of the coma, and resurrect ourselves. Love. Be In It. Sure beats hating.

To re-build a Church that is more INCLUSIVE and to shed the man-made rules/boundaries that so limit our ability to credibly preach Christ's message of LOVE God is asking for renewal, to find Him in others, to be a people-centred Church. To completely re-think the way we organise ourselves and the roles we've put in place and get back to Jesus's radical message of love. How do we engage our youth? Make it simple. Be compassionate. Be hospitable. I presume God is asking us to revitalize the Church so it is relevant to all of us in the future. To reclaim to heart of the Gospel "Love one another as I have loved you"—that each community of faith become a school of love with Jesus as Teacher. Priority to get more young people to Mass with their families. To fashion a just and principled Church that can provide inspiration and leadership in Australian society. God is asking us to unite together—we need to get the young people involved. God is asking us to go back to basics—remove all manmade rituals—keep it simple. To heal and grow. To be an authentic voice and an active force for justice. To understand the call and what it means to be Catholic Families spending meaningful time together. To quote Pope Francis in a current book *The Path to Change*: "Jesus is the Lord of risk, and comfort, security and ease. Jesus commands courage ... and to blaze trails to open up new horizons capable of spreading joy born of God's love with every act of mercy. God teaches us to encounter Him ... in our neighbours who feel abandoned." Inclusive Church. To hold up Christ first. Reverence. To restore sound Catholic doctrine back into education in the schools, pulpit. There's good existing structures to rebuild on. Be optimistic. A sense of Historic moment like Vatican II. To be strong and united as we face criticism from outside—criticism we deserve. Church needs to be relevant in 2018 and beyond—requires some change. Church's attitude to divorcees, gay/lesbian, contraception. Church's role in actively progressing social issues—be brave, not stand on the sidelines. To re-ignite a hope-filled Church for all—youth, aged, disadvantaged. To be ready to live and speak our truth as followers of Jesus, especially in issues which our society is speaking for non-Gospel values. God is asking us to be tolerant and open-minded. To tackle contemporary issues that affect people's day-to-day lives. To make the Church relevant to living and not just ritual God would like us to be more involved in the spiritual especially the youth to be involved. To come into the 21st century and look at the Church with the eyes of Jesus. I think God is asking us to be faithful to the Church and evangelise more. God wants us to believe in him and follow the 10 commandments. God wants us to participate fully in the sacraments How to make the Catholic Church relevant to today's Catholics. To demonstrate that the Catholic faith is a reflection of God's care for each of us rather than rules and rituals to be followed.

To be a witness of His love, compassion and forgiveness.

A summary is listed here—for details please see attached document. a. To guide, educate and encourage our Youth (11 responses) b. To proclaim, educate on and evangelise the Catholic faith—Personal and Laity (11 responses)—Clergy priests/bishops (6 responses) c. To promote and increase prayer and praying the Rosary (7 responses) d. To promote the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation (5 responses) e. To be more like Christ (4 responses) f. To encourage worship within and of the Liturgy (4 responses) g. To foster greater community within the parishes (2 responses) h. For Christian Unity (2 responses) i. To share our resources (1 response).

I believe God is asking us to return to the fundamentals of the faith. That is, for the laity to be enabled to grow closer to God and in holiness via the sacramental life. As a bare minimum, parishes should enable the laity to undertake (i) Daily prayer, (ii) Weekly Mass, (iii) Monthly confession, (iv) An annual retreat. At present, it is very difficult to attend Mass during the week, as many parishes have Mass after 9am when people are at work. There should be some consensus among nearby parishes so that at least some Masses are offered before or after work. This would assist the laity immensely in growing in holiness. Further to this point, the sacrament of confession should be encouraged and up-scaled to more than just 15mins on a Saturday. If people are to confess at least once a month, there needs to be greater availability of the sacrament. No amount of Catholic events will convert the hearts of people more than the giving the laity greater accessibility to the sacrament

<p>of confession. Likewise, greater availability of Adoration so that the laity can spend time with Jesus, is by far one of the most efficacious methods of converting hearts. I believe the Church has tried to appeal to youth in a watered down (protestant-ish) way that the youth simply find cringe-worthy and uninspiring. The youth want to grow in holiness, they want to be challenged to die-to-self, to take the narrow road. The youth want to see authentic Catholicism, beautiful music and experience Mass as the transcendent reality it is. Praise-and-worship has its place, but not in Mass. We should not be embarrassed by our faith, and nor should we be embarrassed to invite people to it because of the shallow 1970s ditties. As the Second Vatican Council stated, "Gregorian chant should have pride of place".</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to show humility. The Church is currently undergoing some challenging times with the recent conviction of Cardinal Pell, the Royal Commission and the decrease in active participation of Catholics in the Church. As God asks all of us, the Church needs to show repentance and ask for forgiveness on behalf of the priests who ruined the lives of children and their families because of sexual abuse. In order to regain the trust of those within and outside our Church, we need to acknowledge the wrongs that took place and develop and implement measures, with the help of those affected by child sexual abuse, to prevent such horrible crimes and abuse of power from occurring again. We need to follow Jesus' example and openly accept all people into the Church and stand up for those who are most vulnerable in the community. The Church might also attract more followers by reaching out to people and groups that we haven't always accepted in the past i.e. LGBTIQ people.</p>
<p>- Deeper and consistent formation of priests. More exposure to community life. —Allowing diocesan priests to live in community —More effective use of property owned by the Archdiocese near parishes; e.g. create young adult formation houses, hubs for evangelisation of families —More accessibility to Adoration in local deaneries —priests/ bishops stepping aside from management roles to focus on pastoral roles and investing in well- formed lay people to be in positions of management in parishes and diocese to work with priests and bishops—More funding towards youth ministry at LOCAL levels and not always distributed to large scale events —Not to spend ample time discerning how to be more "relevant" to the world, but to discern how to be more radical in our faith and practice and invite others in love (this is how the Apostles converted the world in the Early Church) —Learning to PRAY</p>
<p>To give faithful witness to our Catholic faith in our daily lives.</p>
<p>To be open to the Holy Spirit guiding us to open our doors to people without judgement or prejudice and to encourage young people to feel they have a purpose within the community. We need to adapt to the times while not letting go of the message of the Gospel which is to love unconditionally. We need to let go of unhelpful rules and regulations and just focus on the word of Christ to do everything in love. We also need to spread the news that there are good people in our Church, both laity and clergy, that are doing wonderful work to help the marginalised and alleviate suffering. And above all, we need to stand up against the evil that is the abuse of children and young people by clergy and the systemic cover-up that has happened over the history of the Church. We need more decision-making power given to women, we actually need ordination of women to stop the continuation of these abuses and to show that the Church is not stuck in the Middle Ages. We also should consider the end of celibacy for priests so that they can lead more normal lives and to do away with the culture of putting priests on a pedestal. None of these traditions are scriptural anyway and were not part of the early Church.</p>
<p>1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? I think God is asking us in Australia to show examples for the Catholic faithful by acting with justice and compassion. We should be seen to be empathetic to all people. Clergy have an obligation to God to care for their parishioners and gain their loyalty so that parishioners can care for the clergy as well. To this end, the inclusion of lay people in decision-making by the Church is essential. We must find a way to harness the passion of the young people who are growing up in Australia with poor leadership and divisive and lacklustre examples.</p>

The following is a consolidation of an anonymous survey in which 15 people responded: a. To be more loving, accepting and generous in spirit and more like Christ (12 responses) b. To guide, educate and encourage our Youth (9 responses) c. To proclaim, educate on and evangelise the Catholic faith (7 responses) d. To trust, hope and return to Him and serve Him (5 responses) e. To foster greater community within the parishes (4 responses) f. To promote and increase prayer and praying the Rosary (2 responses). Further details are contained in the attached file.

I think God may be calling us to return again to the basic message of the Gospel which is to follow Jesus. We are genuinely Catholic only when we are Christians first. I travel a lot for my work so I attend Mass across the country (and in my own parish too) and I have observed that parishes are more vibrant where the message of Jesus is preached in both word and deed. When I see both the clergy and the laity genuinely open to the word of God, the parish seems more dynamic and alive than other parishes. Right throughout the Bible, the people of God lost their way and had to be called back. Perhaps God is calling all of us to genuine conversion, again. In the Church, I often hear people complain that there are not enough young people or vocations. But I often think that there are not enough old people or middle-aged people either. I want to be in a Church where all age groups and states of life are valued. I don't think that the low number of vocations and young people in the Church are the issue, they are just a symptom. I believe that when we genuinely foster Christian prayer and conversion of heart in all people that we will see the benefit in our parishes. I grew up in the 80's and 90's and the message at the time seemed to lack substance. At that time, there seemed to be a lack of genuine Christian formation and I can see this poor formation has led to poorly formed adults both in and outside the Church. I think it's time to do something about that. Formation in the area of prayer, the scriptures, the early Church fathers and other Church writers would be of enormous benefit to us all individually and as a Church. Many people, myself included, are longing for something to sink our teeth into. There also needs to be more formation in the area of interpersonal relationships. I notice that this is an issue not just in the laity but also in the clergy as well. If we are genuine about building community, then we need to be talking about how to do that appropriately so we can rebuild the trust that we have lost with many people.

PRAY! Ask God to bless our Prime Minister, the Congress, the courts and all public officials to govern wisely, to protect the interest of all Australian citizens with justice and true charity, and to respect and love our laws. Ask God to also encourage more young men to be in His service at the Catholic Church because we are losing many of our priests now.

THE MASS: THE PRINCIPAL LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY Because the Mass, or Eucharistic celebration, is central to the life of the parish, it is important that the celebration is meaningful and prayerful. As one who has attended Mass daily for over 70 years, I am concerned that the Mass has lost its appeal especially to the young. Our parish Churches still have large congregations but the people attending are mainly those of mature age and there is a dearth of the youthful presence. This is a serious situation that must be addressed. From my observations in three parishes, there are several matters that need urgent attention. 1. In too many cases, the celebrant cannot be understood because he has not been taught to speak English. As celebrant, the priest gives a homily and after the consecration, he alone recites the prayers but the congregation does not participate and often cannot understand what is going on. This is made worse if such a priest gives a long homily that lacks clarity of content. 2. In too many cases, the readers, while willing and generous, again do not speak English clearly or they speak too softly. 3. The Mass attended by several classes of Primary Children needs attention. The children under the care of teachers are quiet but do not meaningfully participate. Again, this is partly due to the matters raised above but also because the readings can be incomprehensible and the priest does not know how to speak to young children. It is good for these young ones to attend Mass with parents but to be present as a large group is counter-productive. It would be far better if the priest could celebrate Mass with small groups, can talk to the children and explain in simple language the parts of the Mass and the readings. 4. The new translations have not been helpful. With Congregations mainly of older people it is apparent that the response in the Gloria and Creed has been partly muted as they get confused

with what they have recited for years and what is new. 5. Confirmation. The young are well prepared but it is doubtful if they are making a personal commitment. Perhaps confirmation should be held when they are 15 or 16 and have been accepted by the parish community. The above is not intended as a criticism of priests or readers but is rather to indicate that young people today will not be responsive if they cannot participate and cannot understand what is going on. When young people go on school retreats, they can participate very well in Eucharist that engages them and are prepared to spend a long time in meaningful ceremonies involving Reconciliation.

I believe our dear Lord Jesus is asking us many things—but without doubt, He is asking us his Church to create a more representative Church that gives women, youth and lay people more say. We unfortunately have created an institution that is managed predominantly by older men—our parish management model was developed in the Middle Ages and is not relevant or sustainable today. We have such huge people resources available to us, yet our current system allows little opportunity of genuine influence. We as a Church have so many blocks to genuine engagement with women, youth and lay people that do many people have left dissatisfied and disillusioned. I believe that our Churches' position on contraception is a major reason why so many women and lay people have become disengaged—it is a rule/law that was created in the 1960's and is one of the great "Social Injustices" of our times. I have uploaded a more detailed submission to support this statement. Thank you for listening- the real test: will we actually do something about it?

God is calling us to critique the role of the laity and the hierarchy in the Church. Following the Royal Commission into sexual abuse by those in the Catholic Church, we must eradicate the underlying causes that enabled such abuse to happen. Power in the Church has been abused for centuries and clericalism is a result. It is up to all to challenge a lack of real change and a renewal of Theology and Spirituality. Theological renewal, (bringing the Church into the 21st Century) is essential and basic to all renewal of spirituality, structures, training and seminarians and the laity. Vatican II teaching/theology must be the basis of this renewal and must include developments in theological understanding incorporating environmental and cosmological theology. We as laity today do not accept a spirituality based on pious practices and devotions of a past age. The laity are better educated than ever before and seek a deep spirituality and contemplative prayer life. Evangelisation should be halted in the Church until this renewal takes place. At the moment, the horse is before the cart! Clericalism is the basis for driving people away from the Church. All forms of outdated medieval attitudes of members of the hierarchy being "Princes of the Church" are rejected and need to be eliminated. Our Church Leaders need to follow the lead of Pope Francis and be true Shepherds of the Flock. There needs to be closer scrutiny on those applying to the priesthood and then ordained. We need mature, professional, socially and culturally appropriate clergy. We call for a return of married priests to be given the opportunity to exercise their priestly ministry. We want a more decisive role for women in the Church.

This is to upload a document to my previous submission which I submitted to the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse. After examining the Case study 44 into John Farrel, there is little doubt that the conduct of senior staff at [—] [—] was an over-reaction to attempt to suppress the connection between the school and Carlingford priest Finian Egan (later convicted of child sex offences). Stories about Finian Egan were beginning to circulate in 2010 when these events took place. Egan was connected to the school when Marist brother Peter Pemble was principal. Pemble was convicted of child sex offences in 2015. It highlights that protecting reputation was more important to the Executive Director of Education and the Bishop of [-] than treating children with justice and respect. The second example from the Diocese of [-] highlights that securing money from the government is more important listening to parents, integrity or truth.

As a sign of atonement for the horrific scandal of child sexual abuse by clergy, I ask everybody not to address priests as "Father" and for priests to relinquish the "Father" title. "Reverend" is the correct title for a priest and shows respect to clergy both for the office they hold and as people who have dedicated their lives to the service of others. The title "Father" is a familial term which is supposed

to reflect spiritual fatherhood but usurps natural fatherhood and the authority of parents. Child sexual abuse has occurred when parents unwisely allow their child into the control of the perpetrator, who appears as a trusted family member, above suspicion. Every person can take part in this change by addressing priests as “Reverend” and not “Father”. Priests can refer to themselves as Reverend in all documentation, and ask people to address them as Reverend. In Matthew's Gospel (23:9), Jesus said “Call no man your father”. The best explanation I've seen acknowledges that the parent-child relationship is temporary; a dependent relationship to allow the development of the child which ends or transforms when the child becomes an adult. At that point, the relationship may become an adult to adult relationship, or end. It is destructive for adults to continue in a parent-child relationship which is dependent or co-dependent. Many family problems result when adults continue to be a child in the relationship with their parents or siblings or spouse. Jesus' words can be seen as a call to engage in a spiritual relationship with the God as the ultimate Heavenly Father. Priests and religious can help with this relationship, but would be the first to say that they are not God, and should not be mistaken for Him. Matthew 19:12 is often used as a biblical explanation of celibate clergy. The Jerusalem Bible says “There are eunuchs who have made themselves that way for the kingdom of heaven”. The eunuchs are the servants of the Church, the celibate clergy, but a eunuch cannot be a Father. I became uncomfortable calling somebody “Father” who was a contemporary or younger and less experienced. They too found it uncomfortable and said they didn't like being called “father”. It seems it is a tradition which the laity impose upon priests, but perhaps is one way which we “put priests on a pedestal”. In the children's liturgy, a common question from the youngest children is “why do we call him Father if he doesn't have children?” It is folly to try to separate spiritual fatherhood from natural fatherhood.

God never asks. He expects and guides us towards the correct pathway from which we have deviated. We have lost the meaning of Christmas—all we think about are presents and food. We have also lost the meaning of Easter—we concentrate instead on chocolate eggs.

When I was in Europe a few years back, I noticed that some Catholic churches had signs at the inside back of the church requesting, besides phones being on silent, and reminding visitors that this was a place of prayer, that appropriate dress be worn in the church. Probably we are familiar with the demands lived in the Vatican when people enter the Blessed sacrament chapel too. It would be so good that we would raise the bar in our churches here too, in regards to appropriate dress.

To treat others the way you want to be treated.

I think God is asking us to prune some branches and fertilize the soil to increase the fruit. In saying this, I am referring mainly to better evangelizing of 'families' and 'schools'. I have taught RE, Catholic Studies and Studies of Religion for over 12 years in a Catholic High School in Sydney and would like to pass on my observations. 1. Teaching staff need to be authentically Catholic, not just qualified to teach RE. Students recognize fake, Catholic 'lites' and respond accordingly. You can't pass on what you don't have! 2. Survey all students and discover what they want to know about God and the teachings of the Church relative to their lives today. I offer my MATS PowerPoint Assessment on RE in Schools including a mini survey that reveals where student's interests lie. I note the lack of sacraments i.e. Reconciliation opportunities (3rd Rite might be needed on occasions). I believe the Church needs to set up a Central Resource Online for RE Teachers (Similar to TES BlendSpace) where lesson plans, Lectio, Christian Meditation, Music, Videos, etc... can be posted by staff and accessed freely and easily. Staff could be rewarded for their contributions. I also believe the delivery of lessons is very important for different ages. Modern day parables often get a Catholic message across well disguised and in video form e.g. modern-day Samaritan video. Lessons/videos on Catholic Social Teaching need to be based on real life situations and shown across all 7-12 years. We need to deliver lessons the way students want (not 'bean bag') but with modern technology. Apps for all forms of RE would be well received. Central Website with numerous up-to-date links. Put some money and expertise into technology and you will gain their interest. Parents often undo what is taught at school and are a greater force than school itself in evangelizing or not evangelizing. They need to be engaged at many levels during their child's school life.

Equal representation of women and lay people in decision-making and leadership. Ordination of women is necessary NOW! Where are the women bishops? Lay people such as Francis Sullivan and Kristina Keneally should have the opportunity to lead the Catholic Church in Australia on a level footing with the bishops. I believe the Holy Spirit to be speaking through these two individuals prophetically at this present time. Celibacy needs to be OPTIONAL!! Married clergy should have the opportunity to be pastors of parishes; this includes gay married clergy. Celebration of the Eucharist should be encouraged amongst families and small community groups as breaking of bread within a solemn meal with participants administering the Host to each other ... Scripture tells us that Christ is present when two or more gather in His name...a priest is not required! The Vatican is not the home of Christ. The Vatican should be home to administrators of the Universal Church and should be seen as such; administrators are not pastors to their flocks. Administrators should be a distinct separate entity. In short, the Catholic Church requires a Vatican III.

To be an independent Church, like the early Churches; to be who we are, not a pale reflection of what Rome considers we must be. To be able to say to Rome: This is what we in Australia need. This is who we are. This is how we run our Church. Not having our reflection of who we are canned by some cardinal, and then having HIM write his own report, saying how sinful and secularised we are. Secularity is the way of the third millennium, like it or lump it. If you don't like it, try Iran or Pakistan. We don't kick goals these days; we have to get along with the world, if we want to change the world. This is something Pell could not learn. Too many like him. Each country needs its own way of worship; not to have it dictated and then re-dictated to make it more stilted, less artistic, and deliberately pushing it in the face of people who want to live, and their Church to live, in the 21st century. God wants us to be real, the best me I can be, the best Church we can be—reaching out, not just protecting our wicket. We need more clergy to do that—people of all kinds, people who can offer services of all kinds, whether permanent or temporary. We need equality of all the sexes in our clergy. The so-called Catholic Church has set up so many barriers, how can we call ourselves "Catholic"? God doesn't recognise any of these barriers.

1. I think that God is asking us in Australia to make a new start. To be a relevant voice of compassion and holiness and to make our voice heard. 2. I think that God would also ask that more lay people be included in the council, so that it is not so loaded towards the clergy. The clergy live in a different way to the ordinary people and cannot be expected to represent them authentically. 3. I think that God is asking us to be accepting of each other and to be aware that differences between people and opinions can lead to change for the better. I also think that radical change should be on the table for consideration, not just clinging to old ways.

A focus on prayer; faith formation (seek other opportunities to deepen spirituality other than through Mass); to speak the truth; to evangelize and reach out to others; live the Gospel; equality of the genders in ministry; our parishes to be places of welcome and belonging; an increased role for women to make a contribution to the Church; be the face of Christ; inclusion of LGBTQIA divorced and people who suffer with mental health issues; show more compassion to those who are marginalized in any way; to pray and consider the option of married priests; to provide opportunities for people, especially young adults and parents to reconnect with their faith; improve homilies so that they are a means of connection to the community; improve transparency and governance in the way the Church is run; to read the 'signs of the times' in a post Royal Commission era with clergy being able to marry; a Catholic public voice and advocacy—doing more for refugees and asylum seekers- a Catholic voice in national conversation-respond to social justice issues (homelessness, refugees and asylum seekers); to be His disciples and spread the Word; married women priests; that we engage as parishes in a welcoming way; to change the way we pray together as a community in a 21st century context; we are been asked by God to preserve our environment for future generations; to involve families with young children in all aspects of parish community life; to build communities that strengthen our nation- the Church is part of the broader community.

A return to the heart of Jesus Christ in Eucharistic Adoration.

<p>As a young person who has gone to many of the youth events in the [-] archdiocese as well as 2016 WYD, I believe God is telling us to come back to our roots. I believe that we have moved towards a Pentecostal and Protestant Tradition. I believe God is calling Australia back to its authentic Catholic faith. Our Catholic faith is rich and it the only Religion that has the Truth. Therefore, I feel compelled to the belief that God wants us to come back to our Catholic Tradition. This does not mean that we ought to go back how things were 2000 years ago but rather we teach fundamental truths. A lot of parishes are hearing homilies that are not founded on Truth and have no or limited theological background. Again, this does not mean to have a theology lecture as a homily but at least have a homily that encompasses teaching from the Church Fathers. The main thing I have struggled and I am sure it is not just an [-] suburbs issue, but it's the fact that Mass has lost a lot of its meaning. That people have twisted and distorted what Mass really means. Therefore, I believe that God is calling us to put away the feel-good songs and the need to be politically correct and sugar coat moral issues. God who is all Truth and Wisdom would want Australian clergy to teach His Truth. This Truth needs to reach the lay people because there are a lot of people in the pew and outside the Church who are thirsting for something greater. They want to know what the Church believes and its moral stance on particular issues.</p>
<p>God is asking us to stay strong, remain faithful to the gospel and to reach out to others—people in our community and to the marginalised. God is asking us to be more inclusive and open to the presence and voices of women in Church leadership and decision making.</p>
<p>Uncertain</p>
<p>I am a catechist in the RCIA programme in [-] [church]. I enjoy what I am doing and the candidates appreciate our help in their new-found faith. Our coordinator has developed a thorough programme and makes sure that the candidates understand their commitments before being received into the Church I have spoken to a few friends who have participated in similar parish programmes and they have found either that they don't know where to start or the programme isn't holistic enough (i.e. they gloss over the sacraments ...). The candidates don't feel prepared. One catechist friend had to create her own programme. It makes me feel we need a standardised programme which would make clear the importance of the sacraments especially (as I have noticed that Confession can be glossed over or overlooked).</p>
<p>After listening to discussions and reading material, I really believe that the "Church", mostly understood as the clergy and hierarchy, need to truly embrace the contribution, role, position of women in the Church. There is much rhetoric around re: this. I have just read about the anniversary of "Woman and Man in Christ." This was supposed to be a way of looking at, understanding and embracing the role/position of women in the Church. I was involved and know many women who contributed. The hierarchy could not even give title to final product that recognised women alone, given our male dominated history. I am no way exclusionary, but there are times when ... I also think we are being asked to explore at great depth our understanding of "clericalism". It is alive and well, and not just within clergy. However, I am in a position to experience clericalism as expressed at the highest levels though they would not see themselves as entertaining clericalism. It is prevalent in young men and bishops.</p>
<p>To put our hands up and volunteer in our parish. To look after the poor and those poor in Spirit. To look after and support our clergy. To give those educated in the faith a greater role in our parishes.</p>
<p>To build a personal relationship with Jesus, for its own sake, and also so we can share the faith as 'good news' that responds to the needs of our hearts. This includes learning how to pray, how to really believe in God's love for us, and how to rely on the help of grace. I love it when a homily brings Jesus to life for me as true God and true Man and shows me ways of talking to Him and taking Him with me after Mass, in daily life. I want to have Jesus as a model to help me live with integrity and to show me how to treat others. I want to talk things over with Him and see things from his perspective to help me make decisions instead of worrying or procrastinating on my own. How can I find Jesus in my work, responsibilities, social life, difficulties, how can I remember to trust Him and his mercy? I am thinking about a combination of what Pope Francis says in the first pages of the Joy of the Gospel</p>

about God's words and deeds as the Good News, and also about what Pope Benedict said about the faith being not just a collection of beliefs or practices but about someone, Jesus. The rest needs to build on that, because that is where our hope is, and it gives meaning to all the rest.

As I listen to various people talking about what they'd like to change, I want to cry out "we are the body of Christ!" In order to be a body that is in complete union and harmony with our head, we need to know how to listen to Christ, how to discern His voice in the noise and distraction of our lives and how to live out our "ordinary" lives in union with Him. I feel we need to discover/rediscover the richness of our faith, our liturgy, the transformative nature of authentic relationship with God; a sense of the sacredness of being in His presence...how to pray, contemplate and be guided into action by Him. I really feel we need encouragement...to become continually more aware of what God is giving us and to embrace it. Daily Mass, Confession readily available, etc. is really important. Please help us to embrace a solid, prayerful, mindful, sacramental "God and others" centred life and vocations will follow as will the desire to serve in the wider community in various ways. I have witnessed young children involved with "The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd" respond in this way. It would be a gift to the Church in Australia to support the growth of this work. For 23 years I have cared for frail elderly people in their homes. It is a great sadness for them that have great difficulty accessing the sacraments they need. Some examples in the parishes near us: Mass for the anointing of the sick at 7:00am on a weekday, no afternoon Mass on a Sunday (It took 5 hours for one beautiful lady I helped to be ready so the only Mass she could be taken to was mid-week in the city. Some families have been unable to find a priest to come to the house to anoint the dying. I understand there are a lot of calls on the time of our priests but please can administering the sacraments be prioritised.

I believe that at this time more than ever, God is calling us to inclusion. The Catholic Church has many wonderful organisations and individuals who contribute through parish and diocesan ministries. However, many in the Church feel alienated and marginalised due to a range of life circumstances and lifestyle choices. They feel unwelcome and unsupported. We have moved too far from the Gospel message and the example of Jesus. The hierarchy and clericalism of the Church has been the source of great division and hurt. The voice of the laity and in particular, the contribution of women needs to be recognised, promoted and valued. I would like to feel as though I am an equal, contributing and valued member of the Church. I have been actively involved in all my life. The recent revelations of abuse have been devastating for all concerned. Recognition of the sadness and sense of loss experienced by the wider Catholic community due to these revelations is yet to be responded to. I believe God is calling us to a proactive path to understanding, reconciliation and healing.

God is asking us firstly to honestly identify and quantify the problems and shortcomings the Church has in Australia (similar to the rest of the Western World) and then secondly, identify the causes and failures of Church leadership that has led to those problems which are of such large magnitude. I am not specifically referring to the abuse scandals that have recently hit the Church. Only after the first two steps have been undertaken are we in a position to start identifying the huge changes and solutions that need to be put in place.

I think God is asking us to become more resilient in our faith to him, to become stronger in our practices and not water down his teachings just so the Church can become more popular. Our calling, as Catholics, is to draw others toward God through living the truth he has taught us and help others to understand what truth is. We cannot change truth to suit others but rather change others to understand and live truth. We must be patient as Catholics, first we must start within our schools and parishes to ensure what is being taught is aligned with truth and God's own teachings. Then we must appeal to others by having strength in our faith and also the knowledge about our faith and why it is the truth. God calls everyone to himself and in order to achieve this, we must live holiness and we must know and love our faith.

Improving the support to young families, as the future of the Church is in their hands. See submission attached at the end.

God is asking us to review the basis of authority within the Church. We believe that the Church focuses too much on rules and the existing structure of authority. This has led our Church in some ways to resemble the Jewish hierarchy of Jesus' day which He frequently spoke out against. We believe God is asking us to review whether Church teachings which have developed over time remain consistent with the teachings and actions of Jesus as reported in scripture and to have the courage to change them if they do not (for example, the reasons for not allowing women to join the clergy seem weak, but the curia seem to look for reasons to stick to and defend the past position on this issue rather than genuinely question whether it is consistent with Jesus teachings).

God is asking of us today in Australia what he has always asked of His children everywhere. God's Will for us does not change. "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail." Hebrews 1:10-12. The journey of faith requires one to face hard truths. It requires Catholics to confront teachings and doctrine of the Church that they may not like. God is asking us to live the Commandments. He continues to ask us not to kill (especially unborn children and the elderly). He continues to ask us not to commit adultery or engage in extramarital relations (despite the painful challenges that our homosexual and divorced brothers and sisters face). He asks us to be brutally honest with others and ourselves. Importantly, He also asks us for our love and companionship. This is best manifested in prayer and regular sacraments. The challenges for young Catholics can barely be comprehended by Catholics of earlier generations. The ubiquity of the internet has allowed the lies of the sexual revolution and its accompanying moral decrepitude to pervade every aspect of our lives. The public square is filled with demagogues who preach that the Catholic Church must 'move with the times'. The times are not good. The Catholic Church has made horrible mistakes, but it must be remembered that these mistakes have been made in spite of its teachings not in accordance with them. The Church must not soften its tough moral stances to appeal to broader society. Young Catholics need a pillar of strength in the Catholic Church. They need a strong, unmoving anchor in an ocean of chaos. I am saddened by the failure of the Church leadership to call out those demagogues in the public square that profess to be Catholic but who advocate social policies that are entirely at odds with God's Will. Those political leaders need to be called out by the leadership of the Church when they lie to Catholics about what we believe. I continue to be let down by the failure of a Church leader to condemn Kristina Keneally's public support for abortion. This is not an isolated example. We must be vigilant against those that intend to muddy the waters for the faithful. The secular world talks about the 'meaning of life' as if it is some complex puzzle that requires a complex answer. This is misplaced. Life is simple and beautiful in its simplicity. It becomes complicated when we put our temporal desires before God's unchanging Will for us.

I believe He is asking us to take up the arms of the Holy Eucharist and prayer, both personal and as a community. St John Bosco had a vision of the barque of Peter in stormy seas and the two columns the pontiff was able to anchor between held the Holy Eucharist and Our Lady. This I believe was a prophetic vision for our troubled times. There is very little Eucharistic adoration in our Churches and I believe that the power this beautiful practice wields is second to none. I am lucky to attend a Church which prays the rosary daily after at least one of the Masses through the week. This beautiful devotion to Our Lady should be promoted much more than it is and attended where possible, by the priests and religious. What better example than this for the lay faithful. Remember what Our Lady said at Fatima, "In the end my Immaculate heart will Triumph". And I bring to your attention the recent vision Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Nigeria had while praying before the blessed sacrament for the ridding of the Islamic terrorist group Boko Harem. Our Lord appeared to him and extended a sword towards him and the bishop in turn reached for it. As soon as he received the sword, it turned into a rosary. Jesus then said to him three times "Boko Harem is gone". There was an open letter addressed to the youth synod from a group of Australian students. It opens "The young do not want to shape the Church before the Church can form us. The world is confused. And in this confusion, the

young have nothing to grasp." The Catholic faith needs to be taught in all its beauty and fullness from as early as possible, sin needs to be called out for what it is. We need to be encouraged to frequent the sacrament of confession. We need to have our consciences well formed. There is a quote from GK Chesterton that goes something like this "Challenge the young to live a holy life and not just to be a good person but focused on God and His truth". Please teach from the pulpit and the classrooms the destructive sinfulness of abortion, homosexuality, sexual impurity, dabbling in the occult, just to name a few. I say destructive because these sins can ruin whole lives, I've seen it happen with women who have had abortions. Our Church is built on a rock and weak teaching, watering down of the fullness of our faith, of the laws of the Church, the loss of the supernatural, especially regarding the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist are slowly chipping away at the rocks of our personal faith experience. When we stand firm, we stand strong because God is with us. "I am with you always to the end of time". Good morals need to be taught with love and without ambiguity. The lay faithful of all ages need to hear the truth that Christ gave to His Church without one dot or one iota changed.

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time? God is asking that Australia, as a prosperous, safe society opens its heart to the many who are marginalised both within and outside our country. God is asking that Australians be people of compassion and of welcoming hearts, courageous enough to speak truth and to acknowledge the suffering of others—to give life to the principle of 'love thy neighbour'. In particular, this requires attention to inclusion and equity within our own society and the structures and forces that make some poor and some very rich; to the challenges of reconciliation and recognition of Australia's first peoples; to the systems and actions which damage the environment—hurting the planet and its ecosystems and damaging the lives of many who are exposed to pollution, land degradation and the impacts of climate change. The Church has the opportunity to be the voice of humanity through the example of Jesus Christ. Over more than 200 years, the Church, its personnel and structures, have proved effective and powerful lobbyists on key issues which affect it directly—social, political, financial, moral. If the Church was able to marshal the same resources and political acumen to tackle, for example, social inequity, the treatment of refugees and detainees and the state of the environment, it could be an inspiration and a guiding light in a world where many are looking for leadership and hope. The Church can embrace and reflect what is good in the world—fairness, democratic processes, goodness, beauty, reason. Through the continuing strength of lay leadership in the Church, a new model of ministry can emerge, of lay-led communities with re-imagined ideas of authority and power. In this post-Royal Commission time, the people of God, in accepting their own 'crucifixion' with humility of heart and with a commitment to conversion and hope can move forward and lead the way to a different way of being. This will require a loving response as well as a doctrinal response.

Protect and grow good families, this starts with setting good groundwork for marriage preparation, then follow ups after marriage. Good families are the seedbed of vocations and do a lot of good to society.

We are being called to fix perceptions of the Church among people with little contact with it, and especially with left-wing people of all ages. There is a perception that the Church won't be accepting of them if they come back to the Church. The Church is expected to "just tell you off", and is perceived to be full of "crusty white men who look down on you". This perception must be changed by Catholics at all levels. Our bishops are being called to clearly state the Church's teachings when required. When questions relating to faith or morals receive significant media attention, the bishops should issue a statement of the Church's position. In particular, if Catholic politicians or public figures make claims that conflict with Catholic teachings, the bishops should proactively call them out. If the bishops disagree, they should take the opportunity to resolve a question that is likely troubling many of the faithful. The bishops should try their hardest to resolve the questions, and if they can't, they should at least issue a joint statement saying what they agree on and explaining where and why they disagree. It is confusing for the faithful when bishops issue conflicting statements, especially when they present a bishop's private opinions as Catholic doctrine. It becomes hard for anyone to say

"what Catholics believe in Australia". A single statement describing the Catholic position could be distributed effectively using targeted online advertising. Relatedly, we are being called to improve our communication with left-wing people about what the Church does and doesn't teach. Most Catholics appearing in the media as such are right-wing politicians. They present a relatively unified message, whereas the clergy often present contradictory opinions. Conservative politicians can become the "face" of Australian Catholics. Thus, other conservative positions not linked to the Church can be attributed to the Church. This presents lapsed Catholics with a distorted view of the Church, and implies a false choice between remaining outside the Church or surrendering their political opinions. Australia would benefit from more centre-aligned Catholics in politics. Social media and targeted online advertising present new opportunities to communicate with people who may otherwise have little contact with the Church. For non-Catholics, we must present Catholics as welcoming people who will accept them. We could also respond to media issues relevant to the Church, and communicate our response to a wide audience. These avenues also provide good opportunities to publicise the Catholic contribution to social justice and charitable works. This will acknowledge and show respect for the victims of disasters or hardship, and show that the Church is aware of the suffering of marginalised groups. It will act as an example of charity, and put an "everyday human face" onto it so that people think of charitable works as normal. Also, it will make it easier to participate.

God is asking us to give him his rightful place in our lives- our first and last thoughts should be about him. We can spend one hour in the day reflecting on scripture, reading something spiritual or just talking to him about our difficulties, sorrows and hopes. He is also asking us to care for other human beings and share our land and resources with the less fortunate.

The Importance of good formation in Catholic schools: Students enrolled in Catholic schools would often receive constant influence of the Church, by various means of formation given by the school including but not limited to compulsory morning prayers and religious classes. However, it is insufficient to merely provide doctrine classes and mandate certain Christian obligations to students. Teachers could serve (and often bear the greatest expectations from students) as role models who genuinely practice and live out their faith—and not just by words. Students often look up to those who preach the gospel, and observe how the teachers of the Bible act in life. Moreover, the way of religious education is delivered in Catholic schools is also vital in a sense that students must be feel COMPELLED or COERCED in fulfilling certain Christian practices. For instance, students are often told to give up something during the season of Lent. The doctrine being taught here is sound and in line with the Church's teaching. However, it is equally important to let the students know that God does not desire slave givers but children who freely offer up something to Him. Without putting emphasis on freedom, students may develop an inaccurate view of the Church as the institution that puts down rules for people to follow; as opposed to the real meaning of the Church's teaching that God desires our genuine love.

I believe God is asking the Church in Australia to be more cultural and more counter-cultural. "Cultural Catholicism" is often used to describe a society where people still participate in Catholic traditions but don't actively engage in their faith. And while "cultural Catholicism" alone is not sufficient, it isn't something to be mocked or rejected, because the existence of a Catholic culture is vitally important. Indeed, without creating a Catholic culture, we have no hope of maintaining Catholic communities. The corollary of "cultural Catholicism" not being enough in today's world is that "counter-cultural Catholicism" is equally insufficient. My generation of Catholics (millennials), and the generation after us, grew up in a world very different to that of our parents and grandparents. We have never really known anything except counter-cultural Catholicism; it has never been 'normal' to be a practising Catholic who loves the Church, believes her teachings, and tries to live them out. Given it's the only thing we have really known, we are more likely to engage with our faith as culture warriors than as culture-Catholics. That too is insufficient. The truth is that we need both. We need those who are 'cultural Catholics,' not in the dismissive sense, but in the sense that they do not always recognise the hostility of the world towards people of faith, to be a

little more counter-cultural and to raise their voices when parliaments or protestors try to silence the faithful in the public square. And we need those who are 'counter-cultural Catholics' to put down their clubs and batons from time to time and apply their energies to the building of solid, Catholic communities so that we can maintain a Catholic culture. Because if we lose the culture wars and our religious freedom is taken away, it is within these communities that the faith will remain alive.

Perseverance in Formation by external means. I think there is a Massive population of Australian Catholics that are so poorly educated in the Faith. 1. It's the responsibility of the diocese to ensure that every child in their parishes has ample opportunities to receive a proper and thorough education in their whole faith (doctrine, history, apologetics, the way it's run, the purpose of traditions, etc.). It is extremely unfair to these children who rely on their parish and parents for a proper education. I know so many young adults who are embarrassed by their lack of knowledge in their faith, who have fallen away from their faith simply because they realised they knew nothing about it, or who have become anxious and withdrawn whenever publicly discussing and defending their faith. 2. It is so important that the priests are properly educated, who in their homily can confidently and clearly, educate their parish on Church teachings and cultivate a vibrant community based on strong conviction in faith. 3. There must be more opportunities for parents, particularly young parents to be receiving more education in their faith besides the weekly homilies. Whether that be sending home information, offering free classes, daily retreats, etc.

God is asking us the same as He has always asked of us-to be better people, people of truth and light for others, to be instruments of love and peace and to always find the joy of the Holy Spirit in hope- especially when there seems to be none. To be the loving sister and brother to others as Jesus and His life's teaching example -for they are more relevant and imperative to our own lives today as they were when He first spoke. To find our way back to God, to be FREE from all the pains and sufferings and falsities that has corrupted our ideas and realities in what we truly long for-true Love and Happiness in enjoying the Glory of God so that it will reach every facet of our lives and being.

I think that God is asking us Catholics of Australia to rediscover the beauty of Our Mother, the Church in the person of the priest.

I think God is asking us to rediscover the beauty and richness of the Liturgy in Holy Mass.

De-clericalise the Church, update Church teachings to the people, some are stuck with the fire and brimstone, grumpy/bossy nuns/priests to end, LISTEN to the people, involve the laity, healthy conversation about intimacy and sexuality more along the lines of John XXIII. More glass half-full faith/religion, continually revisit music in the liturgy to address taste, background, language (international and linguistics) and culture. It is all very well for us to see forgiveness of our sins; however, the Church should seek forgiveness of its sins. Maintain a good place to raise and educate children. Listen to people where they are at.

For each of us who are Catholic to grow in our personal love for God, and to share our faith with others. To help people understand that faith is a gift that makes us happy, and feels free to respond to God's love for us, not just feeling like it is a set of rules to follow, or an obligation. The need for Formation: —Perhaps having a program for homilies to ensure that the essential aspects of our faith are covered, as often that is the only formation people get: e.g. the sacraments, devotion to the Eucharist, special feasts, the creed, the ten commandments etc. —To provide a solid foundation in the Catholic faith, in particular at Catholic schools—above all in teaching children how to pray, becoming familiar with the Bible, especially the gospels, regular opportunities to participate in the sacraments, including discovering God mercy in regular confession. Going back to the foundations of the catechism, in a way that is up-to-date and accessible. Religion teachers should be practising their faith, not just have the qualification, so that they can really transmit the faith through their example, not just teaching. The Eucharist as the Centre: I think that since WYD Adoration of the Blessed sacrament has been renewed in many parishes. However, many people still do not know for example to look for the Tabernacle in the Church, and that because Our Lord is truly present, that is

the heart of the Church, where we go to, and why we genuflect, and perhaps this is something that could be taught better, especially by ensuring the Tabernacle is always in a prominent place, not hidden in an obscure alcove that people may easily overlook. Also providing more opportunities for confession, and encouraging people to go regularly to confession. Many places only have 1 hr a week for the entire parish, or a few minutes before Mass. Focus on the Family: Family is the foundation where we learn our faith, and it has a far greater impact than schools. How can we provide more support to parents, who may never have been taught the faith themselves? Also helping people to ask Our Lady to look after their family, and discovering the richness and power of the family rosary.

- A greater emphasis on catechesis in order to equip ourselves for battle against the forces that wish to destroy the Church. This catechesis needs to be centred around the Holy Eucharist in order to combat the lack of reverence for, and sacrilege against, the Holy Eucharist. This catechesis must stem also from the homilies of the clergy which must take a more catechetical tone and from the Liturgy by longer Communion fasts, making Communion rails available for those who wish to receive Christ on the tongue, and having priests remind their flocks that only Catholics in a state of grace may receive the Eucharist. —A grander spectacle of the Mass to capture the magnitude of the Sacrifice (ornate candles in the Benedictine style), but also greater involvement of the laity into the Liturgy so they like a part of the Liturgy. The congregations, especially the priest, need to make sure all feel welcome at Mass—particularly by greeting people before and after Mass. —For the clergy to not be set apart from the rest of the Church community; to have greater lay leadership—particularly as administrators in order for priests to spend more time among their flock. Also, for women to have leadership roles within the curia.

God is asking us to return to the stories of our faith; to unpack the cultural, political and religious context of Christianity as it evolved in 1st century Palestine to re-learn and apply the teachings of Jesus in our current context. The teachings call us into radical love. God is asking us to be radical in how we love: by being a welcoming community for all; by embracing the gifts of all; by ministering to all.

I think God is asking us to be accepting of all people. That includes gay people, divorced people and people who feel like they don't belong in the Catholic Church anymore.

How to fully live out our Catholic life in this increasingly secular world? How to practice and stand by our Catholic beliefs despite social pressures which continually seem to work against us? How to entice youth into a more spiritual life?

Possibly he is asking different things of different people: Of the people, maybe it's to stop looking outside the Church to find things like contentment, fulfilment, satisfaction, etc. while the Catholic Church has much of what they are looking for but are too disillusioned to see. Of the clergy, to become the role models that they should be, to stop the inaction and fully admit that their actions on many issues have been woeful and caused the wider Church community embarrassment and anger.

To constantly pray for our Church, especially the leaders. To restore hope in the Church. To bring the lukewarm back. Passionate religion teachers are the only people who should be teaching the faith to children. God also wants us to advocate the Rosary because we cannot get through these tough times without our blessed mother.

Heal Like Jesus, be human. God with us. Forgive See forgiveness. We are all equal in our baptism—ALL. De-clericalise. Look at lay ministries more—not in a trite way, but where clerics are accountable to lay people. Church being a place of love rather than authority. Keep singing and smiling and being optimistic. Healthy humanity surely is more healthy spirituality and open to grace. Why do we the Church struggle to talk as loving, caring, good Godly persons? Where is the optimism of resurrection in some elements of Church? It doesn't work having clerics talk about sex and money. Power in the Church is still at odds. Repressed religious sisters and lay people are the new wave of abusive people within the Church. Silent at times and quite deadly. The focus / direction is lost for so many who need healing.

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 dioceses that don't have it available, [-] being one of them and for one of the biggest cities in the country to not have one is a disgrace. We must go back to traditional hymns rather than turn into a charismatic Hillsong style Church, there is already those types of Churches available and whilst some may think they are thriving they are not, because people come and go and don't stay on full term, it also undermines our faith in trying to be like them although we aren't. As a young person, I reject guitars and all forms of modern worship and much prefer Gregorian chanting and traditional hymns. Church numbers started to decline when the modern reforms of Vatican II came about and it hasn't recovered since. If you are wondering why our numbers are down and vocations are down, that is the one event plus the further modernisation overtime that has made people lose the faith. We must be strong and adhere to all forms of tradition whether it be regarding liturgy, social views, etc. I also believe that the modern architecture of the newer Churches are a disgrace and look no different to modern Pentecostal halls. Also, we need to get rid of gay priests as they have been the ones that have brought about the molestation issues. Sacred silence in Mass and modesty should be enforced also. Bring back headscarfs and no female speakers, or altar servers. We need to start living our faith.

That the Australian community more fully recognise the Christ within it. That it begins to see that Christ in self, in everyone and everything. That Christians understand the example Jesus gave us as the personal Christ, as to how best to live in the world and live a life that would currently be seen generally as countercultural and by most Catholics as counter-religious. This would include love and inclusion of all, including the many groups we currently exclude as immoral. Such Christ's love would I believe fundamentally changing much of the present structure and understanding by the organised Church which has led it to so abjectly fail so many in the community, then, to protect itself, blame them, then excluded for the failure to love.

God is asking us to review the governance structure of the Church and include a greater role for the laity. One possibility we would like the Plenary Council to consider is making the clergy responsible for spiritual roles whilst administrative roles within the Church are handled by boards of predominantly lay people. We suggest that the Plenary Council consider starting a role similar to an ombudsman. We think this would allow a clear path and transparent process for addressing concerns of members of both the laity and the clergy when other attempts at resolution have failed. This would hopefully prevent future systemic failures such as those that resulted in the covering up of child sexual abuse.

Renewal of faith:—Focus on re-evangelisation—Adult faith formation for parents in Catholic Schools—Having clear witnesses—Kerygmatic preaching—Accountability of priests- not doing your job, therefore no job “You are a priest forever like Melchizedek” —Counter-cultural witness—Better music and choirs—Media strategy—National Marian shrine as an option for pilgrimage—Less

administrative work for priests- employ a parish manager—Youth focus • Changes in the language used. For example, Thou—You—respect • Prayer time; prayer for peace • Committed to our faith and active in the Church community • Outreach to ethnic communities and migrants. Having a structure in place to do so. • Having more opportunities to visit the sick. Affiliate people with St Vincent de Paul. • Stand up in a united way on moral issues (E.g. Gay marriage) • Sharing resources between parishes (E.g. Youth group) • Allowing priests to have specialised roles. For example doing mission in other parishes. • Help others in the community to be more active in the local Church. For example, encouraging daily Mass attendance; encouraging more Morning Teas held by the parishioners and providing opportunities for people to help around the parish. • Having more outreach and connectivity through personal sharing and prayer • Richness of doctrine- always answers to the questions.

We are being called to reflect deeply on how people can engage in Catholic life when they are not in Communion with the Church. It is likely that within a few decades, many Australians will be in stable homosexual partnerships, possibly with children. The Church will need to identify ways to continue to live its identity when most people then over 30 will have some homosexual friends who won't abandon their partners for the foreseeable future. At the bare minimum, Catholics will need to learn to make clear that the Church does not consider those people to be inherently evil, and that it believes such people can live good lives while on Earth. Homosexuality is an offense against a person's true spouse, whom people in stable homosexual relationships can justifiably expect never to marry, and possibly an offense against the image of God, which it is unreasonable to expect non-Catholics to care about. More generally, we need to make clear that we don't assume that we are any better than people who make any particular lifestyle choices. The Church is also being called to speak up more about social justice issues. My local priest feels strongly about several such issues; I don't know whether the bishops support him in that, since other priests say very little about them. The bishops ought to clarify what is agreed, what is Church doctrine and what disagreements are accepted by the bishops. The Church is being called to be more vocal about politically progressive causes. At the moment, the Catholic leadership don't try to promote Church teachings in broader society except when they have to, like with the plebiscite. This diminishes the credibility of the Church with left-wing people, since it makes the Church appear to be a politically conservative organisation dismissive of many left-wing concerns which actually feature heavily in Church teachings and practice. For example, I can't think of a time when an Australian bishop stood up for the unemployed, who ought to be a main focus for the Church (more so because people attach self-worth to their jobs than because they are poor and marginalised per se). Our bishops need to take left-wing stances as readily as right-wing stances when things valued by the Church are threatened, to retain credibility among left-wing people as an institution with values other than rigidity.

Catholic Italian friends and family are critical as to why their daughter/sister/class mate should get married in the Catholic Church. Despite the fact that she was brought up Catholic, educated Catholic, still practices.

- To stand true to the Traditional teachings of the Church. To be very clear when speaking of Church teaching, instead of being ambiguous as some Church leaders have done in the past—for this ambiguity has harmed the faith of the laity, not helped it. —For Church leaders to not be concerned with Church attendance or respect from the public eye, but instead be concerned first and foremost with the salvation of souls as they previously did. —Bring back the penitential side of Catholic spirituality: make abstinence required for all Fridays, make all days of Lent compulsory fast days (not just Ash Wednesday and Good Friday), bring back the disciplinary practices of ember and rogation days, and lengthen the Eucharistic fast as 1 hour is only a token penance. —Bring back the reverence of the Mass: restore chant and the organ to its rightful place and do away with instruments that belong in a rock concert—make it so that once again the lay faithful can sing the Mass, rather than sing *in* Mass. —Few Catholics believe in the Eucharist, and even fewer act like they do (many receive Communion in the state of mortal sin). This must be corrected catechistically and should also be remedied spiritually by encouraging reception on the tongue while kneeling. —We seem to be at

a profound spiritual crisis and yet most priests neglect the intercession of the saints by not saying the Roman Canon during Mass and instead opting for the shorter Eucharistic prayers. And the prayer to St. Michael is rarely said after Mass by the priests. We cannot afford to go without the prayers of these saints. —The Church leadership in Australia has not stood up for its teachings that the secular world holds in contempt. Priests refuse to preach about the sin of sodomy, abortion, or contraception and as a result many Catholics go on proudly proclaiming themselves "pro-choice Catholics" or "gay Catholic". Bishops should require of their priests that a minimum number of Sunday homilies be preached about these neglected teachings. —Dioceses in this country are so large that bishops do not have a fatherly relationship to their priests (let alone the laity) yet will have several auxiliary bishops assisting in governing a smaller section of the diocese (whether it be a 'region' or 'deanery'). Following the principle of subsidiarity, these large dioceses should be broken up with the region/deaneries becoming their own diocese governed by the once-auxiliary bishops. —The philosophy and theology of Thomism should once again be promoted as a cure to the ailment that is 'modern' philosophy.

After listening to the people in my community and my personal prayer on the question, I think God is asking of us in Australia that we put forward the teachings of Christ with confidence, and give formation to the younger generation so they seek Christ in daily life and help those around them to also discover the face of Jesus.

To remain faithful, to deepen our ecclesiastical knowledge and participation and to develop a mature and dynamic faith in Jesus and evangelisation of his message to a secular society too comfortable in its material wealth, too secure in its scientific knowledge and too frightened to place faith in anything other than the self.

Action the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Child Sex Abuse; recognition of first people's sovereignty and the need for a just republic; an immediate end to offshore detention; urgent action at all levels to prevent further climate change. To LISTEN to the many people, in our society, who no longer see the Church as relevant to their lives. People living in 2019 have many pressures in their lives and also have a deep desire for spirituality. However, the traditional responses that once spoke to people, do not communicate the message of Jesus in their real lives today. The Church needs to be able to address the issues and seriously engage with the barriers experienced by so many people. To care for each other, be kind, compassionate and loving as best you can. To preach God's love; be cognisant that we have a responsibility to love and care for his magnificent creation earth. We have to commit that God's intimate presence is in all things and that we are living the incarnation in God through Jesus. To be faithful and strong. Show our strength in our faith and the protection of others; show mercy. Open our hearts and doors. To live out the values of Christ in everything we do: Social Justice. Shelter, support and welcome the refugees. To show peace, compassion to all. Reconcile this old debate between Science (evolution) and God (creation). We can't 'give up as all too hard. To have some humility and humanity. To think critically, but not to lose faith. Foster inclusivity of difference and curiosity. To be the light of Christ in an increasingly apathetic society. To re-assess 'old' Church values and be invitational so that our liturgies and community values reflect acceptance of all. To keep faith, acknowledge and share the positives and be prepared to be very transparent, knowledgeable and prepared to discuss the negative issues in our Church objectively—especially with the young people in our families and in general. They are the key to our religious future and we should listen and be prepared to accept valid arguments from them. To lead by example; to be the Catholics that we were baptized to be. To take a breather from our busy lives. Talk to people, be kind, loving, etc. To be better people for others and reach out where possible as well as respecting ourselves. To introduce more of the younger community into the Catholic Church, by making Masses relatable to that community. Partner with and advocate for First Nations peoples; we have so much to be sorry for and so much to learn. To be gentle in actions but brave in our listening and to stand up for our beliefs and others.

God is asking us to review rules for admission to the priesthood around marriage and gender. Allowing married people to enter the priesthood, as is already accepted practice in some rites of the

Catholic Church, would help address the declining number of vocations and would result in priests whose life experiences were typically more similar to those of the majority of their congregations. The reason most commonly given for not allowing women to join the priesthood is that Jesus only chose male disciples. We have two concerns with this argument. 1. It is not clear that Jesus only chose male disciples. Although it is implied in our Gospels that the disciples were all male, the Gospels were written many years after the time of Jesus' ministry and it is possible that the people who recorded or translated them were against female priests for reasons of their own. It is also true that some other early Gospels implied that Jesus did have female disciples and some of Paul's letters suggest that there were women who held roles of authority in the early Church. 2. Even if 2000 years ago, Jesus did only choose male disciples, there is no record of him making any statements forbidding female priests in the future. By the same logic, we could say that Jesus did not choose any Scandinavian or East Asian disciples, but there is no suggestion that men from these backgrounds are not eligible to join the priesthood if they believe that they have been called to do so. We believe that God is calling us to have the courage to challenge some of these long-held traditions that the Church hierarchy seem determined to defend.

I think God is asking us to understand our faith and to take the journey with Him wholeheartedly. I am a mother of 3, my husband and I often hear that as parents we are the first educators of our children and it is through our families that we encounter God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is through our families the faith is transmitted and the gospel comes alive. This task of faith formation of our children is one of the most important vocation we have. Yet there is an assumption that we as parents know our faith. Sadly though, this is not accurate and I speak for myself in this. However through divine grace, we were fortunate to find a school community at [-] and [-], both [a particular educational philosophy] schools, where we have come to learn more about our faith, deepen our understanding of Christ and our Blessed Mother, and in turn help form the faith in our children. We have come to understand and have greater appreciation for the importance of the Blessed sacrament and receiving the sacraments regularly. I think God is asking us to help parents in their vocation, help them in their formation, help them to understand our faith and what it means to be a Catholic Christian. I think God is also asking us to stand up for what we believe in, but this task is made difficult when we are not clear in ourselves what that is. We need the Church to help us.

God is asking us to send out a clear, strong message about who we are and what we stand for as the Catholic Church in Australia, rather than leaving the media and entertainment industries to define our identity in the minds the general public. To achieve this end, we suggest utilising appropriate modern tools including hiring public relations professionals, social media, traditional media and advertising. The public should be made more aware of the positive contributions the Catholic Church makes to Australia in terms of social services, education and healthcare.

God is asking us to fully atone for past sins uncovered by the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Although the Church has taken some action, we feel that it has not gone far enough given the scale of the sins committed and the inherent hypocrisy in the Church enabling the perpetrators to continue their abuse at grave cost to the innocent victims. The needs of children to be protected from predators was ignored either to contain scandal or to give problematic priests further chances for reform which tragically went hand in hand with further opportunities to offend. Although acknowledging that priests have the same right as all people to have sins forgiven once confessed, we find it hard to understand why priests involved in either committing crimes of abuse directly or in covering them up are still recognised as priests. We are also not seeing the improvements in transparency we hoped to see. For example, a recent archdiocese child protection training program used some scenario-based examples from the royal commission and it seemed as if they had deliberately chosen examples of abuse which were NOT related to the Church.

The unity of churches. All Christian brothers and sisters united become one. Pray for the salvation of souls throughout the world. Pray for the politician to receive God's wisdom when taking care of the country. Pray for each one of us, whether we are religious or lay people, pray for God's protection in

our thought, words and actions. Pray for the reparations of sins and conversion of sinners to both who believe and don't believe in God.

God is asking us to speak out loudly and clearly on social justice issues, seeking to address issues directly where possible and also to inspire members of the Church to independently do the same. We think that God is asking the Church to challenge members to do more to address social justice these issues.

I sincerely believe we are being called to greater authenticity and orthodoxy of our Catholic faith. This must be apparent not just in conviction of belief, but also in the expression of our faith. We must restore the dignity, honour and solemnity that are due to the liturgy. This does not mean a full return to the Tridentine Form of the Mass; rather a greater respect of the Novus Ordo, and the traditions upon which it is based. Far too often, the Novus Ordo has become something of a show or performance, instead of the supreme act of worship offered by the Church. Younger Catholics such as myself are craving for the solemnity and tradition of the Apostolic liturgy, which at its core is the basis of the Novus Ordo. This can be achieved through the proper formation of priests and those who serve during the liturgy, and thorough education on the reasons and traditions behind our liturgical practises. Furthermore, we should not feel that our expression of faith is confined ONLY to the liturgy; we are called to take that expression out into the world, to preach the Gospel not simply through words but through action and deed. I also believe that the Church must stand firm with regard to matters of morality. Too many times we have heard our leaders (be they priests or bishops, school teachers or principals) seem to openly reject proper Catholic teaching, in favour of a more socially-acceptable approach. I have personally witnessed Catholic leaders teach falsehoods regarding the Faith, giving incorrect information to trusting families and children in order to "keep the peace" and apply a counterfeit salve to their guilty conscience. The Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, must be incorruptible, yet the implied abandonment of her most sacred dogmas regarding family, marriage and sexuality leaves many in a state of spiritual starvation. We are called not to "get with the times" or abandon the cornerstones of our faith. We must not be afraid of being "left behind" by a society forging its own path, be it right or wrong. Rather, like the Prophet Isaiah and St John the Baptist, we are called to be voices crying out in the wilderness, even if it is the spiritual wilderness of our modern society.

God is asking us to evangelise more often and more effectively. All members of the Church should work hard to spread the good news, and learn to be confident in identifying ourselves publicly as Catholic. The wider public are often seeking spiritual fulfilment but find it elsewhere; we need to make sure that people who are searching can easily find our Church.

Perhaps what God is asking of the Church in Australia is no different to what He has asked of His people throughout history; to offer up prayer and fasting, to turn to Him through love and an earnest desire for a deeper relationship with Him. The Catholic Church in Australia, and indeed throughout the world, needs to focus on formation. It is essential for all Catholics to be properly formed and catechised in their faith. How are Catholics expected to hold onto the faith and evangelise others when they themselves are not properly catechised and have little understanding of the Catholic faith? Particularly among us young Catholics, we thirst for the truth. We do not want a watered-down faith; we desire to hear the truth, regardless of how difficult or challenging it may be. We, as university students, desire to be offered deeper formation in the faith; we want proper catechesis and the opportunity to understand the faith through apologetics. Catechesis should also be compulsory in all Catholic secondary schools and all Catholics, both old and young, should have opportunities in their parishes for proper formation in the faith. This might include weekly catechesis sessions, Bible studies using sources such as Scott Hahn or Jeff Cavins, and a greater focus on learning apologetics for all Catholics. The Catholic Church should erase the stigma of 'Catholics not knowing the Bible' unlike our protestant brothers and sisters; rather we should make available more Bible courses and Catholics should be encouraged to know scripture. Through this proper formation in the Catholic faith, a greater understanding of the beautiful mystery of the Mass and the liturgy will be grasped. Through formation, Catholics will truly come to a deeper understanding of the mystery

of the Mass and a deeper love and reverence will ensue. Beauty, one of the most attractive transcendentals to any being, Christian and non-Christian alike, should be returned to the liturgy. A deeper reverence and respect for the liturgy should be paramount among Catholics, and this will only flow from a proper formation and understanding of the Mass. Every parish Mass and Church should reflect the beauty of God; whether by more traditional music, a deeper reverence (including silence before and after Mass), and an understanding from the congregation of what is taking place. Our Church buildings should also reflect the beauty of God by offering Him the praise and glory through beautiful architecture, and consequently transcending the people towards God. In a culture that is truly growing more devoid of beauty, let the Catholic Church arise as a beckon of light, a beckon of beauty, allowing this transcendental to transform the hearts of men and women towards Beauty Himself. Young university students are thirsting for Christ; we hunger for the true faith passed down from the Apostles. Please form us and show us the way of the cross, show us the way of selfless love.

John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another". After contemplating for a while and praying on how to answer this question, I finally got the sense of God saying... LOVE. Everything about God is summarised in this simple word. That is the one word used to describe God. So simple but yet with great significance. As we read the Bible we know that from the very beginning till the end it was all about love. God creating the world out of love to sending his only begotten son Jesus who sacrificed Himself on the cross for our sins, again with love and for love. So, with that being said I believe it is very simple what God wants of us... which is to simply love. Only love can break through all the barriers and triumph wickedness. When we love one another by this all men shall know that we are disciples of Jesus. When we love for God and through God we can overcome all sins. So we us the Church must be witnesses of that love. Only through love we'll have unity in our Churches. Love starts with us giving that first step. We look the world today and the one thing everyone seeks and sometimes found in the wrong places is love. Everyone is seeking to love and to be loved because that's what we are ultimately called to do and live by. Ephesians 4:2-3: "With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Colossians 3:14: "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Proverbs 3:3-4: "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favour and a good name in the sight of God and man." 1 John 4:16: "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." Ephesians 4:2: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." 1 Peter 4:8: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." We know it is not easy to love in a world so full of hatred and un-forgiveness. So, the message of love, more than ever before, needs to be emphasized through the Churches. And with love, God will lead us.

I think Our Lord is asking the faithful to be brave and preach the Word.

There are three primary areas in which I think the Church may be called to respond to better allow for God's will to be known and His love to be experienced. Firstly, due to the significant amount of abuse cases and cover-ups, the Church needs to address the way priests were able to systematically abuse others without repercussions. A mentality of covering up crimes, concealing the priests, and paying off victims without genuine care for their human dignity shows a lack of charity for the wellbeing of others who too are inviolably marked with the image and likeness of God. It is a complete shattering of their dignity as well as the trust of the Body of Christ. Preventative measures and risk management measures are necessary to never ordain men who are prone to such behaviour and to ensure that some sort of accountability is demanded of local parish priests and clergy in positions of power who, when given the freedom to, abuse their power to maintain a selfish lifestyle concerned only with comfortable and lavish living. Secondly, the Catholic schools built and upheld by the Church are in dire need of true Catholic culture. If teachers do not have faith in Jesus Christ, the

Son of the Living God who died and rose from the dead to redeem us, then they will give nothing to their students but empty shells of knowledge lacking true wisdom and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Faith is not something that is passed on through theoretical knowledge and purely social justice events but it is inspired and given by Christ through his faithful. If the teachers are lacking faith then they cannot instil it in their students. From the experiences of many, the Catholic religious education in our schools is taught in a superficial way. We do not need EXPENSIVE state of the art technology or new RE programs but rather, faithful teachers and principals who love with the immaculate and sacred heart. Often parish priests, as well as children, are well aware of the teachers who present a facade of being Catholic. Our children deserve better, they are our future. Our schools need to embrace their true Catholic heritage and traditions that have drawn so many of the faithful close to the heart of Christ and produced saints in every age. Thirdly, the sacrament of reconciliation is scarcely available in our local parishes. I am sure this is the same in other dioceses. From a theological level, sacramental graces are Massive outpourings of Christ's love upon the Church. If Catholics are not provided with an adequate opportunity to build a healthy habit of going to confession, then they will miss out on a vital experience of knowing who Christ really is. They will fail to understand the depths of his merciful love because they were never given ample opportunity to experience it. One way of overcoming this is planning at the deanery level to have confession available within each deanery every day. Most people can drive or secure a lift to a neighbouring parish to confess.

God is asking us to be more inclusive of the marginalised. Jesus repeatedly showed support for marginalised people in His time on earth. The Church does not do enough to include and support certain groups within our community including divorced people and homosexual people. We believe that the Church should reconsider the theological basis for opposition to divorced people remarrying and to homosexual people being involved in homosexual relationships. When a person is divorced through no fault of their own, not allowing them to find happiness with a new partner appears to lack the compassion Jesus so frequently demonstrated in his ministry. There does not seem to be a particularly compelling theological argument against allowing homosexual people to enjoy consenting relationships.

God is asking us to review the structure of the Mass to better meet the needs of modern congregations. Ideas put forward include seeking to make Mass feel more celebratory, webcasting Mass so that members of the Church can participate more often, having a "child friendly" Mass option in which Mass is celebrated in full but on a level that younger children can understand, and holding special regional Masses in stadium venues so that neighbouring parishes can gather together. It was suggested by several people that priests' duties should be split so that homilies are given by priests who are good orators, and priests less gifted in this area are tasked with performing other roles. It was also suggested that sermons could be given by members of the laity with the priest retaining the role of performing the consecration.

Get rid of the homosexuals in the priesthood, ban Catholics from being freemasons again, bring back the Latin Mass, bring back tradition. Pell is innocent.

God is asking us to improve our sense of community. Many people expressed a feeling of a lack of community which could perhaps be addressed through well supported faith formation or small group programs. The possibility of greater ties with neighbouring parishes was also suggested, particularly in terms of facilitating the running of groups such as women's groups, men's groups and youth groups where there might not be enough support to run one of each type of group within a single parish.

God is asking us to foster more involvement for women within the Church. We feel that the dominance of men in positions of authority within the Church reinforces the notion that women are inferior to men, and that this is not supported by the teachings of Jesus.

God is asking us to return to the humble teachings and actions of the Bible—the hierarchical Church has distanced itself from the people from which they administer to, by elevating themselves away from the ways Jesus walked this earth amongst his 'flock'. To be mindful of the people who are

remaining faithful to the Church despite all the shocking scandals taking place, and to acknowledge them for the enduring faith and trust in THEIR Church.

God is asking Australian Catholics to remain patient and faithful to Him. Even though there are many trials like the hostility of many people against the Church, same-sex marriage plebiscite, religious freedom being challenged in politics and also the scandals within the Church, God remains faithful to us and reminds us that He is our creator and that He will triumph in the end.

The Church in Australia is wounded in two ways. Firstly, it bears the wound carried by the Aboriginal people of our country. Blood was shed, cultures were destroyed, and the dignity of a people was desecrated by a colonisation with Christian foundations. So, whether we explicitly own the guilt of such actions or not, the Church is implicated in the infliction of this wound. Secondly, the Church bears the wound of the sexual abuse scandal that has ravaged its heart, done untold damage to victims and the faithful, and torn apart the true priesthood. These wounds are still fresh and hinder the health and growth of the Church in Australia. Until we (both hierarchy and faithful) can stand in the wounds and own them, let the pain be felt in our hearts and walk in solidarity with the wounded, we will not heal. If the Church has been implicated in the causes of these wounds, it must lead the way in the healing of a broken Australia. Jesus promises that healing is possible. We must run to Him, the healer so that He can meet us in our wounded-ness and make us whole. The Holy Spirit helps bring the gift of healing to us. All the Church's focus should be upon opening up to the Holy Spirit and the healing and graces it brings. So many of our efforts will fall flat if we do not tend to these wounds. Like the wounds of Christ, the wounds of the Church in Australia could become like sources of light and mercy for others. Let us not be afraid to face them.

Students—Students were vocal in their desire to show respect to people and the environment and be inclusive in their actions and their life style. Over 13% of respondents were concerned about climate change and the need to care for the environment. Students were hopeful and expressed a desire to act out of love without discrimination; identifying First nation's peoples, same sex attracted, LBGTQ+ communities and refugees as groups that needed to be included and supported by the Church. Some students were challenged by the hierarchy of the Church and the exclusion of women in sacramental leadership roles. Parents—To allow for a more diverse range of people to lead and vote on Church decisions. Women to be leaders and decision makers in all levels of the Vatican and Curia. Women to have a vote in the Vatican and Australian Church decisions. Different people, other than the view point of priests preparing the homily Rethinking of the belief that 'all are created in the image of a loving God' to expand the embrace of the Church to truly accept gender and difference in sexual identity. To truly Shepherd its flock! To model all the teachings of Jesus. To return to the model of the Early Church Communities. Be patient and keep faith with Jesus. To listen to our hearts and be inclusive of all. Staff Be his hands and feet—go to the margins, love like he would love. Work for the collective good of Australia, not just for ourselves. Moving with the times is not a strength of the Church, so be patient. To be better people. To be more actively supportive of people in a caring and loving way. The communication received is often about what we haven't done properly rather than affirming what was/is done properly.

God is asking us to provide more formal religious education to the teachers in our Catholic schools so that they can pass on accurate knowledge to our children, and also to provide formal education for adult members of our congregations who are not always as well informed as they ought to be. God is asking us to support the spiritual development of members of the Catholic Church. Many participants reported feeling the need for greater spiritual nourishment. Suggested possibilities to address this need include a greater focus on meditation, retreats and faith formation opportunities. God is asking us to review the key message of the Church. Some participants felt that the Church should focus on a positive, joyous message of love, forgiveness, compassion and the possibility of eternal life. Others felt that the Church needs to remind its members more frequently about the threat of hell and damnation. God is asking us to restore due reverence to the practice of Mass. Some people felt that modern congregations do not treat Mass with sufficient respect (for example talking at inappropriate times, failing to genuflect or bringing in food and drinks and leaving rubbish

<p>behind). God is asking us to increase the focus on Our Lady within Church and bring back statues and images which became less prevalent in our Church buildings post Vatican II.</p>
<p>Teaching and guiding our current and next generations what is true and what is false and that we should never give in to what is false or compromise on what is true despite pressure from the society. Even the most fundamental beliefs that we used to never question are being challenged or distorted (e.g. gender vs. gender fluidity, marriage vs. same-sex marriage, human being vs. a cluster of cells in the context of abortion).</p>
<p>To repent, to restore and to rebuild a strong relationship with Jesus. May Holy Spirit guiding us to reflect on how we, Catholic can encourage the lost sheep to be returned, how to fire up the lukewarm believers, getting the existing Catholic believers to know the power of the Words of God; to identify the evangelisation opportunities with advances in technology for generation Y and beyond; how can we Catholic be trained with knowledgeable, spiritually, and physically fit in spreading the Truth of God to others.</p>
<p>God has asked the same thing of all people at all times. The unification of their will, with his divine will. By doing so, an individual strives for sainthood and salvation. For more information, please see the document attached to this submission.</p>
<p>To be caring and respectful of all people.</p>
<p>To be truer to the Gospels where we are a compassionate, all-inclusive community welcoming the poor, the underprivileged, the alienated through their sexual persuasion, enabling ex priests to relive their ministry and not be excluded because they have been unable to remain celibate. The Church needs to be open to the role of the laity as outlined in the Vatican II documents. The sense of community has diminished especially in parishes where pastoral councils do not exist and in many cases, the priest becomes the figure of authority and the laity, the Body of Christ, are not able to exercise their baptismal responsibility. It saddens me that the Church to which I belong and value has to be diminished by public scandals and lack of accountability. As a young teenager in a parish where the PP was a paedophile, I have witnessed many lives that have been destroyed over generations although this has not destroyed my faith and practice in and for the common good.</p>
<p>I believe God is asking us to be more active. Involving our children, our teenagers and young adults more. As a mother of 4 young children aged 9—15. Our Church doesn't allow much for our younger children. So many of their friends attend other Christian based Church activities yet they don't teach our faith, our beliefs, teachings, traditions, etc. The other faith-based churches are super proactive. Anglicans, Bay City Church, Hill Song, etc. They provide get together, camps, dinners, outings, movies, get-togethers. Our [-] Church involves and provides for our young etc. Encourages etc. We can not only rely on youth days like Archbishop [-] mentioned was a success at St [-]'s talks. We need more consistency throughout our parishes, dioceses! Regular get-togethers, pizza movie nights, etc. Our priests, bishops, nuns need to hold more talks with our young. They don't know if in trouble they can turn to them, our Church for help, guidance, etc. Seminars, talks, etc. Bishop [-] mixes a lot with our [-] youth at Church. The energy is amazing, their spiritual life amazing. 🙏❤️. Our Catholic Schools need to return to our traditional teachings! All other denominations do so why do we have to break down so as to not offend. My daughter attends the same high school I went to yet they do not follow and teach our girls the same traditions, celebrate major feast days, etc. I'm so disappointed that our parish priest is amazing, yet not utilised. No reconciliation, etc. The reason too many non-Catholic's attend our school. Why? Parishioners need to be able to turn to our priests, bishops, nuns, during hard times. I contacted Bishop [-] regarding a serious matter at our child's school, and was not contacted to months later! Felt very let down. If our priests, bishops, etc. don't respond to parishioners, then who do we turn to? The Anglicans ministers, etc. go out of their way.</p>
<p>Re-evaluate the Catholic Education System and Curriculum in Schools. The percentage of practicing Catholics from the graduating class is less than 20%. That is around 40 or more girls that were raised Catholic, with good parents, falling away from their faith after graduation. I'm sure it started in the later years in school. That is a terrible percentage, and I went one of [-]'s most prestigious Catholic schools. We had theology twice every second week. I compared my education to a small private</p>

school in the US—our religion levels we were learning in year 12 were equivalent to year 7 at this school. Our beliefs are backed up by logic, so our children/students need to use logic to understand their faith. The school in the US had an amazing system—Saint Monica Academy in Pasadena, California. LOOK THEM UP!! Religion Teachers in our Catholic schools should be 100% Catholic, agree with 100% of all Catholic teachings, are well formed and have a high form of understanding enough to discuss the faith with the parents. Religion Teachers should be checked by the Catholic Education Society every year or sent information annually/weekly on current issues in the Church in order to safeguard, defend and teach the truth. To be qualified as a Catholic Religion Teacher, you should have to do an extra test after university—just like they do for doctors or nurses. It's the only way we can protect our schools from having teachers informing our children of the wrong idea/information etc. Our faith is something that needs to be taught, discussed and practiced, meaning our teachers need to be examples of faithful Catholics to their students. There should be no mention of getting drunk, pre-marital sex, contraception. They should be going to Mass every Sunday, receiving the sacraments daily, etc.

I think God is asking us to pay more attention to the essential teachings of Jesus (love, compassion and forgiveness) and less attention to defending and maintaining dogma. Jesus did not have much time for people who focused too much on Church rules in His own day and yet in many ways that is what our Church has become. I think the leaders of the Church need to reconsider the notion that any of its representatives have the authority to divinely interpret the Word of God. The tradition of claiming the ability to do so has left us all susceptible to being misled by human error. We are in the position of choosing between defending elements of dogma that don't make sense or admitting that the dogma was not quite right and thereby calling into question the basis of our authority. Jesus didn't agree with or abide by all of the religious "laws" of His day. It would have been impossible for Him to do so since there are inherent contradictions within scripture in any case. We know that throughout history there have been several very sinful Popes which in itself is enough to disprove the idea that the Papal tradition is incorruptible.

Secular Understanding of Church Traditions and Beliefs. I think at the moment there is a lack of understanding of Church traditions and beliefs through a secular lens. This is particularly important in order to explain the faith to people who aren't Catholic or religious. It also helps Catholics have a deeper love, understanding and appreciation of the faith if it's based off an understanding of logic rather just tradition. Just how a person needs to get to know a person more to fall in love with them, the same with a person's faith; the more they understand the faith on a deeper level.

The world is moving much faster with the advancement of technology and social media is now a huge platform. It is obviously a platform we need to be leading on. Archdiocese needs to be seeking the appropriate help from professionals in order to advise on marketing, public engagement, websites, social media, etc. Hillsong is fabulous at this—maybe we should consult with them. It is so important to be on these platforms and leading with strong material. This is how we won't get drowned out by the left-wing agenda.

God is asking the People of God to focus on people, not power. Through an inane focus on power (and authority), the bishops of Australia (but not all of them) are destroying the Church from within. The bishops need to put on 'sackcloth and ashes' and walk with the People, not stand on an elevated pedestal.

To learn to LOVE Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbours as we are created to love ourselves. Love of self and others come from the overflow of love of God, but do we really love God? Does Australia really desire to see his Kingdom COME and be on Earth as it is in Heaven? We need to return to being a people of prayer, seeking God in all aspects of life, with MASS as a time of WORSHIP of God stemming from our hearts. To adore the Lord in the Blessed sacrament and in all His children. To understand that the Eucharist is literally Jesus, not just some symbol of what happened at the Last Supper. For Mass times during the week to be more accessible to students and professionals (i.e. not just for the oldies at 10am on a Tuesday when everyone is working or studying), for CONFESSION to become NORMAL, and for the sacrament to be restored to

<p>that level—first rite of reconciliation where there is time to share the fruits of our examination of conscience, and allow Jesus to extend His mercy and love through the priest, the absolution, and the counsel given during confession, 1-on-1. Confession has changed my life. I've been fortunate enough to be shown how to prepare well for it, to invite in the Holy Spirit, to use a longer examination of conscience, and to understand God loves me. Our Church needs BOLDNESS when it comes to speaking up for the most vulnerable—the unborn, the sick and elderly, those who are confused about fundamental matters of IDENTITY rooted in confusions about who they are sexually attracted to, etc.. Marriage as a sacrament and Covenant needs to be emphasised as a path to sanctity, not just a place where sex is licit. JPII's TOB [Theology of the Body] is prophetic for our times post-sexual revolution. Divorced Catholics is just such a tragedy. Unsupported in the lead-up to marriage and engagement, and left ALONE throughout their marriage that slowly deteriorates. They deserve better. Ultimately, if Australians don't come to KNOW and LOVE God, we are screwed. Christ is God—more than a good teacher, wise man. If we can't be overwhelmed with wonder and awe by His death and resurrection, what are we living for? Main points: Deeper Prayer, Conviction of Morality, Centrality of Sacraments, Proper Catechesis (child, adolescent and adult!), Individual Spiritual Direction, Service, Proclamation of Truth with Boldness and Compassion.</p>
<p>Open our eyes and heart, help one another, forgive each other, be a good Catholic, citizen, person. Slow down and listen to God and his calling, messages. Pray more.</p>
<p>God is asking of us, the Church, at this time in Australia to provide thorough doctrinal formation and catechesis to the faithful in Australia through schools and parishes. This is so that we can deepen our personal relationship with God and better stand up to the moral challenges and social climate of our time. In conjunction and to facilitate this better Catechesis of the faithful, we believe that God is asking our pastors and teachers in the Church, those who already have this doctrinal knowledge, to speak out more vocally and concretely on the difficult issues of our time. This would mean teaching clearly on matters such as abortion, gay marriage, gender ideology and contraception. In addition, we believe there needs to be a renewed focused on the spiritual care of the faithful that highlights the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ. This should be focused most ardently on the relationship with Christ that is to be found in the Holy sacraments—particularly of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. That the Mass, in particular, should be an opportunity for deepening our relationship with the person of Jesus and not disproportionately focused on the sociological aspects of community and participation.</p>
<p>God is asking us to show a positive approach to our faith with all we encounter and be welcoming of the many "lapsed" Catholics who appear at Christmas, Easter and Christenings, weddings and funerals. I frequently say to both Catholics and non-believers, that our faith comes from a belief in the message of Jesus and should not be corrupted by the failings of our minority of fallible clergy and religious, who have significantly let us down in this country through their abuse of power over children and families. Our systemic Catholic schools are the real areas of hope and remain the only way of connecting with young people. The schools show by example, how to fundraise for the poor and disadvantaged and are the only "ordinary" practices of Church for them. The experience of their local priest and/ or curate is disassociated from their lives. The continued wearing of a cassock in the local community is inappropriate unless in a Church setting. A simple cross on a shirt with a nice pair of trousers is easily identified as a member of a religious faith. Many victims of child abuse continually refer to the black robes as so controlling. Let religious in schools bring in religion to other subjects indirectly by engaging with students in their daily lessons of maths or science or technology and instil a faith dimension to learning. Bring the altar forward in the Church so that it is not seen as being so separate from the congregation. Jesus always sat among the people and we rarely experience Jesus on a Sunday unless in private prayer.</p>
<p>Reaching out to one another to do mission work, do not to be distracted by non-believer.</p>
<p>To be aware and ACT on behalf of the laity. No more sidestepping.</p>
<p>God is asking us to get back to the Gospel message and forgo the institutional and haughty trappings.</p>

Show love and be merciful to your neighbour even though it may be difficult.
To keep our faith and belief in God through our individual and communal prayer and liturgical practices, and stay unified as a community of Faith, To not be afraid to spread and pass on our Faith in these troubled times of mistrust and to trust in God alone. To like Jesus. Open our Hearts and minds and tongues at this time. To both speak and listen to each other's truth and seek guidance of the Holy spirit.
1. To be a more compassionate Church • To identify the suffering of the world and take action to alleviate it. The Church needs to promote itself as an advocate of the poor and the needy. The Church should promote the good works of organisations within the Church that are already providing social welfare, development, humanitarian relief, education, health care, disability, and aged care support. 2. To encourage the Church to lead and inspire us. The Church's inherent role is tolerance and compassion, yet this is not being experienced by the majority of Catholics who are turning away from regular contact with the Church. If the Church were truly inspirational we would no longer be left with questions such as: § Why is attendance so low? § Why are people turning away from the Church? However, the current model is part of the problem. The present hierarchical structure and inherent clericalism within the Church is an exclusive rather than an inclusive model. § We need to promote that God loves us and bring back the joy of loving God. 3. To engage all members of our community. Through an inclusivity which is representative of all. The Church needs to embrace fully the Catholic social teachings of subsidiarity and participation in its organisational management so that all members of the Church, particularly women are incorporated into all levels of decision making. Through a truly collaborative decision-making process, it is hoped that the Church will become more accountable and transparent at all levels of its operation particularly with regard to child protection and safeguarding. Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission, Child protection/safeguarding needs to be implemented and monitored in every aspect of the Church's operations. The Church needs to hear and respond to the cry of the poor and the earth 4. To lead by example: The Church should lead by example and follow the example of Pope Francis through humility, solidarity and action. We are all human beings made in the image of God before we are anything else.
To be a prayerful Church promoting the love and mercy of God that encourages a deep personal relationship with God and provides spiritual nourishment, offering different methods of prayer to engage the heart with that of Christ. Helping people to come to know the human Jesus as a friend. Giving women an equal voice in governance structures, parish pastoral councils and liturgical celebrations. Listening to the wisdom of women as the major formators and supporters of every aspect of the life of the Church. Seeking opportunities for genuine co-labouring amongst diverse communities. Open, honest and trusting communication with parish communities in advance of changes happening. Providing opportunities and nurturing youth involvement.
I feel that God is asking us to continue praying and having faith in his plan for us and in the teachings of the Catholic Church. He is asking us to trust in the teachings of our Church and not to be fearful in standing up for our faith, in that we don't get swayed into following those who think that redefining our rules according to today's fashion is God's way. I pray that our schools remember to have courage.
Will He still find faith on earth when He returns?
Do we still believe in the teachings of His Church?
I think God is asking that our Church hears the voice of its people and the cry of pain and disillusionment coming from hearts seeking change! So many seek the ordination of women to priestly ministry and married men and women to be an option for all who respond to a vocational calling!!! Our hierarchy must hear the prayers of the laity!!!
To honour and respect one another.
I think God is asking us: 1) to reflect on our Faith and what it means to us. 2) to support our less fortunate brothers and sisters, locally, nationally and internationally with what will help them

<p>towards a better, sustainable life, by helping them build a better life for themselves. 3) to be proactive in our Faith 4) to differentiate our Faith in God, from our disappointment in the administrative body of our Faith, namely the Catholic Church as it is operating today. 5) to support the good work that is done by the many Catholic charitable and evangelical groups</p>
<p>God would like the Church to be more open. The Church needs to emphasise more on the catechism that has been handed down to us from the Apostles—we cannot water the teachings to suit a few. Catholic teaching in Catholic High Schools in particular should be encouraged. Encourage Youth Mission Teams and other Youth Teams to go to the high schools so that our young people will receive the fire of the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>I think God wants us to take a good look at ourselves to see where we have gone wrong. Why people, especially young people are leaving the Church. We cannot keep on blaming the secularism or the media for it. What processes are put in place to sustain the seeds that are fallen on poor soil?</p>
<p>To believe, to love each other and to find time to savour our belief and love.</p>
<p>To be more of what he became human and died for. So that we have the good news of eternal life. Practically it means we, the lay people need to believe it, know it, and really understand it. Most regular Catholics attend out of some form of obligation, when the Gospels come alive things really change. Other non-Catholic Churches have enthusiastic followers, why don't we? I feel even though we hold all the teachings and best thinkers in our fold for the last 2019 years most Catholics can't stand toe to toe with other denominations on their faith. Let's go back to basics with everyone give them history, theology, philosophy and make people proud to be CATHOLIC.</p>
<p>Marriage is a sacrament, yet most marriages fail. My marriage failed after 12 years. My wife said she didn't love me anymore and she wanted out. She would have nothing of having another go at it and eventually we got divorced. I had two children from that marriage. Both my former wife and I love them immensely as gifts from God. So the marriage wasn't null. It wasn't entered into under duress. There were no hidden secrets or dishonesties. It just failed. The Church's only doctrinal answer for me was annulment. That to me was nonsense. I eventually fell in love again with a wonderful woman and eventually I remarried outside of the Church (of course) and had another child. And now whilst I am still very involved in parish life (leading the music at liturgy), I am reminded by my priest that I am living in sin. So I have to figure ok. So be it. I am sinful. I still go to Mass each Sunday. Live my faith every day in all I do. Spend hours preparing, praying and reflecting on how to best select and prepare the liturgical music to facilitate prayer at Mass, still lead the music liturgy but I am living in sin. So Father says I should really not be having communion. Ok no Communion, as I am a pariah. My spiritual life has fortunately carried on because the Holy Spirit is working in me. It has not only carried on but it helps others in their spiritual journey. Still though, there is the shame I am made to feel about my first marriage's failure. I am on the outer to a degree simply because of it. According to Church doctrine, I have been labelled a failure and I am living in sin. You know it hurts. Most marriages in Australia fail. What is more important to the Church? Doctrine or the people of the Church? Maybe God is asking us to reconsider what is more important in his plan? Man-made doctrine or mankind? Confirmation is a sacrament yet most confirmed Catholics don't continue to have any involvement in the Church, many don't even know they are Christian. Do we need to re-think how we think about this sacrament? Do we need to re-think about how we administer it? Is, for example the practice of trying to get all Catholic school children confirmed before they start high school meaningful and honest. Yes, it gets numbers for the census but the reality is that most of them never get involved in Church life once they receive the sacrament. If the Holy Spirit has really come down on them surely this wouldn't happen but it does and it happens more times than not. They receive the sacrament and then disappear. Surely it would be more meaningful to only confirm adults who decide to get confirmed of their own accord, informed and inspired by the Holy Spirit rather than Mass and meaningless production at the end of primary school as is occurring now. Certainly, use religious education at school as formation but let the children decide what they want to do when they are young/old adults. When (and if) the Spirit calls them.</p>

The crisis in the Catholic Church in Australia today has multiple causes and multiple dimensions. Any response that fails to recognize the complexity of the situation is likely to make matters worse. Any response that fails to address all the key issues, is likely to leave many people frustrated and cynical. The challenge before us is huge. We must work together, building bridges, attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit in each other and in the world we are called to serve. We would like the Plenary Council to address these issues:

- the Church as a community of the baptized, with an emphasis on what unites us as a pilgrim people of God, recognizing and affirming the variety of charisms that enrich us and enable us to serve our world;
- a new culture in the Catholic Church, one that is based on baptism, ongoing conversion of life and promotes servant leadership, transparency in administration and subsidiarity in functioning;
- the necessity of evangelization as an essential expression of our being a community of the baptized;
- women and the laity, affirming them, recognizing their place at all levels in the life of the Catholic Church in Australia and outlining practical and concrete ways to ensure that the words spoken lead to actions taken.
- the destructive influence of clericalism in all its forms and introduce structures, policies and procedures that will diminish the possibilities of it gaining a foothold in the Church ever again.

The very existence of each of the "Movements" represented here: many charisms, many people quietly and generously bearing witness to the Gospel in a variety of ways. Catechists: each week of the school term: Mainly women; other faiths have men; community when speaking together before and after class; shepherds delivering the gospel message Bible Study Groups: once a week in the Church meeting rooms: Educated laity spreading Old and New Testament message and interpretations. Passionist Family Groups: once a month for an outing—in home or out. Promote Spiritual and Social Welfare for Catholic and their non-Catholic partners and families. THE KEY ISSUES: a. Metanoia—call to radical conversion, make the person and teaching of Jesus central to everything b. Laity—call to involve laity more in governance, ministry and the leading of liturgical celebrations; develop a spirituality of the laity c. Clericalism—call to rid the Catholic Church of clericalism in all its forms and create a community of the people of God d. Women—call to give greater recognition to women and involve them more in ministry and governance e. Governance—call for new forms of governance that are not clerically-centred, promote subsidiarity and collegiality, involve more laity f. Contemplation—call to support and foster contemplative prayer and an appreciation for the apophatic dimension of our spirituality g. Ministry—call for wider definition of ministry, greater recognition of laity in ministry. See attachment for more.

When I think about this question, I come up with many responses. However, I am always drawn to one of my fundamental beliefs, that Jesus in his teachings gave us all we need. I believe our faith is a gift from God and we need to reinforce this and that "Christ will make his home in our hearts through faith" bringing our Church in Australia back to having its "roots and foundation in love, so that it together with all God's people may have the power to understand how broad, and long and deep is Christ's love". With Christ's love, the Church in Australia will be a leader in speaking out against all evil, even within its own bureaucracy, and all forms of discrimination regardless of race, sex, and religious beliefs, for "by means of the Gospel all mankind have a part in God's Blessing, they are members of the same body, and share in the promise that God made through Christ Jesus" (Ephesian 3:6). Jesus gave us a new Commandment, "Love one and other as I have Loved you." God is asking us to embrace his love of humanity fully, without reservation, through reform of our bureaucracy, so our Church can continue to boldly love all humanity as Christ (God) does. Is the Plenary Council ready to seriously consider the change necessary to once again empower God's people? Recommended reading" The God Who Comes" Author: Carlo Carretto, First published in English in 1974

Catholic Church needs to explore the strategies used by other Christian Churches to engage families and youth. A working party should be convened to explore, discuss and feedback to Australian Catholic Church of strategies that engage families and youth in Churches such as Hillsong "why do they work?" Explore the use of digital media to connect parishes to each other and the Archdiocesan centre e.g. live streaming at Christmas and Easter. Search for ways for the Church to relevant to 21st

<p>Century and beyond. Church decisions need to have a female voice. Committee or working parties should be formed with laity with equity of gender. Women should have a greater role in the Church as decision makers, opportunities to be deacons and acolytes. The Australian Church needs to support diocesan priests—pastorally and to relieve burden of administration. Formal review process needs to be implemented to evaluate priests' effectiveness in parishes.</p>
<p>That the current structure of the Church is not providing a place for Australians to access or deepen their relationship with Christ. That we need to be radical in our love of the poor and radical in our reimagining of the Church.</p>
<p>To return to the gospel. To return to God. Enough with a mismatch and patchwork of practices of our faith. We need to have us to return to ONE Catholic faith and not one where each parish abides by a different standard. I want to be close to God and praise him in a manner that I can experience heaven on Earth. I don't need a social experience that I can get at the pub. I hope God is asking us to return to Church to see him and experience his mystical presence.</p>
<p>Following the distressing events of the last few weeks and the conviction of Cardinal Pell for child abuse, it is understandable that many Catholics feel betrayed, angry, let down by the institution that has been so important in our lives, and astonished that the Church could not have known or have suspected these crimes were being committed and covered-up. While there has been token recognition of the suffering of the victim(s), the Church's official statement that we should pray and make sacrifices; that we should not draw conclusions as to Pell's guilt; that the Church and institutional leaders clearly feel he is innocent and make indicative statements implying the victim is a liar; is a stark reminder of a mindset that is deeply worrying. It is just plainly out of touch with the reality of these events. There is something deeply wrong with the Church's power structure when criminal activities have been allowed to continue over many years under the form of a clerical protection racket. The Plenary Council will be a waste of time unless it actively engages with the circumstances which have led to these events and the impact of them, and honours to work with the priests and people on the pews to ensure all within the Church are respected and honoured, and encouraged to contribute their gifts and talents, not just money. I pray that Plenary Council will provide the sort of servant leadership we need in Australia now and in the years to come to ensure those within the Church who are complicit in these crimes, are brought to justice and that the Church may flourish in this new challenging world. Bishops, it's over to you now!</p>
<p>I think that God is asking that we bring the Church to a place where the people will love it. I think that paedophilia is destroying the Church and has survived under a cloak of secrecy that has been provided by a celibate clergy. A married clergy, whether heterosexual or homosexual, will live in a situation where the secrecy of paedophilia is not sustainable. I think that a married couple being involved in paedophilia is possible but would be difficult to hide. Paedophiles have been attracted to the Church by the cover of celibacy that has allowed them thrive and find like-minded persons to hide their activities. They have used confession as a tool for their line of action and this has not gone un-noticed by the members of the Church which has lost confidence in this sacrament. Celibacy may be allowed but should not be mandatory. Women have been excluded from the priesthood by men that feel threatened in their role and have made their own rules for their own protection. Women priests and married priests should be the normal.</p>
<p>To be active in spreading the word of God and continuing the mission of Jesus through promoting social justice initiatives.</p>
<p>God is asking us to open our doors to all people. To bring the Church out into the streets and meet the people where they are out. God is asking ask to reconnect to each other in ways other than Eucharist alone.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to turn back to the words and actions of Jesus. The clergy has to change and re-examine their attitudes to power, to real people and real-life problems. For too long, they have been a rarefied and protected species who have considered themselves above their congregation. Ordinary Catholics are crying out in pain at the recent child sex scandals. God's Church needs to listen to us. It is OUR Church and it will suffer greatly through this cataclysm. Our faith in God is</p>

<p>string but our regard and trust in clergy and the Institution if the Catholic Church is severely shaken. Changes MUST take place.</p>
<p>To grow closer to God, to help others do the same and to help the world understand how the Church can help them.</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to be more human in our interactions with each other. This means the clergy with the people especially. There is a continued risk that there are clergy setting themselves up as being elevated above the people—this is not what we need if people are to engage in the Church and feel genuinely welcomed and included.</p>
<p>What he has always asked. For us to go out into the world spreading the good news of The Gospel through his Church and the extension of the Church into our lives with all our neighbours. Review of the Church in accordance with this call is a relevant contemporary question to ask. Are we loving our neighbour and others as ourselves?</p>
<p>We need to re-energise the Church and come back to the values of Vatican II. It seems to me that much of the focus of the Church is very right wing, certainly that is who is most vocal. However, when we think about the priests and clergy that the public respond to such as Fr Bob in Melbourne or Fr Chris Riley, they are certainly more to the left and living out the values expressed at the second Vatican Council.</p>
<p>The attached statement by Australian Reforming Catholics articulates my concerns and wishes for the future Australian Church.</p>
<p>Our thinking can best be expressed around the theme of “Building a Culture of Faith.” In the following pages, we provide our thoughts around four subordinate themes: · The paradox of the Father as celibate; · The meaning and purpose of the liturgy; · How to evangelised millennials; and · The promotion of family. Our focus is on parish life. We take a degree of responsibility upon ourselves to build the faith culture and make recommendations for institutional arrangements that are supportive of this parish effort. Subsidiarity needs to be lived out: the Bishops should identify and support worthy projects being carried out in the parishes. Concluding these discussions, we make the following recommendations: Recommendations · Clerical celibacy is a valuable institution and should be maintained. · Parishes should be the locus of spiritual mentorship, but non-geographically defined forms should be contemplated. · Restore all tabernacles as the central focus of the Church building-tabernacles should not be relegated to a side altar or separate room. · Churches should be used solely for worship or prayerful and reverent sacred presentations e.g. carol services or oratorios. · Priests should be exhorted to celebrate the Novus Ordo Mass in English ad orientem at least once month. · Priests should be exhorted to use Latin in the Mass Proper at least once a month. · Altar rails should be replaced where they have been removed and Holy Communion distributed, with recipients standing or kneeling. (This improves reverence and clearly delineates the separation between sanctuary and main body of the Church. This promotes the sense of the sacredness of the sanctuary. · Communion plates should be used regardless of tongue or hand reception. Educational activities by parishes should include: · Skill formation should be provided around addressing the questions and objections of others in a way that is easily comprehensible and acceptable those others. · Catholic online resources that are improved by benchmarking them against the examples of good practice (see submission for examples) and others like them. Parishes should provide training at three levels: structured training during the prenatal period, continuing training for different stages of parental life, and unstructured mentorship in parenting. We conduct celebration through feast days: we could institute a feast day for marriage day, when which couples could be encouraged to renew their vows. Natural family planning should be part of the content of the preparation for marriage. It should also be part of the Catechesis, which means that it should be taught in schools under current arrangements or in the parish, under arrangements that we have advocated. Provide ultra sound facilities so that women can improve their relationships with their babies from an early stage. Subsidiarity needs to be lived out: the Bishops should identify and support worthy projects being carried out in the parishes.</p>

<p>To be transparent and authentic. What we do and say has to be mirrored by our actions. There is no point in the Church saying it is listening, it wants more lay involvement and a greater presence of women if the Archbishop of [-] does not model this behaviour. In Ireland at the WMoF [World Meeting of Families] 2018, there were women serving the Pope at every Mass—at [—] Cathedral, none are to be seen. At a recent IW Mass for Catholic School Staff, the lack of presence of women again was stark and a young boy standing holding a glass of water for the Archbishop for the duration caused no end of concern. I believe the Spirit is seeking for us to turn from the arrogance, put our words into action and to be transparent—even if the response is No Change, or No Women, or we won't be changing so like it or lump it! At least it would be the words that would match the action!! We have priests in [-] removing little girls from serving rosters—seriously, is there no place?</p>
<p>I think God is asking us to be faithful and to be active members to make up the body of Christ. We need to have a consistent message but in a contemporary world. Are we using all resources available to us? Are we limiting the Church to a male oriented run organisation with people who are turning people away instead of welcoming?</p>
<p>To return our attention to our faith in its most basic form. To pray, attend Mass and worship. To encourage our children in their faith.</p>
<p>To reach out to those who are marginalised and spread the message of love.</p>
<p>God is asking us to review why the Church in Australian has come to this state, the low turn-up to Church and recently, the verdict that Cardinal Pell is found guilty.</p>
<p>To remember why Jesus came to Earth—it was not to start an institution and that we the people are the Church.</p>
<p>God is asking us to return to a simple Church, we are experiencing in our Church at this time, the corruption brought on by unchecked power. We need to return to a Church that is liberating, focusing on the needs of the most marginalised in our society.</p>
<p>- the Church to form a political party as there is no right one out there—to care more for social justice—to keep the traditional values, no LGBT—to use social media more —to let the public know more on the services provided by the Church—to be a leader to uphold and represent the people who holds traditional values</p>
<p>God is asking us to build relationship with him and come together as a community to show strength and compassion to others</p>
<p>To live from the example of Jesus, to tell others the Good News and to live proactively in our responsibility to others and the planet</p>
<p>To believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ and rebuild our Church. We need to support victims of abuse and acknowledge that this is evil and ask why this has occurred within the framework of our Church and how it can be addressed to prevent this from happening again. God wants me to stand firm in my beliefs and focus on the good that can come from a welcoming, caring Catholic community. A nurturing, transparent Church is what God wants me to belong to. Traditional Church is under attack in Australia and they have themselves to blame. God needs me to support those who are holding onto their faith and those whose faith has been destroyed along the way. God needs me to be clear in our relationship and to stand firm as it is being challenged. God is asking me to step up and assist the Church to rebuild a very different version of our current Church.</p>
<p>To follow Jesus' example and reach out to the marginalised. We need to be practical people who work for and with each other. It is time to rid of some of the rituals and clothing of the pastors that are left over from the old Church.</p>
<p>To be open to new ways of being Church together. This includes a love of our clergy but recognition that lay people can and should minister to each other in addition to our priests. I would like to see the place of the diaconate reviewed, renewed and opened to a broader range of people. Women in this ministry is one aspect that must be explored. Additionally, we could consider Catholic Educators who in many cases have Masters level qualifications in theology / religious education. While the permanent diaconate is currently for life and commissioned to specific parishes and ministries by</p>

<p>the bishop, why could a group of deacons not be established from the pool of Principals and Assistant Principals who are clearly committed to the Church and its mission? These people are already servants of the Church, highly educated and spiritually formed. They could in many cases be ordained to the diaconate and further support our Church and clergy.</p>
<p>As a community voice, the vision we have for an Australian Catholic Church. That it be a place for all Australian Catholics—at the moment, it is not. I would like to see our Church be more inclusive. We exclude the very people Jesus would have walked out of his way to help. I would like to see our Church have women, married men and women, regardless of sexuality, divorced men and women become priests. I would like to see our Church be open to divorced people, birth control, and acknowledge sex is about intimacy as well as creation. We adopt all recommendations from the royal commission into abuse of children.</p>
<p>To care for and support the vulnerable in our society. To engage our youth in the ministry of the Church—appeal to their conscience and involve them, as they are the future of our Church. To meet people where they are. To accept all people and not judge. To recognise the involvement of women and give them more responsibility in the Church (not just menial tasks in a patriarchal system)—we are so behind other churches, and society in general. Jesus had female disciples, and women were fundamental to the survival of the early Church—why not now? Bigger than Australia—priests used to be able to marry in the early Church, why not now? We would have so many more Australian priests that can relate to our society. Music—more contemporary, energising music to be written and used in our Masses (Hillsong appeals to the youth mainly because of this). Clericalism—this is something that must be addressed at this time. So much hurt in Australia due to the Cardinal Pell conviction. We are all suffering as a Church. So much hurt has been caused by priests covering up for priests. We trusted them. Many good priests in the Church are also suffering for the bad reputation being portrayed in the media. We need to use the media to work with us to show all the good our Church is doing. Many parents reply of Catholic Education to 'Church' their children—they want a connection but don't want to go to Mass on Sundays—how can we revitalise what we know as Sunday Mass?</p>
<p>I believe he is seeking the truth and transparency from the Catholic Church on all levels.</p>
<p>To be honest with the laity. The institutional Church has to do more than apologise for child abuse. You need to have an internal royal commission and offer up those who have done wrong to justice; mercy is God domain. Stop blaming dead bishops. It's a cop out and we (Catholics) all know it. Without this investigation, other actions are insincere and we (the general public) all see through it. #Married priests and Female priests—we need them. Figure out how it can be done but we need them for many good reasons. Not least of which is why must I have to decipher another homily by a priest from Poland, Philippines, India or Korea when I have perfectly good options from Australia? #Get rid of priestly entitlement. You are not the go-between; you are the celebrant. You are not the knowledge keeper; you are the teacher. And right now, your pupils dislike what you are teaching. #Get out of people's bedrooms. Stop judging everyone's sex. For an organisation that wants nothing to do with sex, you sure love talking about everyone else's. St Paul was a twat; he was not Jesus Christ. I look to Christ; the institutional Church looks to St Paul.</p>
<p>God is asking us to ensure we spread the news of His kingdom in a way that is relevant, inclusive and welcoming.</p>
<p>For patience, to show love and forgiveness towards one another</p>
<p>I believe God is asking the Church to repent. God is asking the Patriarchal Church Authorities to respect Australia's legal processes and respect the victims of abuse rather than questioning verdicts. God is asking the Church to accept all of the Royal Commission's recommendations and to not place Canon law above the law of the land. God is asking the Church authorities to understand that questioning the decisions of the court, once again places the focus on the victims and repeats the Church's sins again and again!</p>
<p>To be more compassionate, more welcoming, more charitable and to actively care for and protect the environment.</p>

<p>To revolutionise the Church and make it relevant to these times</p>
<p>In this broken world, I believe God is asking us to stand up for what is right, to work towards God's Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven. God is asking us to pray, but not so much with words, with actions, to be outward looking and not self-preoccupied. The most urgent problem is that we are facing climate catastrophe without immediate, radical action to curb emissions. Record-high temperatures in January in Australia, climate-related droughts and floods remind us of humanity's collective failure to safeguard these balances. The 2018 IPCC Special Report makes for grim reading, telling the world that we have 10—12 years to radically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions for any hope of staying under 1.5 Degrees C of warming. Collectively, humanity is not yet on track. In that sense, we are in a climate emergency that demands urgent action. Related problems are the extinction crisis, deforestation and a political system that is woefully failing us. I am exceedingly disappointed that Church leadership as a whole is sleepwalking into a catastrophic future. Jesus commissioned us to be prophetic, not self-preoccupied. The generation growing up today will be grappling with the effects of our wilful neglect of the need to protect the planet. Church leadership/Bishops need to take very seriously the words of Pope Francis in <i>Laudato Si'</i>, and resource a wholehearted, rapid response to the climate crisis. The Church needs to be promoting renewable energy, reducing meat consumption, restraint in our lifestyle expectations and forms of transport not based on fossil fuels. The Church needs to stand in solidarity with those who are already suffering the early impacts of climate change, to publicly stand up to powerful forces in society that deny and exacerbate climate change. If we were the Church of Jesus Christ, we would not be distracted and asleep to the most serious threat to life as we know it.</p>
<p>Follow the Gospel message and our call for preferential option to the poor. Reassess the clerical hierarchy in the Australian Church and make the institutional Church more relevant to Australians and non-clerical people. Have a shared leadership for the local Church that is not overly dependent on a male priest saying Mass.</p>
<p>At this time, I believe that God is asking us to strip down the Catholic institution of the Church to the direct message of God and his Bible. This isn't to say that we must abandon religious tradition, as this is key to the formation of Catholic identity; however, I believe that certain behaviours/habits/traditions of the Church are not necessary to the fulfilment of God's message.</p>
<p>Wake up to the changing times and through prayerful consideration, bring the Church into the 20th Century—be guided by the gospel, not doctrine.</p>
<p>Australia needs a faith-filled Catholic community that is part of a relevant Church. We need openness, transparency, involvement of the laity, with special emphasis on the youth, needs faith formation and growth opportunities.</p>
<p>I think that the Holy Spirit is calling all the faithful to return to an authentic spiritual and prayerful encounter with Our Lord who is risen and alive. This encounter can only be facilitated through much prayer and fasting from the whole Church for the salvation of the world and the conversion of sinners. Additionally, I think there are several non-negotiable agenda items to be discussed and implemented as a consequence of this Plenary Council: —An affirmation of the validity of the authority of the Magisterium, as the successors of the Apostles, and especially the Holy Roman Pontiff and his College of Cardinals and brother bishops on matters of faith and morals. As custodians of the deposit of faith, it has been their sacred duty for two millennia to faithfully transmit this deposit to the Body of Christ, the people of the Church, with absolute reverence and respect to the great Apostolic Tradition of the Church. —Pursuant to the above, it is necessary to form the entire Australian Catholic community on the perennial vitality of the sacrament of Confession on a regular basis to be in a state of grace when approaching the Most Holy sacrament of the Altar in the Sacrifice of the Mass. In the words of St Pope John Paul II, "we must always take care that this great meeting with Christ in the Eucharist does not become a mere habit. And that we do not receive him unworthily. That is to say, in a state of mortal sin." (<i>Dominicae Cenae</i>, 1980). Too many lay Catholics are robbed of the richness of the Church's sacramental economy, and risk committing serious sacrilege of the Blessed sacrament on a weekly basis by failing to confess their</p>

sins on a regular basis. This fundamental theology is an imperative preface to the below posit. —The Church in Australia is desperately in need of an urgent return to faithful transmission of the dogma of the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist. I propose three ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL matters for the Council to consider implementing in all Catholic Churches in Australia immediately:

1. Exposition of the Blessed sacrament for at least half an hour before every weekend Mass (and Benediction wherever possible).
2. Formation through talks as well as through profound homilies and preaching in the Mass on the Real Presence and the significance of the Sacrifice of the Mass.
3. An IMMEDIATE urging of all Catholic priests in Australian parishes to take the utmost care and reverence in the Consecration during the Eucharistic prayer, especially with respect to the deliberate, intentional (i.e. slow) and obvious elevating of the Blessed sacrament during the Consecration and Doxology to draw the minds of the faithful to the reality present before them. It is high time that the Church re-affirmed these timeless truths, and in an age of relativism and modernism, any compromise on Our Lord's sacrifice for our salvation is nothing short of the work of the Devil.

Show compassion to others. Foster community. Democratise the Church: including allowing for FULL participation as Church leaders by women and families—equality and removing the ancient and out of touch discrimination inherent in the Church that does NOT reflect its ethos. Address in no uncertain terms, issues of abuse within the Church: I strongly suggest you watch the compassionate, and real debate covered on ABC TV Q & A aired on 4 March 2019 as many, many good ideas for the future of the Church were shared. The reactions and concerns of several very articulate Catholics were so well communicated on this show, please PLEASE watch it and give it much consideration. Hold those who commit, and cover up/condone these atrocious acts to account. Mandatory reporting to police. Abuse must be dealt with by the police and legal system, not in house.

God wants married priests. Our first Pope was married. This would solve the sexual abuse scandals in the Church.

The same thing as Our Lady has said, prayer, penance, fasting, confession, adoration. I'd like to see people taking more interest in the Divine Office, because that's second after the Mass, priority over every other form of prayer. I'd like to see the family rosary promoted.

I believe God is asking the Church to be more available, to offer daily Mass, weekly confession and formation classes. The Churches that offer daily Mass have regular parishioners who attend daily Mass, but so many Churches do not offer regular Mass, Confession and formation. As Catholics, the most important part of our faith is the Eucharist and building a relationship with Christ through prayer, which is only possible when Mass is offered and when the Church is open to allow prayer in front of the Blessed sacrament / Tabernacle. So many people do not know the truths of the Church, the real teaching of the Catholic Catechism. We need to provide people with the true teachings handed down from Jesus, through the apostles and Popes, which is found in the Catechism. Many Catholics today don't even know that the Catechism exists, and they don't know the truths of the Churches' teachings. We need to teach the truths so that people are guided in their life by Christ. Gone are the days that the faith is based on 'feelings', and emotional motivations to pray/ attend Mass. people are looking for the Big answers, 'why are we here', 'what is suffering', 'why is homosexuality wrong', but the Catholic Church in Australia is not declaring the correct answers. We need to provide the truths, as taught by Christ. School children receive a very watered-down version of the faith during their school years, once graduated that's it, no more formation of any kind. This should change so that as people grow, go through different life stages they may learn more about their faith and how to live more Christ like in their profession, and family life. Priests need to keep receiving formation as well, so many priests today are unsure of the true teachings of the Church, and therefore mislead their 'sheep'. What questions do you have about the future of the Church in Australia that you would like the plenary council to consider? Do we rely on the Catholic Catechism to help form School students, parents, parishioners and priests? Do all churches in suburban/city areas offer daily Mass, and weekly confession? Would you like to share a story about your experience of faith or of the Church in Australia that has shaped you? I have met several students

<p>who have graduated from Catholic schools, and all of them were lacking the knowledge of the true teachings of the Catholic Church. What can we do to change this? St [-]'s in [-] offers daily Mass 3 times a day, and they are full! Confession is offered daily and there is always a queue. Yes, the population is higher in the city, but it goes to show that if the Church offers the sacraments, people attend them.</p>
<p>I feel like the Spirit is telling me now to walk away, and maybe come back later, when (if) the Church is changed. And I have, as of last week. On the weekend following the lifting of the suppression order on George Pell's conviction, my parish priest said to us: "The Church is not the priests, the cardinals, the bishops. You are the Church." This is a nice sentiment, but it's not the truth. If the Church belonged to the people in the pews, it would look more like we want it to look—more like Jesus, more about caring and less about money, rules and not outdated practices. My faith is my own, but devastatingly, the Church I was raised in does it more harm than good, and so, for now, I will manage my faith without the support of the Church. The suggestion that 12 randomly selected jurors were all out to get Pell and the Catholic Church, and therefore did not carry out their duties with diligence is unreasonable, unless we believe that this would be true of 95-100% of the Australian population. Individuals are fully entitled to their opinion on this case, but for the clergy to publicly declare (over and over and over) that the legal process has not concluded is offensive (to everyone) and embarrassing to me as a Catholic.</p>
<p>To be open, inclusive and transparent. To follow the vision of Pope Francis, and to let go of our trappings, superiority and exclusion.</p>
<p>To come together and share ideas as to how we can keep our faith alive and in action as we journey into a very different and evolving future.</p>
<p>A return to Jesus.</p>
<p>Asking us to sort out the sexual abuse scandal so that us Catholic can stand tall once again and proclaim we are Catholic to the world</p>
<p>To overhaul the culture of the Church to make it more relevant to the lives that people lead in the 21st Century. The Church needs to address the reality of pace of our world as a result of technology and communications, lifestyle have evolved and that the fundamental beliefs taught are not relevant to today's society. It needs to change its attitude and embrace equality and an expanded role for women who bring another perspective to attitude. It needs to be relative to our children with teachings that address current living conditions medical and needs. To put the person first and show empathy for the victims of abuse.</p>
<p>- To stick together and be strong in our faith—Leaders to stand up and say the truth of the Holy spirit in the Church and not their personal opinion. —To educate his people (the faithful or laity) and rooted in their faith in the doctrines of the Church. —To love and use his Mother Mary for our prayer and what we ask of him. —To pray the rosary—To love each other as he loved us.</p>
<p>I think that God is asking the Church in Australia to revive that practice and example of the first Catholics who came to Australia. When there was no priest in the colony, they gathered at Mr Davis' house for Adoration, Rosary. Profess the Creed, devotions, Filial Support and solidarity.</p>
<p>My submission consists of 2 documents. In short, God requires a change in both structure and culture. Mine is focused on the culture.</p>
<p>To be a Church of welcome and inclusive of all cultures, that grows in understanding and acceptance, sharing in Eucharist and liturgy, social events and encounters. This will bring about a strong faith within families and reducing isolation within cultural minorities.</p>
<p>Reconsider the Gospel in terms of power and authority</p> <p>Consider the question of hierarchy. Is it valid? If not, then what? Or if hierarchy is valid, then how should we create it, defend it and use it?</p> <p>Enlighten. Educate. Learn. Study. Purify error. Instruct. In particular let us use the example of "feminism" so called.</p>

Consider phasing our religious orders

Render unto Caesar ... accuracy and intelligence in our self-understanding in regards to the concept of the separation between Church and state. God wants us to consider the issue of establishment, yet again, as it has been considered many times during history. We need to consider ways to further separate from the state, and I suggest that we cut the umbilical tie of state funding to our schools. However, the issue is complex and I am not fully able to explore it. We need to consider European history and further back to Roman history and early Jewish state models, for example the controversy regarding Kings and the problems of Moses as a religious and state leader.

To become more prayerful Christians, attend Mass, as well as be vigilant to all the current changes that affect a Christian life-style.

To honour the body of Christ and show proper reverence to the Eucharist. 1. Restrict the indulgence of communion in the hand and revert back to Church teaching about communion on the tongue. 2. Remove the fiction of 'Eucharistic ministers' who are not ordained or have had their hands anointed from touching the Host. 3. Emphasise the kneeling of the congregation at the opening of the Tabernacle. 4. Institute reconciliation facilities prior to the beginning of every Mass. 5. Do not allow the Eucharist to leave the sanctuary with lay people, even for the purpose of distributing it to the sick.

God is asking us to commit to the perennial teachings of Christ as made clear in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. For this, we need to recommit to the teachings outlined in *Humanae Vitae*. For each of us to commit, and those of us who have, that we do so more deeply, it means that we would do well to reaffirm that the Church is essentially a witness to the Resurrection. A human being now constitutes the 'channel' of the Trinitarian relations between persons in the Blessed Trinity. For this ecclesiastical witness to be taken seriously by people (including priests), people have to trust that the Church's teachings are those of Christ. The lack of serious adherence to the teachings of the Church on sexual morality, specifically those outlined in *Humanae Vitae*, have eroded the trust that the average Catholic has in the Church and its teachings. Why? There was an initial fuss when it was promulgated, and many left the Church. Then there was silence for the next sixty years. This silence has been misinterpreted as the Church recognising its doctrinal error and hurriedly sweeping the ideas contained in *Humanae Vitae* under the carpet. The Church is seen as being embarrassed by its own teaching. People then think, if the Church is wrong on this, then what else is it wrong about? People cannot give the adherence of faith to any of its perennial teaching—including the Resurrection, because they see that the Church doesn't believe in it itself. If the Church backflips on something as basic as sex, we can expect backflips on everything else. So the Church is seen by most as hypocritical, weak and vacillating. The Church's teaching ignored because is seen as too hard. Sexual morality is taught as being 'up to individual conscience or individual 'discernment'. The next natural evolution of this idea is that all teachings of the Church up to our own 'conscience and discernment' which then becomes all teachings are subject to our opinions. Neuron pathways pickled in mis-regulated hormones doesn't encourage the necessary clarity of thought to discern what those opinions actually are. Sexual morality is certainly not the most important teaching of the Church, but it is the gatekeeper for these doctrines to be seen as mysteriously significant and therefore relevant. Sexual self-control is indicative of self-control in other areas of life. If we are not chaste, each in our own state in life, then there are a vast number of things that we just will not see. We are witnessing in our own day the effect of this lack of vision—and are paying for it dearly. So, God is asking the Church to reaffirm with deeds, its own teaching on sexual morality, especially contained in *Humanae Vitae*. If the Church don't take its own teachings seriously, can we expect anybody else to?

Through Pope Francis, I think God is asking us to be more charitable and to love one another unconditionally and to look after one another.

To become more active in Church parish life. To speak out without fear.

I think that God is asking us to do two things at this time: 1) God is asking us to lead a life that would please him. 2) God is asking Australian Catholics to be leaders. I say that because this is the first Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in the Western World since Vatican II and the first Plenary Council in Australia since 1937. By asking us to lead, God will expect that we will display the qualities of leadership. These include but are not limited to: Being firm, calm, discerning, measured, consultative, the capacity to make hard decisions, inspiring and setting a high standard. This will be a hard task, but we are capable of that style of leadership

To be more truthful in ourselves.

FIRST RESPONSES: Centrality of God's presence and constant prayer; Commendation on new start on preaching the saving power of Christ; Celebration: ritual and deep tradition are appreciated but we are not including all people and there is too much judgement; More sharing of gifts and leadership with the laypeople of the Church; Dissatisfaction with how Bishop Philip Wilson was treated by the Church. Much greater compassion required; Confession in humility by the Church re paedophilia and to keep working at solutions. FURTHER DIALOGUE: Leadership needs to be treated more seriously. We welcome the Plenary Council as a great idea. The Church should be sharing leadership much more with the laity and needs to be welcoming to all and stop being so highly judgemental about who is in and who is out. We commend that the bishops have introduced new ways to keep on spreading the Word, the saving power of Christ and to keep on doing that. The central importance of the spiritual life was discussed and we mentioned the importance of Meditation groups which have been conducted here at [-] Apartments [-] for two years. Meditation is now conducted daily in 400 schools in Queensland. It would be great to have meditation introduced into families. We have a Rosary group at [-] weekly. The solution to the paedophilia crisis needs much more work. There needs to be 'a big clean up', a constant humble apologizing by the bishops and a study of the unnecessary rigidity of celibacy for priests and religious. Witness was given that the love of God and the Christian way of life can be pursued by the married, hence the recommendation that celibacy for life should not be required for priests, be they men or women.

I think God is asking us to use our common sense. I think she/he created us to explore and exploit our potential. I think God wants us to challenge ourselves, to take risks, to be willing to live with uncertainty. I think God is constantly asking us to trust him/her. I think God is asking us to make our Catholic faith more relevant to the world we live in today. I think God is telling us to use the extraordinary talents and wisdom of women and men (young and old) both outside and inside the Church. I think God is asking us to shed our egos, to stop judging one another, to be humble but forthright. I think God is asking us to wake up to the reality that she/he has no favourites—women/men, black/white/yellow/brown, rich/poor, etc. are equal in his/her eyes and that there must be an end to patriarchal rule.

God is asking us, as His Church; not just to continue to present, and be encouraged to recognise the importance of Faith in our daily lives. But at the same time, be open to the needs of His people within our community, —to teach by both word and example, —to invite many into an experience of God's love in the workings of our everyday lives.

I feel we have strayed from God's path of humility, compassion and tolerance, especially when it comes to the LGBTQI+ community. We say a "Christian marriage" is between a man and a woman, but when did Christ become so exclusive? We see numerous examples in the gospel where Jesus reaches out to the marginalised (lepers, women accused of adultery, beggars). He never asked anyone if they were Jews or Samaritans or Tax Collectors or Thieves, he showed compassion to everyone, so much so that while on the cross, he tells the thief to his right, "Today you will be with me in Paradise". He never asked him whether he was straight or Gay, Jew or Gentile. And yet today we the Catholic Church are amongst the persecutors of the biggest marginalised group (LGBTQI+). Christ came to world to save it, not judge. Then why are we in Australia, taking a seat of judgement (referring to Mr [-]'s numerous stunts asking for rights in Catholic institutions to expel LGBTQI+ students under the guise of religious freedom and his homily on spreading fear about the definition

<p>of marriage changes, etc. and the [-] diocese donating a \$1,000,000 to the "Coalition for Marriage" an organisation sowing misinformation, fear and intolerance). God has blessed us with an age where so much information is available freely. The Church and we Catholics need to be humble and accept that we can be wrong. A look back at history and we will find so many incidents where we have persecuted people for believing something different or pointing our mistakes (ex: persecution of Galileo Galilei for scientifically proving the earth went around the Sun when the Church believed the sun went around the earth). To close, I would just like to quote the words of Jesus, "Only God is just and so only he can judge." For our part, let us be compassionate, open, accepting of everyone around us even if we can't understand their way of life.</p>
<p>1. To show mercy and compassion to all, especially to those who are marginalised because of their sexual orientation, or because they are divorced and remarried. 2. To put women into effective leadership positions in the Church, and if this requires a change in Canon Law, ask the Holy See to do it.</p>
<p>God is asking us to be brave and courageous in sharing what is at the heart of our faith—love. God asks us not to be afraid to go beyond the fences in order to grow in our faith, thereby being witnesses to Jesus message of love to all. God is asking to treat each other justly and with love in our hearts, no matter what. God is asking us to listen to each other and be prepared to face our own vulnerability. God is asking our whole Church to take responsibility for the abuse of children and be genuine in our response.</p>
<p>FROM THE PLENARY COUNCIL SUGGESTION BOX: 1. Have the children making their first communion sit as a group at the front to go out and receive the Lord. The families 'are not holy' -(distracted in their behaviour). 2. To the Bishops and priests, Hand on the truth and beauty of the Faith to our youth! Support and defend the teachings of the Holy Mother Church at all times. 3. To all our bishops and priests, Please fight for our faith! There is so much opposition coming against the Church in these days—we NEED our priests and bishops to be bold and proclaim the truths of the Catholic Faith as handed down by the Apostles and Church Fathers. Strengthen the teaching of the faith in Catholic Schools so that our young people can carry on the Faith into the future.</p>
<p>1. To return to Gospel values, to listen to and to follow the teachings of Jesus. 2. To remember that canon law is a human construct which should serve the needs of all members of the Church. 3. To continue the Church's work in health, education and welfare but seek to reach out more to the marginalised. Is the Church too much an arm of government? 4. To find a way of hearing from disengaged Catholics in this listening process. 5. To worship and communicate religious ideas using standard English. 6. To put effort and money into improving music used in liturgy, a variety of genres, but improved quality. 7. To encourage our bishops to find a way of agreeing on the changes needed to implement the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to child sexual abuse. Specifically: • to appoint laymen and women to positions of responsibility in Church organisations, so that they shape policy and make decisions; • to be transparent and accountable in matters of governance and administration; • to have a selection mechanism for bishops which is known and which involves laypeople; • to make clear to the Vatican that the application of the pontifical secret to clergy sexual abuse is inappropriate in Australia; • to have an open process for investigating accusations of sexual abuse by clergy, religious and employees of the Church; • to have a wider and more expert input into the selection and formation of clergy and religious and to follow this with compulsory professional development and appraisal.</p>
<p>Accept priests from diverse racial background including priests from Africa.</p>
<p>God sent His only son to this world to provide us with the Good News. Jesus stated He is The Way, The Truth and The Life. Keep the Church Christ-centred, preach as he did, that he is the only path to salvation. We mustn't be afraid of this, we must be bold and know that we will never be accepted in this world for preaching that Christ is King. As Christ foretold, they will hate you, but know it hated me before it hated you.</p>
<p>To envelop all Catholics and encourage participation by all, as well as seek a fair society. This includes the gay community and especially women. The continuing marginalisation of women in the</p>

Church will not be tolerated in this age of women seeking parity with men. The old right aligned hierarchy of the Church, led by Cardinal Pell, must move aside and a more compassionate and welcoming Church must emerge. This must include the Church speaking out for the marginalised as fervently as it speaks out in matters of doctrine. We hear only muffled voices from the Church on such issues as the refugees on Manus, etc. [The] appointment of [bishop] only sees a continuation of a right aligned power base that is as out of touch as the current hard right in Australia. Ditch the dogma and embrace people is what our Church here in Australia must do. The appalling treatment of those abused as children is perhaps the most glaring example of how the Church has been about self-interest and looking after its power base, rather than caring for its people.

I was the parish Ambassador for [-] parish, [-]. I have encouraged the various small groups to send in their responses separately, online. At different group discussions, in which I participated, the issues discerned were: PASTORAL CARE—looking out for other people, reaching out to those who do not have a voice, standing up for our religious beliefs; DISCIPLESHIP—caring for each other; and supporting our priests' vocation; CHURCH—foster belonging in the Church; increase women's role in Liturgy. In addition, I add: —Our final destiny—to be with God in heaven; and here on earth to know, love, serve and worship Him with our family. Against the background of faith we have inherited, received and confirmed as our own, ensure that this faith is passed on to our children. To make our children/ people believe in/ understand everlasting life —The early Australian Catholics were courageous people, true to God, willing to protect the faith. To be bold again, protect the faith again, worship/ honour him some more Witness: I am an Australian Catholic ... T-shirts, marches, stand up and be counted for our belief. To be awake to the presence of Jesus... in the stormy waters; to be present to Jesus each moment and make His Presence felt! —Faith changes lives! Let's encourage others: C'mon let's get to heaven (rather than "Go to hell". To encourage / inculcate in our students a personal encounter with Jesus. Open ourselves up to His Passion. Rely totally on God; and submit my will, to Him. Explore what is it that keeps me/us from banking on that life-giving source. —Heal me O Lord and I will be healed. We need healing; we must WANT to be healed—TO FOLLOW Him. Support one another... those that need it more; and perhaps not even able to ask. Bring healing to those close to us—in our families, in our parish.

∅ To restore Trust, relevance, and strive towards Jesus's example in the 21st Century. More than 2000 years since Christ set standards for the Church and progress has dwindled down guided by the oldest bureaucracy. More martyrs in recent history reflect the lowest level of maturity, depending on heroes instead of utilising its resources and strengths to help shape a better world. Australia can lead by example and adopt better practices and implement programs that can transform what evidently does not work effectively and lacks direction.

We are being asked to move into the 21st century. We are governed by ideas formed by people who lived in an age which is no longer appropriate today. These respected theologians of the past (Erasmus, Augustine, Aquinas et al) responded to the needs of their time. 21st century needs and times are different. A start would be to have married priests—immediate relief of the shortage in Australia. It is no use asking current priests as they clearly are in favour of the present system. Celibacy does not cause paedophilia but I believe it forms part of the cover-up of crimes. If a priest/bishop had children of his own, he would be horrified at these abuses and would want to stop it immediately, rather than the sinful hiding of the crimes and moving the perpetrators to another parish where they can attack more children. Again, there is no point in seeking the opinion of current clergy who have a vested interest in the current system.

To find and implement effective means to revitalise the lifelong practice and knowledge of the Catholic faith, especially of the young. To thoroughly reassess, where possible, the success or otherwise of the Catholic school system in meeting the needs of the Catholic community. My six questions in the next section all relate to Catholic education.

Pax Christi believes in a Church for All. We call on the Australian Church to honour the call of Pope Francis who calls for the participation by the whole people of the Church and the sharing of responsibility at all levels in the Church. The days of confining Church government only to Bishops

must end. Baptism and not Ordination is the fundamental sacrament and the entire baptised are responsible for the welfare of the faith and beyond that to the needs of our world without exception but especially to the poor, the oppressed and forgotten. It is fundamentally the sacrament of inclusion which does not distinguish between people. We need to see baptism as the celebration of the miracle of all birth which has implications for our awareness of the sacredness of Creation and all life. 'We belong to God's family from the first moment of our existence.' (No. 134 in An Astonishing Secret). We need to reclaim the baptismal identity and mission of all its members in the Church with less focus on those who are ordained and a greater focus on the Church as a body of the baptised. Ministry in the Church cannot be concentrated in those who are ordained to the detriment of the baptised. The ministries of the baptised need to be allowed to flourish. This must include all the baptised and not just some of them. As Bishop [-] has stated: There needs to be a bold and strong leadership to nurture and to enable the emerging model to prevail. There is also a need for committed people who act like critical yeast in critical times. The Church needs prophetic voices, even voices from the margins and from outside, to keep its leaders honest, transparent and accountable. We cannot afford to let the momentum for cultural and structural change in the Church fizzle out. It is for the sake of a healthier Church that all the baptised participate in its functioning and bring their gifts to bear on its growth. The missionary and pastoral priorities can no longer be imposed from above, but discerned by consultation with the faithful down to parish level. Respectful and listening conversations should be held at all levels of the Church. The word synodality describes how this could happen at all levels of the Church where a creation of consensus happens. WE call on the Catholic Church to realise that the Spirit of God is for all of humanity and creation. The Church must stand with all who seek the right to life. Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus involves every aspect of our existence on this Planet. The Church can no longer be silent on issues that affect us all e.g.: Peace, Weapons of war, Nuclear Arms, Climate Change, Justice, Poverty, First Peoples, Discrimination such as of women, the young, gay and lesbian people, Immigration, Asylum Seekers, and Trickle Down Economics. Fr [—], [-] (NSW) [—] [—]

I think God is asking us to pray for guidance in reflecting on where we are on our journey to the Father and deciding what we should change to help us all to continue on the journey. Some changes could come from examining the resources we continue to commit to our Catholic systemic schools and examining the spiritual formation outcomes as against the education outcomes. The state now does education much better than it did when our Catholic schools started. There are many other outreach issues we could more fully address with more resources. Among these issues are a better resourced and paid CCD, homelessness, mental health of youth and adults, foreign aid, migration assistance, people trafficking. We would be doing and be seen to be doing Christ's work by committing more resolutely to issues like these. Obviously to exit parochial school education is a Massive, complex operation and must be planned with extensive consultation. However, I think the possibilities opened up would exceed the potential losses of this change.

To attract and keep young people to come to the Church, attend Mass and join Church associations/groups. Mass liturgy can be boring to many people especially to the younger generation. Thus, a good foundation of biblical knowledge for them to understand the real meaning and importance of the Mass is essential. Our Catholic school education must be able to provide this knowledge/training to our students. Parents of Catholic families need also show and lead their kids by example: such as attend Mass on time, dress in decent and appropriate manner, etc.

God is asking us to consider change in the Church in Australia. Australian society has changed significantly in the period since the Great Depression and World War II. There was a greater sense of community immediately after that period and God was central to that. However, in modern Australian society that generally enjoys more affluence, access to technology and where things have been given and not necessarily fought for, things are taken for granted and God plays a lesser role in society. It was acknowledged that change can/will be a challenge and will present problems. Our group does not want to see change for change sake (such as in liturgy of Mass and the order of service for the Mass which appears to have happened) but meaningful and fruitful change that will

be of benefit to all Catholics. Other examples of change include: That there should be an end to the ostracising of divorcees and gay people. Our group felt that any change needs to be driven from within the Church as opposed to being driven from the leadership of the Church down. Our group felt that change needs to be carefully managed. For example, empowering people in the change process. Treating people who are subject to change with dignity and respect. Consult people subject to change and ensure that you take the people with you when change occurs.

As a young woman who grew up in the Catholic faith with faithful parents who attended Mass every week, I did feel a moral and ethical fibre that ran deep within myself and my family from their faith. However as I grew up, I felt that the Church lost relevance in my life and while I always maintained a strong faith in God, the structures around it seemed hypocritical, inflexible and treated women as second class citizens. I didn't feel the Church knew where to meet young people on their journey. It was only a few years ago when I came across the organisation Voices of Faith, where I now work that the call back to the Church seemed clearer and meeting so many women and men in this network helped me to think deeper and to better understand my faith but also speak up for it. I think God is asking us to be inclusive, to be open and honest, to dialogue with one another, to listen to each other. To not allow dogma and doctrine dictate how we live our lives, but to constantly be open to the Word of God as it speaks to all people. I believe that God is asking the Catholic Church to include women in decision making, into leadership of the Church where women make up over half of the membership. To hear their perspectives, to learn from them, to allow their expertise, skills and talents to work collaboratively in shared leadership. I also believe God is asking us to be accepting and inclusive of all people made in the image and likeness of God. I believe God wants this leadership to bring concrete solutions and measures to ensure no women, child or man under the Catholic Church is ever harmed through abusive practices and that these perpetrators be put to justice and serve the consequences of their actions.

God is asking us, via Church hierarchy, to accept a Church that has been more interested in protecting the Church and the clergy at the expense of the Catholics they represent. This has been evident from ancient times due to the Church's way to rule by constant control, fear, persecution, power, greed, abuse, dishonesty and non-Christian treatment of the Catholic faithful by all levels of Church hierarchy. The constant situation over the centuries of hierarchy abusing their power has led to a degrading of Catholicism within the Catholic congregation and also outside the Church. The fact that Australia had to have a Royal Commission to highlight Church hierarchy abusing their power just shows the disgraceful Church leadership and the absolute disregard the Church leadership had for the Church congregation. The continual cover-ups and very poor regard for the victims was very deliberate and designed to protect the reputation of the Church and the Church hierarchy and further degrade the victims. I cannot think of anything so UN-CHRISTIAN. The response from Church hierarchy has been weak, predictable, forced and inadequate. Due to their track record, unfortunately Church leadership's word is worthless. The vast majority of that Church leadership is still in place. I cannot see how the Australian Catholic congregation can get to a point where they can ever respect the existing Church leadership. Unfortunately, this taints the actual innocent priests as well. WHAT IS GOD ASKING US? —1. To forgive the Church hierarchy? 2. To forgive the Church? 3. To forgive God? 4. To believe God is protecting the congregation, especially the vulnerable. Until we see positive ACTIONS to convince us, the above have been not only addressed but actually changed. I cannot see the Church moving forward in any significant way in the near future. Catholics love Christianity, love being Christians and all we ask is that our Church and Church hierarchy display Christianity in every aspect of their work. This has been so lacking for centuries and with the leadership still in place, I cannot see significant change in the near future.

To listen and to get real.

To reinvigorate the Church and culturally put the parish back at the centre of faith, social, cultural and community life across the country. We have let our communities become places that we barely spend time in. Parish life should incorporate and offer options for all activities, from sports and recreation to learning and of course, spiritual guidance. Many of our Church doors are now always

<p>shut. We need the lights back on and the doors reopened. The community need our Churches and our Churches need them.</p>
<p>I believe God is calling us to change the structures of the Church. We need to change the hierarchical model of the Church. Every man-made law has to be analysed and see if it fits in with what Jesus is telling us in the Bible. We need to learn from the Pentecostal churches, especially in the area of music and teaching. There is a great need to promote what the Catholic Church does in areas of social justice so the younger generation realizes we are not just about money. We need to start again rebuilding the Church using the scriptures as our guide and follow the example Jesus gave us when He started His ministry.</p>
<p>To apologise to God for the way the Australian Catholic Church has behaved and for one year at every weekend Mass for the congregation to say a communal "SORRY" prayer.</p>
<p>I Believe that God is asking us to move forward in the spirit of Vatican II and not to regress. The Church in Australia needs to follow the Pope and be more aware of Social Justice Issues. Social Justice Groups should be fully supported by the priest in parishes. Many pp's do not support and some actually block moves by SJ Groups; I am not speaking about my local parish where our priest does support our Social Justice Group. It is interesting the priests mostly support the SVDP Society.</p>
<p>To be ourselves. To become a better person with each passing day. To listen, be kind to ourselves and others. Just to be.</p>
<p>To live and share Christian values, to not be silent about my beliefs, continue to keep God top of mind during everyday life</p>
<p>God is asking us -to love our neighbour (the marginalised, disadvantaged, disabled, Indigenous Australians). -to care for God's creation—preserve our natural resources and share the fruits of these resources equitably -to understand that the poor in spirit are blessed—not the powerful and the loud-spoken. The voiceless, the powerless are shouted down and further marginalised when a Church does not seek with all its might to listen and ask for the views of all its members regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, education, ability, marital status, occupation -to act in a way that honours clergy and Church ministers role to serve the people of the Church and not the people of the Church serving the needs of ministers or the Church hierarchy. -to remember and acts on what Jesus told us in the gospels in priority to what humans have interpreted over the years from these scriptures. To see the teachings of Jesus through a lens of current scientific knowledge and using the intellect that God has given us.</p>
<p>God is asking us to follow his will. To many of us our following our own will. We always do what we want, what we think is best for us, we guide ourselves and believe in ourselves more than God. We need to follow God's will first. And learn not to love the world and the material of the world. We worship materialistic things too much and distract ourselves from Jesus too much. This will all die but Jesus will always live, we have a choice to live with him. We need more teachings in Churches and in public on living for God and following his will. We need to make the youth understand why Jesus saves us and frees us from worry. To Jesus Christ be the Glory!</p>
<p>To remain faithful to the teaching of the Church. Wait until Christ revitalizes our Church with more vocations and fervent laity.</p>
<p>God is asking us, through Our Lady, to believe the Message of Fatima; which is, that hell is real and eternal, that many souls go there due to sins of impurity, that we must repent and do reparations, that we must pray the rosary daily, that we must try to stop sinning and lead holy lives, and that we must pray for the conversion of poor sinners. God is also asking of us to look at the horrific scandals of the Church and to see that these are related, at least in part, to the Church's unhappy moves towards being a social-justice outfit rather than a means of salvation. And one in which personal sins was no longer seen to really matter, but where showy calls for progressive causes mattered greatly. As just one example of this, the worst criminality so far uncovered with regards to the American bishops and cardinals, appears to have been committed by showy social justice and interfaith advocates (Cardinal McCarrick being the exemplar). These criminals appear to have used their social justice causes, firstly, as a cover for their degraded crimes, secondly, as an excuse to mix with</p>

powerful "progressive" elites, and lastly as an excuse not to bother addressing their own sins or the sins of their flock ("after all, working for a cause make me a nice person, right?") These issues, I believe, also relate to Australia. That said, societal redemption starts with the lived Faith and with holy interactions between one another. And for people to take holiness and purity seriously they need to be routinely reminded of the reality of hell and purgatory (something which our clergy also need reminding of, judging by the abuse scandals.) God would also be asking Australia to look at Leo XIII's clear encyclical messages on detachment from the concerns of this world, and the need for constant focus upon Jesus and the Heavenly afterlife with him. The paradox of Leo XIII's request is that such a focus would allow a person to deal far better with the concerns of this life; than would a toxic attachment to this world and its issues. But once again, this openness to grace is dependent upon a holy life, purity, and a following of the Church's ancient and wise teachings. However, compromising these teachings only blocks grace, thereby making such compromises cruel (even when they are condoned with "good intentions" and by "nice" people). Finally, God is asking the Australian Catholic Church to just do its job, and stop apologizing for speaking the Truth, as well as stop trying to be "groovy" (when did that embarrassing, unhappy trend ever work?), and stop trying to please secular progressives who by nature are insatiable, and who hold the Church in contempt whenever it makes such efforts. Please, be forthright, brave, and uncompromising in demands for holiness, and ask the same from the laity; they are awaiting the request. Also, ask them to pray daily for the clergy.

Ask what would Jesus do? Not be led by man-made, unfair and out of date rules. Let priests marry and allow female priests. Reconciliation should be 3rd rite. God will forgive if you are truly sorry. Priests shouldn't be able to look at you like they know your sins. Some look at you differently. The word 'change' in the Mass took all the meaning out of the words. Made it distant and very sinful (grievous fault) and negative.

I feel that God is calling all of to a life of holiness. To live authentically Christ-centric life, steeped in the unconditional love of Jesus Christ and our neighbour as our self. In doing so, I feel that God is crying out for the Church to be an authentic representative of Himself to the nations. To take responsibility for the disgraceful crimes over decades against children and others. That has seen the total destruction of people's lives and faith in God, and to stop blaming the victim and pretending to itself that the Church is being attacked and that they are the innocent victim. There is a difference between the occasion sin that could be seen as a misdemeanour and a complete and wanton disregard for the word of God, the Law of God and His people. Christ was about justice and authenticity. The Church has to be willing to be this to the people whether they be Catholic or not, and get back to the understanding that Jesus died for ALL and not a select few. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit in very dramatic fashion bestowed the gift of language upon the Apostles. This was so that the word of God could be brought to the people of all walks of life in the vernacular that they understood—in short bringing the word of God to the people in the concrete circumstances of their lives. Not making God and his message rigid and inflexible and 'one size fits all' message. God and His message were to be moulded to the people. In stark contradiction, the Catholic Church is utterly inflexible, unfeeling and completely dogmatic manner. It would not be first time I have heard it said "if you don't like it leave"! Is this really what Jesus would do and say? Is this really why he died on the Cross and is this what he said to the 'Good thief'? God through Jesus Emmanuel was about being "God WITH US!" Not making life so exclusive and divisive that it turns people away. "Come to me all who labour and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28-30)

We believe God is asking of his Church to be honest, to open their ears to the gifts of insight the laity have to offer: something Massive has gone wrong. Not just paedophilia. Mediocrity. Lack of authenticity. Elitism. Clericalism. Jobs for the boys. I urge the Council to be humble and listen. Admit something very un-Christlike has shaped the Church for too long. It is time to throw off the princely clothes—the status of Pharisees—and don the carpenter's apron. The servant's rags. The worker's overalls. it is very difficult to believe in our age. Only those who can lead us to greater faith should

be in the priestly role. Best to have few but authentic priests than to have many mediocre pretenders.

To deepen personally in our love for God through formation, prayer and kindness. Learning about the Faith—deeper doctrine in the schools, in the homilies and in youth groups. Learning to pray and love God and therefore put God's love into practice by having real concern for others—both friends and family and everyone we meet.

The Church has lost its way, but not how I expect most people believe. Many will say that the Church needs to modernise or become more "inclusive". This is not the problem and in fact could be part of the problem. Instead, it has lost its authenticity. At the heart is the Liturgy, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In many places the Liturgy is insipid, trying to be fashionable, bland, lukewarm. Gone has the sense of the sacred, the "setting apart" which is what sacredness means. How many truly believe and worship as it is the Holy Sacrifice of the Cross Made Present. Of Time and Eternity merging?!!! Priests act like 1970s hippie RSL band members "presiding" over the "celebrations" with silly smiles on their faces and cheap jokes. Restore the Sacred! Gregorian, Latin where appropriate, incense, priest ad orientum where appropriate, etc, etc. Not for some attachment to the old ways, but because this is the Church at its best. God wants restoration of the sacredness of the Liturgy. Adoration, worship, thank giving, petition...to be oriented to God, not to man. From Poor liturgy we turn to poor teaching and evangelisation. God wants the Church the Truth and with Fire in its belly, Stop being the "Church of Nice", with bland "God loves you" feel-good sermons. Life is hard. Life is especially hard in this modern world. With its demands that the State or Consumer Product be worshipped like God. Where the virtues are replaced with vices. The Nike "Just Do it" replaces the virtue of temperance and prudence. Sexual licence runs free and all, include Catholics in name only rejecting the Church's harder teachings. Well the Church needs to double down on the Truth, because only the Truth sets people free from the bondages of their vices, foolishness and pride. Teach the Truth without fear or passion, even if at first we lose numbers—for in the long run, the authenticity and challenges of the faith will win back those that seek Truth, rather than demand Comforts. Teach the reality that life is a Sacrifice, that God wants us to offer up our sacrifices, that we must wear the virtues as our armour and sustain ourselves with the sacraments. Finally, let's not become the Anglican Church—the Church for all people and therefore of none!!!! All the modern things that men and women seek of the Church already exist in that carcass that is the Anglican Church. Let those who want to fashion Holy Mother Church into something that the Anglican Church have the courage to walk away, to give us back the Keys of the Church on the way out.

I think God is asking us to move the 'Church' into the 21st century—to take account of the social and historical context we are now living in; to acknowledge that we are no longer living in the context which existed when the patriarchal dominated nature of the Church was entrenched. I think God is asking that those who now control the organisation of the Church be open to change—to allow women to play a more fundamental role—that women are not there as helpers to support men. I think God is asking that the Church in Australia be open to priests marrying—this happened in the early Church so there is no dogmatic reason why this can't happen again. I think God is also asking that we recognise that divorce is OK and that people who are divorced should not be shunned, prevented from receiving the sacraments. In this social and historical context of the 21st century, it is evident that divorce can be a good thing—as opposed to living in abusive relationships. I think that the Church as an organisation needs to listen to the people and learn from past mistakes. Until the Church acknowledges wrong doing and speaks out about it, then nothing will change. The Church needs to embrace change instead of trying to maintain systems that came from another time and place. Church needs to be more 'Christ-like'—to be open to others just as Christ was. The Church as an organisation is too judgemental—shunning those they believe are different (e.g. LGBTQI people). The Church also needs to embrace young people—to do this, the Church needs to move into the present and understand that the youth of today will question and challenge rather than accept something with no thought given to it. The Church in Australia needs to be strong and revert to the changes brought in by Vatican II regarding the prayers said at Mass—Vatican II introduced change to

<p>take into account the idiomatic language of the people—changes that have now been adopted are regressive.</p>
<p>I put this in the wrong box ... 1. Could qualified parishioners take over the managing/running of our "parishes" or better models of Christian communities thereby allowing priests to re-evangelise members of Catholic/Christian communities?</p>
<p>*There are three areas that I think the Plenary Council should focus on in its deliberations: Evangelisation. As Pat O'Connell pointed out in a recent article in the Catholic Weekly (30 December 201 p. 17), "the point of religious education in a Catholic school should be evangelism". When I was at school, I was taught by nuns who embodied the Catholic faith. Most parents were practising, and we were given a thorough grounding in the teachings of the Church. Catholic schools today are largely Catholic in name only. Many teachers and parents of children in Catholic schools do not practice the faith. Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation are administered to students who are not going to continue the practice of the faith ... The Church should designate some schools as truly Catholic—with practicing Catholics as teachers, and children of practicing Catholics as pupils. They should be prepared to fund such schools independent of government assistance if necessary. These schools should also become centres of evangelisation of the wider Catholic community. Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation should only be offered to those who genuinely intend to be practicing Catholics. Social Justice. If St Mary MacKillop were alive today, I am sure that she would say that the Church should move to support those in greatest need, as she did. She established schools for poor children, orphanages, and refuges for the homeless, particularly vulnerable women. Most of these needs are still with us. Homelessness is increasing, particularly among older women, women of child-bearing age are offered abortion as an answer to an unwanted pregnancy, families are struggling, many are dysfunctional and Australia has a significant problem with drugs and mental health issues. Catholic children are no longer denied access to education. However, much of the wealth and infrastructure of the Catholic Church is tied up in schools. The Church should move towards divesting itself of schools that are not truly Catholic. It should divest itself of or repurpose any property that is not serving the needs of those in need, or functioning purposefully as a centre of Catholic life. Governance. The Church needs new governance structures that will better protect the Church against the sexual abuse scandals that have so undermined its credibility and the trust of its members. The fact that sexual predators were admitted to the ranks of the clergy is one thing; but even more disturbing was the way the clergy moved to protect themselves at the expense of their victims. There needs to recognition of the fact that the laity are part of the Church too, and they have a role to play in Church governance. This is particularly true for women</p>
<p>I think that God is asking us to respect all individuals and include them in our Church e.g. homosexuals, divorced people because this is what Jesus would do. Jesus spoke to Mary Magdalene who was a prostitute and who was excluded by everyone else. I think that God would like to allow priests to be women and allow priests to marry. This would give our Church more balance and understanding of people and their difficulties. Priests were allowed to marry many years ago and it was human beings that changed this around the middle ages.</p>
<p>There's a torrent of destruction spewing from the secular world trying to engulf the Church to bend to the world. God doesn't change and what he says doesn't change, he's asking for a true metanoia. He's asking for firm resolution to follow in his footsteps and live a true life in him by maintaining the traditions of the Church and an increase of adoration of him in the Eucharist. The Church needs holy priests to draw in the faithful, the only way this can happen is if they draw from the source.</p>
<p>For all members of the Church to have a strong voice within an increasingly legislative Church. The Church to be used for prayer and reflection. For people to be more prayerful in our daily lives. To defend the faith. Why have we let the children move away from their faith? To respect other people's right to their beliefs even though we may not agree with them. To be more active in the Church. To 'keep the faith' in spite of the challenges we face today. To be inclusive of all. To be its leaders; its soldiers; its visionaries. To be people of faith and action. To be faithful to the Gospels. To</p>

supports our priests. To give more time to the Church. To be of service to others. To reach out to young people and those not practicing their faith in our parish. To actively participate in Church life. To acknowledge our Catholic tradition more in today's society. For the Church to be less business model and more faith based. For believers not to be ashamed of being Catholic. To make Jesus known and loved. To ensure a voice of the youth is heard and listened to. To attend and support our Church. For the laity to hold the Church hierarchy to account. For Church structures and finances to be transparent. For those training to be priests to be able to handle all possible scenarios of the future. To envisage a Church of the future with significantly fewer priests and a model to sustain this. For believers to stand up for their beliefs even in the face of opposition. To encourage the young people to be actively involved in the Church. To encourage our young families, children and grandchildren to experience God. That the bishops speak with and listen to the people. Communication. God wants us to be faithful always and to be united. To love and respect everyone. If we don't respect and love others, then we do not love God. To look at ways to speak with other Christians. Progress towards Christian re-unification. Rebuild credibility and trust in the Church. To be a Church for all. To build authentic Catholic communities; places where people can come for authentic friendship. Faith must be grounded in the family. A greater role for women in the Church. To be a more unified Church—clerics and laity working together for the common good. Greater appreciation of the complementarity of the roles of clergy and laity working together. To evangelise honestly, faithfully and courageously. To be aware of the world around us. Increasing support for families trying to raise children in the faith in a hostile world. Second evangelisation. To respond to those in need. To be more mindful of the marginalised. To read the signs of the times. To be cultural and counter cultural: to build a Catholic culture and to be a sign of contradiction. Concern for the environment. To be people of action. Faith in action. To be visible witnesses to the Gospels.

FIRST RESPONSES: 1. Prayer and Worship, 2. Ecumenism, 3. Evangelism by personal outreach, 4. Put faith in action, persevere regardless of scandals. —Be strong and pray God for help and increase of faith for Australians and Australia -God is asking clergy to be more community-minded; share more of what they have, not just spiritually but physically, e.g. helping others doing voluntary work, especially for the elderly and disabled. In this way we achieve the true meaning of love which is inclusive regardless of gender, nationality or religion and other backgrounds. We are all God's people, young and old. Australia is rich but spiritually poor, so foster belief in God and strengthen the faith, especially for youth. —Bring the Church closer to the people and inform us, perhaps by small groups to discuss the Bible, meditation groups for family and youth. Foster friendship. — Priests to reach out to Catholic families personally, through the schools. —Re Ecumenism: Unite all Australians to God. Unite all Churches in the love of the Lord. Have friendship and contact with other Christians. Allow God to receive perfect glory from the human family. —Share God's name with ALL people, through love. —Put faith in action, regardless of scandals—Support the elderly—Bring peace to the world—Continue in the Catholic Church in spite of the problems with some wayward priests—Hold more adoration in the Church and encourage people to attend.

To speak boldly and honestly ... 1. Develop a new model of priesthood (that recognises all the baptised faithful in ministry) And in so doing *make celibacy a choice *welcome back married priests *ordain women to priesthood and diaconate *stamp out clericalism *reduce our dependence on priests from overseas 2. De- institutionalise the Church and simplify it in order to let Jesus in. * Move from the current hierarchical and authoritarian institution to a community model of Church that acts as Jesus did. * be a strong voice for justice and be a place of action for the poor, the oppressed and underprivileged (Church as the light of Christ that shines out visibly; treatment of Indigenous peoples, gap between rich and poor, treatment of asylum seekers, the homeless, the disabled) * provide greater learning and faith formation opportunities for the laity and leadership * build closer relationships and dialogue with other faiths and learn from each other *Listen to the views of others, evaluate and discern new pathways 3. Learn from the recent Royal Commission into institutional response to sexual abuse (bishop's leadership/ lack of leadership, their responses/communication, lack of formal and public apology to the victims) Question the Church hierarchy on their response (or

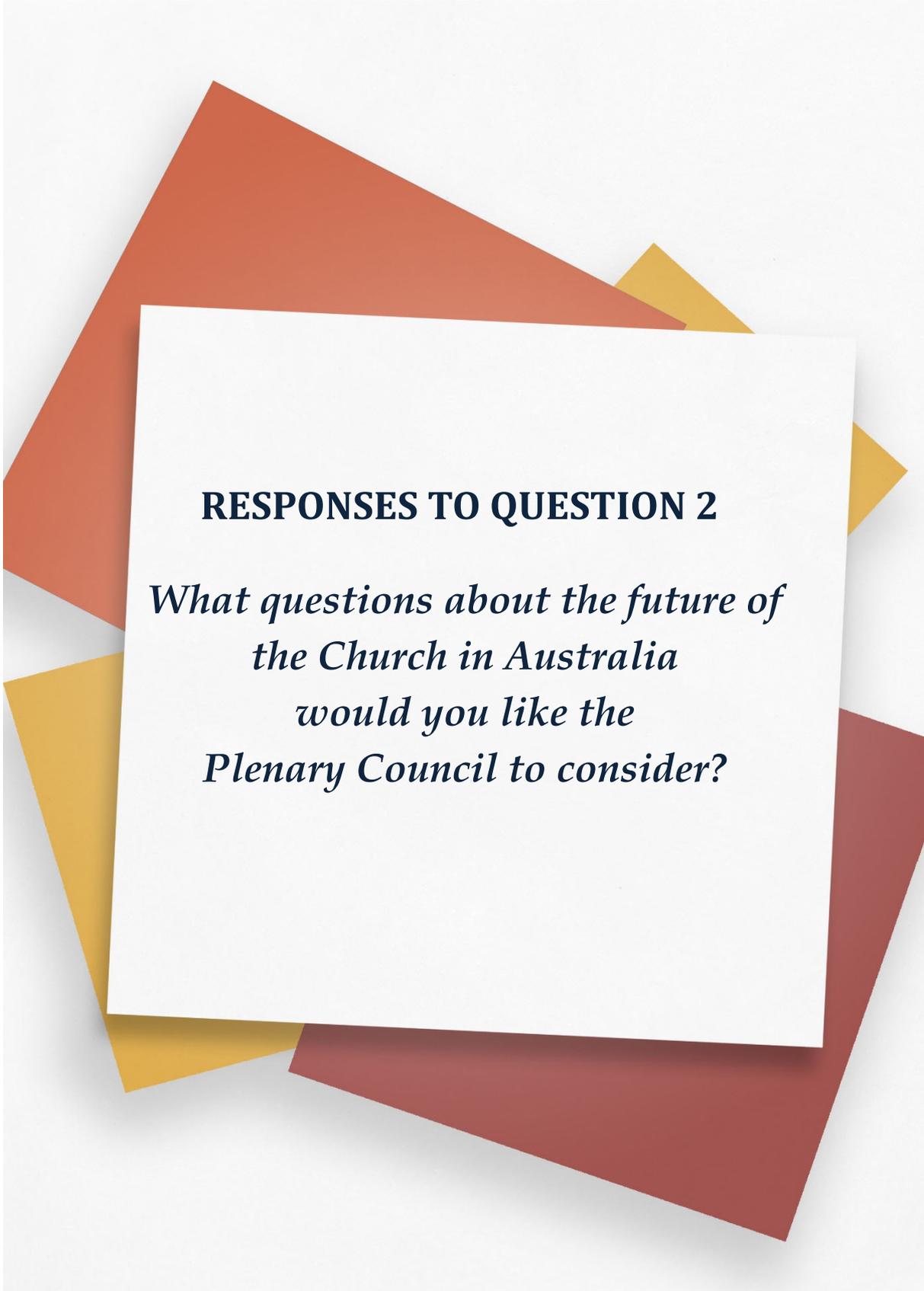
<p>lack thereof) to assist those adversely affected by the actions of individuals within the Church (clergy) 4. That the focus of Church is more than the rituals. Sincere spiritual direction and education is needed and some Church laws need to be relaxed. Bishops need to make some courageous decisions so that the Church is accessible to all. *To be drawn into a deep faithful, trusting and loving relationship with GOD and to allow this relationship to permeate and influence every facet of our lives—individual relationships, family friendships, community and the world as a whole * We need to welcome back to the Eucharistic table those who feel alienated from Church —divorced, those married outside of the Church, homosexuals * The third rite of reconciliation needs to be reconsidered as a means of community healing as well as individual healing 5. Respond to the exodus of youth from the Church and investigate the reasons (often to other less traditional denominations) Are they attracted to the musical style some Churches offer? Why is our Church not relevant to them? Some Church laws are perceived to be completely out of step with our current culture e.g. sex before marriage in a loving relationship. “The Church has insisted on sexual morality more than on the love and social justice in human affairs that was a constant and powerful theme of the teaching of Jesus” (Bishop Geoffrey Robinson). The Church’s teaching that all sex between a couple must serve both the procreative aspect as well as the unitive aspect is anachronistic. Whilst the Church still holds this teaching, young people in particular lose respect for the Church.</p>
<p>Fidelity to the Gospel</p>
<p>God is asking us to love Him with all that we are and all that we have. We can only love Him authentically through experiencing the authentic person of Christ, and being conformed to His divine love for His Father. Christ is met most perfectly in this life through the Eucharist and the Scriptures. Hence the best way to achieve what God wants of the Church in Australia is by increasing our focus on meeting Christ in the Blessed sacrament and in the Scriptures, while encouraging a quiet and prayerful heart open to the reality of Christ. Eucharistic adoration is a practice that beautifully combines these, letting the faithful meet Christ in silence, through the Scriptures, in the presence of the Eucharist. Pope St John Paul II wrote 'adoration of the Blessed sacrament is also an important daily practice and becomes an inexhaustible source of holiness' (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 10). All other things we desire as a Church flow naturally from these sources. We seek community, but 'we are one body for we all partake in the one bread' (1 Cor 10:17). We seek practical love and good works, but our love must be the love of knowing Christ, or it will descend into mere human virtue and we will not attain the divine love. If we seek first knowledge of and union with Christ then we will have all that God desires of us. We 'are anxious and troubled about many things' but only 'one thing is needful' (Luke 10:41-2), to sit at Christ's feet. If we, as a Church, focus on helping Catholics experience Christ who is objectively there in the sacrament and Scriptures, then as our love is deepened by Christ, we will do all the practical things God desires of us.</p>
<p>To have faith in God, and tolerance towards the administration of the Church in Australia. It can be challenging at times, especially when dealing with certain clergy.</p>
<p>To listen to His Holy Spirit and let every person know they are saved through Jesus Christ and He welcomes all of them into his fold. I think we need reform in the Australian Church currently. To start teaching the faith in its full and unadulterated form, to worship reverently again instead of being overly creative and self-indulgent and being humble enough to see our ancestors prayed well for almost 2000 years.</p>
<p>To get back to the basics of our religion which has taken a very soft approach over the past 30 years or so. Bishops do not stand up to so-called modernist Catholic reformists and so we have been backsliding and agreeing to them to keep the peace. Oh, for a priest or bishop to say NO! To these blindsided individuals. I call them one hour a week Catholics. Jesus expects us to be 24/7 Catholics. We are in a sorry state in Australia.</p>
<p>He is asking us to be faithful and extremely tolerant of people around us who seem to be trying to divide us in our beliefs. To pray for these groups before they destroy our very livelihood...</p>
<p>Service to all. To be open to follow Jesus and His love for ALL people.</p>

Be bold. Be transparent. Be real ... esp. to our youth. They have been deprived of the practical tools (behaviour, language, mindset) that would help equip them with an alternative to the current bombardment of secular values. Is the Theology of the Body being thoroughly taught in all secondary schools? Are parents in primary school being introduced to this as well, so that it becomes "organic" in their children's daily lives? If teachers in Catholic secondary schools are struggling with how to teach JP II TOB, begin with online talks by Jason Evert or Fr. Mike Schmitz. Address the Churches teaching on "uncomfortable" issues ... pornography, oral sex, premarital sex, same sex attraction. Show them an alternative. Help them to understand the sanctity and value of their bodies, minds and hearts. Read Adam Bryant's courageous testimony (Catholic Weekly) ... this demonstrates the CRISIS we have in our schools. My own children's experiences also confirm this. Catholic families need help in their parenting as so many non-practising Catholic parents do not understand the HEART of what it really means to be Catholic. They perceive it as an "organisation" of rules, with a few "sacramental" boxes to tick to get their child through school. Nurture their spirituality. All parents want to know how to parent best ... host talks, and include a faith dimension. Address specific current issues, with links to sites that give a Christian perspective. Regularly promote books, articles, movies, music, etc. that may help enlighten and guide parents in the ways of Christ. Publish these in the newsletter, and encourage school principals to speak out at every gathering where parents are in attendance. Our leaders need to be less apologetic. The teaching of studies of Religion for HSC students seems to teach students all the rules and methods of many religions, but no real heart experience of Jesus Christ. We need to make a heart connection for students to Jesus somehow, perhaps more retreats or in-service teaching. My younger child got an amazing mark in Catholic Doctrinal and catechesis SOR (Non-HSC) but is ignorant of the person of Jesus!! It's like straining the gnat but missing the elephant.

To be better Christians in the community, to have more unity among the Churches. Being stronger at speaking out against the political issues such as abortion, 'gay marriage' and euthanasia which go against the teachings of Christ.

I think God would like us to be more relaxed about attending Mass. I would like a short Mass in every parish once on a Sunday. I'm thinking of the many people with mental health problems, and they are easy to recognise if you have had mental health issues too. To be forced into close proximity to other people and not being able to leave till Mass is finished is a source of anxiety to a lot of people. Parents of young children would appreciate it too. And elderly people. Mass can be said in 25 to 30 minutes and a lot of people would appreciate that course of action. Singing so many parts of the Mass as we do now and hymns too is very time consuming. I think all the coloured vestments the priest wears are alienating to a lot of people. Plainer clothes, as a start white garments like Pope Francis wears would be good. After all, Jesus wore clothes that the rest of the community wore, not clothes that made Him stand out. The Religious Sisters are much more approachable in their everyday dress, instead of the habits they used to wear. Another thing is to take away the required 1 hour fast before Holy Communion. This also is a terrible burden for people with OCD.

I think God is asking us to be His presence to a nation that is wilfully ignorant of Him. Asking us to be His love in a world where His love is spurned.



RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2

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

QUESTIONS FOR PLENARY COUNCIL

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

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

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

1. How long should Catholics have to endure banal liturgies for?
2. When will parish priests become again full-time pastors (abolish day off)?
3. Can you bishops find and appoint someone who will lead the Australian Church in its resurgence?
4. Can you try to bring those who follow Jesus together?
5. Can the revenue to the Church be increased by innovative means?
6. How will the Church demonstrate in word and deed that it truly believes in the real presence?
7. How are we going to deal with priest shortage?
8. Will the Church flourish if it is heavily pruned or does the Church as we know it need to die so a new Church can be born?
9. Can all priests take seriously the Homily they preach at Mass?
10. When are our communities going to be treated with the respect of dialogue and discussion not being told what to do?
11. With a society that is all about technology and a generation, that is selfish how does the Church accommodate the community and try to motivate them towards the Church?
12. How does the Church support the changing family?
13. How do we plan to empower lay people to be the hands and feet of Jesus?
14. How can we connect all the dots between the different ministries & the hierarchy?
15. How can we increase understanding amongst Catholics as to why the Church holds all life as sacred, even during suffering?
16. How do we develop ministries in our parishes among the ordinary Catholics in the pew?
17. How are we going to evangelise?
18. How will we reach out to lapsed Catholics?
19. Is the hierarchy of the Church serving the people as Christ's images depict?
20. Does the Church in Australia need to review the wealth of the Church to possibly consider wealth redistribution?

21. How critical is it that every Australian considers themselves a member of the Catholic Church and is committed to all of the Church's teaching?
22. Given the shortage of priests, how can the laity take on (and be granted) additional responsibilities?
23. Are we giving priority to God in our life?
24. How can we bring the Church into the 2020 times?
25. Will you change the structure of Mass e.g. longer homily?
26. Can you have different Masses e.g. one that is modern and one that is traditional?
27. How can we keep young people involved in the life of the Church?
28. How do we connect with people who no longer attend Mass?
29. How can we increasingly become a Church that is Christ-centered, relevant and people-focused?
30. How do we care for the needy in our society today?
31. When will we focus less on the institution and traditions that overcomplicate or contradict the message of Jesus?
32. How are you going to get more homegrown priests?
33. How can we incorporate lively music into our liturgies? For example, Hillsongs have such a lively musical component that attracts people to their services. It is important to have music to lead us in our worship.
34. Will the Church ever be willing to evolve alongside our society?
35. How can we remain relevant in a society that largely sees that faith, prayer and God has no place in one's life?
36. Has it considered looking into the training and appointment of lay Deacons to each of the parishes?
37. Has it considered the appointment of women priests and women Acolytes?
38. What measures are being taken within the Church to prevent further sexual abuse by the clergy?
39. What can be done to address the Catholic students abandoning their Catholic faith on leaving school?
40. How will the Church make an effort to engage the youth to ensure that our faith is maintained and sustained in the future?
41. In the Bible it quotes do not judge others yet all Churches regardless of religion judge gay members of society why??????
42. When will our bishops be bold in inviting married priests and other men who have left back to ministry?
43. Are there any plans for promotion of what might be called "Family Catechesis", that is to say, parents teaching traditional catechism truths, perhaps using modern resources, to their children, in a family setting?
44. Is the Plenary 2020 being held due to the Church fading away in first world countries?
45. Will there be more transparency in future decision-making and will the laity be more involved?
46. When will women get an equal management and leadership role in the Church?

47. How to be keenly sensitive and more creative to campaign for priestly vocation?
48. As the current custodians of the Catholic Church in this country, what do we hope to hand on to the next generations?
49. How does the Church intend to encourage the laity to take up the universal call to holiness?
50. How can the Church continue to influence stakeholders (e.g. government and business) about moral issues?
51. We would like them to consider the facts that as a true believer of God we must live according to his will not ours and we must bring people the truth and nothing more or less.
52. Why has the Church not moved on and allowed priests to marry and have a family?
53. How is the Catholic leadership going to turn around the legacy of Cardinal Pell?
54. What models of governance will dioceses and parishes adopt to achieve broad participation in decision making, accountability and transparency?
55. What are we going to do to evangelise and unite the denominations of Christianity?
56. How can we reach those who are in pain, who are suffering, and who are seeking relief?
57. What can we do for people suffering from mental health issues and gender/sexuality-related issues?
58. If we are to be a witness to our faith what does this look like?
59. Why do people see the Church as an institution rather than the body of Christ?
60. What are the bishops doing about the religious state of our schools?
61. Will women be allowed to be ordained?
62. How can we claim to have credible, just processes of leadership, authority and decision-making when women and married adults are excluded?
63. How can the Church be sustained in the future given the current trajectory of falling numbers and disenchantment with abuses stemming from rampant clericalism?
64. Do we offer enough to our young people (at school and afterwards) to convince them they need to stay active within the Church?
65. How can the Church better connect with young parents and offer them useful guidance?
66. When will the Church openly accept divorcees, LGBT people and others that conservatives don't like?
67. Will the Church continue to preach the same Commandments and teachings that Jesus did about loving God, our neighbour and ourselves?
68. Who is really defending our faith against the corruption?
69. When can we have more perpetual adoration in each archdiocese?
70. What should the Church look like in 100 years or in 500 years?
71. How will the Church involve migrant groups if they do not translate important information into community languages - at least the major ones?
72. Why isn't there more opportunity for faith formation in our parishes?

73. How is the Church going to bring back Catholics who have stopped going to Mass and relating to the Church's message?
74. How can we face individualism and a culture of self-sufficiency?
75. What does the Church need to do to respond more fully to the Royal Commission?
76. Why are so many Catholics afraid to launch out and speak about their faith in the public square?
77. How can the laity receive more and better formation?
78. How can the Church place a new and determined focus on evangelisation?
79. How can the Church better respond to the needs of the Catholic community?
80. This Plenary Council program, with limited support from all of Australia's bishops, poor format, and targeting less than 5% of Australia's Catholic community does not inspire trust. So, how can the Plenary Council restore trust within this program?
81. What actions can be taken so priests can devote more of their time and energy to their priestly duties as set out in the Code of Canon Law?
82. How is the Church stopping the ongoing secularisation, even inside Catholic schools?
83. How will the Church proactively address and try to improve/ change its perception in the community in the wake of unsavoury sexual abuse claims/ stories?
84. Are we doing our best to love our neighbour?
85. Is the Church serious about caring for its youth?



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 34 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.

Daily Mass helped me to commit to leading a life that Christ calls me to. But I was only able to attend daily Mass because at the time I didn't have a job, when I was working, I couldn't find a Mass anywhere near me that was before 8am or after 5pm. Also, adoration of the Blessed sacrament helped me to grow in love for the Eucharist. There needs to be more Adoration available throughout each diocese.

I came to Australia trying to get away from my old self and the trial of a life where I was not sure where it will end. My first job was a process worker, to a cleaner, then more cleaning ... one stormy rainy day with lightning strong winds working outside cleaning cars ... I felt the loneliness of my career as a cleaner so I wished and prayed to Jesus. Wished I had a job with an office where I can have a desk and not to work outside anymore, a car with an air con as my old car was overheating and gives me a headache. Also, I was wishing to be in managerial role where I can lead people and help serve them. With God's willing, I am grateful and fortunate that all of the above has been accomplished. Australia is where my life has been wholeheartedly converted a love and closeness for Jesus and his Mother Mary and the Church Australia is where I found my faith. I'm now working in a job for the whole state as a Coordinator for a company where everyone thinks I'm smart and intelligent but I'm not, new company car (Jesus hides all the good things from the wise and reveals to others like me and turn me into a professor looking in which but am not) ... Thankfully for the gift of the Holy Spirit a reason why I'm able to lead and find the strength courage to accept the hardships, struggles, difficulties, people against me and make fun, tease me because I was a cleaner ... but with the love of my Lord, it feels like nothing in this world I cannot do. I also hope and pray to one day to be able to work near the elderly, the sick, terminally ill or even reading the gospel as my English is not that bright ... but yet again, I have accomplished all of those. I now volunteer as a Sacristan, read at Mass every Sunday, take communion to the sick and also welcome the sick from [-] to Mass ... more and more little miracles acknowledgement every day is continuing to bless me and enlighten my life even now joining in as LCM (little company of Mary) ... My heartfelt every day to our Mother in heaven for her guidance and help enriched a commitment to me in life to go to Mass every Saturday of the week to give thanks to Her Son, our Lord, for my mission in life past week ... This is now my continual routine life living full of Novena Prayers, taught and given to me by the Spirit. I now feel enriched, empowered and blessed everyday day by day the fullness of grace and mercy, justice, life of commitment to my faith. Thank you Lord, without you I am nothing.

My mother and my wife are Anglicans and I see many things that they do far better than we do.

My parents lived the faith and passed it on to me by the example of their lives. I attended a Christian Brothers' school and my teachers shared their faith—and the Green Catechism—with me. One (lay) teacher in particular spoke on the benefit of weekly Mass even in times where faith seems absent. This was a key message which has always stuck with me. I was fortunate to be able to study an MA (Theological Studies) at The University of Notre Dame Australia later in life which has really helped me to understand my faith and the symbiotic relationship between faith and reason.

My experience is that there are many good people in the Church, both ordained and non-ordained, who are doing their best "to keep the show on the road". I am concerned that many priests are being stretched too far and are overworked, often responsible for several parishes. We are urged to "pray for vocations" and that is not a bad thing. But the answer is staring us in the face and we refuse to recognise it. There are plenty of vocations but we keep on ignoring them on the basis of gender. There are numerous women, who are theologically trained and often have many other qualifications which would allow them to be excellent pastors. This failure could almost be characterised as "a sin against the Holy Spirit".

I have come closer to Christ through prayer, reading and the example of my parents, almost despite my early dealings with the official Church. I have been so disappointed by so many priests who barely spoke of Christ. Thank God I have now found some good priests who want to bring me closer to Christ.

Priests that are down to earth and look to children as the source of the future and that can empathise with what families are actually dealing with. Pope Francis has been an inspiration and we need more of him.

I'm 78. I have taught in Catholic schools for 55 years and continue to do so on a limited basis. The Church has shaped my faith. Years of commitment to practical involvement with High School students, along with ongoing formation, reading, reflection discussion with wise religious men and women and priests, has developed a richer approach to a wonderful faith. It has also led me towards sensible criticism of official Church approaches—top down, rather than listening to the faithful, does not enrich the Body of Christ.

[-] again: "The Catholic Church should advise faithful that do not conform with the tradition and teachings of the Church ... that there are other Christian denominations [to] which people are free to move, in line with the Church's respect for personal conscience and choice." A childish, petulant response to a serious issue! "Children from Year 1 are capable of understanding the meaning of the liturgy ... Confessional boxes to be installed in every church which respect the privacy of the penitent ... Preaching clergy should visit parishes on Missions. Music should be appropriate to the liturgy, organ to be the prime instrument ... Children to sit at the front of the church in year rows, with a responsible adult (catechist) at the end of the pew supervising. ... Fasting to receive communion should begin from midnight of Saturday." [And if I go to Mass on Monday to Friday?] That shaped me in the 1940s and 1950s. It has not shaped me since the mid-1960s. And to return to it is not only inadvisable but impossible. Life, the Church, the Faithful—we've all moved on. Once again—bishops of Australia—listen to your people.

My parish in [-] is defunct. After more than a hundred years, it has failed to make the final cut. Failed to make the team. IKEA across the street from the old church is the replacement (flat packs for all!). Repatriate the profits overseas. Pay virtually no tax. Allow the sell-off of public assets (PPP's). Where is the voice of the Church in this tragic failure? Where is the voice on public ethical concerns?

A loss of the sense of mystery, of the lives of the saints, devotions and understanding of the spiritual power of the Mass and sacraments and an increased loss of the sense of community in parishes as time has gone on. The world seems to have become the evangelist to the Church (all baptised) as the Church has centred on works good in themselves but less conscious of the direction of the Holy Spirit. The Charismatic Movement has struggled to be accepted for what it is trying to effect in the world.

Lessons from the Margins: Walk slowly, Pause frequently, Listen deeply, Speak sparingly, Consult widely, Act with integrity, Work collaboratively, Respect unceasingly, Praise regularly, Advocate passionately, Observe closely, Discern wisely, Reflect often, Tread sensitively, Encourage sincerely, Love tenderly, Question perceptively, Discuss openly, Respond compassionately, Laugh heartily, Celebrate frequently, Pray unceasingly, Breathe deeply, Weep occasionally, Wash hands habitually, and live gratefully.

<p>My Faith was initially shaped by my family and then my Religious Formation. But it was the teachings of Vatican II that was the catalyst for the maturing of my Faith, increase in Religious literacy and the deepening of my Theological/Spiritual education.</p>
<p>Three issues that I think the Church needs to move on, but which I doubt will even rate a mention at the Council are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Women priests,2. Married priests,3. Greater use of the Third Rite of Reconciliation.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Women squatting during the offertory of the Mass instead of kneeling properly.2. People entering the church and not genuflecting in deference to the presence of our Lord in the tabernacle.3. Not doing proper genuflecting (instead some people do what is closer to a curtsy).4. Various hand and body gestures in various parts of the Mass.
<p>My son took his own life when he was 30 years of age. The night it happened, police came to my home, shouting, "Police here", I knew in my heart something terrible had happened, and as I proceeded to unlock my door, an amazing fear gripped me and all I could say was, "Please, Lord, Help me, Help me ... Straight away, a peace came over me and I became so calm, the Police remarked ... this is really strange ... I was quite taken back myself at how I felt. It was as if Jesus took over from me and took away my pain. And of course, afterwards I knew from scripture He bore all for us ... if we just believe ... Praise be to the Lord.</p>
<p>My experience of Church for the past forty years had been living in the small community of [-] with about a Catholic community of 50. We have a care group which supports our whole community of [-] with cooking for those in need. Visiting the lonely and sick. Being with the dying. Where we see a need, we attend to it. I only have to send an email to this caring group and they respond. This to me is CHURCH. We look after our church, all volunteers clean, cut the grass, and make beautiful gardens which supply the flowers for the altar. Because of our isolation, we work together to maintain our church building and community. We have a wonderful choir and readers and acolytes and servers. We have catechists. Many retreats for men and women have been held in our church. This is a vibrant community the powers that be want to close off and sell part of to support high rise building over at [-]. Our parish. This makes me very, very sad. A community that is vibrant closing down!!! Come see how we work and you will learn about the true meaning of Church.</p>
<p>I am a single mother of two very young boys. [-] and [-]—I am a teacher and My youngest son is 18 months old—when I went on maternity leave they struggled to find a maths teacher to fill my position and like most things, you sometimes write that you are willing to do something that you really never have the intention of doing—I returned to work and my load was teaching religion, I was slightly overwhelmed cause as you can imagine that I did not see myself as a priest—(and when [-] was 5 months old, my husband left me and I was now a single woman)—when my husband left, as much as it was something that no one wants or wishes, I remember back to my childhood where one of my teachers told me that God only gives rocks to those who can carry them—over the last 12 months, I think God has carried me, not only could I have not asked for the greatest support but I also changed parishes because I wanted my children to go to a school in the future and the priest has shown compassion that I have never seen before—and the community has lifted me when I have felt like I was failing as a mum because I couldn't make my two boys sit still in Mass and be quiet. (although I sometimes get others to watch my children so I can engage in the Mass)—I feel that the Catholic Church has made me a more confident mother and how to be a part of a community especially in a time when my life was a mess—as a young girl, I was an altar server and my grandmother was involved in her local parish, my grandfather did the books for the parish and my grandmother was a committee member of many of the church groups—although my parents weren't as active, my grandmother painted a picture of Our Lady and I think seeing that picture shows how much Mary meant to her as a mother of 9 and I know that is who I pray to as a mother of two, and I think it is in the simple prayers that you start to think clearly.</p>

I was raised in a practicing Catholic family and went to Catholic school to year 12. Now at 56, I understand that just because someone is devout doesn't mean they are always kind, loving and respectful of other people. Some of the kindest, caring people I know are of no particular religious group.

Faith in Jesus during a fire—stayed calm 10 years ago, I was going to suicide, I had a dream that an angel pulled me out of a fire and this stopped me from going to suicide. Attending Dawn Masses were a very defining moment meeting wonderful people at breakfast afterwards. I was very ill but through the power of prayer, I was helped and received much joy from the Dawn Masses. Prayers were answered for my sister who had a successful hip replacement operation and a short stay in hospital. I have been in the parish for many years and World Youth Day in 2008 was the best thing. I was involved in home-stay and many parishioners put their hand up to be involved. How good Catholic faith can be when everyone pulls together. All pilgrims were very welcomed. It was a huge success and there was a great vibe in the parish and Sydney. Prayers were answered for a Visa application. Everything aligned when applying for a job even though I did not have experience. I felt God's intervention. Being a pilgrim and going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. This had a huge effect in my life, I have had family members reunited who were previously divided. I have experienced miracles. I was sick for 40 days and felt this was significant as it's mentioned in the Bible several times and I felt God was with me and helped me. I now feel much stronger in my faith and have a clearer vision in my life. I was very sick in bed one night at home on my own. I had a water bed at the time and the moment I heard the key in the door from my husband coming home, I strongly felt the movement of someone getting up off my bed next to me knowing they could now leave as my husband was now home to look after me.

Lack of friendliness among parishioners/No communication—to-each-his-own type of atmosphere in clique, I grew up in a very strong Catholic family of ten. We pray every day altogether Holy Rosary (one brother is a priest) NO—Too darkened and badly influenced by being taught by the nuns. The Irish nuns had no love in their hearts just discipline. School days were not happy times—I don't mean anything nasty (or sexual). I'd rather be in primary school now—it is a beautiful school. My friend told me in case of trouble or you want to thank—say the ROSARY. I followed her and Mother Mary never fails. Whatever I ask of her, she gives as long as I pray the Rosary. This is Australia where I learn 'No pain, no gain'. 'No sufferings, no glory'. Thanks! As a convert, I noticed that our Catholic Church are not that friendly as the Protestant Groups. The other Christian groups have more fellowships than the Catholic Church. When you have different trials and tribulations, your faith keeps you strong. Knowing there is someone you can speak to. I have too many stories of the touch of Jesus and retreats and even priests and nuns who have helped me grow in my relationship with Jesus. Testimonies of God's love and faithfulness I have a lot but nowhere to share them in the Catholic Church as we have no prayer meets or BEC/cell groups. When I pray in faith, God has always answered my prayer even though it may be simple. God has never abandoned my request.

I am a very committed member of the Catholic Church but I have been bitterly disappointed over many years at the way it has operated. I have always acted professionally and have been praised for my work, so much of which was unpaid, but in the end my employment was terminated in a most unprofessional and nasty way. So, as anyone can imagine, I am feeling very bitter and hurt, and yet my faith is so strong and, now with this Plenary Council, I have great hopes of vast improvements to come. I pray every day for the Church and feel very confident that the Holy Spirit will see us through this very difficult time.

A common occurrence, especially in country areas is that the parish priest creates a new building, whether needed or not, which requires the laity to foot the bill as he moves on to another area of ministry leaving a legacy but being free of the consequent financial burden.

My story of Faith and how God works in mysterious ways relates to one of our parish priests and a nun who ran an RCIA session who didn't believe in the Virginity of Mary or as God being a Father. The parish priest was promoting feminist views i.e. women priests, Married priests and "God our Mother" from the altar. He also denounced Angels being present at Christ's birth. I had a meeting

with him to discuss these matters. He would [not] listen and ushered me out of the Presbytery. He fell ill a few years later and had to retire. The Nun who advocated God as a Mother and spread falsehoods to new Catholics also is ill now and no longer can participate in parish matters. Evidence God wants his work taught and promoted.

I have been so blessed! I grew up in a dysfunctional family, but my mother was a daily-Mass-goer, I went to good Catholic schools, we knew "everyone" in the parish, and all our neighbours. Being Catholic was the most central part of my identity and belonging. I went to [-] Uni when Fr [-] was chaplain, so I got some tertiary religious education, and good contact with Catholics in other Australian universities. I'd picked up a lot of social justice teaching, and "did my prac" working for a couple of years in the [-] Child Welfare Dept. I spent 2 years living at [-], [-], [in another state]. where Fr [-] had a "commune" before that word had been invented—a sort of lay monastery. Back in [my home city], I lived at home, worked in libraries and studied librarianship, and became friendly with the Little Sisters of Jesus. Influenced by Fr [-] who had just founded the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in [-], I went to study at [-] in [-] in 1972–3. The "lightning bolt" struck when I was in the US with the Catholic Worker movement, and I came back to Australia to join the Little Sisters of Jesus. I was with them in [-], [-] and [-] before going [overseas] for the novitiate. It was a difficult but enriching experience. The up-shot was that I wasn't accepted for profession, and I came back to work as a librarian in [-]. I was able to buy a house in [-] when it wasn't "desirable inner-city real estate" but a poor neighbourhood with a lot of Aboriginal residents (and the Little Sisters). Fr [-] was parish priest. There were good times and bad times, but again, it has been an enriching experience. I've been here 40 years now, through thick and thin times as far as Church life is concerned. I absconded to [-] [-] soon after the NeoCats were imposed on [-]—I can't pray on a battlefield. A lot of my work as a librarian has been in theological libraries, and that has been an enriching experience too. As I approached my 60th birthday, I decided I should take the spiritual life more seriously, and since 1998 I've had more enrichment through spending time at [-], [-]. I love the Psalm response we say on All Saints Day (and it comes up at other times during the year) "Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face." I hope to see the Church in Australia in a better stage of its growth as I wait in joyful hope ...

I was brought up in a believing and practicing Catholic family and attended Catholic schools. I then needed to find a loving God rather than a punitive one to get out of a scrupulous nature. I did this by help from a wise priest and reading Martin Luther. Later I began to understand, through Sociology, that the Church suffered from over routinizing Christ's message and putting too much stress on rigid rules and authoritative pronouncements. I think clericalism needs to be reformed to rejuvenate understanding of Christ's message and for the sake of the lay people and also priests who have had to lead impoverished human lives.

Re: my experience in faith, I grew up on a farm. My father gave us (4 children) our values, usually around the breakfast or the dining room table. He would tell us how we were to live our lives, giving us our principles and values. He usually finished with a quotation from the New Testament by saying "As Jesus said in the gospels ...". I am now an old person and I believe that this formation in my early life is the reason that I go to church and others don't.

I am 82. I grew up scrupulous and I have never managed to free myself of that weakness—fortunately, I imagine that it is unlikely to occur with today's young. But at the same time my early teachers communicated a faith that was vivid and precious, and has always sustained me. I am distressed by the number of my friends who entered idealistically on Catholic marriages when they were young, only to have those marriages break up years later, often apparently occasioning a partial or even complete loss of faith. For the Church of the future, this seems an urgent problem—of course it is bound up with the secular culture around us. I have been greatly helped by the "matey" familiarity of some priests, and I am concerned that some foreign priests may not understand the attractiveness of the familiarity to Australians; though I recognise the need for respect and dignity. The Church has always remained a home for me, and I am grateful to the priests

and religious who have kept that home a living reality.

For most of my life I have attended Mass daily, and I rely on this.

In my contributions to the defence of marriage during and prior to the plebiscite last year, I was astounded by the marginalisation of my position. On one hand, that is fine and understandable. On further reflection, I was very astounded by the marginalisation of my position within my own peer group, loosely defined as the parents at my Catholic School. This led me to further understand that this group does not have a deep understanding of Catholic teaching, or a familiarity in discussing it. I detected rather the reactions of mild distaste as of something unfashionable, or profound scepticism, cynicism and even something fearful, bordering on hateful vitriol. This sort of reaction came from close friends and relatives who were nominally Catholic. Efforts to discuss the issue led to repetition of the ideas propagated by the often left-wing progressive media, and efforts to deepen this discussion by analysis of Church teaching was met often with the above reactions. Of course, it is easy to scoff at the "holy roller" bent on pontificating his own views, but I am astonished because I found a real resistance to exploring not only Church teachings in the informal conversation amongst friends, but also a sort of wilful ignorance and disdain for the idea of studying the texts in question or going deeper into Church teaching on the subject—a population of Catholics ABSOLUTELY RIPE FOR THE PLUCKING. My impressions are confirmed by the responses of the Sydney Catholic Schools and major Jesuit schools to my enquiries as to whether they teach the catechism. Long meaningless answers about the "gospel values" (Dr Dan Brown's glossy magazine) and the "whole person" were as much as I could get out of that dialogue, in other words the answer is "no". Now we have a plethora of psychobabble infiltrating our Catholic primary school to replace what should be front and centre, i.e. the catechism. We have resilience training, offered either within school or sometimes by third parties on site, we have "bounce back" "Kids Matter—which has curious connections to the homosexual advocacy groups Beyond Blue and Safe Schools Coalition (not strong connections but they do use some of those resources) and disturbingly we had a Sydney Catholic schools commitment to unisex style toilets brought in under the explanation that this was better for student safety and behaviour monitoring ... which has some justification but it was disturbing in view of the possible infiltration of gender ideology into Sydney Catholic Schools. All of this is mostly smoke rather than fire. The psychobabble is probably fine, the toilets are probably irrelevant; however, what I see is a lack of connection of the decision-making processes to the struggle with cultural Marxism which is so obvious, and to any apparent influence or reference to the catechism. We don't need to change much. Just reference the catechism first. Don't just adopt things from outside architects, policy makers or third parties.

I have a strong belief in a Christian God. I have become disappointed with the lack of leadership on traditional values and teaching, and the lack of willingness of the Church to protect its community and membership, and the lack of practical support and usefulness in supporting traditional families. The Church needs to move away from Church doctrine, and more towards traditional teachings and practical support around the word of God. The Church needs to move away from its emphasis on the Mass, to a more useful and practical way to engage its membership.

At this time, I view the Church as no different to the temples of old whose practices and focus on wealth and status, Jesus admonished. I have known victims and relatives of victims who have been affected by the child abuse scandals and have not received justice, but have been silenced from speaking out or pursuing justice. I see no improvement and doubt there will be actual changes from this council meeting. After I was diagnosed of Breast Cancer last Sept 1999, the Josephites here in [-] pray for me. My friend told me they put it online to pray for me that year. Praise the Lord and now I am still here trying to be a good Catholic person. And until now, I have a lot of prayers that God give it to me and to my family, friend and neighbour. I'm pleased I had all of my Catholic schooling pre-Vatican II. I am pleased I was old enough to understand what came out of Vatican II. (Submitted by a 71-year-old). The changes in today's world is scary and threatening our beliefs. Our churches need to stand up and remind their parishioners that we should not be afraid of our beliefs and not allow others damage what was created a long time ago. To tell those who really pray—that

<p>they really will see; hear our Lord; His Mother, the Angels and Saints. Personally I have been aided by an angel (in [-]) without even asking for help. Yes—he was NOT human but in human form—a true story.</p>
<p>In the past few years, I have been strongly challenged by a number of non-believers to take action with respect to systemic failures in the Church disclosed by the evidence given to the Royal Commission for Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse which has led to the loss of moral authority in the Church. As a lawyer, it is clear that important restructuring needs to take place within the Church which is outlined in my submissions.</p>
<p>When I was 21, I said that I just wanted to give up work for a while, to go away somewhere and do nothing else but learn about God. I did have that opportunity and I am still learning. I want to encourage everyone to keep on learning about God, faith, what we are here for and where we are going and how we can be of service along the way.</p>
<p>Forty-five years ago, as a top student and person with intellectual interests, I resided for four years at [-] College, [-] University. That should have been a leading centre of Catholic intellectual life, but it was the opposite—as I wrote later, "a nice building full of beer and football". In the last few years, I have been on the Council of [-] College, and while there has been improvement in restraining the worst aspects of its toxic culture, there hasn't been any improvement in its intellectual life. There isn't any. That experience informs my view that the Church has done a poor job as a player in the world of ideas.</p>
<p>3. Priesthood Integrity: While our present parish priest was Administrator, he was a seemingly affable fellow who had our best interests at heart. Now we find he is a dictator and is now doing 'what he wants' (Hence my allegory with raping) with absolutely no consultation with the people who have been working in the leadership roles for years. As an example, to the 2nd in Charge, he is an appalling role model as the younger priest who by nature of age has not been through enough to have any empathy with anyone in the parish believes it is his right to use the exact same method. Have they any idea how demeaning it is to be told by a 28-year-old that you know nothing and don't understand the Mass enough to have any kind of role in it unless you've been trained by the young one?! Oh how you rape my soul, you two priests without any thought for us—no better dare I say than those accused in the Royal Commission. You don't deserve the pedestal you are so keen in trying to put yourself back up on. And while we're at it—it's better to read one of the Pope's Encyclicals during the homilies as one priest you can't understand on a cultural level and the other on a theological one!</p>
<p>I have seen friends recovering rapidly from illness and/or operations—But I also have family members suffering for months and years with illness and insufferable pain without any future hope. All of them still have faith and waiting for the day God shows his MERCY. My faith is something that is a private thing to me. Yes, I do have real story would like to share. Was happened long time ago. I remember I was going to suicide, I got a dream when I was to jump into the fire, suddenly Angel was put me out from the fire, then I woke up. I think God stopped me done silly thing so I stopped to think anymore. Since that I believe God very much, also had Miracle happened to me few times AMEN! I like that people persevere with their faith, whilst still questioning some aspects of it. I am frequently moved by people's simple, quiet belief in the power of Prayer at the very difficult times as well as the good times of their lives. I experienced a conversion of heart 5 years ago and became a practicing Catholic. Jesus saved me and gave me a new life. Without suffering, I would never have known him. I'm so grateful for the Church for all it has given me and especially for being an instrument through which God's love and mercy flows. God was always calling me back never leaving my side, but I've left His side many times in my life because of Lust, Porn, Sex with prostitutes, my ex-girlfriend sleeping with her. But my biggest problem is Porn. I hate Porn. But a priest is helping me and other Catholics that I thank God for being in my life because they really care!!! Teach them young to understand what Love is!!! I love Jesus and Mary, the angels and Saints, His Church, the Catholic Church saves, it's saving me!!! It's time for us to be living Saints!!! Yes—that the house of "God" the Church to be respected as the Church is sacred—to have prayers for</p>

parishioners of different ages. I have always been Catholic but even through Catholic primary and secondary did not know what that really meant. I thought 'believing in God' was enough, and was confused as to where I belonged—I felt I had to choose a denomination to guide me (there are so many whose youths are so passionate!). I was led to the University of [-] Catholic Society, and fell in love with the true Church. I wish I knew before too. Even my high school had some heretical practices (pretend Mass in homerooms with coke and crackers ...), atheists who gave me Ash Wednesday ashes and communion. If only the youths knew how alive our faith is! And how life giving! We don't need cringy Mass music with clapping, we need truth. But we need people formed in the faith to help administer it. The 3 Hail Marys Devotion will bring most living, erring Catholics back to church. Signed Traveller I've met lots of people who change their religion, but the way I think and look at it, they never change their faith.

The Charismatic Renewal has brought me into a personal relationship with Jesus.

In the 1970's, I visited the parish priest of [-], a family friend. It was a tough life he led. But anyone who knew what he did day-to-day would be impressed. We as a Church need to do things that impress in that way, whatever it is.

I had been a practicing Catholic my whole life until 2 years ago. My children were brought up Catholic and we had all attended weekend Masses. I was part of the Church when it became public knowledge that many Catholic priests were paedophiles, on the belief that these were sick men that had chosen to join the priesthood, and that the Catholic Church was basically good, and true to Jesus' teachings. I stopped attending Mass when it became apparent that the Church's management and organisation was protecting the paedophiles, was sacrificing their children and their congregations so that paedophiles could continue their practices unimpeded. I look at practicing Catholics now with disbelief—how can anyone continue a relationship with an organisation that sanctions that behaviour. Investigative bodies that were promised cooperation from the Church, found such incredible delays and stone-walling, that people leading those investigations resigned. The Church has broken my heart and my faith. Until women can join the priesthood, I will be forever suspicious and non-trusting of a group of men that say they care for the people, but have no idea how to do that. The Church hierarchy protected paedophiles, and then tried to justify their own behaviour. I think the Church owes it to themselves, the community and to God to seriously look at change to prevent that EVER happening again. Anything less is just more lip service.

There are three non-traditional experiences that have shaped my current spiritual perspective, all linked to Jesus' example:

1. My late Aunt, a nun in the Little Company of Mary, taught me a great deal about context through her shared study of cosmology. She also provided an example of compassion in her work with the [-] hostel in [-].
2. One of my friends is a Uniting church Minister. He inherited a traditional, shrinking parish. He energised and grew the parish by inviting different communities to use the existing facilities. He welcomed people first—without judgment—and only later encouraged them to participate in Christian worship.
3. I have followed Graham Long's ministry at the Wayside Chapel for the last few years. I subscribe to his view that Salvation is found through the feet (i.e. action) not the heart or head. If love is to triumph over hate, then everyone must be "met" not cured, fixed or seen as a problem to solve (or a soul to save).

I was educated at Catholic Schools and Colleges, and backed up at Home by my Parents on Catholic Values, and these Values were then passed on to my Children.

Priest would come to the family home/knew all the family Feeling inclusive like being part of a family. Love in action—Monsignor [-] being seen everywhere, he would talk to everyone he saw. Caring and humble friend met through the Church. Encouragement Seeds being sown but not realised God's grace is sufficient. One minute "mingle time" in Mass is a good way to make connection with others. Being the hands and feet of Jesus. Didn't fall in love with Jesus until I went to a Youth Group when I was 16 years old—Antioch, great role models and examples in Antioch. I am

forever grateful and got more involved. I got sick and got great support by Christian friends. I saw faith in action. Parish groups/organisations have helped in my searching/longing/feeling empty. Searched and found a personal relationship in the Perpetual Adoration Chapel By spreading the Word of God, I fell in love. Parish has helped me to grow spiritually. Learning the Bible through Bible Studies—wanting and learning about God.

My experience of faith was increased when my daughter due to a car accident was left in a coma and during each of our visitations, her mother placed on our daughter's damaged leg, a picture of Saint Mary MacKillop. Late one night, we received a phone call telling us that the leg had developed a blood clot and needed immediate surgery as the clot would travel to the brain. We gave our consent and the surgery went ahead. The next morning, the medical staff told us she was very lucky that they had noticed the clot, but all went well for our daughter as she was out of danger and continued to heal. Both my wife and myself had faith in Saint Mary MacKillop and she had responded to our prayer.

When I was very young (5 to 10), I had a close relationship with the Sisters of Loreto and the Jesuit priests. They would visit our home and on occasions come on picnics with our family. This rapport has stayed with me and my siblings to this day and we have tried in nurture a similar relationship with our priests and Sisters today, but they don't seem interested in mingling with parishioners who are less affluent than others.

[My parish] has left me Heart Broken. Not allowing our children to receive the Blood of Christ for their Holy Communion, as I quote; "the children are too young as it's alcohol." What a pagan attitude! What are we teaching our children the future of our faith and Church?! So Sad and Heart-breaking to hear this from a priest's mouth. I also asked if not allowed to drink from the chalice that the children receive the Holy Host dipped into the Blood of Christ from the priest's hand to their mouth but this was also rejected. Why? It's allowed for a priest to do, so why is it not considered? I asked also that if the priest believed that the children were too young to receive BLOOD of Christ on their 1st Communion and beyond this day, why could we then change the liquid used, such as Grape juice or water and vinegar instead of alcohol ... For in faith, if Jesus can turn water to wine, the liquid used for Mass matters not as long as the priest's prayer is placed upon it to consecrate it into the Blood of Christ. But every Suggestion was not even considered! If our parish truly believe the children are too "young" for the Blood of Christ why than do we have them celebrate their Holy communion in 3rd class aged 9 and enter the Church as adults in their faith? I am disappointed, disgusted even, as the value of the Blessed Holy Eucharist is degraded in this way and not glorified and remembered as Christ will it. The Body and Blood is the heart of the Mass this should be celebrated and shared among the old and young alike at every Mass for this is how Jesus wills it. The Last Supper showed us we remember Him both with His BODY and BLOOD. I was told we do not celebrate the Blood at any Mass due to disease! We are Desperate to bring back our Catholic faith into our Church as it's lost! If it is the BLOOD OF CHRIST within the chalice, what disease is there! CHRIST'S BLOOD HAS THE POWER TO HEAL RESTORE SAVE and CHANGE EVEN THE HARDEST OF HEARTS. so how can we possibly believe in spreading disease in sharing of the chalice if Jesus is truly present with His precious Blood! Can we not see the devil's menace in this to stop this Holy importance in sharing of Christ's Blood at the celebration of Mass? Let's keep Humble Hearts and focus on the true value of the Holy Mass and bring Jesus back to the centre of our Church and hearts, let's return the full celebration of the Holy Eucharist BODY and BLOOD of Jesus to share among us for this is the only way to stay united, for it's Only in JESUS we become one, one Church, one people for its in Sharing Christ's BODY and BLOOD we share one heart in Jesus for the Glory of GOD alone. Must mention; WHY is the Tabernacle without its cloth and left bare? Disgrace on us and on the Church, where is our Reverence for Jesus? I thank Pope Francis to be able to speak out for our church [-] for it has fallen into ways of evil. I pray for Holy priests, change, unity, Glorifying God in the full celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Body and Blood. Amen.

My family was part of a Redemptorist Mission in the 80's. Through that mission, my family met a lifelong friend who has been part of our faith journeys ever since.

<p>God gives us choice. I don't now why, but he does. I sometimes wish he never gave us the option to choose between good or bad, but only showed us the good. It is important to pray, to learn to differentiate between the good and the bad. Be selfless and place others intentions before you own. Anything is possible if you ask God especially through the intercession of Mother Mary, as long as you are completely certain that what you are asking for is only going to make you and others around you better, and as a whole, make the world better (even if it is just by a little).</p>
<p>As a family we were trying to go overseas and since I was a RN, I applied to NZ. In Jan 2005, I reached NZ and done my competency. When I completed the course, I came to know that IELTS requirement had changed and I could not get registration. I had spent a lot of money for that already and I could not imagine going back to my country with empty hand. I was so desperate and didn't know what to do. That year Good Friday, I did not go to church. All my friends went to church, I got into my room and cried in front of my God and questioned Him. I don't know how much time I spent with him but after 2 days, I got answer from him. An agent called me from Australia and asked me to get ready to come to Australia. My agent had given my paper work here too ... I told my agent I don't have any money for ticket or visa and the answer surprised me. You just reach here, rest of the expense she will look after and to pay back once I get a job. My friends gave money for my ticket and visa. Even now I can't imagine how this all happened. But I am sure my God was carrying me in His hands when I was in trouble.</p>
<p>I have lost faith in the Church. My church has vibrant music groups who provide music at all Masses offered in our parish. One group of young people were told they were no longer needed because there were too many musicians. No effort was made to fit this group into the liturgy and they have drifted away from going to church. This is the fault of the parish priest not taking responsibility for what occurs in the parish and leaving it to others.</p>
<p>Story about consulting different priests and getting different answers to a problem—what is the truth? Being unable to marry in the Catholic Church (2nd marriage) and seen a priest leave and marry a divorcee with 3 children. Unfair. Mass and sacraments have stayed the same, great comfort. Our lady of Fatima statue—while praying in front of the statue, the statue's eyes are lowered looking at the red rose among the white flowers. Filled with joy because of the red rose. Purchased many roses then prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Bought to tears and experienced the Mercy of God. [-] has blind faith and very moved by the strong faith of older people in Jesus. Good liturgy builds faith and poor liturgy destroys faith. [-] grew up in a parish in [-], Italian parents and family very active, there was a feeling of community.</p>
<p>Often at Sunday Mass, I wonder who will go to Mass once us oldies i.e. the over sixties. I am surprised I still am a regular Mass attender. I have been blessed by knowing some wonderful forward-thinking Jesuit priests who have guided, inspired and encouraged me.</p>
<p>We all felt that as Adults, we forget why we do certain things in the church especially during Mass. We feel as Catholic adults, we to be re-educated. When our friends (who are not Catholic) ask us why we do things, we sometimes cannot answer them.</p>
<p>One story shared: I was working in Sydney and my father was in hospital in Brisbane after a major heart attack. My sister rang to tell me to come at once. I flew over and walking into the high dependency ward, I was shocked to see my Father all hooked up to various medical devices. I said, 'Dad, are you in pain?' He smiled at me and said, 'This is nothing in comparison with the pain Jesus suffered when those big nails went through his wrists!' At that moment I had a glimpse of the depth of his faith. I learned that we laity can never underestimate how powerful our witness is to our family members.</p>
<p>The scripture is sometimes hard to understand along with the underlying metaphors or messages. I enjoy homilies. I believe the choir is quite beautiful.</p>
<p>Current PP has removed all authorised lay people/sacristans from helping to prepare or from assisting at Mass. However, homilies are very good. Sexual abuse has still not been adequately and humbly addressed; these issues must not be swept under the carpet.</p>

My experiencing of committed people of varied ages and faith backgrounds contributing in a variety of ways to serve the marginalised and to advocate for justice with no reward expected, has enhanced my sense of hope and empowered me to continue to make a contribution as far as I am able, and according to the gifts and experience that God has allowed me to have.

Yes! When two of my sons were teenagers, they started on the roller-coaster ride of heavy metal music, alcohol and pot, one, once he started working, was becoming an alcoholic. Neither my husband nor I drink alcohol at all. We were "good" Catholic parents, involved in our parish and could not understand our son's behaviours. We turned to prayer—uniting our family to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart through the Rosary, put our alcoholic son under the patronage of [-] and found out about the devotion to Jesus as the Divine Mercy. This enabled me to be more trusting that our sons would change, but as my husband still felt responsible for their safety, he would often almost come to blows with one son and would not be able to sleep until they came in of an early morning. With my growing trust in Jesus, I was able to step in and be a peacemaker. When our son's drinking became worse—he would go straight to the pub from work every day and he became quite restless, and I started to doubt, I heard, from some source, that if you begin to lose hope, you have to pray for a stronger Faith, as faith is the foundation on which hope is built. Once you believe, you can trust in the one you believe in and then you are free to love. So I resolved to trust more, but it wasn't until that my husband finally realised that he had to let go and let God take control that our miracle happened. Our "alcoholic" son staggered off to work, as usual, on Friday the 14th August, but this day came back straight after work went into his room and came out and broke his Heavy Metal CDs and put them in the bin. He said that he had felt like he was going mad, but that he was at peace now! He had had an experience of a woman behind him that morning at work and then experienced a deep peace. The next day—the feast of the Assumption, he went to Mass, confession and fell in love with the Lord! He stopped drinking, went to Mass as often as he could, went to Rome for World Youth Day and met his wife and now they have 9 children and moved to the beautiful Catholic community at [-] (north of [-]). Our other son also married, but has not come back to the faith yet. My husband and I now thank our God for this experience because it helped us to realise that being "good" parents is not enough, we have to try and be "holy" parents, not that we are holy yet, but becoming holiness is our focus now. We also realise that miracles do happen and are better at trusting our most loving God.

Dynamic priest like Fr Rob Galea inspiring young people. In Perth, a program in a small group that follows up after the sacrament of confirmation with young people about their faith but also has a socialising aspect. Having belonged to a youth group through a parish felt this was beneficial as was mixing with other young people and sharing my faith.

Dad and Mum were separated and the three of us moved to his two unmarried sisters' house and I was there until I married. They were wonderful women. We went to Catholic schools. The nuns were lovely too. There was a beautiful picture of Jesus on the wall above my bed. Jesus seemed to smile when I was good and look sad when I did something wrong. I looked on Jesus as my trusted friend and it's never changed even in stressing times and I try to help my students see that Jesus can be their special friend too—no matter what!

We visited two different parishes that did not have a priest. Both parishes were so vibrant and active. The service was joyful and reverent. The sense of a Catholic community was felt before, during and after the service. Every parish we have joined is controlled by one person. The success of the parish therefore relies on one person. No one in our group has belonged to a vibrant parish Community although we have visited some. We need shared voices in parishes and paid people in parishes to support the Youth Ministry and Family Ministry. During the Royal Commission, each week at Mass the priest directed us to pray for the Archbishop 'who was under immense pressure'. There were no prayers suggested for the victims and the years of torment they endured—a telling reflection of people in positions of power who have no lived experience of families, children, abuse and lack of power. It damaged our faith in the Church considerably.

Shaped from young

- Habits and examples from parents.
- Church, etc. Lead by example to your kids and hopefully greater community.
- Grow your faith by getting more in the Church.
- Catechist.
- Volunteer.
- Warden.
- Altar server.

One only has to look at the way Fr [-] was treated in our parish. He was asked to step aside without due cause like at the time of the inquisition. Letters distributed to all the parishes and clergy have said he was being investigated. If this took place in the corporate world, he could sue the organisation for millions.

“See how Christians love one another” was a phrase applied to The Early Christian Community. Why do we not hear it today? We could communicate better through the Press and TV the good things that are happening in the Catholic Community. Why do we have to refer people to other Christian organisations to get help?

Having chosen to wait and plan to have a family so the family can be brought into the world not as a consequence of marriage but as a choice of a loving relationship when they are spiritually, financially and physically prepared to bring into the world and raise healthy, loving people.

As a Maronite, I have seen my brothers and sisters in the Middle East SLAUGHTERED for confessing Christ is LORD. You guys are soft and emotional and cowardly. Grow a pair, and stick to the Faith of our Fathers, the apostolic faith, the divinely revealed faith of the Incarnate Son of God, Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I have been in internal conflict for a long time with the Catholic Church because of its inability to show acceptance for ALL of God's children (e.g. LGBTQ people) which has been quite saddening. I am a Catechist—I never would have known how children are hungry for the word of God if I have not volunteered to be a Catechist. I felt children needs a role model and children need to be accepted and love, sometimes they don't feel it at home. We can give it to them by believing in them. Safeguarding is good—but sometimes it does hurt for the kids who wants adult's presence in their lives because of the absence in their family I have been Blessed to have a good Beautiful dream of Mother Mary, a good Beautiful dream of Jesus and the priest house in this Church. Thanks be to God. Amen Yes, every day is a gift from God! A man (52) (responsible and honest) being harassed and bullied by a loved one but still holding on because of the small prayer I say to Jesus and my Dad every morning Still "Life is Good". I was Buddhist now I'm Catholic; but as the days come, it is getting harder and harder. Thus, I ask why is the Catholic Church so attacked? My personal life has been filled with living in a time when our parents were loving, caring and provided every important facet of growing up in [-]. They are now deceased, but the example displayed in rearing 5 children was tremendous. No luxury but lots of love. We attended Mass every Sunday (in our local Council Chambers small hall). When the time for receiving the sacraments came, we walked to the parish church in [-]. Life was simple but very happy. As a mother of 6 children, my faith has never been stronger. Yes, my husband and I have had crosses to bear—but at the end of each day—we have so much to be grateful for being a Catholic family. We get great joy for being involved in our parish of [-] having lived here for 54 years. Many wonderful priests have come and gone and we are now very fortunate to have Father [-] as our parish priest. At church, some people who help out in the church often feel that they own the church. Some priests are biased. Simple example is at [-] church, every Sunday Fr [-] will only shake hands to certain worshipers and ignore the others that he doesn't personal know. I am being one of the "unknown" ones. I am sure this happens in a lot of churches. However, I have faith in God. I go to church to listen and to talk to God. The priests are just the messengers. Too much! I have had some quite miraculous encounters with the Heavenly Realm, whilst in church, through Jesus and Mary, especially during E.A. I'd like to share how blessed and

<p>grateful I am to be serving and being active in the parish community that I am in. I have come to know many priests, religious nuns, Youth Ministers, young people, families and parishioners in the community; they are very welcoming and it has encouraged and inspired me to give and devote my time to God and the parish more.</p>
<p>I grew up in the pre-Vatican II Church of devotions, Children of Mary, Benediction. I miss the silence, reverence. I welcomed Vat II and think the richness of the Decrees has yet to be fully realised, i.e. People of God by virtue of our baptism: all equal. Now, a Church and society in crisis, I think, like Queen Esther, I am still here for 'just such a time as this'.</p>
<p>We are called to carry out the Mission Christ gave us. There are indications that we have got aspects of that wrong. I think God is asking us to address this for the future. Thankful for the fact I want to bring this to others. Conversation between laity and clergy. Acknowledge what is right rather than who is right. What is the best solution? Holy Church that brings justice and charity to others. Great Music at Mass. To speak to others about our faith. More volunteers at church.</p>
<p>One person in the group shared the following (prayer) story of a healing miracle in her family as follows: My experience is of Devotion to Mother Mary, Mother of Jesus. My grandmother told me her story of faith in God. She was ill and bleeding in a faraway mountain in Peru. My grandfather was a coal miner. She was alone and bleeding. After much crying, she fell asleep. In her dream, she saw our Mother Mary of Perpetual Succour (this was also a picture she had). She saw Mary coming out of the picture and Mary asked, 'Well, tell me what is wrong.' My grandmother replied, 'Mama Mary ...' She then saw Mother Mary touch her and disappear. My grandmother woke up and she was healthy and sound. Amen.</p>
<p>Social Justice is the core of Jesus work, yet it is relegated as an offshoot. The Church is tied up in its own importance and ritual. We have replaced the Pharisees with our some of our own modern-day priests and bishops. Liturgy is stale, dominated by the priest, and lacks any rational understanding. It is ritual piled on by more ritual. It has no relevance to the last supper.</p>
<p>My grandchildren aged 7 and 4, attended an Anglican Christening and had great pleasure in telling me about the wonderful music at the church. It is disappointing that they had to attend a Protestant service to enjoy the music.</p>
<p>The experience of our group at present is that we, as parishioners, are not being consulted on issues which are important for us to know, e.g. publication of the Annual Financial report has been requested but access denied and generally decisions made and no accountability. A clear experience of Clericalism exists in the parish.</p>
<p>There is a saying that you need to hit rock bottom before you seek help. Well, I hit rock bottom one evening about 25 years ago. I remember going to bed after a big blow up with my wife and children. I sat up most of the night reading random passages out of my Bible. It was soon after that I started going away for weekend retreats every couple of months. This allowed for me to be focused on following Jesus and living life in accordance with His teachings. If it hadn't happened that way, I would not be living with my wife of 48 years. I thank God for his intervention and his guidance. Since that day 25 years ago, I can look back and see the challenges that God has placed before me. I am now active within my parish, and love spending time with my family. Daily reflection of the scripture also helps me to be focused, if I miss a few days I can see the effect it has on my mood.</p>
<p>Thanks to the tertiary education run by the Catholic Church in Australia—I was given a chance to read theology and history at the age of 40.</p>
<p>Political: Government's obsession with gender identity, fluidity and neutrality. Insidious undermining or our freedoms in progress. Pompous politicians passing pagan laws with utter disregard for God's laws. Speak with courage and purpose. Christian values: Act with purpose to answer God's voice. Work humbly in God's presence, Respect one another in free speech, listen with our hearts and reflect from our guts, to bring more love and peace in the world, forgive and share, concern for possibility of married priests. Social justice: to help support donations to crisis needs; be more socially aware/involved and look after the vulnerable and homeless, help refugees, unborn children; people in need. Look after the environment.</p>

<p>* When attending a particular Catholic church of Croatian traditions nearby, the elderly are brought into some Masses by the nurses and are part of the congregation rather than having their own separate Mass. This was beautiful and inclusive.</p> <p>* Another person has talked about how the community pulled together to care for someone who was ill and needed assistance with children and meals, etc. At other times, we have witnessed the power of community to assist those in need financially with a sick child when they needed disabled transportation.</p> <p>* Feeling welcomed at Mass when the children were welcomed and part of the Mass.</p>
<p>We all found the discussion very empowering because we had the same thoughts about various issues.</p>
<p>I have always been a practicing Catholic. I fear the Church is under pressure from external forces within society. I feel we should not interfere and keep the originality of the Church, as it has been from the beginning.</p>
<p>Funeral: it was in Italian and although I didn't understand any of it, it was extremely emotional and beautiful.</p>
<p>My faith has helped with a template to follow through my whole life. Without that template, I would be a really confused person. I would be easily led into all sorts of situations that may not have boded well.</p>
<p>Beautiful experience going to 1st Reconciliation at [-] with school children, chatted with priest, experienced a beautiful sense of grace once absolved from sin RCIA—to help teach, a Methodist wanting to become Catholic and working with his family. They all received a blessing at Communion. Met a cyclist, spoke to him and then out of the blue, he spoke to me about how he always rode past the church. In Malaysia, not accepted into a charismatic group because not a Catholic—not welcomed. Met a French priest who made me feel welcome and I became a Catholic. Attended a home prayer group after an eye operation. Had been feeling unwell, received a blessing from the priest and straight away felt better. Youngest sister arrived from overseas and travelled to [-] together. Asked for Mother Mary to help with a traffic problem, avoided a car accident. After a business fire, I stayed calm because I knew Jesus was with us.</p>
<p>About twelve years ago, I'd attended a baptism that was held in a Seminary. The Seminarians passed tambourines, castanets, triangles and ribbons mostly to the children and a few to the adults. Instantly, the mood brightened as the young musicians practised waving their instruments to the smiling encouragements of all present. The Seminarians sang their prayerful hymns accompanied by one guitar whilst the 'orchestra' clanged and tinged! It was a joyful celebration not only for the baby's family but especially for the congregation. I feel this Mass was a beautiful reminder, the Holy Spirit can be present in the simplest actions and I hope one day, our weekend Masses can reflect the cheer and the welcome of this one event.</p>
<p>My first experience of the Third Rite of Reconciliation left a lasting impression of what a wonderful Rite it is. Being led through an examination of conscious was the best preparation for reconciliation I have ever experienced.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A lot of people including myself do not like rote prayers such as the Rosary before Mass. I feel that sermons are lacking everyday content. 2. After having my 3rd child and decided to respond to the ads from the Catholic enquiry centre. I now am a Catholic and have enjoyed the [-] parish for over 40 years. In this time, I have had much friendship, spirituality and faith, including friends from playgroup days. A new direction/change needs to be made. Our parish needs young people to carry on the faith. 3. Faith is caught not taught. My parents had a very strong faith and they led by example. That doesn't seem to happen these days. Unfortunately, it will take a long time to repair the damage done by the scandals in the Church. 4. Growing up, the faith was shared more widely i.e. grace before meals, rosary every night, holy water font at the door. 5. Our parish has undergone a change of organisation and needs to develop new ways of involving

<p>people.</p> <p>6. God comes to us through one another. When my husband dropped dead, I couldn't have gotten by without the support of my parish family. I felt very humble. Support after an incident is very important.</p>
<p>The gay marriage vote was a very disappointing experience of the Church's response, especially from Archbishop [-]. Was very deterring, however I stayed firm knowing that I believe in my faith regardless of whether or not I agree with the Church. Especially seeing how the Church's teachings motivated people to inflict hatred and segregation from the LGBT minority group and that the Church did not step up and do anything about it, was extremely disheartening. I love my faith but I have very little respect for the Church in Australia and its inability to change with times and be a modern Church. If it continues down this path, we will be sure to see Catholicism disappear or otherwise, it shall become a religion full of extremists as I already witness myself with the religious youth. Everything the Church has been teaching for thousands of years is taken so literally and it is the responsibility of the Church to correct the faithful and indicate that the teachings are outdated and they need to be interpreted in a modern context.</p>
<p>Not born in parish but had all sacraments here, family (siblings) have all received. Faith passed on through family. After a major operation, someone was patting me on the shoulder but no one was there and my pain cease. Sacraments with own children—very special. Our father became a Catholic after 50 years of marriage. Faith carried on through mother's/grandmother's side. Mass celebrated in a Council Chambers hall and had to walk a long way to Mass. Support by Josephites very good. Met great friends through parish and school P & F. Prayers answered when asked by 2 Nuns and given a small secretary job through the local school. Had 15 years in the job and loved it. Great involvement through school and parish. Loves supportive nature of parish, my own children chose to sit with grandparent-like parishioners at Mass. Many good memories of travelling with my father. His business collapsed but also knew God was with them. Received help from fellow parishioners when recovering from several operations. [-] Christmas party and parish priest very welcoming. Joined choir and went to visit hospitals and nursing homes. Happy and connected to local parish. Strong Catholic faith from family and Tonga Feels at home in local parish.</p>
<p>I am an acolyte and have to frequently assist elderly priests in retirement when they come to the parish when the parish priest is away. I feel that it is unfair on these elderly priests who have worked faithfully for a long time to be dragged out because of shortage of priests. I am quite willing to and I believe called as well to the priesthood. The only thing that bars me is the fact that I'm married. The Church is praying for vocations. I think it should be praying for wisdom and sight since the vocations are there but denied because of Church laws. It is ironic that married priests do exist in the form of the Anglican Ordinariate.</p>
<p>I travelled up the mountain to the Sacre Coeur in Paris and experienced God's presence within the grand church.</p>
<p>I have conducted baptisms in hospital as a lay chaplain and found it extremely life-giving work. I would like more people in the community to see lay people—especially women—actively involved in this type of ministry. I am a Catholic convert and have brought a lot of professional and personal experience to my ministry. Not being brainwashed as a child in a deformed form of the tradition, I have come to faith as an open-minded thinking adult. So I see that Catholicism has much to offer with its sense of mystery and primal sacramental focus that is about life and death. If this is communicated properly, it can reach more people. If communicated poorly or dogmatically, it alienates people. This aspect of Catholicism is far more visible than in other churches and we should highlight it when engaging in interfaith dialogue. My own faith journey and entry into the Church came out of emotional and spiritual crisis—and there are many people like me out there who are hungry for something. Don't put them off by a retreating to the bunker mentality. Speak to them where they are at.</p>
<p>I can recall when listening and learning about our faith, the Bible, Christian politeness, etc. had a big and lasting impact on me. I feel this is sadly lacking in our schools today.</p>

Very Catholic upbringing. A sister who is a Carmelite nun. Married with four daughters. Completed a BTH in the late 80s while being totally immersed in helping out in our parish ministry in all sorts of areas. Helped run Antioch Youth group for years. Was part of that ministry. I have a divorced daughter who is remarried. I have a gay daughter who is married. I have 8 grandchildren. I am barely hanging onto my Catholic faith. My faith is stronger than ever. But the Catholic Church has let me and my family down on so many fronts it doesn't bear thinking about.

Story 1: Episode in Confession where priest advised to go to Communion (despite sinning) and not to stay away from God.

Story 2: A catechist felt afraid of dealing with a very intricate question by a pupil. She called to the Holy Spirit in her mind. Afterwards in the car, she realised she had given an appropriate answer through the Holy Spirit although she could not remember what she said.

Story 1. I had a problematic relationship with my mother because she was very controlling and I was holding on to anger that related to incidents from long ago, even though I prayed for help. When she was dying, the priest was called to give her the sacrament of the sick, when I heard the priest saying 'Your sins are forgiven'. I knew that if God forgave her, I could. So I spoke to her and told her I forgave her for anything that happened and also asked for her forgiveness of me.

Story 2. When my breast was taken away because of cancer I had radiotherapy. My skin fell off and as the red flesh was very, very sore, I had to get it dressed morning and night in the winter time. I cried and asked God, 'Why me? What have I done wrong? Why am I suffering?' Then I turned on radio station 103.25 and listened to the Bible reading. Then he said, 'When we are sick or have a problem we ask God, 'Why, why me?' But if we only know that Jesus suffered for me, no questions asked, we can accept that suffering for our salvation'. I felt so ashamed because he said my suffering is only for myself. His (Jesus') suffering is for me, for my salvation and for the whole world.

On visiting [-] during a motorhome trip 3 years ago, my wife and I attended the vigil Mass in [-]. We were greeted at the front door and handed the bulletin, acknowledged as visitors, asked if we would like to do the offertory procession and were greeted by the person sitting next to us when we took our seat. We were tempted to go back out the front and check that it actually was a Catholic church, such was the difference to other churches we had visited! This has shaped our view on how welcoming can be done in parishes.

During the first Holy Communion Masses, the way the children came up to receive Jesus was so reverent and joyous. It touched my heart 'yes Jesus is so close and so real'.

I have been a devout member of my parish for nearly 35 years, engaged in all kinds of various ministries in that time. I have also been a lifelong learner of theology and spirituality. If I reflect on what has sometimes tempted me to leave, it is the patriarchy and the abuse of clerical power that I have experienced over and over again. I could give so many examples of how parish priests fail to engage the talents and the gifts of the laity, or even actively discourage or put a stop to ministry that they either do not like or are not interested in. Being the sole arbiters of anything that happens in the parish, they often disempower and infantilize the laity, and sometimes make bad decisions that can be bitterly divisive in a community. Like any long-time parishioner in a parish, I could tell stories of people deeply hurt and wounded by clerical abuses of power. I have no doubt that this system takes its toll on priests too. A pedestal is a lonely place. Too much is expected of them. They have all become managers of large parishes, with too little time for being pastoral. New systems of parish governance are sorely needed. What has sustained my faith and kept me in the Church? First, it is the faith of the faithful, who are there (like us), week after week, year in, year out, and the friendships and loyalties forged through communal prayer, study and worship. More particularly, it is the example and support of my husband which has kept me there in the most dispiriting of times. Then, it is the formation that I have been able to find for myself, in the form of courses, lectures, talks, a theology post-graduate degree, a parish Alpha course, retreats, seminars, Lenten programs, and personal study and reading. It is being connected to a spiritual community of women, the Grail, which I eventually joined when I despaired of finding such support in my parish community. They nurtured my gifts and talents and have enabled me to grow and to minister in ways I would never

<p>have thought possible. It is belonging these past 11 years to a Christian meditation group and practising daily to be still and silent in the Presence of God. And finally, it is the Spirit herself who sustains me and shows me that as God is always faithful, so too must I be faithful, even though the Church is broken, badly damaged, desperately in need, and its priests and bishops so often lacking in humility and compassion, and out of touch with the lives and concerns of the people of God.</p>
<p>I've had too many friends screwed over by the Catholic Church and abuse by members of the Church. Not ONE has been legitimately acknowledged or received an apology.</p>
<p>3 and a half years ago, I was a non-believer and at no fault of my own, I was left homeless with 3 small children as a result from being a victim of domestic violence, and I found a church and my faith. I prayed day and night and 2 weeks came. I was granted a house. The children and I struggled. We had no assets but the clothes on our backs and a few good items. We had no TV, no washing machine, no microwave, no lounges, no beds, no cutlery, no crockery. We were literally starting off from scratch and I felt like the Devil was dragging me down by the ankles every time I took two steps forward. But I kept running escaping from those first pits of hell and the more the devil tried to drag me down, the more I fought against him till the mighty Lord and his angels seen I needed their help, and bam they pulled me up and far away from that man Satan, and rescued my children and myself. So now I am a true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ and understand he does answer your prayers but in his own time.</p>
<p>One of the most beautiful, life giving experiences for me was to be part of a Bible Study group. We met weekly and in 15 years, we studied almost the whole of the New Testament and a little of the Old. We used various study guides, in the beginning, Catholic ones but once we started using those of Professor William Barclay, we continued to use them. I think that that is what Our Lord would wish us to do when in His priestly prayer, He prayed that we would be one as He and His Heavenly Father were one. We must recognise what is good and learn from that and avoid the bad wherever we find it. Once I met the Lord Jesus in the Gospels, I came to love Him deeply and I'm always conscious of His presence in my life all the time. My main wish is to please Him And not to let Him down.</p>
<p>I am of the view that the Church is too guilt-ridden and does not relate to our young people in their lives. The Church, like so many other institutions in society, is only as good as its leaders and those that provide role models for our youth.</p>
<p>I have great faith in the people of the Catholic Church, however am saddened the increasing disconnect between the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and the Catholic community. The gap between the Church's teachings (e.g. divorce/remarriage, contraception) and the community beliefs and practices increasingly not relevant to the people of the Church. There is a significant disconnect between the teachings of the Church and the beliefs of the people.</p>
<p>The Catholic school children of [-] Primary School, [-] after experiencing Eucharistic Adoration said: One student wrote, "for the first time ever, I actually felt like God was really with me". "I felt like his hand was resting on my shoulder," the student wrote. http://Catholicleader.com.au/education/adoration-inspiring-students-and-teachers-of-brisbane-Catholic-school-to-pray-more.</p>
<p>I very much appreciate my Catholic education, and Christian values. I am happy my Children are also receiving a more modern and contemporary Catholic education with less fear of the devil, and less focus on those who are 'different'. I would like to see Catholic education support Gay and Lesbian children (and adults).</p>
<p>As a child, we were taught the Catholic faith with an iron fist and fear of going to hell. As you age, you become more cynical because you know that that is not Jesus' message. We are blessed to have our current parish priest in [-]— Fr. [-] - as his teaching is all about love and reaching out. There needs to be more of this in the Church. The fear and Catholic guilt is no longer working.</p>
<p>Fr [-] has increased my faith tenfold as he is wonderful and inclusive.</p>
<p>People who have left Church, have done so for many different reasons—but one observation by a hospital pastoral care worker was that there seemed to be many instances where a priest had been</p>

particularly harsh with e.g. person seeking to be married in the Church. In the case in question, PP refused to marry couple because they had been cohabiting. The intended groom's father, a lifelong Catholic, left the Church because of this incident. Other people are known to have walked away from the Church because of an unsympathetic/harsh attitude in a minor incident. While we know that faith must be deeper than individual human beings, who happen to be priests, for some, the pain/indignity suffered is too great, and results in a complete rupture with the Church. In other instances, there is nothing specific that cause some to gradually fade away and slowly stop attending Mass. No special reason, just nothing to keep them going—do they know what the Mass is? Do they understand what they are missing? Probably not because they have never learnt. Many in the groups wanted to know more about the Mass. We need to engage these people as much as instruct our priests how to deal and connect with people in our society; they need to know what are the worries normal people have, the pressures they are under and what they struggle with in the rearing of children.

In South Korea, Saturdays and Sundays are dedicated for children's Bible study, prayer, learning about the faith, discussions, etc. Everyone accepts this and is happy to do it and learn a lot about their faith.

Give women a greater role in the Church e.g., as acolytes. Make young people more welcome with music. Make the reception of the Eucharist more reverent. We need greater awareness of God's presence on entering the church. Make greater emphasis on the prayers and offertory as a lead up to consecration. We 'deify' our priests rather than treat them like us and we put too much responsibility on their shoulders. Individuals are practicing personal religion without reference to Church teaching. Clerical formation has led to priests who do not practice or value Catholic tradition/beliefs. Our priests need support as human beings in their role. Teachers in our schools are teaching error because they have poor formation.

Sadly, most of the stories coming from this group (even though they have a love of the Church) is of hurt and rejection experiences within the Church—My conclusion is when their kids hear these stories, why would they want to go through the same? Some of the people had a sense of loss with the focus on the young people they believe they have been put to the side—very much like the corporate world that is looking at lifetime value of the customer. Do they not still hurt, are they not confused by the changing world, do they not need healing, do they not need God's love? Like the Australian culture, they are old and have been put aside in the "old age care" bracket, does the Church not depend on the monetary contribution—to come it feels they are treated in the same way as the Age Care industry is treating them as a business opportunity, are they still not the people of God?

For me, the idea of learning to love God and struggle in holiness was presented to me through formation received in doctrine classes and talks about the Catholic faith. Of course, learning to pray well and for at least half an hour a day was a major help. The things I learned in doctrine greatly enriched my prayer and led me to attending daily Mass. The grace I drew from the Eucharist helped me to live sincerity in Confession and Spiritual direction and to struggle in humility (a virtue which most people do not properly understand and which is essential to the spiritual life). In a nutshell, prayer, formation and receiving the sacraments is of utmost importance. Without these, we can do nothing. If every person was presented with these opportunities, it would lead many youth and people of all ages to God. Perhaps some would still reject the faith, but at least they would not have the excuse of being ignorant and we would not be answerable for their souls.

I was baptised a Catholic in hospital nearly 77 years ago. My parents were wonderful Catholics, giving me the faith and a desire to love and serve God. I have given my own family this same opportunity. We have all been blessed with many graces and the awful tragedies in our lives have strengthened each of us in our own spirituality.

My parents were brought up in a Church where many things were forbidden or frowned up by the Church; where you merely had to make outward appearance of obedience and you were in the box. People don't think that way anymore. We Catholics are no different than others in this; surveys on

<p>contraception, abortion, etc. regularly show this. We need something more to hold us to the way of Christ—something from the Church that changes the way we think and feel about our religion. Vatican II emphasized this kind of transformation, the importance of inner transformation, the primacy of conscience I think it was called? Whatever happened to that? Have we gone back to outward observance, like an unobservant Muslim in a "Muslim" village?</p>
<p>The Bible should apply to all. My Church abandoned me. I am a mature age potential vocation who saw that encouragement and positivity were reserved for the young alone.</p>
<p>As a child, I felt extremely strong in my faith. I find it hard now to connect with God and I now sometimes attend church in the hope that it will strengthen my faith and make my "empty" cup seem full. But sadly, I leave feeling uninspired and more lost. The hymns use archaic words that few understand and the readings, particularly from the Old Testament alienate people also. I drag my husband along with the hope that he too, will feel the connection with God but he finds it boring and switches off. Take last week for example. It was the Christmas Mass and the church was full. We were all expecting and wanting to hear the story of Christ's birth. That is joyful and relevant. Instead we had to sit and listen to Isaiah 62:1–5, then Responsorial Psalm Ps 88:4–5 16–17 27 29. Then Matthew 1:1–25 the genealogy of Jesus. This is alienating the congregation and will drive visitors away for another year! I am a university graduate and educated. How do the non-educated comprehend the complex outdated terminology? Concerning the music, there are so many young Catholic musicians who have written more contemporary music. This is one way the Church can connect to the youth of today. There are some classics of course like; They'll know we are Christians, How Great Thou Art, etc. that can still be kept as the words are still relevant and easy to understand. I fear that if the Church does not make the Mass a joyful experience, the congregations will become smaller and smaller.</p>
<p>I haven't been in [-] parish very long. When I first moved here I hardly knew anyone. I felt lonely at Mass as everyone prays and goes home. I've made my own friends and connections now ... but not at church. We are very individualistic about our prayer and fellowship.</p>
<p>I am conscious that my experience of Church in Australia has helped me to build a rule of life which focuses on me walking with Jesus rather than working for Jesus. There is a call to come close to him rather than just being proximate to holy things. The experience has led me to reflect on how to love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind and all my strength, and to love my neighbour as myself. At the heart of this experience is the desire to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with my God. This seeks to recognise how my life relies more and more on God's mercy rather than my action. I am not called to win God's favour through my own sacrifice but rather be receptive to the person of Jesus who draws me deeper into a relationship at the heart of all creation. The emphasis is on discovering God who calls me to be myself so that I can respond to the desire to love him more deeply with my whole life. This allows me to be moved not by external forces but rather by an inner drawing which allows me to be faithful. The provision of retreat places and spiritual direction has been crucial in helping me to live out my faith.</p>
<p>My story concerns my parish as a youth. It is a sad story of neglect by Church leadership. The parish was lively, Catholics involved in the wider society and it fostered the vocation of very many Sisters and priests. It is now part of a 'mix' taking in five parishes with no resident priest. Yet, the people are still faithful, but they have never been allowed to look after their own community's management or spiritual growth.</p>
<p>1. "This Aussie wants the mystical nature of the sacrifice of the Mass to be made clear to all Catholics. I want it to be made clear, from the pulpit, to congregations:— a. That the Mass is a sacrifice. One of the Ten Commandments given to the ancient Israelites was to "keep holy the Sabbath Day". Their weekly sacrifice, in obedience to that Commandment, was the offering of a lamb at an altar by a high priest. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb" [Revelation 19:9]. Jesus came "...not to change the old law but to fulfil it". In this era of the New Testament, we keep the Sabbath holy by offering the Sacrifice of the Mass. b. It is fundamental always to be aware that what was learned—or should have been learned—at</p>

school viz. at every consecration at every Mass, a miracle occurs and the sacred Host distributed at the altar and carried away in each mouth is the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

c. Each stage or step of the Mass has its own significance—even the priests’ vestments.

d. The Rosary is an important prayer, although at first seemingly too long. On the contrary, each Mystery has New Testament significance and ought not to be boring. Remember we have recently had the centenary of Our Lady’s apparitions at Fatima, where she entreated the faithful to pray the Rosary.

e. Miracles DO HAPPEN—apart from the Consecration at Mass—even in our time e.g. The Miracle of the Sun [see “Ten Dates Every Catholic Should Know” by Dianne Moczar at page 166 and “Miracles” by Eric Metaxas].“

2. “I read Scott Hann’s book “Supper of the Lamb” and it has dramatically influenced my spiritual life. I have learned more from that book than any other book that I read in my life. Since reading that book, I have developed a much greater appreciation of and love of the Mass. I recommend that every Catholic read this book.”

3. “I greatly admire our parish priest Fr [-] and I think he is a wonderful man. He keeps me coming to Mass and I do not know what I will do once he needs to leave.”

1. “My young niece commented that she does not like going to Mass because her parish in [-] has terrible music and homilies.” The quality of music being delivered should be increased and if necessary, paid musicians employed to provide quality music for the congregation. A director of music should be employed on a regional basis to increase the quality of music being provided at Masses. At [-]’s [-], different genres of music should be offered to the parishioners to cater for the different tastes in music. At the moment, recorded music is being provided at 3 Sunday Masses a month, and a guitar player provides the music for the 4th Sunday Mass.

2. My 3 sons are not practicing Catholics although they went to a well-known private Catholic boys’ school. They are very morally upright people who live good and wholesome lives. Their children, my grandchildren, however, are largely not married in the Catholic Church or live in de facto relationships although they received the Catholic sacraments as do the great-grandchildren. They live very busy lives and see no point in going to Mass. I believe that they have no relationship with Jesus. People who go to Mass and contribute to the Mass develop wonderful strong relationships with fellow parishioners and benefit greatly from being part of the Catholic community at [-]’s [-].”

3. We need to reach out to these lapsed and disengaged Catholics and encourage them to go to Mass by pointing out why it is so beneficial for them to have a relationship with Jesus, and to be going to Mass and being part of the parish community. We should do that firstly with our family members and then our friends and then our neighbours. We need to reach out and not be afraid and take responsibility for reaching out to them.

4. “In my experience, religious education in secondary schools is focused too much on the teaching of comparative religion rather than on teaching our Catholic faith. We need to improve the level of Catholic education in our Catholic schools.”

5. “My brother is a lapsed Catholic and never went to Mass but when he was dying, he called me to arrange for a priest he knew to come to see him before he died to give him confession, which I did. He died shortly after he saw the priest.” “We should never give up on lapsed Catholics but always reach out to them by praying for them and being available to bring them back to the Church.”

1. “I sent my children, both the girls and boys, to good Catholic schools since they were 4 to 7 years old. They eventually went to [-] and [-]. After they stopped going to school, they stopped going to church. They do not believe in God. I feel that they were not taught Catholic theology properly at school. They were only taught from the pulpit. I also feel that for me to have taught them, I needed more teaching myself.”

2. I was once on a weekend away with 4 mates. During the weekend, I ask my mates whether anyone wanted to go to Mass with me. One replied “Do you really believe in that stuff?” to which I responded that “I did”. Eventually all the other mates, who were also Catholics, decided to go with

<p>me although they had not gone to Mass for years. It brought one of my mates to continue to go to Mass afterwards. We need to stand up for what we believe and not be embarrassed.”</p>
<p>Born in Uruguay, I was introduced to the Catholic Faith from an early age by my mother, her faith was amazing and had an impact in everyone that met her, so my deepest gratitude to God the Father for given me such wonderful parents. From an early age, I used to talk to God all the time, not only in church, at home, on my way to school, wherever I was. When I moved to Australia, the first few years I used to attend Mass in English and follow in Spanish my native language, I knew all the responses. As I integrated and learned English, I was able to understand and respond in English. It never bothers me because I knew God understood me. Does not matter what language I was praying when talking to him. His presence in my life has given me and my family many blessings, and many times I had been amazed how quick he answered to my prayer’s request. I had felt his presence many times in my life and he has never abandoned me or my family, and my heart is full of gratitude for the good times and the times he hold me in his arm. My spiritual journey started 10 years ago when I was invited to join the Cursillo Movement at [-]’s [-]. From then on, it has been a discovery journey how we can be close to God every day wherever we are, and how we can find God anywhere. It is a light to my path.</p>
<p>Faith is a gift like any other. It comes from my soul, I cannot turn off my faith, it’s like asking me not to breathe.</p>
<p>Our Catholic church is great. Our priest especially in my parish [-], [-] and [-] all do a great job, I pray for them for sometimes I don’t know how they do it. I have nothing but good stories. Just please don’t let our schools be led by people that are not of our Catholic faith or people that don’t care for the poor and all it has become is fees and money-chasing. We work hard at home to teach our kids our Catholic faith and traditions, not for some teacher to call them names and mock them in front of classmates for defending their faith.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. “I go to give communion at the local nursing home to the elderly weekly. I often feel very tired before going and hesitant to go but when I get there I feel re-energised. I get so much from the residents who are happy to see me and I feel that I get more out my visit than they do.”2. I was not a regular Mass-goer but as a result of difficulties I was experiencing in life I began to see Sister [-] regularly. It was Sister [-]’s kindness and her faith that brought me back to the Catholic Church.”3. My wife and I, when we lived overseas, experienced a tragedy in our life which affected us deeply. At the time, we were not regularly practicing our faith. The support that we received from our local parish, from people we did not know, was so caring and loving that we were over whelmed. It touched us and inspired us to return to the practice of our faith. That occurred about 5 years ago and we are still practicing our faith. We now want to give back to the Church the love that was shown to us.”4. “ I have memories of our parish being a vibrant and dynamic community where over 100 parishioners were involved in Lenten groups sessions which then continued after Lent for the rest of the year in various forms. Our then parish priest gave spiritual nurturing to group leaders, which was modelled on “Movement for a Better World”. The parish was divided into different zones, which had dynamic zone leaders and a pastoral care team. The zone leaders and pastoral care team worked together to offer assistance to parishioners and others who needed help in the parish. It was a fantastic initiative which was carried out by the laity in the parish under the spiritual guidance of the then parish priest.”5. “I grew up in a deeply spiritual, secure and fun filled home with a large family. I was inspired by my parents, especially my father with whom I had a special bond, and I wanted what my parents had, a relationship with God. My earliest memories as a child was going to Mass with my best red and white dress. Later in life, it inspired me to share my faith with the whole world.”
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. “I have 3 siblings and we all went regularly to Mass as children but my siblings do not currently practice their Catholic faith. My sister is the mother of 4 and she sent all her children to Catholic schools but currently none of those children, my nieces or my great nieces practice their faith. When

I ask them why they do not go to Mass, they say, "There is no reason to go to Mass. Why would I go?"

2. "I would like to see a stronger role at higher levels for women, in the Church. Women are taking their place at highest positions in politics, science, industry, professions and the Church is still way behind in this. What is the example that we are setting to our young women and girls by treating them as irrelevant at higher levels in the Church? St. Patrick taught Christianity to the women (rather than the men) when he arrived in Ireland as he felt they were responsible for shaping the beliefs of the future generation. Women in power are also effective and we should not treat them with disdain."

3. "I'm from a large family of Irish Catholics and religion is very important to me. I have watched many of my family and many of my school friends move away from the Church and it makes me sad. Church is very important to me as it gives me an inner peace. I feel at church today that some of the preaching is becoming very right wing. One priest said that you have to accept the whole divine truth and not pick and choose, I think that is wrong as I think your conscience allows you to pick and choose. I agree with gay marriage and disagree with gays being told to live a chaste life. I'm a mother of a large family and pretty forgiving about a lot of things and I want my children to have Catholic values but I don't want to be rigid which is the same way my Irish Catholic grandmother and mother also felt. It worries me that in trying to keep people in the Church, we are becoming more dogmatic. I don't think we should be telling people off for not going to church, I think we should be encouraging people to go to church by telling them the wonderful things about it and the peace that you find. What personally saddens me is when my mother died, my gay nephew asked me whether he would be allowed to be the pall bearer. It makes me really sad that the Church has made him feel like that as my mother was very accepting of who he was. I like the way Pope Francis is leading the Church but feel that some of his followers, in attempting to keep people in the Church are gripping them too hard and asking them to toe the line and I don't think that is the best approach. I don't mind if I'm anonymous or not, I'm happy to speak out."

Having Mons [-] as our parish priest in the 1960's who was very popular with all our community especially the youth at that time and a really great leader.

[-] is a business that provides in-house hospitality services for a university residential college. Girls from all different backgrounds come to work, live and study at [-]. We also offer spiritual activities which are entrusted to Opus Dei, a personal prelature of the Catholic Church. We have found with over 40 years of experience that helping the girls to live the virtues through their professional training in the hospitality industry helps them to be happy, coherent and positive witnesses to the faith. Virtues such as magnanimity, generosity, diligence, fortitude, spirit of service, industriousness, empathy, respect, loyalty are all so relevant to the hospitality service that [-] provides. When these virtues and the supernatural virtues (faith, hope and charity) are all strived for, the person themselves become a leader and role model. [-], a staff member of [-] says, "I feel that the working and living environment of [-] is unique because it helps people to be better, but not by long lectures or workshops, but by encouraging everyone to live the virtues in everyday life." [-], a student and resident of [-] says, "[-] really helped me to see that by striving to live all the virtues, I was a happier person. It started with living them in my work: to finish my jobs well, to help others, to offer my services, etc., but then it bled through into my time with my family and friends as well, my whole life! Without really realizing it in a "a-ha!" moment, I found myself becoming a better person."

Yes, I regularly attended church where there was no hymn after Communion. Instead the priest led us in prayer, often praising, thanking, loving and thanking Jesus. This was so beautiful and helped us feel so close to Jesus. Also, Adoration is so precious and so rare. People need to know that the Tabernacle holds Jesus and not just the leftover hosts from Communion. People need to know the value of Jesus truly present in our churches.

We had a very bad experience of bullying at [-] [-]. It took over 6 months to get my kids to return to Church. We found a little parish in [-] that is helping us all heal.

<p>I live in the parish of [-]. For many years we had a priest, Fr [-], living in our community. Cardinal [-] took exception to Fr [-] and banned him from using his faculties in the [-] diocese. However, he was still able to practice in the [-] diocese for a number of years. Eventually Fr [-] was banned in [-]. He does not have a satisfactory explanation for this treatment. He is given no natural justice, especially when compared to Cardinal [-]. This treatment of a member of our community is intolerable. How can the Church think it has the right to treat someone so abhorrently? I am totally non-trusting of the Church hierarchy. The only thing that keeps me in the Church is the wonderful actions done by the 'grassroots' of the Church, St Vincent de Paul Society, Caritas, Catholic Mission, ... I really am close to finding a church that is more attuned to God's message, and lives it.</p>
<p>I have been fortunate to have come under the influence and guidance of many intelligent, learned and compassionate priests over my life. I, at times, can become disillusioned by the arrogance, ignorance and lack of compassion of what I sincerely hope is a minority.</p>
<p>I was educated by a wonderful nun who had visited St Mary MacKillop on her death bed at North Sydney many years ago and she truly carried on that all her teaching life. A truly great and blessed woman.</p>
<p>Our group agreed that it was our early religious education that shaped our future.</p>
<p>Our stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Get off MY altar!”—women acolytes told to get off sanctuary by priest. • New parish priest tell religious sisters in convent to leave as he wants to live in the convent. • Seminarian this year being moved through to priesthood even though many believe he is not ready. • Hans Zohler—shared how only 1% of formation across seminaries is in the human dimension.
<p>In Glasgow, parishes had a children-only Mass every Sunday at 10:00am. If parents came, they sat at the back. The music was songs that they knew and loved. The parts of the Mass were explained, the prayers were simplified and used words that children understood. We have different youth groups for different age groups that have some overlap. Each group can flow into the next and consists of activities, an input and a chance to respond, and prayer.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greatest experience of Church was in 1978 when I went to Marriage Encounter; greatest experience of my life. Left that centre and had ‘fallen in love’. The priesthood and laity shared their experience of priesthood and married couples their experience of marriage. • My involvement in SVdP—they foster community with judgement. I love this ... we help and reach out. • Left school Yr 12, not sure what to do; gap year lived in a retreat centre. I was part of a religious community. Firmed up my faith—lived experience. This is their life. At 18, this was very powerful. Joined in retreat. • Faith has been a life long journey—my mum a woman of deep faith—seeing her live the Gospel. For me, Social Justice has been important in my family for many years and this has shaped me. Grandfather a strong influence. • I am welcomed when I go over to the schools—I collect my nieces and nephews—welcomed (special needs). • Raised a Catholic—Mum’s influence very strong. Difficult time in our marriage and I met Jesus through the youth community. The belonging that I felt in our parish. My faith turned around, grew, and has been my guiding light.
<p>Briefly the problems over the years of paedophile religious and the way the bishops have handled it has knocked my confidence in the human administration of the Church. However, I must say my confidence in the Almighty has not changed.</p>
<p>I’ve been attending [-] [-] in [-] and I attend most Sunday Mass even though it’s not in my local and this is because of Father [-]. Father [-] has a great nature and his sermons have maps of the area which we are hearing about. Photos of the locations or images of artist impressions. This helps shape the story and makes it real. Father [-] talks through the relevance of the story and makes us understand why we are hearing the stories. In the past I’ve attended other churches which has not</p>

<p>captivated my attention and it didn't motivate me to keep attending but Father [-] has from the beginning been relevant and spoken in a way that makes me think about my faith in my day to day life. I would hope more priests would do the same.</p>
<p>I find it increasingly difficult to maintain my faith. The Novus Ordo rite of the Mass as it is 'celebrated' typically eats away of my faith—for example, an Assistant Bishop (what are they, by the way?) regularly 'celebrates' Holy Mass by substituting the Nicene Creed for his own prayers, gives 3 'homilies', and changes the words of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. I try and keep my faith DESPITE what I see and hear. My former parish priest did not believe in original sin or the necessity of baptism. And the parish priest before that, had a family and allowed his concubine and children to live in the presbytery (heh, at least he wasn't gay, unlike most of the clergy). Yes, this is the same parish I am talking about. Only the traditional Latin Mass keeps me sane, and helps me to keep my faith.</p>
<p>I feel the Catholic Church in Australia is but a shadow of the Church that Our Lord will like her to be. The answer is to return to tradition and the teaching our fathers in the faith. Making the Church 'more relevant' only—ironically—makes her less relevant because the Church is not about relevance but about being a signpost and witness of salvation. My experiences with the Catholic Church are becoming less rewarding because I find it harder and harder to find the Catholic Faith being believed and preached among the Catholic clergy, and there is almost nothing to distinguish the average Catholic from the average atheist.</p>
<p>My faith was shaped by my school, as I learned to pray, talk to God, and live out my Faith through virtues daily. They emphasize this in everything we do, and are always being questioned and challenged so that we are ready to defend our Faith at any given time.</p>
<p>The Church has shaped me into who I am today in lots of ways but this one experience stuck out to me as I felt God telling me what to do in a tough situation. But also, my school chaplain has really helped my faith grow through amazing and relatable meditations and good confessions which have helped me fall in love with the faith. Also quickly, my sister has been on a spiritual retreat and during that time, she was overtaken by an evil spirit but people prayed over her in tongues and healed her and the spirit came out of her. Thank you God. This has made my faith stronger and more real and raw as it's proof these things are real and can happen. Now to my story, I was very stressed and anxious as my friend was suicidal and she got moved to a special hospital to treat her illness. I was carrying so much burden the whole day and then after talking to countless people and them trying to calm me down and help me, I went to the chapel and just sat down there. As soon as I did, I looked at the altar and straight away all my burden was lifted off me and taken away. Now the Bible saying "come to me all you who are heavy burdened and I will give you rest". This really has stuck with me in this life-changing experience as I felt all my worries, my stress, my thoughts, my feelings were all lifted off of me and I felt happy for the first time in 48 hours as a person I knew, her life was on the line. This has shaped my faith by having a school chapel which has helped in ways more than you know and can be explained.</p>
<p>I am Maronite Catholic and what I love about it is that it does not only unite us by religion but also with the Lebanese, middle-eastern culture. In my BIG family, one of my older cousins I never got the chance to meet as he passed away during birth. My family never talks about him as it hurts to bring out the past. However, as I have grown in my teenage years, one night I prayed to him before I went to sleep and I had the experience to visit him in my dreams with Jesus, except I couldn't see his face as it was only a blurred image. This helped shaped me that I am not alone and I do have support and love from heaven, and that even though I cannot see him when I wake up, I know that he is looking out for the family.</p>
<p>Spiritual direction—life changed for me when someone introduced me to this long-standing practice in the Church. A priest helped me to learn to pray and confront my own life with the word of God. I think any person who wishes to have more than a "routine" relationship with God, needs a committed and holy guide to help them discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to them.</p>
<p>Thank you for letting us speak and thank you for your service.</p>

My life changed at the age of 21 when I decided once and for all to give myself fully to Jesus Christ. After that, I was and still am full of joy and peace. As a young person living in a confused world, a particular source of joy and peace for me is the constancy and immutability of the Catholic Church's doctrine, in particular the Church's moral doctrine. In my experience, this has led me to love the Church more and more. And this experience is the same for all the fellow young practising Catholics that I know.

Create more opportunities for people to experience God. The Mass is fine. We should celebrate together on a weekly basis. However daily personal experience is important for faith to grow. In my own experience, I feel the Church has always said you should do this to deepen your faith but I feel they have not shown "how". They left that up to the individual. People are searching, they attend mindfulness yoga mediation courses. We need to teach people how to have that personal relationship with God and this I feel is the key for once the spirit resides in the individual, once the flame is lit, the rest gives itself.

My family are devout Catholics. We were educated in Catholic schools. I was told when I was 18, I could not have children. I spoke to a priest who suggested my role should then be a teacher or a nun—thankfully I dismissed this archaic reaction. I now have 4 children. I thank God for every day. My concern in dealing with Catholic organisations that there is a Catholic hierarchy in schools and Catholic organisations that has little to do with merit but is an old boys' club built on "Catholic-ness". I am also concerned about the ultra-conservative American version of Catholicism that has entered the faith in Australia. I am also concerned with the move by conservative Anglicans to the Catholic priesthood—bringing ultraconservative mores with them as they perceive Catholic faith as being less "progressive"—alienating moderate/liberal Catholics. I am also concerned they seem to be protecting the organisation of the Church at the expense of the people in it—and doing what is right in relation to social justice issues.

How my faith and education have helped to save me and others in my life. Why a faith including baptism and sacraments are so important for us, especially for strength and protection, love and understanding, forgiveness and mercy. In 2016, the Extraordinary year of Mercy and 2017 the Fatima year while praying the Divine Mercy chaplet in front of Our Lady of Fatima, I was filled with the grace of tears, my eyes were overflowing with lots of tears, flood of tears flowing continuously throughout the Chaplet prayer, this worried me as there was no reason for me crying. I was very happy at that moment of time. I offer my prayers for the healing of the wounded Mother Church. Mother of Mercy Pray for us. I have been saved by God many times in my life but recently I came across a Christian Pastor and how with conviction she speaks about the Holy Spirit. Her uplifting messages give inspiration but God gave me life when I was at the most trying times of my life. The Holy Spirit, my comforter. I wished I had known earlier and formed a relationship with him. God bless all of you.

When I was age 27 and 16 weeks pregnant, I left my violent, alcoholic husband. The agony I went through to decide to leave was horrendous. And this was all because of my fear that I had been married in the Church, am a practicing Catholic and that I valued my marriage vows so much. So when I filed for an annulment, it was just another nightmare. To be told "everything you have told us has been denied by your ex". So, as though it was not hard enough, I had to justify my actions to leave and was virtually accused of making things up. Honestly? This was the most difficult time of my life. Not supported AT ALL by the Church. It was more important to take my money for the annulment and make me feel worse than I did. Good thing my faith is strong and I love God, not necessarily the lack of understanding or compassion shown me by clergy. When I was 15, I was sexually assaulted by a Marist Brother. The bishop, who I know and told, totally dismissed my experience. There is no compassion. No understanding. And how could there be when clergy are so removed from the everyday experiences of their communities? What has shaped me? My love of the Eucharist, my absolute faith in God and knowing that God forgives me and loves me, not some priest pontificating to me. How can people be expected to continue loving a Church that is so judgmental

<p>and exclusive? I only go because I am strengthened by the Eucharist. Not from what I see and hear in the Church.</p>
<p>Rant finished. Thanks for reading. I feel very betrayed by the schools that I went to. They were great schools and had some great teachers and great men of the Jesuit order, but those men and indeed St Ignatius, have been betrayed by the modern leaders of those schools and that order is in doubt in my opinion, although I am thankful to many of the priests who remain doing the hard and sometimes thankless work and trying to carry on. But my criticism extends to other independent Catholic schools with similar concerns. [-], [-], come to mind. Either they should come into the fold, or they should stay outside it and operate as an independent school, not as a Catholic one.</p>
<p>Neighbours who live around me do not go to church because they do not believe in God (mainly the youth).</p>
<p>I am from [-] and moved to [-] early 2015. The first six months of living here was very difficult for me. My husband had a great job and was happy, but I hated my workplace. One particularly sad and difficult Tuesday, I had attended my GP and was diagnosed with anxiety and depression. I was despondent and felt so lost and alone. I felt the urge to seek out the sanctuary of a church. I went looking for one and found myself entering [-] in [-]. There was a healing Mass going on, which I didn't want to interrupt. One of the congregants saw me crying in the entrance and welcomed me into the healing Mass. I attended a few more healing Masses after that one. I stopped attending regularly until January 2018. I went to Israel on an educators' tour with the JNF (I work at a Jewish day school). Visiting the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem stirred something inside of me. I started attend [-] again and Fr [-] came on board as the new parish priest. I have since met quite a few people through the Church, I volunteer for the Kids church, and am becoming a more active member of the Church. I leave Mass each Sunday feeling happy and at peace. My next goal is to attend a Friday night Christian meditation sessions. I almost did last Friday, but my anxiety held me back. I feel that the Church has been a prominent focus on my recovery and helps me to cope with my anxiety.</p>
<p>I came here (from Vietnam) as a refugee: I appreciate and am always grateful to Australia and Australian Church. In my earlier (younger) years, I thought the (relaxed, less ritual, etc.) way of Christian life is very good (enjoyable, attractive). Now, getting older, I realised somehow we have let the younger generations (incl. our children) slipped (steered) away from GOD; our society is dangerously steering down to a 'Godless' life!!! I feel responsible for that as well!!!</p>
<p>My experiences of retreats at the Spirituality Centre at [-] are always a rich source of learning, inspiration and moving prayer experiences. The sense and conviction of being like John the Evangelist, a beloved disciple of Jesus always seems to pervade my times there. My encounters with women in particular, and young people who have come to that place to seek refreshment and challenge in their spiritual lives, always leave me full of hope and joy.</p>
<p>I learn more about what faith is from my fellow parishioners than I do from my local parish priest. I volunteer as a catechist and representing parents in Catholic schools to Educational Authorities and through these, I feel I am learning more about living out my faith.</p>
<p>That the good Lord is always waiting and ready to pour out His love and mercy upon each one of His children.</p>
<p>Many people have shaped my faith but my parents and weekly prayer groups that I attended as a child have shaped me. Community has shaped me and we are lacking this. I would like to see monthly sausage sizzles after Mass, Morning tea, kids' ministry program (that is the same everywhere), info nights on parenting, Yearly youth festivals and retreats advertised in all parishes, Men's group (these can be over a few parishes), senior groups, Duke of Edinburgh award, Stewardship award for youths aged 8 to 14, which I have put together and attached to this submission. Parents group. These might be over 4 parishes that have a group of people serving seniors and one might be families, the other might be youth. We are one body but I feel it is being pulled like the world to individuality.</p>

<p>My faith is deeply rooted in the faith of my parents ... that is why I feel so strongly about the Church's mission today to the adults in Australian society.</p>
<p>I, along with many thousands of other members of our Church, both religious and laity, got 'swept away' by the sexual revolution of the 60's and 70's which, combined with a university education, saw me lose my faith, as it were. But something about 'Holy Mother'—the Church, via my Maronite mother, never enabled me to ditch Her completely, and now, thanks be to God, I am more securely established, than I could have ever hoped to be, and, part of that has been my ability to blend, through the new physics—the 'physics' of light, my faith with reason. Also, learning what the Buddha taught, and not Buddhism, via my meditation teacher, [-], has also helped me to 'ground' my faith, through the Dharma—through (Mother) nature—through 'Our Blessed Mother', that much more securely.</p>
<p>We came to Australia in 2017 (me and my daughter). After coming here only I learned the prayers of Angels, especially St. Michael the Archangel. We started attending the novena on every Tuesday at [-] church [-]. From that day onwards, we felt the strong presence and protection in our life.</p>
<p>After the Bali Bombing in 2002, many people in Sydney found comfort and consolation in [-] where they gathered and shared personal experiences of the Blessed Virgin Mary whose presence was being felt. Many people of all backgrounds, young and old, Catholic or Greek Orthodox came and shared their faith so openly and in a caring and loving way. I then understood the great value of pilgrimage shrines of which there should be more in Sydney and within reach for many people.</p>
<p>My parents and grandparents were from the country and were very strong in their faith. They were great role models for all their children. These days, many like us try to be the same for our children and grandchildren, but with all the distractions in today's world, it's getting harder for parents and the Church to compete.</p>
<p>I attended a Bible study group with my two children for nearly 3 years at [-] [-]. We found it very beneficial and helped our faith grow. Unfortunately, it has now stopped running. We hope the church can find a leader soon and start the group again.</p>
<p>In 2012, I attended for the first time the Mass of the Lord's Supper in [-] Cathedral [-]. The dignity and solemnity of the liturgy, and the wonderful music, brought home to me the importance of beauty in our churches and above all in our liturgy. Since then, I have met many young non-believers who have been inspired by such beauty to ask about how to become Catholics and seek baptism.</p>
<p>1. Changing tide—Vatican II foundation for inclusiveness and service buried in return to clericalism and elitist thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishops and priests focusing on ceremony of their position not on engagement, humility, love. • Inaccessible language used in homilies and liturgy. • Focus on rules compliance not of faithful witness of God's love and Gospel message. • Defensive rather than a humble open and learning institutional Church. • Clergy not in tune with society so struggle to relate and engage—e.g.: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Children today are taught to evaluate and question in ways previous generations were not. Teachers and parents are part of this evolution but clergy are largely disconnected from it. ii. Clergy developed and trained in patriarchal culture struggle with Australian culture including equality of genders. • Withdrawal from devolution to parish communities of activities like RCIA. • Rule-driven ostracism of community members. • An environment of intolerance of diversity of views and of diversity of observance that pushes people away from the institutional Church. We all have relatives who do not attend Mass but still believe in God. Many have children who do not attend Mass but baptise their children, send them to Catholic schools and have them confirmed. <p>2. Strength and vitality of faith communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally driven programs where people engage with people they know have been very successful. • Parishes where community empowered flourish. • Humility and translation of gospel setting during liturgy enables connection to today's society and

<p>spiritual growth. Such a liturgical experience leads to discussion within home and community that spreads the gospel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecumenical engagement at local level leads to strong faith-based relationships and destruction of barriers. • All have seen that clergy are human and diverse in skills and background. The diversity within the clergy is a strength that we have seen leveraged through the placement of individuals with other priests to support their development. • We all have been inspired by a simple succinct homily expressed in context for today's situation and we all have been depressed by a long literal restatement of the readings overlaid with instruction based on literal interpretation of the words. Finding ways to develop the skills of individuals to strengthen humility, leadership and emotional intelligence is key to vital faith communities.
<p>At an English-speaking catechesis in Panama, a girl from the USA asked me ways that she could improve her own faith in her Church and what can be done to encourage people in their faith.</p>
<p>Having experienced youth programs in other Christian denominations, I have found them to be more involving and interesting. They foster a culture of open discussion about their faith that I think is somewhat lacking in Catholic programs. The Church should try to create an environment where youth are proud to express their faith and have the tools to engage with others in discussion about the faith. There needs to be more emphasis and instruction on being an active Catholic rather than just a passive one.</p>
<p>I have a brother who goes to church every Sunday and is a great man. I have been to church with him on occasions and it breaks my heart for him not to go to holy communion. The Lord forgave many in the Bible like David who had his rival killed because of his lust. My brother hasn't had anyone killed and is a champion to his ex-wife.</p>
<p>As we were involved in starting a family club in [-]. To create a positive environment, good families need to work together. Had parenting workshops—parents got formative talk given by trained parents, and invited professional speakers at times, while children attended organised activities, crafts, catechism, drama/dancing/martial arts. The best activity was parents and children sports, games and shared meals. A yearly camp was the highlight, lots of fun and games, bonding time. Through this club, it has built real, true friendships. In some of the camps, a priest comes to say Mass daily. The children now help in running clubs, ...</p>
<p>So many times when sitting at Mass and listening to the priest's homily, I am overwhelmed by the feeling that this man, because of the attitude developed during his training and the pedestal on which the institutional Church places all priests, has no feeling for or understanding of the life I have been leading as a wife and the mother of a large family. I come away from Mass feeling completely uninspired and unsupported by what I have just experienced.</p>
<p>I lapsed for a brief period of time in my Catholic faith. It was easier to go anti-Catholic than to take a stand. I started going to a Protestant church but was ultimately left unfulfilled. I would play in the "praise band" but it meant nothing. I had no understanding of any faith-based prayer and ultimately was lost. Then one of my friends asked if I could sing some Chant for a wedding. The second I began to, my life changed. I began studying Philosophy, Theology, the works of the Saints and I felt like I was closer to God. I took my new faith to the Holy Land just last month. There are no guitars. There is no "praying over people". There is only authentic, Catholic Faith. And that is what the Spirit is asking of us.</p>
<p>I am currently living in [-] on a temporary work assignment. I have found our parish in [-] very welcoming.</p>
<p>I was brought up in a strong Catholic family where we were expected to go to Mass every Sunday. Whilst I didn't understand the meaning of the Mass, I quite enjoyed going as a family and meeting people after Mass. When I got to about 14 years of age, to the disappointment of my parents, I stopped going. All my brothers and sister were the same. Some 20 years later when my first child started school, I started going again more for her sake. I started to understand more what the Mass</p>

<p>meant, and how important God is in my life. I truly believe I have received his healing power. The homilies became more meaningful to the extent where I now actually look forward to listening to our parish priest's homilies on Sunday and I am able reflect on these all week and can adapt all I do to please God. I think it is important that if we can't keep our youth interested, that we are able to bring them back at a later stage.</p>
<p>Regular visits to the church helped form my understanding of the liturgy. I cherish the liturgy and the music of the Church.</p>
<p>Over many years, I have watched with sadness as my family and friends experienced such pain when they felt the only way for them was to leave such a judgmental "Church". Wonderful good people.</p>
<p>In preparing to teach a course on Women and Religion to senior students, I attended a summer school. One lecturer—a Catholic sister—used St Brigid as an example of a feisty, determined, visionary who was (allegedly) ordained a bishop! I had attended St Brigid's Primary School and learned almost nothing about her—now I knew why! It explained why the statue of Brigid in our church holds a staff. Through much of the Church's history, there has been a gap between those who have the resources and skills to master theology and those who rely on someone else—usually the ordained—to select the knowledge that is needed. I always encourage people for whom the Catholic faith is important to take all opportunities to inform themselves as deeply as possible, rather than rely on another individual's judgement as to what matters.</p>
<p>There have been a few significant points in my spiritual life. I would like to share two of the most poignant. The first was that someone took the risk of asking me to get involved in parish life. I was in year 9 and at school at the time and I knew a little music. We needed an organist. I was nervous, I was uncertain. The acolyte encouraged me to get involved. He gave me a couple of hymns and said just try to learn these and then when you are ready to try, just play them over and over. No one will mind. They will appreciate your effort. He told me it didn't matter if I wasn't good, just that I tried. 35 years on, I am still involved in music ministry. My involvement has made my faith and commitment strong, deep and real. It is my calling. I cannot contemplate life without being able to minister in this way. Facilitating prayer with the organ, the guitar, singing and composing. All thanks to someone who acting through the Holy Spirit encouraged me and empowered me. The most heart-breaking experience of my faith life on the other hand was when I was sitting with two friends before a lecture at university 30 years ago chatting. One friend (a Baptist) turned to my other friend (like me, a Catholic. Catholic school all her life, Catholic parents and upbringing, recipient of all the sacraments of Formation) and asked her non-maliciously and out of genuine ignorance "are Catholics Christian?" My second friend's reply broke my heart. She said, "I don't know, are we, Anthony?" How does this happen? How did the Church, her parents and their upbringing, the Catholic School system and my friend fail?</p>
<p>No, story-telling is not the purpose of the consultation! The aim here is to put right what the laity see is wrong ... in short order at that!</p>
<p>I totally trust in God's mercy.</p>
<p>My faith was strengthened by a priest who used to be in my parish who taught about the scripture readings and taught the context and meaning of the faith.</p>
<p>Five years ago, one of our married sons was struck down with cancer of the pancreas and other parts of his body. After a number of major operations, he temporarily recovered and then the cancer returned and requires further operations and treatment. We believe that the prayers of ourselves, family and many friends has allowed him to live a very full life with his family, continue to work and participate in the sport he loves—cricket.</p>
<p>I attend regular retreats that have formed me into the faith. I am very involved in the Church. I attend women's faith formation group at my church where I learn all about the Church and the tradition. Family spiritual camps are very helpful.</p>
<p>I have attended many school Masses in several suburbs and it is very obvious that very few children if any, have the vaguest idea of the Mass and very few teachers even know when to stand, sit, kneel or anything else, so how can they be teaching anything about our faith?</p>

<p>What have shaped my love for Our Lord and the Church are twofold in my formative years:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A home where the faith was lived and knowledge of the faith was prized. 2. A school where what I was living in the home was reinforced and supported.
<p>My study of theology in the BTh degree has enriched my understanding of my faith, enabled me to reconcile it with contemporary cosmology and provided me with a vision of Church as faithful community sharing a way of life.</p>
<p>The story I would like to share is how I am filled with wonder when I take the time to truly look at the world in which I am living and see my fellow man (i.e. man and woman).</p>
<p>Our PP, Father [-] came to tell mum that dad was in hospital after a massive heart attack. I was at uni and my sister doing the Leaving Certificate. The stress caused mum to have menorrhagia which meant that she was hospitalised in St [-]. Father came every week to look in our fridge to make sure we girls had food. He went with me to the bank manager to explain our family situation and asked him not to foreclose on the mortgage and said that he was sure our parents would pay all but he added that he would go guarantor. I'm sure that we were not the only people that he stood firmly by through the really tough times of life. The most beautiful, lovely Christ-like person I've ever known. A very hard act to follow.</p>
<p>Our experience is that there is a lack of a nourishing spiritual life in parishes and that often, parish leadership is not marked by a spirituality of compassionate care for all and honesty in relationships. Often, issues of social justice, hospitality and open-mindedness which are integral to Christian/Catholic spirituality are lacking. The annual Social Justice statement from the ACBC is rarely referred to in local churches. People are hungering for ongoing education in faith and understanding of Scripture as a source of nourishment for prayer.</p>
<p>If I did not listen to a catechesis, today I would not be with my wife. These catechists were people like me who did not judge me but showed me that God has a plan for everyone in a concrete way.</p>
<p>I was born into a Catholic family and mostly went to Catholic schools. I did not have a living faith. My faith was ignited at [-] University on contact with evangelical Christians for whom Jesus was real person—one we could have a relationship with and who would walk with us. My faith journey began then. I stayed away from Mass for many years, but returned some years later (to familiarity, not for soul-nourishment). My faith journey has not been nourished by Mass or any Catholic practices—it has grown through personal experiences at Taize, and with regular engagement in a Lectio Divina group for the past 10 years. I no longer go to Mass, and I no longer call myself a Catholic, but a Christian—i.e. a follower of Christ. That is all that I can say with 100% certainty. My prayer life is alive, my faith in God [is] complete. From this point, I may take on other practices that empower be to live more like Christ did, but the liturgy as I've known it, has never given me nourishment or solace. My fellowship with other sincere Christians has.</p>
<p>I personally came to an adult relationship with God at the age of 28 through the Catholic Charismatic renewal. It was a powerful healing experience and changed me forever. Through this small group gathering weekly praying together and becoming friends, my husband converted to Catholicism in 1985 and truly he was so committed and his love of God and community just shone.</p>
<p>No 'feel good' stories from me. Engage with those we have marginalised or prepare for failure!</p>
<p>I've been an active member of St Vincent de Paul for some years. We visit people in their homes and service their needs, regardless of their religious beliefs, sexuality, marital status, mental health issues, recently released from prison. We approach these people with respect and in a non-judgemental manner. In return, we receive from them respect and gratitude. To me, this is a model of how the Church should be.</p>
<p>Like Jesus, we are born into this life <i>through</i> God, we live our lives <i>with</i> God and we end our lives <i>in</i> God. <i>We</i> are the living Trinity. Go and live your life.</p>
<p>I love the Liturgy of the Hours. It is the greatest secret treasure of our tradition. Rather than communion services, why not use the Liturgy of the Hours? I find that praying the Office every day on the way to and from work creates the necessary space I need to listen to God speak to my heart so that I am ready to face the challenges of the day. I have often wondered why this treasure is not</p>

<p>used in our parishes. It does not need ordained ministers to lead it. It is the most obvious prayer of the People of God. I urge the Council to put the Liturgy of the Hours on the agenda as a priority for the liturgical and spiritual renewal of the Church in Australia.</p>
<p>After going through bouts of deep loneliness and sadness that God in his mercy consoled me through the kindness of old friends. In particular, more recently the words of a friend during a camping trip strengthened my resolution to not give up on prayer.</p>
<p>I found after going to a Catholic school wanting to leave and abandon my faith and the Catholic Church. Reason is school is to learn and work, not a place to develop faith, after searching and trailing other faiths, I suddenly found myself back to the Lord. Scripture turned me back to the Lord in addition to listening and reading from Bible scholars. I can only wish more people could have this exposure and resonance with scripture to find the Lord. Now I realise the small things in Mass and the different prayers referring to different components of scripture like the "Holy Hosts" and "Lord Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father" to the Book of Daniel which is a core book about our Lord. I feel this was missed during my early learning of Christ aka "Son of Man".</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The parish priest used to support my family and I when my Mother and Brother were sick. This experience allowed me to understand life to be about helping others in my community. This shaped my aspirations in life. 2. The great work the College and the parish do together (e.g. Night Patrol, Christmas Appeal, Project Compassion, Nagle Apartments Visits) should be highlighted! 3. God is always calling us, all we need to do is to say 'Yes, Lord, here I am!' I'm an acolyte and a catechist and I love what I do. Serving God and others is such a blessing. By doing this, I have increased in faith and love and I want to do more. 4. Attending World Youth Day in Madrid, was a highlight for me in my spiritual journey. 5. I feel welcomed by my church community and I am grateful for my connection to God.
<p>Some of the groups shared experiences of people being good to them, their experiences at school and with their families. Some mentioned that they sometimes do not feel engaged at Mass on the weekend. Some also mentioned how they enjoy having a job at the church and that they are part of some young Catholic groups.</p>
<p>My Catholic faith has helped me form an intimate friendship with Jesus Christ, God the Father and the Holy Spirit through Mary, our mother. After many overseas service projects, I have learned to see God in the poor and most impoverished people around the world. This has spurred me on to share my faith with my friends by bringing them along with me to means of formation, confession and the Holy Mass.</p>
<p>The Old Testament passage of Ps 78:1–8, about the inter-generational catechesis concerning the history of salvation is highly inspirational to me, particularly in my role as a priest teaching Religion to children in schools for some thirty years.</p>
<p>One time I prayed intensely with utmost sincerity and deep faith and God answered my prayer in an instant. After agonising about a situation for weeks, all that disappeared in a flick.</p>
<p>Kids are getting taught about evolution in the Catholic education classes.</p>
<p>The issues outlined in the attached Submission are largely based on the cumulative 400-odd years of collective 'life experiences' of our parish group.</p>
<p>I am a migrant, I moved to [-] in 1987. It has always helped me to go to [-] Cathedral to see how they take care of the liturgy, how everything is clean, shiny and made of very good material, how sacred music is used to help piety. I note that a lot of the improvements have happened when [-] became Archbishop, and this has been seamlessly maintained by the current Archbishop [-].</p>
<p>Example quoted of research conducted by McDonald's into their loss of business and their resulting approach to "Retain/regain/convert" based on solid research. A good comparison to consider. Some may have come when they had younger children but as they their children stopped attending, so did the parents.</p> <p>Personal story #1—husband of a group member was brought up as Salvation Army. Converted to Catholicism and was observant until a contact with a parish priest who was verbally abusive to the</p>

man about the Salvation Army ... the man stopped attending Mass for many years because of this encounter. The question is why doesn't the Church remedy this situation? Children are not coming to Mass or grandchildren except on 'special occasions' when they may attend 'for the parents'. Influence of schools can be very strong—social justice is very important to young people and can influence them.

Personal story #2—brother of a group member left the Church because of an encounter with a particular priest despite being very involved prior to that. Example: A bishop due to celebrate the traditional Christmas Eve Children's Mass was asked about the placement of the pageant during the Mass. Refused to discuss concept of giving up homily time—response, "That's not going to happen". Point made that it is important to children and families and parish ... but no discussion was 'allowed'. Lack of moral authority Example—Teachers and principals in Catholic schools who do not adhere to the code of ethics, do not (regularly or at all) attend Mass, there is no accountability, Principals are divorced and remarried or living with a partner which is contrary to the Oath required to be made on appointment. Complying with the teaching of the Church in their lifestyle is the issue. We can certainly add the significant findings of the Royal Commission into the sexual abuse of children by priests and religious and the totally inadequate response by the hierarchy of the Church at all levels even up to the Pope—in the past and present. Our parish Youth Ministry was very involved in WYD 1996, 2000 and 2004 and although individual youth returned and tried to invigorate the parish, nothing was achieved, as there did not appear to be any follow-through plan from the hierarchy. "Eye-opener" moments arising from discussion

- The extent of WYD 2008 being a non-event in terms of any flow-on effect on youths in Australia.
- Broken trust and the perceived loss of moral authority of the Church.
- The need to present the positive side of the Church.
- The lack of responsibility of the hierarchy.

I have always loved the Church since I remember. I loved all the saints. My mother did not know how to read but she always instilled the faith in us children. My two children were diagnosed with cancer and through prayer, fasting and healing Mass and now my son is 50 years old and thanks be to God, both are alright.

Powerful experiences of the sacraments (especially of Reconciliation and the Eucharist) when holy priests celebrated them—enabled me to experience the love of Christ in the Catholic Church—which is why I will not leave the Church in spite of all the failures of its clergy and religious.

I wish I could share a spiritual story where the Catholic Church was involved. Although I was born into the Catholic faith, I live my faith out as a Christian. I watch the Australian Christian Channel (ACCTV) and a lot of my Spiritual education and growth is because of that channel and its Christian content. I can't say that the Catholic Church has helped me much in my spiritual growth. I'm sorry if this sounds harsh but it's the truth.

An idea from our group was to have a commentative Mass in order to help youth and adults understand what the whole thing is all about members of the group felt that this had been useful in their own faith life. Another suggestion is more retreats, etc. because this is formative in any faith life.

A convert from the Anglican faith in my teens, I moved to the RC original Church. I remain a churchgoer and financial supporter and have taken minor parish duties in the past.

My granddaughter can't be part of sacraments in her primary school because she is Maronite Catholic. Why can't Maronite Catholics receive communion in our parish? Our Church as an ocean of grace mercy needs to be more inclusive and accepting of others joined in the same faith. A strong presence within the group focused conversation on the Holy Spirit's questions of us. Stories were centred on what people observed and not so much on what they had experienced. There was a common theme of the schools letting our Church down in terms of formation of our children. Discussion about the wisdom of separating 'youth' activities from wider parish and faith activities—to behave and respond as a whole community, we need to be formed and to act as a whole community. This group returned conversation to the importance of faith tradition although did not

recount personal experiences, only their belief that a focus on our faith tradition and Church teaching might encourage more people to stay in the Church and practice their faith as a community.

Until around 1987, I was basically a Sunday Catholic when I learned from a friend of mine that our Heavenly Mother Mary was Appearing in Medugorje. He sent me some literature in which Our Lady asked people to pray the Rosary, go to Mass, Monthly Reconciliation and Fasting. I saw that She was asking nothing new there that I shouldn't have been doing already. So I started doing what She asked of me, praying the Family Rosary, Monthly Reconciliation, Fasting. So Our Lady Appearing in Medugorje (have visited there 3 times over the years) had a big impact in shaping me. Later became an Acolyte at my local parish church and have been an Acolyte about 27 years. I am involved in my local church with prayer groups and Adoration.

I grew up as a Catholic and was very devout as a young person. I am still a very spiritual person today, but have left the Church. My central reasons for this are two-fold, firstly, as a woman I never felt like I was as valued as men in the Church, even though I had as much time, effort, sense of community and purpose to give. I felt rejected by the Church and unvalued. I am amazed that today, it is still the case that women are second-class citizens in the Church and it's simply unacceptable. Secondly, to me, the Church is totally out-of-touch with the issues that people are facing today. The Church could and should have a much more powerful voice on the issues that matter: inequality, poverty, climate change. But, sadly, the Church is stuck in defending itself from public scrutiny into its darkest crimes against children. If at least the Church would apologise and genuinely try to reach out to the victims rather than protecting itself, then this would be a start. The Church has a long way to go and I honestly can't see it being a place where people from all walks of life can come together in peace and to celebrate love and God. It's at odds with Jesus' most basic teachings and I think Jesus would be very saddened by what he sees as the Church today.

I am a newly baptised Catholic although I'm not new to the faith (been attending Catholic schools since primary). However, lack of engagement has let me drift apart for years, and allowed me to keep putting off my baptism and taking the plunge into the faith. While there is no silver bullet into making me engage quicker, I feel as if that there may be ways. I can be engaged quicker given the right circumstances.

During my younger years back in the Philippines, I quit my studies in the university to pursue priestly formation in the seminary. Due to unexpected circumstances I was advised to leave the seminary to realize more vivid truths about myself with regards to priestly vocation. The formators gave me hope to return so long that I could be ready. Sad to say, I was lost and didn't take on guard towards my spiritual life. I let myself to confusion and chaotic against my vocation. I turned it down and later found myself regretting about it. The seed of vocation that was given was not taken care by me. Out of this experience from the seminary through married life, I have deepened my understanding about the feelings and life of other aspirants. I made to think to guide young people to discern more in their response to a call of God for priestly vocation. This is so much rare and wonderful that could lead own family to the grace of God. We need priests in the vineyard of the Lord, the Church, the needy and those who are losing faith.

The Royal Commission findings have devastated my confidence in the Church and its priests.

I am a Religious sister. I have been a sister for 18 years. I am 38 years old. I have witnessed the suffering of many in the Church who have felt betrayed and without a voice. They have been silenced and shut down. I myself feel like women and also Religious women have not valued the Church. We are free labour for the priests and bishops. This has to change. Women need to have more of a voice in the Church. They need to be respected, valued and supported. I have witnessed religious give their lives in parishes, as chaplains, in pastoral ministries, with very little appreciation, and thanks. This has to change. My own conversion and call took place through the encounter with Christ in the Word. It is my personal and intimate encounter with Christ in the Word of God that sustains me. I would like to see a greater emphasis on THE WORD OF GOD.

<p>Every time I attend Mass, I notice the dwindling numbers is attendance. This surely is a sign for all to see that the Australian Church has very serious problems. Until very recently, the Church has shown a great reluctance to look at these problems.</p>
<p>Recently during the homily of my celebrant, I was aware that his words would have appealed to me when I was in my formative years as a committed Catholic, during my 20s. I recognise the difficulty for him to try and appeal to my needs as a person in my late 60s who has always been a faithful churchgoer as well as people who are at the same stage of faith development as himself, I would hope training and support for priests could help them tread this difficult path.</p>
<p>Our group was formed to satisfy a common need to understand better our Catholic faith and to stay abreast of important current issues affecting the Church and Christian values in general. We are family men, most of who are actively involved in a variety of professions and business enterprises. We meet once a month to receive some formation and to share our faith experience. As a result of this exposure, most of the guys in the group have experienced a form of conversion or awakening in the Catholic faith which has been fruitful in the Christian education and formation of our children. Members of our small group appreciate that as parents, we are the primary educators of our children and the role of the school is to support the parents and partner them in the formation of their children.</p>
<p>I have been part of a practicing Catholic family all my life. I love the majority of the work the Church does and the message it presents. I find some elements almost intolerable however. Unequal treatment of women, and discrimination of LGBTI people are very hard for me to reconcile. Many of my family are still practicing Catholics but others have left the Church. The abuses carried out by Church leadership have been a major contributor to that. I do not believe the model of unmarried men representing the highest level of leadership is an ethical stance given the past abuses and our current human understanding of gender and human and sexual relations.</p>
<p>Care of parents for "special" children; spouses caring when age or sickness takes its toll. Young people today are seriously discerning whether God is calling them to priesthood or religious life. Parents who going on trusting in God and living their faith after great tragedy has happened to their children.</p>
<p>Everyone to pray Our Father and Hail Mary, and Glory Be to help finally pray for Australia and Lebanon for all the saints.</p>
<p>Since WYD and going to Europe, my life has changed and made me realise how real our Faith is and not some stories in a book but actual people in different times and eras but also now. My time in mission school with the Sisters of Immaculata and my time in the postulancy program with the [-] have given me the foundation, beauty and truths about our Catholic faith which I had no idea existed and wished these things were more integrated in our parish life. Simple things like how to pray and what is prayer, brief Church history and concrete things about our Mother Church, that ordinary folks should know and shouldn't have to study Theology in University just find basic truths about our Church.</p>
<p>My father and mother were deeply committed Catholics from remote areas, who both had the great privilege of Catholic education, which they treasured. From the earliest age, as a young boy growing up on a sheep and wheat farm with four brothers, the enduring gift of learning and education was often spoken of with an enthusiasm and purpose that captivated and compelled. My own education with the Mercy Sisters, Marist Brothers and Jesuits was extraordinary in its enjoyment and influence. In my work in education, it has been a privilege to work with many committed lay people, Religious women and men, priests, and bishops. As I get older, I see ever more clearly that we are all pilgrims on a journey, trying to do our best despite our faults and failings. I wonder often in these times of change and turmoil for the Church, what sort of Church will the Spirit guide us to shape for today and for our children and their children?</p>
<p>3. Other experiences/comments—topic “what issues do you think affect people’s attendance at church”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability and timings of Masses.

- Quality of preaching.
- Scandal in the Church.
- General society/media profile, perceptions and pressures arising out of the scandals.
- People “not happy” with their priests.
- Not understanding the importance of attendance and not making it a priority.
- Lack of knowledge and faith.
- Catholic teaching shortfalls.
- Whether there is Children’s Liturgy available.
- Physical aspects of church—public transport/location/parking available—disabled/elderly friendly (stairs/ramps, wide doors, etc....) access to parking (conflict with primary school play areas), crying rooms for babies/toddlers.

We are a Chinese Catholic community which manages 2 Cantonese Mass in [-]. Unfortunately, after the Cantonese/Mandarin priest got sick and passed away over 10 years ago, we still do not have a Cantonese priest to lead the communities. Another Chinese community in [-] Diocese could immediately recruit a Cantonese speaking priest from Hong Kong after the current priest relocated to [-] parish. Our community currently relies on support from some religious orders to celebrate Sunday Masses for us. But as they do not speak our language and do not understand our culture, they could not pastor our community. Regarding the image of the Church, some of our children (actually a lot) are not willing to attend the church because of the lengthy and boring liturgy of our Mass. Some of the liturgy coordinators are over-emphasized on the fine details of the liturgy therefore giving this kind of impression to the new generation. Besides, most young people cannot relate their daily life with the liturgy and sermon. Catechumen. We do not have a youth minister to look after our youth group and rely on a few youth leaders and a couple of adults to plan the program and activities.

1. Studied in Catholic school and went to catechumen class, having been a Catholic for more than 20 years but still know not much about God; and not confident enough to talk to others about God.
2. It seems that Holy Spirit is full of wonders and mysteries, not easy to know Him.
3. The syllabus of the catechumen class may not cover a lot of contents within the limit time. Therefore, continuous ongoing formation is important for the growth and consolidation of our faith.
4. Faith is a journey and need to walk with the Bible constantly open. Without reading Bible, we may lose sight of the important issues in our lives; and not easy to evangelise. We must know our God before we can talk to others about our God.
5. In Hong Kong, there are some very successful religious programs that get youths actively and happily involved; and thus strengthened their faith and their sense of belonging in Church.
 - a) The two creative musicals, St Francis of Assisi in 2012 and Matteo Ricci in 2018 led by Rev. Giovanni Giampietro (Yan Po Tak), involved youths in script and song writing, stage performance etc.
 - b) The young adult bands formed by some Catholic friends who write their original songs about God and their faith, make CDs and perform locally or at overseas. The band members evangelise actively and draw many people to know God and their belief; and to appreciate their attitude as Catholic.

I have recently re-examined my own Faith from within the perspective of an Ecumenical Prison Ministry (Kairos); I'm now embarrassed that I once glibly referred to "our separated brethren" I won't do that again. Consider rejuvenating a Fourth-Day Movement as a truly Ecumenical encounter with God, ourselves and with others.

About six weeks ago, a new administrator was appointed to our parish. He has been ordained about six years. He is dressed completely (during heat waves too) in flowing black soutane with a sash which has a fringe on it. His homilies are lectures and go on for about 20 minutes and are more about sin and hell than the compassionate love of our God. He recently told a nun who has just celebrated 60 years of profession that nuns who do not wear the full habit are not able to face the truth! In a homily, he said that he was amazed that people were telling him what he should be doing! This is far from making a collaborative community but one hopes that it is early days and he will be able to become part of the community—at their level.

Sadly, I have been involved in the funerals of three people who could no longer face life. One was a beautiful funeral liturgy for a young man in [-] diocese. It was conducted by a senior priest, who had not long been in the parish, but it was full of kindness, compassion and hope and of great comfort to family and friends. The mother of the deceased still gratefully remembers the kind, generous and comforting words and actions of that priest. The second was in [-] archdiocese, for a 22-year-old young woman and the church was overflowing with her devastated parents, family and friends, including her entire school year of 140 young women. The inexperienced priest said things like “She will be judged”; “We don’t know if she has gone to heaven” and discussed purgatory at length. It was a very analytical, cold approach which may have been a statement of fact, in accordance with Church teachings, but was not at all comforting at such a tragic time and it caused further distress and alienated people from the Church. The same priest is sometimes heard commenting about the absence of young people at Mass. Sadly and shamefully, he does not comprehend that he alienated 140 of them by his choice of words and actions at the young woman’s funeral. The third was in [-] archdiocese just recently, the funeral of a man with three young children. A number of letters and emails have been sent to the priest and the Archbishop about the great distress experienced by the family as a result of the words of the priest involved. With the parents of the deceased young man sitting at the front of the church, the priest described the young man as insecure as he came from a ‘broken home’ which had contributed to his suicide and as having a ‘humpty dumpty’ personality. The congregation was appalled, family devastated and my sister-in-law, who is active in her parish, was left ashamed to be a Catholic. I have been to many Catholic funerals and have assisted in the liturgy. I believe that Catholic Funeral Masses generally provide hope and comfort as we gather to pray for the deceased, family and friends and are an integral component in supporting people at times of great sorrow. Most recently, my mother and family were very grateful at the generous words and support shown by our parish priest upon the death of my father. This should be the case at all funerals, and particularly those where the deceased has taken their own life.

Prior to this Plenary Council we have not been asked, in our lifetime, for our views on the Church. We see this as a very positive step, although we are apprehensive about the time for action and processes following submissions. Our parish priest is a remarkable and generous man, who is very much in touch with our communities. He has led by example and we have seen our community grow. We are very fearful about what will happen when he is no longer able to be with us. Our concerns have been magnified by the actions of many more recently ordained assistant priests, who don’t relate to people, do not understand the realities of parishioners’ lives, are too frequently offensive and the result is that parishioners will not attend their Masses. In our experience, lay people are vital for functioning parish life. Women are prominent in these roles.

I grew up in a Lutheran sect which was rejected as a member of the Lutheran church in the 1860s. In this sect, people are supposed to rely solely on the teachings that we should love God above all else and our neighbours as ourselves. In my experience, this was certainly not working well within this organisation. I attended an Anglican school, but was not particularly inspired by the Anglican services I witnessed either. Over time, I began a serious search for a spiritual home which lasted until I was in my mid-fifties. In 2010, I joined a Christian mediation group in [-] church in [-]. After attending regularly for sessions of about one and a half hours a week for about three months, I decided I wanted to become a Catholic. I attended an RCIA group which began at [-] [-] in July 2010 and was most ably conducted by Sr [-]. In January 2011, I briefly transferred to an RCIA group at [-] church in [-] as I felt a particular attraction to the Franciscan Charism and this parish had not previously been conducting an RCIA group. To my great disappointment, no priests or religious were involved in leading this RCIA group. There were two leaders. One disgusted me by commencing a discussion by stating that he thought the Virginity of Our Lady could not possibly have been a physical fact. Later he commented to the group that he was surprised that we ‘would bother’ to become a Catholic ‘these days’. The other leader of this RCIA group was a female academic theologian whose decidedly cerebral approach to the Faith disturbed me as well. I hurried back to Sr [-] at [-] after about 4–6 weeks attendance at this other RCIA group. I was duly baptised, received my first Holy Communion

and was confirmed at the Vigil Mass for Easter 2011 at [-] [-]. When I converted to Catholicism, I was surprised at the number of TAFE teaching colleagues who made negative comments. Two of my more casual friends, a man and a woman, acted as though I were joining a satanic cult rather than a church. The man seemed to blame me for the Inquisition and constantly made 'jokes' with anti-Catholic overtones, while the woman was absolutely horrified when I became a catechist in 2015. She seemed to think I was engaging in brainwashing helpless children with some unimaginably horrible content. I feel sick at the level of hatred levelled at the Church by people who consider themselves to be above average intelligence and who certainly have obtained above average levels of education. However, their knowledge and experience of the Catholic Faith seems almost non-existent.

I am a woman and wonder how the hierarchy cannot see the powerful patriarchy which wields power. At community gatherings for Mass in which it is women who carry the work of evangelisation within families, the sanctuary is inhabited solely by men, who isolate themselves by wearing ancient styles of clothing.

The Catholic Church has the answers and the answers are there if you want to find them. For a long time, I was leading a double life where I would attend Mass on Sundays, but not live a life consistent with my beliefs for the rest of the week. The issue was that my faith had no purpose—I found myself going to Mass out of habit rather than because I believed myself to be a sinner needing God's love, mercy and forgiveness. I saw my faith as one compartment among many in my life alongside my sporting life, academic life, family life etc. It was only when I discovered that the purpose of my life is to become a saint in Heaven that everything started to make sense. Now, instead of being one compartment in my life, my faith became the frame in which all of the other compartments were located so that my work life, my sporting life, my family, etc. were all directed towards giving glory to God. Moral issues became no brainers—there were no 'grey issues'—it was a simple case of whether the matter was going to help me achieve my goal and become a saint in Heaven or not. Everything made sense and I have never looked back. I am incredibly grateful to the Catholic Church for her patience with me and I wish to share my story with as many people as possible so that they too can experience the joy of being Catholic.

I am a woman. I am unable to fully participate in the Church. It's 2019 and the Church in Australia still treats me as a subordinate. On my Mother's side of the family, we can trace her Catholic heritage back 32 generations. None of my siblings have baptised their children and I am very reluctant to bring my daughter into a faith that tells her God loves her within a Church that tells her she is less because of her gender. It's very easy for Bishops to blame lack of church attendance on the influence of the society we live in. The reality is you have perpetuated a Church that is inequitable and abusive to those who are not part of the dominant power group. People today can see the imbalance and the abuse and whilst we may not be rioting in the streets we are no longer sitting silently and passively in the pews.

I have come to know a few people in different parishes involved in the sacramental Programme, in preparation of children for their first Holy Communion. Unfortunately I also know of some cases in [-] where those responsible were not in possession of a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church at home, or were even aware of the existence of the Compendium of the Catechism. I find it disturbing that those good people, in good faith, and with the best intention, are not aware of the riches of our Faith, and therefore can only transmit a very superficial or pale version of their own limited understanding.

I have witnessed a friend of mine who decided to use Sunday mornings after Mass to give his children classes on the Catechism. The oldest were around 7–10, but the younger children (five and four year old at the time) wanted to be part of the class. The result was that they enjoyed the classes and invited their school friends and others. As the parents of the friends drove their children to the class (about 30 minutes), the parents stayed for the session. Several of them were not regularly practicing the Faith. They learned both from the teacher and from the children (interest, enthusiasm

<p>and retention of what was taught), that they themselves returned to the practice of the sacraments and were extremely grateful to their friends for this initiative. Needless to say, the Sunday class was backed up by the "teacher" and his wife throughout the week, in the practice of the Faith, individually and as a family (Grace at meals, family Rosary, bed time prayers and a short personal examination of conscience with the children).</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every so often we take our growing children to 'Hillsong' to get a 'pick-up' and enjoy their faith, but we keep going to our parish Mass. 2. We have moved parish so we 'get nourished' in our faith. 3. Three ladies recently asked me to help start a charismatic prayer meeting in the parish as 'there is nothing happening'. We have had two meetings.
<p>The story of faith that has most influenced me is the increased devotion my parents have shown to the Church following the suicide of their youngest son. The guilt and sense of loss than cannot be understood unless someone experiences this. In the past 15 years, being able to attend church, pray and rely on God's help, I am sure saved my parents. If not for their local parish and their faith, I am not sure how they would have dealt with this loss. In my experience, the strength of faith and the support the Church provided was immeasurable.</p>
<p>I am in touch with many young adults and I see as each year passes that these young adults are full of insecurity and low self-esteem. They may come from dysfunctional families, from families where the parents are constantly arguing, or parents who haven't shown that they love their child as he or she is ... These young adults are lonely and lost and looking for love and acceptance.</p>
<p>I work with many young adults entering university and I find that they don't know why they should continue going to Mass now that they have left home. Some of them don't even know about the one hour fast before receiving Communion. They find Mass boring ...</p>
<p>I see that people are happier when they think about other people ... when they are only concerned about themselves; they don't see what their neighbour needs ...</p>
<p>My experience of faith is that God is very close to me, strengthens me, loves me, impels me to change towards becoming my better self while gifting me with the goodness of creation. My experience of Church is stultifying. It is judgemental, powerful, proudly above us lesser humans especially women. Being a religious sister, I am immensely challenged to stay in the Church but my congregation gives meaning to my life. If only the Church could respect us!!</p>
<p>I love my Church. I do. But it is, like all families, messy and with its' own very real struggles, dramas and stories we would rather not share. I have met the very best and the very worst in my years of parish, school and work life. But the best—good people doing extraordinary things day after day is the stuff that keeps me connected. I have known brilliant clergy, loved the nuns who taught me to be clever and argumentative and questioning and watched with tears of joy, as my children receive their sacraments in a parish that felt just like home. This is why I stay. I wouldn't dream of losing my relationships with these people, or my God because of the terrible abuse—in fact, it is because I have felt so saddened and disillusioned through it all, that I have leaned on my God and my parish more than ever. Whenever I feel like giving up I think of the luminaries I have had the privilege to pray with, study with, work with and serve and I am still, knowing that God is with us. I am an intelligent, free and thinking human being—I could leave if I wanted, but in this family, albeit one that is in crisis, I still see Jesus and until I find a better alternative, I will stick with it.</p>
<p>For many in the group most of their religious study was at primary school learning to recite the catechism without the opportunity to really understand or discuss what they were reciting. One member of the group related that last year's parish school Christmas concert featured non-religious Christmas songs and believed that as a parish school there should have been a number of religious carols and saw this as the secular narrative seeping into our schools.</p>
<p>I have met many faithful and committed lay people, clergy and religious who have welcome me as a person first and foremost. I was fortunate to be led to a group of LGBT Catholics who met weekly for the Eucharist in [-]. This restored and nourished my faith and gave me life. It continues to sadden me that "The Church" cannot walk with me on my life's journey. I have persisted for 25 years but I do</p>

<p>wonder if I can be bothered for much longer. Pope Francis gives me hope. I pray that the wisdom of the Holy Spirit prevails through this 2020 process.</p>
<p>My Faith is grounded in my family life yet disruptions in our parish life, seems clear that leadership acts irresponsibly in relation to the vital and fragile parish community. Who would take a loving father away from his family and for what reason? Like a family, growth comes from how a family lives its life and this is through a deep love and respect for all a grounded attachment and sustains itself and one another.</p>
<p>I love my parish very much! My parish is so beautiful. I love what my Pastor has brought to our faith community. There is a general level of care for each other, it invites/encourages me to live and share the Gospel.</p>
<p>I was very fortunate in the quality of religious and academic teachings I experienced in my school years. I attended 4 different Catholic Schools from Kindergarten through to 4th Form. I attended a government school for 5th and 6th Form for geographical and travel reasons. The sisters and priests who were part of this stage of my life showed nothing but dedication and caring attitudes and displayed strong work ethics. The (religious) brothers taught at the nearby boys' school which my brothers attended. My parents always assisted the nuns, priests and brothers when asked or when requests were published in newsletters. This involvement contributed to the strong family ties that my brothers and sisters have today.</p>
<p>World Youth Day in Toronto. This was a great time that brought the Church in Australia to another country.</p>
<p>There needs to be a lot more consistency. The parish I grew up in had the same parish priest for 10+ years that I remember and the parish was a real community. I am now back in the same parish and since the early 1990's, we have a considerable number of priests—some of whose language was not easy to understand. We've had the altar moved to the body of the church and then the next priest has moved it back to where it was originally. We've had the kneelers removed because one priest didn't want us to kneel during the Mass and the next priest put them back because we had to kneel during the Mass. One priest used unleavened bread for communion, the next changed it back to hosts. Many of our priests have had additional Church duties outside the parish and as a result, only had a "foot" in the parish so to speak. Some priests have given a homily of about 10 mins and other priests had spoken for about 20 minutes together with a comment at the beginning and end of the Mass. Some priests would complete the Mass within the hour and another would be over an hour and quarter. Some priests have been ultra conservative others "radical" in their views. As a result, some people leave the Church because it is no longer familiar.</p>
<p>We are from Goa, formerly Portuguese India, with a strong Catholic faith, influenced by our patron, St Francis Xavier; several of our family members are priests and nuns. I was baptised a Catholic at birth. Since my first Holy Communion at age seven, I usually attended daily Mass when I lived at home and served Mass from the age of 10 to 18 when I left home to study Engineering. Away from my Catholic environment and surrounded by non-Catholic colleagues, I had a faith crisis and explored other religions especially Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, Buddhism and the Bahai faith. This last was the most attractive as they were genuinely welcoming—something I never experienced in the Catholic Church. However, I did not pursue them because Jesus seemed to be far most likely to be God. After four years, I graduated and returned home and a job. My prayer was basically, "Reveal yourself to me". I participated in joint prayer meetings under the aegis of the World Council of Religions. Influenced by the Charismatic Renewal among Protestants, a small group of parishioners started a prayer group. Soon, through the Life in the Spirit Seminar, I was baptised in the Holy Spirit—this began my adult Christian life! I was part of the leadership of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the city. I met my wife in the Renewal and we married in 1978. We were blessed with two boys and a girl and had challenging, fulfilling professional careers. Faced with sectarian violence and for better opportunities for our children, we—together with our Charismatic Renewal group—discerned to immigrate to New Zealand. There God gave both of us opportunities to advance our careers. We joined the ecumenical (90% Catholic) [-] Christian Community and led the [-] branch</p>

that grew to 100 men, women and children. Our children, through Catholic schools and colleges, graduated from University. Thirteen years later, with the children grown up, [-] and I moved to [Australia] to suit my job. [-] too found a job in her field and we joined the [-], an ecumenical (90% Catholic) community. The boys got married and settled down in USA and New Zealand respectively; [-] followed us to [Australia] after her Law degree. When [-] and I retired, we volunteered—through [-] Australia—for a year’s service in [another country]. Unfortunately, there I suffered a compound fracture in my right leg and picked up a serious infection. After five operations in [-], I am just getting back on my feet. We attend Mass either in [-], [-] or [-], [-] where I have served as an Eucharistic Minister and Acolyte. This month I enquired in both parishes seeking to make this submission but neither had an active group. Speaking to a few individuals in both parishes, I saw no interest in forming a group, hence my decision to make this submission alone.

1. “Priest-less parish” model at [-] has worked exceptionally well over several decades with a very strong faith community supported by priests from neighbouring parish. Strong outreach and support programs, strong liturgy lead by laity. Model has brought more engagement from people as there is a sense of community and ownership. This model also more fully utilises the skills of lay people in the running of the parish and engagement with other faith-based communities.
2. Have been blessed with priests who have humility, connection with everyday lives and struggles of parishioners, are self-aware and self-questioning and who shun clericalism.
3. Have also experienced bishops who talk down to parishioners and who focus on the status and pomp of their office alienating parishioners.
4. The Church has lost its moral authority and is seen as hypocritical through, for example:
 - the way in which it has responded to abuse by clergy and religious;
 - the retreat from Vatican II principles and practices; and
 - the treatment of women and marginalised people.
5. Outreach activities of parishes and school communities provide examples of people living the gospel message and these are primarily lay-led.

1. Young turning away from church attendance, but not necessarily faith in God, because of:
 - a. hypocrisy of institutional Church in relation to the nature of the responses to abuse cases;
 - b. clericalism and elitism of clergy, focusing on and defending the superiority of their position, which is seen as Pharisee type behaviours;
 - c. inaccessible language of liturgy and homilies;
 - d. an emphasis man-made rules compliance rather than faithful witness of love and humility,
 - e. unwillingness to be talked down to, want engagement and dialogue.
2. Exclusion practices of Church do not fit with inclusiveness of society.
3. Tradition not a reason for continuing a practice that is not relevant to the culture or society of the faithful.
4. Clergy isolated from society and many not familiar with culture, trials and tribulations of members of the society.
5. Strong parish communities living Gospel message through outreach activities and community engagement.
6. Strong commitment to Catholic school education by non-churchgoers because they have faith but not trust in institutional Church.
7. Some really effective clergy who have strong listening skills and are empathetic, self-aware and self-questioning, have strong community connection and are humble.
8. Catholic Schools that actively develop a searching and questioning faith in God and promote practices to live that faith in the service of others.
9. Strong faith based communities like [-]’s school for children with disabilities at [-] where the [-] community provides education, pastoral care and witness to faith through service to children and their carers’. Through this service to others, the whole community is touched by the gospel message being enacted.

My faith is part of who I am, brought up in a very Catholic family who were part of the parish community and when I married and had children, my husband and I were involved in both the parish and schools attended by our children. Although my husband has died and unfortunately my children do not practise their faith, it does not make any difference to what I believe and how I am still practising my faith by attendance at Mass and being involved in the liturgy as a Reader, Minister of Communion and taking Communion Services when the parish priest is on leave—this is very much a privilege.

1. Involved in the assistance to a PP who had bipolar disorder. I wrote a job description for a PP. It was an impossible job with poor or no training for it.
2. Moving from a parish where the PP behaved as though any idea was a possible threat, to a parish where ideas were taken up discussed and actioned if the discernment indicated it was appropriate. In other words, my professional training was recognised and my gender was not a barrier. The PP difference was related to training and education.

My family and school and religious institute have shaped my faith. Now I have to ask: What is this CHURCH to which I belong? I can only endeavour to believe in the God who is Mystery and try to follow Jesus and the values of the Gospel, and live faithfully in my community.

We have shared our stories of our experience of faith and of the Church over the last eighteen years, and continue to do so when we gather as a prayer group monthly. This sharing is part of the fabric of which we are together. Despite our struggles with the Church as an institution, we continue to remain active members. We decided that for the purposes of the Plenary Council, we needed to focus on questions 1 and 2. (78 words)

The impact of clergy on parishioners. One group member who described themselves as “not particularly religious” but observant described the impact of a priest leaving and the arrival of a new parish priest with a different leadership style, peoples’ reaction and the subsequent drop off in Mass attendances. Real leadership skills are needed to bring people along on the journey—management skills. It can be particularly difficult for Assistant priests who become parish priests to step into that role sometimes. Priests’ feelings of loss about not being able to have marriage and children—is this addressed? The humanity of priests—do we, as laity, tend to put them out of reach by our attitudes and putting them on a pedestal? Priests from non-English speaking backgrounds often struggle as do their parishioners. Language, accent and cultural approaches can create a lot of issues. Irony of couples receiving pre-marriage counselling from celibate priests with no experience of family life. Issues of being denied Eucharist for those divorced and remarried. Awful long-term impact on many. No blessing for marriages outside of the Church for divorced people having significant negative impacts. People in past times having to be married in the Sacristy or behind the altar when one partner not a Catholic. Issues of interrogation by some priests of people within Confession. Major problems within the Church. One group member spoke of their personal experience in working in residential care and confronting those in charge about the abuse, the closing of ranks and an attitude that the law (secular) was not applicable. A strong view that clericalism and the amount of property owned by the Church are twin evils. These issues are not restricted to the Catholic Church ... can be found in Protestant churches. Important to remember that, in the history of the Church, many decisions and rules have been made by faulty people. People today are more informed. Issue of Eastern Rites of Catholicism having different rules for their clergy. Celibacy was only introduced in 15th century. Many believe that the reason that married priests are not allowed is financial. There is a pressing need to bridge the gap between clergy and laity. The hierarchy and all clergy need to understand the current needs of all the people. Masses need to be ‘less boring’. Faith is not to do with the hierarchy of the Church. We don’t need more priests, more dogma and more rules. We need good people doing good things.

My heritage shaped me. My mother imparted on me a great gift of faith, love of God and Church. I have 3 children none of which practise their faith. They had a wonderful example. Their dad was a convert.

It has to be my encounter with Opus Dei. I was a Sunday Catholic or a lukewarm sometime Catholic for most part of my life until I met Opus Dei 11 years ago. The formation I received has helped me to work on a personal relationship with God that was an incomprehensible idea to me in the past. I am utterly grateful for this organisation in the Church. Faith has become real in my household.

My parents, one set of grandparents and one grandparent were practising committed Catholics whilst the other grandparent was non-Catholic but practised his own faith. Whilst I am grateful for my Catholic upbringing, my faith formation in retrospect was very narrow and religiously repressive. I believe the laws on birth control impact negatively on my marriage. My mother the product of a "mixed marriage" helped me to understand that Catholics did not hold all the answers and were quite intolerant of other very good practising Christians and non-Christians.

[-] College is a residential college affiliated with the University [-]. As a college, we are poised to impart formation to groups of young women of all backgrounds and creed, with the emphasis on building a family environment conducive to achieving academic excellence and the development of the whole person, the whole individual; we aim to form women leaders in our society, the most important of which, being leaders in families. Underlying all these is the Christian ethos of the college, and we are inspired and guided by a Catholic Saint, St [-], the founder of [-]. As an organisation for lay people, it aims to relay to every person that God invites everybody to seek holiness in and through their ordinary work, family life and social relations. [-] has an international presence, where members live and work in more than 90 countries. The staff of [-] College are members of [-]. They run activities that speak to 5 aspects of formation for youths to respond to their mission in the Church:

1. Human formation—talks/workshops/lectures on human virtues and value education; service projects to help disadvantaged members of our local and international communities; Workshops and on-the-job training on the value of the work of the home; sports and recreational activities
2. Professional formation—talks/workshops on the value of work; ethics; philosophy; Guest Speakers from academia and renowned professionals; training in time management, work-life balance; public speaking
3. Spiritual formation—Guidance to practice habitual mental prayer; reading and meditation of the Gospels; access to the sacraments—daily Mass, confession and Spiritual direction; promotion of Eucharistic devotions; traditional Christian devotions (Rosary, Stations of the Cross)
4. Doctrinal formation—Classes on faith and morals; Topical conferences on aspects of Church teachings; training in Catechism (to teach in local public school) and Apologetics
5. Apostolic formation—the above formation forms the young women to develop a genuine love for Christ and in turn, have the confidence to pass that love to others—family, friends; and the eagerness to develop more and deeper friendships.

As a survivor of child sexual abuse, I can share that my only comfort as a child was the true person of Jesus, who I learned about at my Catholic school and my local church. But it was Him, in person, who gave me hope and encouragement when I wanted to die, and He who has walked beside me ever since. Therefore, I only want to listen to Him, and those in the world who reflect the same light. I've found some of these people in the Catholic Church, and many more on my journey through life who are not Catholic. The beauty of my faith in Him is linked to the Church, but will never be dependent on the Church. The sacrament of the Eucharist has sustained me and I thank Him for leaving us this miraculous gift of himself that has survived the painful history of the Church. I pray for deep healing in the Catholic Church so others can find peace and love that is God's gift to humanity through Christ.

It helps me personally the doctrinal, ascetic, apostolic and human formation I receive weekly in a centre of Opus Dei and the spiritual direction with a priest and a lay person who accompany me in my journey.

My grounding in 'Religion' was through the Catholic education system from start to finish. It was in the days of a harsh, unforgiving approach which ruled with fear. However, despite this I have developed a strong faith from this beginning and feel I am a spiritual being close to God. I have

witnessed a few amazing 'miracles' which are too personal to discuss but very convincing that God has been working within my life.

God has blessed me with a long and healthy life. My simplest experience from life has been that whenever I followed my God blindly I was successful, but when I followed my own route I stumbled. Not to mention the many times that God pulled me out of the fire without me realising it at the time! Hundreds of years ago, a young unmarried lay woman, Catherine of Siena (later Saint and Doctor of the Church) noting the grave danger that the Church was in at the time, played a major role in trying to bring peace by communicating directly with and visiting the Pope. Later in her "The Dialogue", she petitions God for reform of the Holy Church, amongst other things. She was very critical of the clergy and pulled no punches. However, she was never disrespectful of priests because they are "Christs" on earth who bring Jesus to the world through the Eucharist. The core of her success was simply her personal holiness and closeness to God. Together with Saint Paul, Saint Mary McKillop and Saint Mother Teresa, she is an excellent role model for the laity today.

Recommendations for Plenary Council 2020

1) Catholic School. Operates in different circumstances and objectives under which it was established. It is no longer a school for local parish Catholic families run by local parish. It is a business run by '[-] Catholic Schools', generating profits at the expense of the local parish. Non-parish and non-Catholic children are enrolled. Staff consists of mostly non-practicing Catholic teachers. Even School Leadership Team, despite of the provision of its members being practicing Catholics, very rarely are. Most of them don't even know what the term 'practicing Catholic' means. As a result, Catholic Schools have become a parallel church, providing very shallow religious education and often an anti-Catholic education. Catholic Schools in 21st century Australia are counter-productive. There is no need to compete with Math, English, etc. education with Public Schools. What the Catholic Education should be focused on is an authentic Religious Education which can be more suitably provided in Sunday Schools run by properly trained parish Catechists and volunteers.

2) Clerical titles. You shall call no one on earth your father... Of course, we call dads 'fathers' and teachers 'teachers', but the point of Jesus teaching is that we remain humble and attribute all authority to God. We are simply God's instruments, God's mouthpiece. So why do we use clerical titles such as "Your Grace", "Your Eminence", "Your Holiness", "My Lord" and even "Reverend". In 21st century Australia, clerical titles more in line with Jesus' teaching should be used (brother, sister, servant, friend etc.).

3) Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. "Is anyone sick? Let them call for the priest..." We all seek healing touch and blessing when we are unwell. We read in the Gospels, how sick people flocked to Jesus, who laid his hand on them and they recovered. With proper catechesis, people will understand that this sacrament is predominantly for grace to endure the sickness. If God wills, also the healing can be given. The forgiveness of sins will be conditional on one's inability to go to confession.

My faith story has been first and foremost shaped by my mother and father. My mother passed away in 2009, at age 77 and my father passed away in 2018, aged 92. My parents lived out the gospel teachings of Jesus in a true, consistent and wonderful way. They were quiet and modest people whose first impulse was to help others and to be kind to all people and God's natural world. They raised seven children in a modest house on a single income and still made it a priority to help those less fortunate. Their sense of social justice was strong. They were grateful for all they had and felt blessed, not only for material things, but for love, the gifts of sight and hearing, good health and the ability to give to others. Jesus was very real to them, both as human and divine. They were love, as expressed in St Paul's letter to the Corinthians—always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. They always looked to the positive and endured their difficulties with faith and steadfastness. They understood faults, but rejoiced in goodness and gladness. They made a joyful life for their children and grandchildren and many extended family members. They were the joy of my life. My faith has also been shaped by my education in Catholic schools, by the friends I met there, as

<p>well as my work in education, in state, independent and Catholic schools and the good people I have met there. My faith has also been shaped by my church community, the good people there and the positive work they do.</p>
<p>My Mother was a devoted Catholic. She married a Presbyterian who in later life embraced the Catholic faith. I enjoyed my schooldays being taught by the Christian Brothers and none of my friends were aware of any child molestation. My career has involved working in the health field with devoted Catholic Nuns for whom I have a great respect, but there are very few left now and I think Catholic hospitals and schools will be run by the laity in the future.</p>
<p>I have a lot of experience of faith both overseas and here in Australia. As an immigrant, I have always found solace at church and the adoration chapel. I have always felt that although I'm living in a foreign country, away from my family and friends, I never felt scared because I know that God is with me and he's guiding me. I felt that I'm meant to be here because I have a mission. True enough, God made me see that my mission is to work with children through my career as an early childhood educator. I've been loving God's children through my profession and I'm very fortunate to be spreading God's work.</p>
<p>Despite all the problems the Church has, my faith is fundamental to my life and I don't know how I would have managed without it. When my parents died, I saw how much their faith meant to them. In saying rosaries around their beds and being with them when they were anointed, they each had a sense of calm and being ready to leave this life and go on their journey to the next. It was a profound faith affirming experience. I also firmly believe in the power of prayer. My faith is deepened through volunteer work with St Vincent de Paul and the work the Church does with the poor and marginalised in our society. I'm quite connected with my parish and have formed close friendships with like-minded Catholics which is of itself faith-enriching.</p>
<p>Sadly, my reflection is on the lack of response in some dioceses to the Royal Commission on Sexual Abuse by Clergy and Religious and the more recent conviction of George Pell. The Church is shattered and the people want to hear from their leaders. In many places—no comment. Jesus would be standing on a hill talking to the crowds. We are not seeing that today in Australia.</p>
<p>My view of the Church is primarily dictated by my Mother's experience of love and support from the Church throughout her life, how she as a Catholic woman has shown no prejudice either to those outside the Church or those that are different to her, she has taught me true love for God—this means living our lives considering kindness as the fundamental premise of our faith: as Catholic women we also consider it our duty to fight for justice for those who cannot fight for themselves, this may mean we are unpopular with conservative people within our Church. I have observed intelligent and progressive people within the Church attempt to agitate for change, it is very slow—but there are those of us that choose to stay and fight for a modern progressive religious organisation, our Church rather than leave in disgust (which sadly in this day and age, is very common). I am consoled by the emphasis on social justice that is communicated by the Church, it has been my teacher, I would like to see this translate to deeds in real life, less judgement and more love.</p>
<p>My Catholic faith came from mum who was an Anglican and converted to Catholicism. My anti-clericalism came very young when my father died and the priest refused to allow the Australian flag to drape his coffin during the funeral. Dad was a soldier for the Australian army during World War II. Mum had a metal plaque of the flag nailed to the coffin in response to the Irish priest. I was 10 at the time. I have sat through some good and some shocking sermons but no one said a thing because the speaker was a priest. Now we know what the clergy and hierarchy of the Church were doing, thanks to the Royal commission. Few of the people I grew up with bother with the Church and I don't blame them or think God will either. I still go to Sunday Mass but waver re my beliefs.</p>
<p>I converted to Catholicism in 1975. I was Anglican and started searching. I found what I needed in the Catholic Church. By the way, I'm the only Catholic in my family. I have never looked back, am a regular churchgoer, reader, special Minister of the Eucharist and was a Catechist for 6 years. I love my Faith and my God. I just pray for the Vatican, priests and Laity that they be guided by their hearts</p>

<p>and faith, to change and forget about what was in the past (at the end of the day, it's only tradition) but keep in mind the one thing that a lot of us are forgetting—The Church is not about dogma, but our love for Our Lord, who died for our sins and redeemed us through His Passion because He loves us so much. That is what the Church is about!!</p>
<p>I am a member of my local church community and have previously been a member of Christian life communities, an Ignatian spirituality movement. I also volunteered for some years as a young Catholic person.</p>
<p>My experience is that of working, both as a volunteer and as a paid employee for many years in the Church. I love the Church and the teachings of Jesus Christ and I lament the fact that people are being turned away from the Church by the non-professional behaviour of the clergy. I feel very sad and depressed by so many stories of neglect and outrageous behaviour. Please look at bringing the Church into this century.</p>
<p>I did my confirmation. It's important to my Mum.</p>
<p>We have been encouraged to do daily prayer, conversing with our Lord in the tabernacle, the family rosary, also with other friends, 5-minute reading of the New Testament, knowing the true doctrine of our Catholic faith. Attending the sacraments of confession and Mass regularly. This has helped all of us to help others through friendship.</p>
<p>1. The story of one woman from the group: "I feel included because I find a way to be included. If I didn't feel included here, I'd go somewhere else. The laity IS the Church. Special ministers of the Eucharist play a very important role. Women are permitted to distribute the Host, and if there is no acolyte I do so, when I see the need. But I cannot be an acolyte. Why not? I think the hierarchy is afraid of women, that if we are allowed to be acolytes, then we will want to be priests. I do not want to be a priest. I just want to be recognised and allowed to train to be an acolyte. I know I can do the job. Why are my interests and abilities overlooked? I know I can do a better job than some acolytes. I get so frustrated when I see them muddling through when I know I can do it but I'm not given the opportunity. I'm not being arrogant, I'm being honest."</p> <p>2. Another story: "The prayer life and the social life of the parish are both important. I love going to Bible study and having the opportunity to discuss and ask questions. I want our parish to be active and vibrant, a place where everyone is made to feel included and welcome. There are all sorts of people: divorced, remarried, single parents, young people, and old people. Nobody should feel less important or left out or refused."</p>
<p>My faith when I was growing up was nurtured by my parents but it didn't mean very much to me because everything was in Latin and when the priest gave his homily, it was always that we would go to hell. When Vatican II was introduced by Pope John XXIII, it was like a breath of fresh air. I became much more interested in my faith.</p>
<p>No particular story, but some broad themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents worked very hard to pass on their faith to me. This included directly running religious 'classes', reading religious books with me, the whole family praying together, and most importantly, the strong example with which they themselves live out their faith; • Local priests and parishioners inspired my confidence in the faith through their examples; • Peers who are practicing Catholics, providing a strong, supporting community away from the 'storm' of indifference and 'selfism' in the broader culture.
<p>I have a small story which happened for me during the International Youth Day in Sydney a few years back. It was a beautiful time for our parish in [-]. We provided accommodation and meals for young people from the Broome diocese. They had caring clerics and their bishop with them and the young people were happy and very lovely to talk with. On the last day before they went off walking to the Mass at [-] Racecourse, they thanked us by singing on the steps of the church—the Lord's Prayer in Language. It was beautifully prayerful. I then went home to watch the Mass on television but felt somewhat disappointed to see the bishops and I suppose some cardinals in beautiful white robes very separate from their diocesan and national groups—I found myself saying "Why did they have to be so very separate from the young people?" These same young people had made us all so happy</p>

including, local shopkeepers, who met the young ones around the town. I found myself thinking Is our Church too pompous?—are we getting the modern need right? I don't really think so. And then I was a little disappointed to see the bishops at the recent very important Synod in Rome on abuse of children in beautiful green robes but with no obvious female members of the group. I understand there were some few women including three who addressed the group and were well-received. However my overall impression reminded me of the [-] Racecourse separation and I wish and pray we could become more aware of this and work as a Church in Australia to be inclusive of our brethren.

I was received into the Catholic Church about 30 years ago. I grew up in a practising Christian Protestant family and was an active member of my church. My husband is Catholic, and I started going to church with him. While there were many aspects of Catholic teaching that I found difficult to accept, one thing spoke more and more loudly to me. That was the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. My searching of Scripture could not convince me of the Immaculate Conception, perpetual virginity and Assumption of Mary. But Jesus' words "This is my body" and "This is my blood" at the Institution of the Eucharist, and the discourse with the Jews in the synagogue in Capernaum as recorded in John Ch 6 leaped off the pages as if I had never read them before. When Jesus said to the disciples "Do you want to go away too?" like Simon Peter, I replied "Lord, to whom shall I go?" I didn't become a Catholic because of my husband, or even because I wanted to. I came because the Holy Spirit whispered then shouted in my heart "This is my body". And that is what keeps me in the Catholic Church. I am saddened at what the Church is today. I see creeping clericalism becoming the norm. I hear Latin being reintroduced. I was a Classics scholar. I love Latin. But it is not the language of my faith. Today, my already heavy heart felt like lead as I listened to a homily about how "victims" of sexual abuse were believed without due scrutiny of their claims. It saddens me that women are not able to perform roles for which they are eminently suitable. It saddens me that so many people are not permitted to join me at the Lord's table because they are gay, or divorced, or remarried. I have done some very serious soul searching. I don't think the Holy Spirit made a mistake. The answer remains: "Lord, to whom shall I go?"

My parents divorced when I was 8 yrs. old. My father had an affair with a fellow parishioner at our church. I didn't understand all that at the time. My parents separated, it was all very destructive, messy and sad for both families. I still had a strong faith, even at that young age, and I very much wanted to make my confirmation when I was 11, I was told by my scripture teacher, that I wasn't allowed to make my confirmation because I didn't go to Mass enough—this probably was because my mother was no longer allowed receive Holy Communion. As a family, we stopped going to church, I took myself up to Mass every Sunday after the scripture teacher told me I couldn't make my confirmation—I still wasn't permitted to make it. Years later, my brother committed suicide and my faith was all I had to hang onto, it provided a safe haven in a grief-stricken time. I ended up falling pregnant to a boy from a devoutly Catholic family, and we married 2 years after our son was born—I felt this was done under subterfuge as the priest marrying us didn't know about our son! When my beautiful boy came to make his confirmation—I joined him! I felt like it was a part of my spiritual development that was missing, and I was so pleased to run the formation classes for him and me at the same time! I became a scripture teacher at my children's public schools, and through teaching catechism my own faith deepened. The spiritual journey that really awakened my senses was Ignatian spirituality, I now practice the Examen daily. I believe that Imaginative Contemplation is a very active way of engaging feelings, emotions and senses—it has been like a spiritual window opener for me. I believe the Catholic Church has such a rich and varied smorgasbord of prayer practices and I so wish that in your average parishes, people were made more aware of them—perhaps by an Australian Catholic pray resource book? There is a type of prayer practice that would appeal to everyone—they just have to find out more! I have been so disturbed and saddened by the sexual abuse scandals in the Church, I believe that it has not been properly dealt with—I do not believe parishes should be under the auspices of a single often elderly lonely man who sometimes

struggles to negotiate modern day society. We have so many good, educated smart men and women who could help our priests.

My Catholic faith was formed in Zimbabwe and South Africa, where I grew up. From early on, I was exposed to missionaries from Ireland and Belgium. They were wonderful priests and nuns who were examples of Christ's mission on earth. Through the South African Church, I saw apartheid for the evil it is and to see all people as God's creation in love.

Some things that have helped me in keeping and growing my faith have been:

1. Good friends who live the faith and have helped to guide me.
2. Community service—helping the elderly, helping Indigenous kids, helping overseas in India. Helping to mentor youths. These activities, mostly as a volunteer, have had a great impact to help me be a better person. I think this has also helped me through serving others to understand the great service the God has done for me in the Redemption.
3. The help of the example and preaching and sacraments given by holy priests has really helped a lot.
4. Teaching others about the Catholic faith and helping friends to convert has been both deeply rewarding and a spur to try to live my faith better.

I am a young passionate Catholic woman, wife and mother. I have always felt drawn to the Church and to leadership. From the age of 7, I remember wanting to be like my role model Mary Mackillop (then Blessed) When I considered by vocation options, the only 'religious' one I felt called too was the diaconate. I knew that I would never be able to be a priest but I thought, just maybe, God would lead me to find a husband who one day may feel drawn to the Diaconate. So then together, we could help lead and minister within a parish. Our good Lord did lead me to my most beautiful husband who does have a deep desire to serve God and his people in the ministry of the Deacon. My heart burns and always has desired to love God, to serve God, to go wherever he sends me to do his will and to lead people to him, to help them grow in their love for Him. I just feel it is sad that in order to help lead a community of faithful on a ministerial level, I need to go through another vocation and not be independent of it. I know that Our Lord intends to use me to lead His people—he wouldn't have blessed me with my beautiful passionate faith and my leadership skills. I'm just unsure how that will look. I am currently in the Leadership for Mission program sponsored by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. I hope that the bishops utilise the skills of the remarkable, passionate young Catholic women they are paying for. In my theology study as part of this Graduate Certificate, I developed a love of Scripture. Women have always accompanied Jesus and never abandoned him. It was to a woman, Mary Magdalene that Jesus first appeared. He deliberately chose a Woman to be the Apostle to the Apostles. Throughout the Early Church, women were crucial in the development and continuation of the faith. They served as Deacons. God had always intended men and women to be together, to serve together. Why should it then be different in the ministerial Church today? We would benefit significantly from the God given gifts that both men and women receive in the leadership of our Church. From my essay: Mary Magdalene is an important role model for women in the Australian Catholic Church. Her testimony and proclamation "I have seen the Lord" heralded in a turning point for all of history. Mary Magdalene was the Apostle to the Apostles, a foundational leader and preacher within the early Christian Churches despite the cultural norms limiting the participation of women in society. A devout, faithful woman who believed and understood Jesus and his mission. Like Mary Magdalene on that first Easter morning, full of joy and anticipation, may we, as Australian Catholic women, charge towards the dawn of a new era, to announce and proclaim the Gospel. Hopeful that the discussions, dialogue and outcomes of the Plenary Council may open the opportunities for Australian Catholic Women, afforded to us in our baptism, to lead the Church however it needs and whatever that may look like into the future.

I am a gay Catholic who has worked in the Church all my adult life. It is alienating to constantly hear how the Church needs the right to discriminate against gay Catholics working in its institutions. I believe I am promoting the Gospel and Church teaching in my work, to equal standard to straight people. Being straight does not make a person more faithful. However, it seems that employers and

Church leaders only look at my sexuality. That is the single and only criteria for how I am treated. Despite being very good at my work and receiving positive feedback about my effectiveness, I eventually found myself “blacklisted” and cornered into leaving/resigning. I am not seen as a person with gifts, talents and skills to offer; rather I am seen as gay. I don’t believe this to be in accordance with authentic Catholic teachings about the human person. The plebiscite and same-sex marriage “debate” in Australia was handled poorly on all sides—very little reflection or discernment and much misinformation. However, one effect that hit home for me is my sister-in-law’s more vocal condemnation. It seems her church group has empowered her to constantly remind me of my sinfulness. She often also makes jokes about harassing LGBTQ people if she sees them on the street. This seems to be part of her right to religious freedom. It has put a great strain on my relationship with my brother and their children. She believes she is doing what the Church calls her to do. The Church does not challenge this type of behaviour. It seems that the Church is encouraging families to reject their gay/lesbian sons, daughters, uncles, siblings, etc. This does not sit with good family values. I would hope Church leaders promote positive and loving relationships rather than “promoting” activities and attitudes that divide families and create disharmony. I would like to be judged, if the Church must judge me, by the fruits of my work and life rather than solely the reality of my sexuality.

Yes, my first visit to a Catholic Church in Australia was with my girlfriend who was Catholic. I found the list of program/activity of the Mass to be too repetitive. Also, the Mass was not presented in a modern style of worship that appealed to me. Thirdly, I realised that many Catholic members, like my girlfriend, although identifies herself as a Christian, did not know what it really is to have a personal relationship with God.

Truth, Beauty and Goodness brought me back to my faith. Please uphold these within our Church!

I have encountered so many Catholic groups who have helped a number of people get close to God; the Marist Brothers, Opus Dei, Disciples of Jesus, Contemplative orders. The common themes of success are;

1. Sincere love for God,
2. Life of prayer and the sacraments,
3. Lively sense of charity and love for the poor and lonely,
4. A great ability to explain the Catholic faith and practice it consistently in their own lives—that makes the whole thing authentic. I think that's all that is needed to concentrate on.

I was educated in Catholic schools (three primary schools in country areas in [-] and an independent Catholic boarding school in [-])—all were good experiences and I am very grateful for my secondary education in particular. Growing up in the country, I saw country priests work hard to minister to isolated communities, with little thanks or recognition. I would like the Church to recognise the hardship of these posts, taken by men who are not seeking power and fame in the hierarchy of the Church. I travelled overseas on a pilgrimage with a Catholic priest and completed an Interfaith course through the Council for Australian Catholic Women—both were wonderful experiences in my young adulthood. Most recently, I have been nurtured in my faith through connections with the Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Ursulines and Loreto’s—they make me proud every day.

Having grown up with the Catholic Lite taught in the Catholic schools of the 1970s, I struggled to see that the Church had the robust texture to respond to the cultural shifts that were well underway two decades after the sexual revolution. By learning some Christian philosophy as an adult (never received at school), I later gained an appreciation for the beautiful sacrament of Confession and the ineffable sacrament of the Eucharist. The manly and robust teachings of Saint John Paul II eventually had their effect on this child of the 70s.

My name is [-]. I am a social worker with a PhD in Social Work. I work doing family assessment reports for the Family Court. I have been a Catholic for a year now, having been received into the Church at Easter 2018. I am married to a devout Catholic man, a churchgoer, as I am, whose family have met weekly for the past 30 years to say the Rosary together. I am happy to now be part of that group. Like everyone around me, I feel astonished and betrayed by child sexual abuse within the

Church and the destructive cover ups that put an institution's reputation before human need and human suffering. I believe that most child abusing priests are lonely and sexually maladjusted men who have not been allowed to form healthy heterosexual relationships, not paedophiles and homosexuals, as is commonly thought. Celibacy is a rule made when the Church was over a thousand years old. It's not working! I understand that the Church was over 1,000 years old before it definitively took a stand on celibacy in the 12th Century at the Second Lateran Council, where a rule was introduced forbidding priests to marry. It is time for that arcane rule to be overturned. As far as we know, many of Jesus' disciples were married, and there is no evidence that Jesus himself was celibate. Overturning the rule that priests cannot marry will lessen (not eradicate) the incidence of sexual child abuse, and may well save the endangered species of the priesthood. Marriage and Divorce A Church that excludes divorcees is not a Christian Church. Exclusion from remarriage in the Catholic Church after divorce. My husband and I wanted to marry in our local parish church that we attend every week. We were forced to find an alternative, which was the Uniting church down the road. Our priest, with whom we formed a relationship, attended the service in the Uniting church, but declined to say a prayer, a blessing or any other form of active participation. I respect this, he is a person with integrity, but I am saddened by the constraints he felt bound by. My husband attends weekly Mass but has not taken the communion for years, because of his beliefs in his own exclusion. Annulment—I believe that Pope Francis has tried to make annulment a more humane and timelier procedure. My annulment application has been in the system for nearly two years. I feel like a criminal who must plead my innocence. Nor are the people who have interviewed me in [-] highly skilled or trained. Inclusiveness—If the Church truly wants to be more inclusive, as Jesus was, it should welcome worshipers regardless of their current or past marital status. I would have thought that the twenty-first century should be a time of welcoming people into the Church, not discouraging sincere people of faith.

Chaplains play a crucial part of keeping our faith consistent and strong especially with the cultural groups. We had a priest who had a significantly large number of his ethnic group, and sadly when he had passed away, it seemed like the majority of that community stopped attending Mass. We would see the same people in public—it may have been a language barrier which is ironic as our Church is universal.

I have been blessed, to have had the perfect Catholic parents. Most of my school friends were in a similarly blessed family situation, this being some sixty-eight years ago. All of our Catholic schools had religious nuns and brothers teaching us then. I guess this led us to many religious vocations then. Our school classes did have Mass attendances during school time most weeks. In higher grades, we also had the sacrament of confession available when we had Mass attendance days. These strong Catholic Church teachings subjects definitely strengthened not only my love of my Faith but a group of my long time very close friends from school day times, and this small band of friends still carry out the Catholic Faith very profoundly. Full marks to our parents and our very good religious teachers of them days. Why not go back to the Church pre-Vatican II. Bring back our Holy Days of Obligation. Bring back the sacrament of regular Confession in the confessional in front of your priests, not sitting in the church and confessing your sins to yourself. Receiving the Blessed Eucharist on the tongue, not in the hand which is most irreverent. Why not the Latin Mass? Why change any of these Holy Church Traditions, Our Catholic teachings and traditions have been watered down to a point where our Traditions will one day be lost, then we will become like all of these other break-away Protestant churches. The Traditions of the Catholic Church are what make us Catholic. The Traditions of the Catholic Church are what make us Reverent. Our priests need to add a bit of fire and brimstone in our Sunday Homilies, to remind us of our obligations in practicing our daily ways of life and spreading our Catholic Faith in the way we live our lives in Jesus Christ. For the Catholic Church to have carried on for well over two thousand years, it cannot be broken. Please, no changes to the traditions of the Church. Is it really any wonder by now, why so many western churches stand cold, prayer less and empty, when Jesus has first been stood up too, then ignored, then replaced, then moved, then removed and finally discarded altogether. Has not the Masonic

<p>Plan done its job so very well? All too well. We are the Church. Let us all stand up for Jesus. Please God, No more changes. Please pray for me.</p>
<p>The centrality of the parish and a pastoral priesthood as lived in the joyous spirit of the many priests who have served this parish and the wonderful diverse cultural celebrations of my fellow parishioners.</p>
<p>Continuing adult education. Starting with Lenten groups when they were first established and continuing with many others after Vatican II courses and discussion groups offered over the times gave me the opportunity to explore my faith in a mature way that my Catholic education at school had not.</p>
<p>It was through exposure on mainstream TV media that I found out that an old school friend had entered the priesthood. We have since caught up and been in regular contact with him. I have come to realise that people are put into our lives for a purpose; they may not be there for all of our lives but may mould/influence us over a period of time and providing a little guidance or insight. They come and go but are always there.</p>
<p>Catechists often work in difficult situations ... no classroom, mix of religions in same room. They are God's representatives. Often the basic ideas of our faith are what the children will carry into their future lives.</p>
<p>My formative years as a Catholic were pre-Vatican II. I went to a Catholic School and learned the green catechism off by heart. Being a good Catholic was all about keeping all the commandments plus the Church Rules. It was all about fear of God and hell and not about God's love for me, or for developing a personal relationship with Jesus. Then along came Vatican II, and Pope John XXIII threw open the windows and let in the air (the Holy Spirit). Whilst I missed the Latin Mass (which I had grown up with), it was wonderful to finally hear the scriptures proclaimed in the vernacular. It was at this time that I had the opportunity to do a three-year Christian Formation Course which opened my eyes and taught me so much about God's unconditional love for me. It also confirmed niggling thoughts I had had about God. I also learned that I didn't need to earn God's love and acceptance by good deeds, etc. I began to realise that God loved me from the moment of my conception, and that his love is unconditional. God's love is far greater than that of human parents, who love their children regardless of the choices they make. They may be disappointed, but they never stop loving them, and would willingly sacrifice their own lives for their children if needed. That is how much God loves me! 22 years ago, I had the opportunity to go on a Cursillo Weekend, and it was at this time that the reality of God's love for me became evident. This Church-recognised organisation has been my lifeline. Regular meetings with like-minded and faith-filled people help to keep me focused on Jesus, and inspire me to continue to follow Jesus, by following the three steps of Prayer, Study and Action. Through Prayer and Study, I am getting to know Jesus more and more each day, and as our relationship become stronger. I am finding it easier to act as Jesus would have me act. When confronted with a dilemma, I usually ask myself "What Would Jesus Do?" and act accordingly.</p>
<p>THE STORY OF OUR GROUP We are a diverse group of friends, who have known one another for more than 50 years. We are all over the age of 70 years. The group comprises a Dominican Sister, a single woman who is a retired teacher, and a couple who have been married for 51 years. The woman is a retired Barristers Clerk and a Counsellor, and the man is a retired electrical engineer. We all have university degrees, and some have postgraduate qualifications. We had a number of meetings to prepare our submission to the Plenary Council. Despite our diverse backgrounds, qualifications and life experiences, we quickly reached agreement on what we believe are the main challenges facing the Church in Australia, and on the changes which should be made in order to meet these challenges. OUR INDIVIDUAL STORIES a) THE DOMINICAN SISTER: As a Dominican sister for over 60 years, in general I have had a very positive experience of the Church. However there have been times when I have been so disappointed in the responses from the Institutional Church. b) THE RETIRED TEACHER: I am a non-professed single woman who has been involved in education for over 50 years, 45 of these in Catholic schools. My great joy has been to see young women</p>

mature in their understanding of the message of the Good News of Jesus. My great sadness has been to see the institutional Church underutilise their and my gifts because we are women. Too many of them have become demoralised and left the Church, though many continue to make an extraordinary commitment to society.

c) THE MARRIED COUPLE: Our Catholic educational upbringing was pre-Vatican II, therefore, we are victims of a guilt mentality especially associated with all things sexual. Despite this, because of our ongoing faith education in a post-Vatican world, the Church is still part of our lives. One very distressing story we would like to share is that of our brother/brother-in-law when he became associated with a very right-wing Church group. He died in 2011, and much to our dilemma, organised a Mass in the Latin rite for his funeral. We felt so removed as no female member had a role in the Mass. Further embarrassment to us and many others, was the refusal of the priest to allow communion to be received in the hand. This was so divisive and our fear is that this practice could become more widespread. Does this action reflect the spirit of the Last Supper (the first Eucharist)?

While I grew up going to Catholic School, my family did not practice the faith. I left the Church for many years, and only after a profound spiritual awakening in a community called Siddha Yoga did I return. My spirit was literally dragged back to the Catholic Church. I have done countless retreats and experienced much healing through them. My family background was one of emotional deprivation and some sexual abuse. I found as an adult, even after my return to the faith, that the Church did not recognise people who were not in typical 'normal' families. I frequently felt excluded. My mother who hates the Church admitted one day that she still prays every day. Many friends do not go to Church and find it irrelevant. These people all have faith in Jesus, but the Church does not meet their needs or speak to them. There seems to be a gap between the spirit of Jesus and how the Church runs and operates. I know of people even in my own inclusive parish, who have left the Church after a conversation with our then priest about gay marriage. The Church rulings seem to be anti-Christ in my view. My main spiritual nurture comes from meditation and I am in a long running meditation group. I speculate as to why I stay in the Church, and I think it has more to do with community and belonging. Certainly, I disagree with so many teachings that some lapsed Catholic friends question how I can call myself a Catholic. Just cannot see or hear the voice of Jesus in much of how the Church operates.

There are vibrant communities of Catholic faith everywhere and that is what sustains me. I have been lucky to have the experience of being in parishes led by the Franciscans and Jesuits, wonderful men of faith, simplicity, compassion and outreach.

I chose a Catholic girl from here. And I believe He sent her.

Still look at the teachers in my earlier education, particularly one Marist Brother who introduced me to the Gospel of John and led to a long love of that source of enlightenment. Also think I long for good liturgical expression. Would like to see a sense of the sacred back in the liturgy.

Sadly, it was not the Church but mainly a faith community committed to raising good Christian families, through evangelisation and renewal, that shaped me and my family.

I am involved in a Catholic men's group. We meet monthly in our homes and we pray, reflect and encourage each other in the faith. This has helped me and the others in fostering and nurturing each other. We approached our parish priest who called it ungodly to have such a group. This has not deterred us as we strive to help each other with prayer, Bible reading and reflecting on topics that pertain to Catholic manhood so we can become Godly by our virtue and actions. We pray for our parish priest continually.

One member recently went to Mass in Jakarta where the emphasis was on engaging with the modern world and technology. She felt this hopeful engagement was not manifested in her [-] parish. A member of our group preaches for Catholic Mission. In some parishes, she feels there is overemphasis on religiosity and piety at the expense of a deeper engagement with the challenges of Jesus' message for today's world. Involvement of groups in St Vincent de Paul has become harder

<p>due to new regulations, such as no persons under 18yrs can be at night patrol, even with their parents.</p>
<p>When my child was stillborn, the community reached out and embraced my family. This has helped me through this period and still does. I believe that God works through this community but we need to be the ones doing the reaching out to all people.</p>
<p>I took a risk and put on a Theology of the Body course at my parish in [-] and 52 people came for the 5 week course. This was a video series by Christopher West. This showed me that people are wanting to be informed and to deepen their faith. We followed with a Bible study (UN-locking the mystery of the Bible) and 72 people came and we invited a visiting priest from the USA (Fr Larry Richards) and 400 people came. People want more and it's not as hard as we think. We need to just encourage every parish to be offering a small group course at least twice a year. The feedback from ours was phenomenal!!</p>
<p>I found a deep and continual formation about my Faith, the benefit of sacraments I received has Made me a different person with a Good character building, better person as a whole.</p>
<p>I am a sacramental coordinator for my parish and this position has opened my eyes as to the needs and requirements of children and families. Our families are committed to the sacraments and our faith but are then LOST in poor spiritual leadership and unprofessional staff from the parish. Are you aware that the costs of sacraments in [-] of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation range from \$10 per sacrament to \$60 per sacrament! Are the sacraments for SALE? Can we really place a cost for having Jesus in our lives? Could we have funding per Catholic child to have the sacraments?</p>
<p>I went to Catholic Schools and left with very little knowledge of my faith. When I was confronted in the 1980s about my faith at University by fundamentalist Christians telling me the Catholic Church was evil and I am going to go to hell and how do I believe what I receive every Sunday was really the body and blood of Christ, I was lost and confused and did not know what I believed. So many Catholics at that time became born again Christians because of the evangelical fervour of these Christians. At the same time, the anti-God and anti-Church environment of the university was telling me faith and belief in God was for my peasant grandparents, not for educated people like me. This also made me doubt my faith, yes, my grandmother had a deep faith and was a peasant. Perhaps this religion stuff is rubbish. I was short-changed by my Catholic School system in this period of my life and would have been lost. Luckily, I met a young man from the UK who was able to give me quick answers and some immediate security because he had knowledge of the faith. He also set me on a path on how to acquire knowledge of the faith. I was also lucky enough to be at the first World Youth Day with John Paul II which helped me see that I am not a freak or fruit loop and that many young people also believe. John Paul II's writings also helped me especially the role of the sacraments in the spiritual life. This foundation gave me a security and an anchor these 30 years since. The Catechism of the Catholic Church when it came out in 1995 answered all my questions and has been a secure bedrock. I have lived a fulfilled and giving life that also has had its share of sufferings. However, out of my school friends only 4 of us still practice our faith and we have been blessed with an inner joy. Some from my year at school have found God in other churches or have found a naturalist spirituality and some of these have some contentment. Most are ignorant of God and our faith. Many of these have suffered a lot and have had hard and difficult lives. Where was the good shepherd for them? Did the Catholic Church and the Catholic School system short-change them in their youths? I feel for the shipwrecked Catholic lives around me who could have had a chance. Now their children and grandchildren are not even baptised and seem to have little chance to share in this gift of knowledge, truth, love and freedom I have.</p>
<p>- Prior to moving to Australia in 2007, I used to visit at least once or twice a year for 9 years. I was very disturbed with the lack of formation among priests in the churches I visited. But since I moved here, I have found many parishes with holy priests and have witnessed the enormous impact the holiness of the priest has on the holiness of the parish. I have also seen how the Catholic Church in Australia has grown in formation and holiness under the leadership and holiness of Cardinal Pell.</p>

<p>- I married a non-Catholic and move in an environment that is not necessarily friendly to the Catholic faith. What's worse and more difficult is being among Catholics who are not fully united with Catholic teachings. I have found great support and encouragement when I started attending formation with Opus Dei. How I am so thankful that I have access to formation that is true to the faith. It has made me love God more. Through this support, I call Australia home. Through Opus Dei, I realise the importance to bring all those around me closer to God.</p>
<p>1. Staying in [-] College, an [-] residence, have shaped us in many ways—learning how to get out of ourselves and look after the people around us, knowing more about the faith through doctrinal classes and practical talks on how to live our faith in our ordinary day to day life and deepening our personal relationship with God through personal prayer and contemplative reading of the Gospel. 2. Coming from a country where the Catholic Church is mildly persecuted (limited number of churches, no Catholic schools, but full of fervent parishioners) to Australia where there is a church in every suburb but not much attendance let alone vibrancy was a maturing experience. I realised that if faith is not fought for, it dies. And for most Catholics, faith is seen as an option with ritualistic traditions rather than a necessity which informs one's whole life.</p>
<p>Theme: Spreading the word: Use our morning teas as an opportunity to discuss the gospel message. Sharing food. Grace before morning tea—father bless the food on offer. Passion play in [-] at Easter was a peaceful way to demonstrate our faith. Each church shares a prayer. Group of people. Peaceful. Celebration. Not everyone feels safe in a big group in public in the middle of [-]. Make the younger generation excited about the Church. Extend existing programs e.g. children's liturgy, family Masses. Scripture. Simple language. Sunday school. More regular. A kids' Mass for a longer period. At children's liturgy—help kids plan for family Mass. Kids help pick the verses and songs. Craft to decorate the church. Kids to get involved in different ways that they are comfortable to help. Kids teaching kids about God. High school kids to help teach primary school kids about God. Spreading the word online and in social media. Bible quotes and a nice prayer. Not in your face but something easy to like and share. WhatsApp group to advertise Church events/ get together. Currently see a drop off—tweens and teenagers. Make sure there is lots of mission-based activities offered so they can do something good for others and feel good in return.</p>
<p>Yes. I am one of the blessed people who have had an almost overnight conversion. This was a very confusing time for me, I didn't know what was occurring, and to be honest, the impact of it was overwhelming. I proceeded to go to one of my parish priests. In the time I sought for his guidance and advice, I came to know Jesus, I came to know the Holy Spirit, I came to know God the Father, and I learnt to pray. Under the influence of this particularly zealous priest, I came to know who I want to be—an imitation of Christ. Because that is what this priest reflected in his words and actions. Without this guidance, I don't believe I would be where I am in my faith and my walk with God, in such a short period of time. That is why I believe that God wants priests like this. I might mention, this conversion was less than 2 years ago. Due to this encounter of conversion, due to following my calling and the prompting of the Holy Spirit, I endeavour to continually learn and grow in the likeness of Christ. I aspire to be a saint. And I believe that, with evangelical movements, zealous and well learned priests and spiritual directors, that the members of the Church could learn God's Will, could change the face of Australia and could change the face of the Church—THROUGH—the Holy Spirit. Blessed be God forever!</p>
<p>As a Catholic community, we all give thanks for the gifts and strengths that bind us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gift of Eucharist. • The scriptures and the power of the Gospels. • The people who have helped open the scriptures for us. • The strength of the Christian community here in [-], as well as our strong social justice ethic. • Our role as the “People of God”, as acknowledged in Lumen Gentium. • Priests who build community. • The documents of Vatican II and our priests who have supported it. There has been, and continues

to be, much in the Church to make us turn away, as countless others have. However, it is because of points of gratitude that we remain faithful.

I am an Australian woman and a convert at the age of 33. I mostly attended Mass on Sunday, not received into the Church as yet, with my husband and children. In those days, my husband and I used to watch 60 minutes and the story at that time, was about "The Devil's Advocate". The story about what the Church needs to do the Beatify a Saint and the story went on to discuss Mother Mary of the Cross. I remember thinking about all the statues of saints in our Church and how each saint would have had to go through the same process and I was deeply moved and impressed with the strict details of the procedure. Through a Catholic friend, I learned about Our Lady's appearance in Fatima. At that point in my life, I didn't know much about her and the fact that she had come to earth to give us a message was to me amazing and that Our Lord also had come to speak to a religious. I wanted to know what was said and why ... I wanted to learn the rosary and read more about our Catholic tradition and the saints ... I put my conversion down to the grace of Our Lady, she has been the most amazing mother to me and I am so very grateful to God for my conversion journey. My point being, that now I go to daily Mass, where often the Mass is offered for a particular saint or for Our Lady, Sacred Heart of Jesus, St Joseph and I think what a pity that this knowledge is not made available for the Sunday Mass goer, not all people sitting in the pews are actually Catholics, they are there accompanying their husband or wife who are the Catholics ... Perhaps stories on the back of the newsletter?

It has shaped me. I've been raised a Catholic. I identify as a Catholic and as I've travelled many countries, I've also felt at home and connected to God in a Catholic Church.

I would have died hours after being born, were it not for the providence of God. I was told this fact when I was old enough to understand, in my early teens. Due to a particular vitamin deficiency, I began passing blood shortly after birth, before I could even be placed in my mother's arms. I also turned out to have a rare blood type that wasn't in stock at the hospital and needed a donor to survive. My father and maternal grandfather were both overseas on work, and it was only my maternal grandmother and mum's siblings who were around mum at the time. My grandma somehow managed to placate mum when she asked why she wasn't being shown her baby, while my uncles and aunt frantically made telephone calls to all and sundry trying to find someone whose blood type matched mine. This was in the mid-1980s, so of course, no cell phones, no social media that would have considerably speeded up the process. My grandma prayed fervently to Infant Jesus to save her first grandchild. And finally, in the wee hours of the morning, it was the friend of a friend of a friend who came to my rescue. In the 35 years since this event where Jesus first saved me, I have experienced His intervention in my life repeatedly. My faith in Him has tided me through the ups and downs of life. In particular, He helped me deal with the illnesses and sufferings of my beloved Godfather and my precious younger sister. It may seem as if my prayers for their healing went unanswered as He chose to bring them home to Him. My faith was shaken by these two events; however, He also provided comfort and strength in unimaginable ways. I may not know why my family and I had to endure such pain, but I do recognize that even in the midst of these tragedies, blessings abounded. Today, despite the turbulence the wider Church faces and the tragedies of my own past, I remain committed to this man, my Lord and Saviour Jesus. I believe absolutely in His message. I pray that together, we are successful in ensuring that not only does the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ continue to exist, but to thrive and shine as the Light to the World.

No thank you. Just wanted to say thank you for allowing these submissions.

It's not easy to be faithful to Christ and His Church. I have a tremendous respect for priests, because without them I would not have the opportunity to receive My Lord in Holy Communion. I also have seen the effect of bad priest on the faithful. BUT RIGHT NOW, we need to find the passion to Love and serve according to the richness of our Catholic faith ... I grew into this faith because of Good, Holy well-formed priests, because of Good educators who taught the truth and parents who were strong and fair. When society now aims to destroy these pillars, they will destroy objective truth and pursue state-controlled political correctness. I thank God for my conversion through these people.

<p>We need to go against the grain of society and the Media no matter the cost. The Truth of Christ is everything.</p>
<p>I would like to say how important my parents and grandparents were in my formation and believe there needs to be a stronger stress on parental responsibility for their children's faith formation.</p>
<p>- There is an abundance of resources, events, Mass, adoration and confession available in [-] which has helped me continually grow in the faith. However, there does not seem to be so much available in other parts of the country.</p> <p>- The events that are on across [-] allow for young people/youth of the Church to meet, grow and deepen their faith which leads to more people taking their vocations seriously.</p> <p>- Availability of perpetual adoration in [-].</p>
<p>A story of strong faith. This is a teaching from very young. Whatever we do, we have to say a little prayer. Eating or drink, always a sign of the cross or little short prayer. Sleep and wake up, always prayer and this is a constant reminder of Jesus in our lives every day. As we are now, the presence of God in our lives is real.</p>
<p>My faith was truly changed when I encountered the Traditional Latin Mass. I was struck by the authenticity and beauty of Catholic tradition, as well as the life-changing effects of living the spiritual life.</p>
<p>I grew up in several parishes with holy priests (usually priests ordained prior to the 60s). They were simple priests with a love of God. This inspired me in my faith. Many of the priests that I meet today don't inspire me at all. In fact, they challenge my faith. They seem to be totally unaware of God.</p>
<p>My grandfather served in WWI and was a sheep shearer in outback NSW. He married a local girl born in [-]. Saint Mother Theresa travelled there twice and stayed two weeks. A nun from India, setting up a centre of caring within an Indigenous culture. The effort to see and reflect in remote desert locations, should be seen as a pilgrimage every Catholic should do, as I do now many times, to how people live on the fringes of society, on missions, of our own making, to exclude people of a different skin colour. This was and still is racism that changed my view that we are not a Christian country as yet, but still needing to see with different eyes, in our own backyard, our near neighbours. These outback trips experiencing, sharing black and white stories of our family background have created for me, since 2013, a common wealth of valuable knowledge, to see my true Australian identity, formed since our family arrived from Ireland in 1841. As a Catholic family in early Australia, the pioneer Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church, who celebrated Mass in our pioneer ancestors houses, in [-], NSW, as an example, were of far different character and breeding than the current training I witnessed at Good Shepherd Seminary in Sydney, recently (Late 2018). CATHOLIC PRIESTS—SEMINARIAN TRAINING An urgent need to “smell like sheep” as recommended by Pope Francis. “One month In Broome” is not enough, as stated in the five-year seminarian training in experiencing our Australian Indigenous culture as just one example. DEACONS can be female (and married) to BE INCLUDED and urgently change the gender balance within, just like in most educational institutions. A more familiar, family-oriented partnership as a culture of inclusive and diverse knowledge within the whole of life journey we all travel along, from birth to death.</p>
<p>The 2nd Vatican Council changed the way I have lived my faith. In my faith Community at that time, we had a lot of instruction to understand the changes. Learning was freedom, with it, personal responsibility for my faith.</p>
<p>Social Justice is my driving force and I see it in my parish priest, but not necessarily in other priests. Social Justice includes all aspects of the human support, not just those the Church itself supports. The Church does not support same sex marriage, but the leaders of the Church should have come out in support of the Civil union, The Church does not condone divorce but has an annulment process itself, isn't that duplicity and the Church playing the part of God in determining whether the marriage was true or not. Stick to the teaching of Jesus; forget the Old Testament as it can be too contradictory. I love my parish, I love the teachings of Jesus in regard to our fellow man, but CANON law often does not reflect those teachings. I experienced Mass in locations all over Israel in public places, yet Canon Law does not allow me to be married in those same places!</p>

My parents were wonderful examples of faith in pray and in action. I felt that I was a part of God's family from an early age. There is now a constant pressure from the secular world to reject God. I am strong in my faith and am overjoyed to spread the message of Jesus. The difficulties that I have experienced in my life have bolstered my faith and made me aware of my final destination, which is to be with Jesus and the family of God.

My parents were shining examples of lives lived in faith. This environment nurtured my faith. My parents sadly divorced and I was lost for many years. My faith suffered but I developed resilience through pain. I developed a great love for the passion of Jesus and the spirituality of the passion of Jesus has brought me closer to Jesus and therefore my Father in heaven. I have tried to be a good example to my children and pass on the Christian message. My wife and I are dedicated to each other and our children. My faith continues to grow. I believe in Catholic education and I believe that the Eucharist is the centre of our lives. We have a duty to share that message with others.

I am a convert. My mother had been brought up as Catholic and during WWII she married in the Catholic Church. Her husband on returning from overseas took up with another woman. My mother approached her father (who did not go to Mass but sent his 9 children) who told her that no child of his was going to divorce. He abandoned his daughter. My mother divorced and then found love with my father and married him in a civil ceremony. I was born and was taken to a priest to get baptised and my parents were told that "the Church would have the child but not the mother". My father told that priest that the Church would have neither. I was baptised in the Presbyterian Church. I went to Sunday school and sang in the children's choir. At about 13 yrs of age, I had a friend who was Catholic and we talked about religion walking to and from school. Around this time, my maternal grandfather died and I went into a Catholic church for the first time ... it felt like I was coming home. I started attending scripture lessons with the Catholics instead of the Presbyterian in high school. The local priest and an order of Brothers were attending that school as SRE teachers. I became friends with both; Fr [-] was the priest and the brothers were Bros of St [-]. All of these men have been accused by others of sexual misconduct and gaoled in the 1990s but for me as a teenager, they had been honourable men who had inspired me to convert to Catholicism which I did at 17 yrs of age. I attended my local church for individual instruction for about 4 yrs and wrote to the Catholic enquiry centre during that time too. In 1969, I met a young man through my workplace who was just coming out of the Marist Bros Novitiate (5 yrs) and we married 22 months later by Fr [-]. We had 6 children quickly (ten pregnancies in 7 yrs). Both of us are musical and we have been providing music at our parish Masses since before we were married. We were not without trials in our marriage over our 48 yrs but we have survived with God's help. Once our children became independent and were working, we started to provide assistance to other parish musicians who often did not understand liturgy; this was throughout [-], going [interstate]. My husband's liturgy grounding with the Marists was added to by doing a graduate Diploma in Theology with ACU. My husband left work in 1995 to do Christian music full-time and to help other musicians freely. We recorded 4 albums of original songs for Catholics and various CDs for special occasions like [-], [-] and [-]. I was working full-time to pay the bills while he was doing this. He did this for 15 yrs before returning to work in Catholic schools as a school chaplain under a federal government program. We have now been providing music for parishes for nearly 50 years. How long we can continue this ministry is unknown but we do it every week for the glory of God.

This is my 2nd response to the Council ... we are deeply grieving following the appalling news and happenings of the last week ... whether the outcome is right or will be proved wrong. The damage to the Church will take some decades to repair. The Institutional Church starting with the Curia needs urgent Reform. My Faith comes from my unalterable belief in the Gospel, the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Jesus and in the Eucharist he left us; in the role of Mary in our Redemption and in God's unconditional love for each of us individually. My inspiration comes from the spiritual reading I do, e.g. Daniel O'Leary to name but one and in the genuinely saintly people I meet in all kinds of situations. I pray this Plenary Council will give us reason to hope that bishops ARE listening and see

<p>the urgent need for major changes to the image and practices of the Institutional Church which is so badly broken.</p>
<p>We are active participating Catholics and have been all our lives. We see an urgency for our Church to immediately address all the serious issues detailed above. Without all-encompassing action, we see the Church in Australia becoming irrelevant.</p>
<p>I would like to share the following story/stories about my experience of faith or of the Church in Australia that has shaped me: About three years ago, my wife, daughter and I attended Sunday Mass at a neighbouring parish to support my son, daughter-in-law and young family. My children and daughter-in-law struggle with the relevance of Church in their lives. During the readings, a woman in the pew behind us collapsed. We rendered what assistance we could, sought out a doctor to assist, called the ambulance and comforted the women while we waited. The paramedics arrived around Communion time, brought in some bulky equipment and worked on her for some time before wheeling her out of the church just before the recessional. AT NO TIME DURING THAT MASS DID THE PRIEST GIVE THE SLIGHTEST RECOGNITION THAT ANYTHING WAS AMISS EVEN WHEN HE PASSED BY WITHIN A METRE OR TWO AS HE WALKED THE AISLES SPRINKLING US WITH HOLY WATER!!! This was my third similar experience in a church in the [-]. I cannot help but think of the Good Samaritan! These priests walk by on the other side! Nothing apparently is more sacred or more important than the ritual of the Mass.</p>
<p>I grew up in a family that prayed together and fasted, and I owe my faith to my beloved parents but there have been a few others along the way that helped to strengthen and bring it to maturity. As a refugee without means, the local parish paid for my secondary education that earned my gratitude and lifelong commitment to support the plan giving project. The holiness, dedication and gentleness of men and women religious and lay have constantly challenged and inspired me to strive for greater holiness.</p>
<p>There needs to be more of an awareness of the Courage apostolate for people who are struggling with Same-sex attraction and have made a commitment to strive for chastity. People who want to follow their faith but are struggling with SSA need to receive the fellowship, the support and the prayers they need so that they can live a pure and chaste life, to follow the teachings of the Church and to know that they are not alone on this journey. I had first heard about Courage when I was reading the Catholic Weekly newspaper and they had an advertisement for Courage. Then I did some research online to learn more about this apostolate. What motivated me to seek the Courage Apostolate was that my faith was becoming more important in my life but I was still struggling with SSA. Since I've been going to the meetings, I feel that for the first time that I'm not alone on the journey. There are some other men who have SSA (some are married and some are single) who are going through the same struggles as me and to know that we can pray and support one another as well as having to quality fellowship with each other.</p>
<p>I attended the recent Colloquium in Adelaide. It was heartening to hear dedicated Catholic women who support and work wholeheartedly in the Church. Equally, it was disheartening to hear our contributions are either encouraged or blocked by the personality or clerical idea of the parish priest or bishop. I am realistically enough to acknowledge that any organisation needs a structure to enable it can function. The message I heard often at the Colloquium was that the structures of the Australian Catholic Church are failing the people of God and the Gospel. We need to change them.</p>
<p>I was raised in a Catholic household by a Catholic Mother and a Non-Catholic Father. I was taught the catechism and my faith from a young age. It's never too young to explain God's love and mercy to a little child. They understand far more than we give them credit for. My mum pulled me out of the local Catholic school because of the rubbish we were learning in RE. I was sent to an independent school that taught a very Christ-focused form of Catholicism. We learnt virtues and social justice. We learnt the truth of Catholic teaching and we were encouraged to stand up for life and faith whenever we encountered the need. I am now trying to instil the same into my children and unfortunately it is much harder as there are fewer and fewer faithful Catholics in the Church.</p>

I remember meeting Pope Pius XII. My Uncle had served as a Pallottine Missionary for 20 years in the wilderness, heat of NW Western Australia. It was he who was to have the audience with the Holy Father. For such a long time, the bishops surrounding the Holy Father kept “fluffing “around and keeping Uncle [-] away that the Pope himself had to push through to take his hand. That image somehow encapsulates Church behaviour until now. Pope Francis is a breath of fresh air.

As a member of the Order of Malta, taking the Promise of Obedience in 2017 has provided an impetus and framework to support a path to holiness.

In 1987, two (2) papers were presented to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference "Women and the Australian Church" by Mary McDonald SGS and "Women and Scripture" by Elaine Wainwright RSM. These papers emerged from the context of the project "Women and the Australian Church (WATAC) sponsored by the then Conference of the Major Superiors of Religious of Australia (now Catholic Religious Australia—CRA) since 1984. Little (if anything) in this sphere has changed. As women religious, we understand the following:

1. The gospels portray Jesus treating women and men with equal dignity and respect.
2. This is further reflected in the Pauline text: "All baptised in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ". (Gal 3:27-28)
3. The Church in its teachings reinforces its belief in the dignity of all human beings. Canon Law notes: "Christ's faithful are those who, since they are incorporated into Christ through baptism, are constituted the people of God." (Canon 204) and "Flowing from their re-birth in Christ, there is genuine equality of dignity and action among all of Christ's faithful." (Canon 208) and among the documents of Vatican II is noted "Every type of discrimination ... based on sex ... is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's law." (Gaudium et Spes, #29) Perhaps the telling are the words of Jesus in Matthew's gospel about the woman who anointed Jesus at Bethany. He praised her in a way that is unparalleled in the whole gospel story—"Wherever this gospel is preached in all the world, what she has done shall be told in memory of her" [Matt 26:13] The questions in the WATAC report remain: Is the Australian Catholic Church prepared to let women have a choice, a 'say' and a fair go, to set in place an action plan for the Church so it becomes participative, inclusive and recognises the feminine as intrinsic to an understanding of God, to human wholeness and thereby to Church renewal? We see the Plenary 2020 as a call to recognise that as in 1987: "We are at a new point in history which is both creative and religious. It calls us to TRANSFORMATION through listening and responding to the Word. This Word is spoken in the Scriptures and in our tradition, in the events of our lives and in the shared wisdom that we speak to one another." (McDonald. op. cit pg 10) This is a story which shapes us. "We stand together clothed in grace and showered with blessing"—[-] CSA.

- > Church to be more embracing of others.
- > Gluten-free hosts not being accepted is wrong.
- > Have Catechists explain the actions of the Mass—Why different coloured Vestments, why the Elevation, importance of the Consecration, why the washing of hands. This might answer the comments of “the Mass is boring” because young people don’t know what is going on, hence the well-known comment that “the Mass is boring”.
- > Allow more involvement of women at Mass and in other major ceremonies. Female priests.
- > Third Rite of confession to be AVAILABLE, not simply not allowed.
- > Rectify and announce false man-made teachings e.g. No meat on Fridays, Indulgences, sip of water preventing you from Communion, divorced people can’t take Communion.
- > Seminarians to be better prepared for parish life. Not recruited too early. More openness to divorcees, also gay people (which is a result of birth not their fault).
- > Diminish the amount of Pomp (and the costs involved). Jesus didn’t wear Vestments and other items worn by priests of high office.
- > Embrace other Christian faiths.
- > Laity to be allowed more decision-making in the Church and parish activities. Some priests don’t

allow planning or finances to be discussed.

> More concentration on social/spiritual resources for our youth—similar the old CYO groups in the past.

> ASK THE YOUTH WHAT THEY THINK WHAT GOD IS ASKING. They are the future of the Church.

- Being a companion/sponsor on the RCIA journey, I feel my faith has been illuminated in a special way. I have come to a deeper understanding of what I believed. As a cradle Catholic, some aspects of faith have been passed down to me or seem like common knowledge, but the RCIA program brings these things that I might not have focussed on to the forefront and transforms them. By simply starting with the "basics", I feel like some aspects of my faith finally have the foundation that makes them stable and believable with my whole heart.

- All the priests at our parish stand outside of every [Mass], talking to parishioners, introducing them to one another, etc. This has done so much to foster the sense of community. It has made the priests feel more accessible (for advice, sacraments, discussions, explanations) and provided an additional reason for parishioners to stay after Mass and get to know one another.

Pray always for faith and Catholic Church. How can you expect me to confess my sexual sins to a priest when once doing this, the young priest asked for my name and address? This scared me and since then on, I never want to tell my secrets to a priest, I'd rather tell it directly to God. Young children are hungry for the truth, how can the Church help? I believe that children need more education about their faith. Lovely to see them serving in the church (altar servers). We need more of them. Church does strengthen my faith. I believe that Catholic Church is the one true religion. But the people who run it are all human. I accept the imperfections. I have grown in love for others and love for myself through God's grace (which I believe and have observed) has come from attending Mass 4 times a week in the last 2 years. I can more easily forgive and understand others as a result. Thank you to God. My mother has shut God out of her life. Never did she pray or speak of God—but miraculously, the Jehovah Witness changed all of that, their belief in some aspects may be different from us but I give them credit for bringing God to many people who have disregarded Him. Because of the Jehovah's patience and kindness, my mother became one of them and started to make God a part of her life. I was sad because she gave up being a Catholic but I was also happy and grateful she became one of God's followers and made Him a part of her life. No harm done except we lost another Catholic to another religion. Many religions have different ideas, yet they cannot point in the Bible what they believe in. I am a devoted Catholic but a PRACTICAL ONE. I pick up the good from this Christian religion and disregard what I don't believe in the Catholic religion—all because they are not God's words in the Bible. Let us be realistic!

Considering the treatment I have experienced in the name of the Church and/or by Catholics in authority (again, directly or indirectly in the name of the Church), it is amazing that I am still actively engaged, or even just still present. It is, however, on a knife-edge: a backward-looking, deeply conservative, pre-Vatican II styled Church will be a final straw! Enough!

In Australia, right now I am ashamed of the governance of the Church. I am not ashamed to be a Christian, just ashamed of the leadership of the Catholic Church. Of the organisational entity that refuses to address the evident flaws in a governance model that is designed to preserve unquestioning deference of celibate male clerics. That stalls and delays over a meaningful response to the Royal Commission's recommendations. That undermines and second-guesses the judicial system to defend convicted child sexual abusers before it weeps for their victims. Theology has to evolve. All of the Church's "doing" functions, schools, hospitals, and social services all recognise that governance must be transparent, accountable. All have developed lay leadership of faith formation and spirituality. In my working life over the past 35 years, I have seen organisations become more open, transparent and accessible. Yes, there are still hierarchies and levels of seniority, but the distance between people has shrunk. The command and control paradigm doesn't work anymore. Jobs for life don't exist. Performance is agreed and regularly reviewed. Deference and influence are earned. Strong leaders engage openly and continuously. Organisations do not thrive and grow where people are not accountable.

I lost my faith because the Mass felt too soft until I found Latin Masses. The current Masses feel like a fast-food get in and out. People don't wait till the priest leaves, they just go.
Yes, on World Youth Day, we went to the March for Life and this has become a topic I am very invested in.
If I did not believe in God, I don't think I would be where I am in life. Without him, I wouldn't have had the confidence and courage to go to uni and to move away from home.
What has shaped me the most is spending time in prayer in front of the Blessed sacrament. I wish there was more access to adoration chapels.
There have been many times when I've wanted to go to confession, but the only available times at most churches is for half an hour before the Saturday Vigil Mass ... That's not enough, and it's no wonder so many Catholics don't think they need to go to confession, especially those who only go to Mass on Sunday and cannot make it to confession on Saturday due to work or family commitments. How is the Church in Australia supposed to be, as Pope Francis basically says: A Field Hospital for Sinners, if the opening hours for the confessional are so limited.
I am lucky enough to be a part of a church community that often celebrates together and this creates a wonderful sense of belonging. Once a month we hold morning teas after Mass and it is a wonderful experience to engage with the community. In my parish, we have "youth Mass" every last Sunday of the month. Within these Masses, the children and youth are able to give their ideas and are responsible for choosing and singing the music, reading and altar serving. This is a wonderful way for me to engage in my community. Afterwards everyone goes upstairs and shares a meal, which I think is extremely valuable and has allowed me to connect with people of all ages in my parish.
What has shaped most of our faith was the extra activities that our community organises to let the community members bond with one another. But with Catholic Schools in Australia, a lot of us think that not a lot of people that attend the school or teach at the school know a lot or fully adhere to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Although there are religious related activities, not enough explanation is given to the students as to why we do them or why it is important for both the students and teachers to follow them either, and it feels like the Church is getting less involved with schools which is hurting both the Catholic students and teachers, and the non-Catholic students and teachers.
The moral values that come from my faith and the examples shown from family and community members from the Catholic Community has been very significant in my development. My father's and now my own involvement in St Vincent de Paul Society has been very significant to this development.
There have been so many cases reporting sexual misbehaviour involving the priests and nuns. In May 2018, a nun was pregnant and revealed the sexual abuse of religious sisters by priests and bishops. I have met priests that wanted to treat me like a "little sister" and see me one-on-one regularly. By suppressing people's natural desire of intimacy, it will not make the priests and nuns more holy. I hope the Church can consider having no restrictions on the marriage of deacons, priests, bishops, nuns or other ministers to a person of the opposite sex. These servants of God will have the freedom to choose single consecrated or married consecrated life.
I spoke to a religion and English teacher who teaches at a Catholic school and gathered that she was not conveying the right teachings of the Church in terms of gender identity and traditional marriage. We can't have teachers being lenient and teaching immoral things at Catholic Schools. Catholic schools should be the beacon of the truth for students and teachers should always be reminded to enforce the truth.
A more work life balance in Australia, has given me more time at hand to try and do daily Mass, give more time for family rosary and this has helped me increase my faith.
In my conversations with young people, I have seen many faces light up when they suddenly discover the full beauty of the Catholic faith. One young man who I am instructing in the Catholic faith, and who will be baptised this Easter, grew up in a family with no faith at all. His parents are both atheists and his knowledge of Christianity was practically nil. Through a friend of his at work, he

began to read what the Church teaches about human sexuality. It blew his mind. And it made him think about the way in which sexuality is treated in today's society; something that he had never done before. His conclusion was that if society actually tried to live what the Church says about sexuality, then so many challenges facing the family would be resolved.

There were a few events that I attended that had a huge impact on my faith and ultimately, on my life. These included: Immaculata Mission School, World Youth Day (Rio, Poland and Panama), ACYF and Youth for Christ. Before I started to practice my faith, I was lost and looking for love in all the wrong places. I got caught up in the wrong crowd in high school, and although I never wanted to do the things that they were doing (partying, drinking, etc.)—I found myself, because of the lack of love that I felt in my life, I found myself joining in with them. I was looking for meaning and purpose in my life—I was looking for a love that couldn't be fulfilled by the parties or the drinking, and couldn't even be fulfilled by the people around me. I was yearning to hear of a love that could fulfil me and that would never abandon me. I was invited to attend a youth camp run by Youth for Christ, and this set me on a path towards Jesus. I encountered Jesus' love in a time of praise and worship that we had—and now that I look back on it—all I wanted and needed to know that I was loved. Loved and known by God. A love that I knew would never abandon me. Or forget me. or reject me. A love that knew me behind all the masks and facades I put up and beyond all the walls that I had around my heart. And this opened my heart to his ways, his commandments—everything—because I knew He loved me and wanted what was best for me. My life changed and I was completely changed. My group of friends changed. All I know is that at that time, I felt God was reaching out to me—he was chasing me. I think this is what the Church needs at this time—there is so much brokenness in the world—and what people, especially young people, need to hear is that they are loved—but they also need to hear the truth of Jesus Christ and his teachings and commandments—because love without truth is sentimentality and truth without love is cruelty. They want to hear the truth (specifically about authentic love, living chastity, human sexuality, the meaning of life, life issues and where the Church stands for example—euthanasia, abortion)—we don't want anything to be watered down—that is just giving us the message that we can't handle hearing the truth, or somehow it'll be too difficult for us, or that the Church doesn't believe that we can live it. But I found that when I discovered Christ—the teachings of the Church seemed to make more sense to me, and I could accept them—because I knew that they came from Jesus and out of his love for us, that he doesn't want us to wound him, ourselves or others (e.g. he doesn't want us to sin). Also, when I discovered Jesus—I realised this desire in my heart to be a saint. I think that young people want to be saints—they want to be radical (and not in the negative way that we understand this word today, but radical in the sense that we want to make a total gift of ourselves for God and the world).

Once a month, we organise an all-night Eucharistic adoration in the College chapel. This begins at 10pm and finishes at 8am. While young people are not renowned for their ability to concentrate, it is incredible the response we get for this event. Just a few days ago, we had the first all night adoration for 2019. We had 40 people put their names down to spend 30 minutes in silent prayer in front of the Eucharist during the middle of the night. Many of these were not Catholic, yet they are looking for answers and thirst for God.

It has been our whole life.

When I was 22, I attended a talk on World Youth Day 2011 at [-] centre for girls and women (a centre of [-]). After this talk, I started to befriend local girls in the area and became active in my faith such as attending weekly meditations with a priest of [-], weekly confession, monthly recollections and a yearly retreat. There were women who lived in the centre of [-] that were instrumental in my faith to encourage me to frequent the sacraments such as daily Mass, weekly confession and to be an instrument of Christ in the middle of the world by sanctifying the ordinary work that we do each day. It was at [the centre] that I learned to serve others by working for God and to also value doctrine and my Catholic faith. Without the help of these centres of [-], I don't know where I would be today. I'm now 29 years old, engaged to be married in May 2019 and I'm preparing for a vocation that I have been able to pray and prepare for with formation through my

involvement with spiritual activities as a young professional. Essentially, [the centre] brings together women from a variety of industries and ages for mutual support, insightful guidance, and lifelong learning. It aims to enrich women professionally and culturally through talks, workshops and activities that enable them to positively contribute to their social environment. Through sharing of inspirational journeys, authentic friendships and a spirit of collaboration, a new generation of young professional women are being empowered to participate in positions of leadership and positive influence across all sectors. More details on [the centre]'s activities can be found here: [https://www.\[- \].org.au/](https://www.[-].org.au/). For about seven years, I was volunteering closely with other young professional women in Western Sydney to promote character development, professional growth and growth in virtue. Young girls of Western Sydney need a place like [-] to ensure that they are growing to be women of leadership, integrity and virtue. I am passionate about young females in this area to also grow in their faith, especially through quality formation and doctrine. The priests of [-] have been instrumental in my formation and we need to support these priests to assist with reaching more young people. [-] now requires funds to expand and grow in the area. I am passionate to help more centres of [-] grow in Australia and New Zealand as it has helped shape the person I am today. My love for God has grown and I know how much I have been influenced by those around me on this journey. Young people of Australia are called to a particular vocation and I am asking the Plenary Council what more can be done to reach many souls when it comes to spiritual growth and direction. We also need to foster the love of the home, love within families and for support for young people who are called to particular vocation. More details on similar projects can be found here: <http://aepl.org.au/projects/>.

I am ashamed at my past apathy. I am ashamed at how we, the People of God in Australia, have tolerated the behaviour of our leaders over the decades. Clericalism and the lack of accountability of our leaders to the people they lead must end. The exclusion of laity, and especially of women, from leadership and decision-making in parishes and dioceses must end. This submission is made in my own name and may not reflect the views of any organisation with which I am associated.

I've been blessed to know learned pastoral priests whose teaching of the scriptures has greatly aided my own faith development. Where are their successors coming from and how will they be formed for pastoral ministry? Current models of formation in seminaries reinforce clericalism and blind adherence to doctrine. Church culture must be overhauled to make the Church a safe and welcoming place for all God's people, especially children, minorities and the poor.

As a Sister of St Joseph, I could recount many stories. Enough to say that the stories that have touched me most, are those related to my experiences among and with the poorest of the poor. I agree wholeheartedly with Pope Francis, that we are called to be a Church of the poor. That is where we find God.

As a teen, I really was shaped by question and answer forums that the Church through priests have encouraged. The topic of sexuality and chastity let me know of the beauty that the Church offers that cannot be found elsewhere. Reason as opposed to the faith side of Catholicism drew me in deeper. As I have grown however, the faith aspect of my relationship with the Church is becoming more of a focus and I have realised that a very real balance needs to occur in my spirituality in order for me to grow in holiness. Opportunities for Adoration and fellowship have been paramount to developing this virtue and I have seen a great improvement in me as a result.

I am a practicing Catholic who is confused and concerned with the structure and strategy of the Church. I find most of the clergy disappointing and non-proactive in important and sensitive matters. Most either doge or dismiss confronting issues. I am horrified and saddened with the Cardinal Pell saga. It has cost the Cardinal's supporters and our community millions of dollars. What happens next? Be honest and caring and face up to the situation no matter how painful it may be. Please show us all, not just Catholics, that the Church is taking action to redeem itself.

A common theme in the stories of our faith journeys is that we have come back to the faith, through the discovery of tradition. While somewhat lapsed Catholics after our modern parish upbringings,

and "Catholic education", it has been the discovery of traditional liturgy, and the deep richness and beauty in the traditions of Holy Mother Church, that have made us come back to the faith, and to embrace it, to love it. I dare say each one of us would not be practicing to this day, were it not for this. If all we had was continued exposure to bad liturgy, watered down catechesis, and a protestant view of God and worship so prevalent in the Church today, we would not be here today; each one of us, in one way or another, has been drawn back to God and His bride by reverent liturgy, beautiful architecture, deep theology; in essence, a higher calling, and the treasure of tradition. A contemporary Church that moves with the world will not bring people back to Christ, but rather a Church true to itself and to God, who stands firm amidst the heresy and apostasy of modernity that will bring souls back to God.

I have met several students who have graduated from various Catholic schools, and all of them were lacking the knowledge of the true teachings of the Catholic Church. What can we do to change this? Look to the Catechism as the text book. [-] in [-] city offers daily Mass 3 times a day, and they are full! Confession is offered daily and there is always a queue. Yes, the population is higher in the city, but it goes to show that if the Church offers the sacraments, people attend them.

Living the gospel—Learning from others about faith. Coming together in small groups encouraging people to open up. Thank God for the gift of faith. My grounding through Good times and Bad. I admire people who go to church daily. Being Catholic in these times, we are ridiculed for what we believe. A safety in talking about God to each other. Disrespected for past bad examples. Consider how you will respond, what would Jesus say if he was here and now? "We are a hospital of sinners, not a museum of saints." Give your best example. My faith is who I am. It defines me.

Make a point of reaching out and welcoming and supporting all members of the Church community. So many people so sad and lonely inside give them the glow of hope. Experienced the Holy Spirit talking to me felt compelled when Father called for catechists. It was my calling the Holy Spirit asking me to step forward. Organise a once a month dinner for the homeless. Started with just 5 people, now about 55. The bond of friendship that he has witnessed is amazing. People wanted to give and contribute, in giving they receive. People come back when on their feet and say thank you. Encourage people to contribute so the parish is enriched. Supporting people with depressions so that they can be a resource and tap into their strengths/gifts and give of themselves and grow in self-worth as a result. Parish strength when people share and contribute and feel comfortable to do so. What can I do? Always asking what can you contribute? Listening and communicating. Inclusion policy. People need to be open and looking. Broaden your thinking. All God's Children. What you've got is worthwhile.

Priests who are not lukewarm and instead confident and courageous in Christ's teaching have shaped me in my faith.

I was blessed to attend World Youth Day in 2019 and strongly feel that it has been hard to bring back the fire burning inside of me as I feel the Australian Catholic Church is outdated and does not invigorate me with passion.

I previously worked in a University as an Academic. My work colleagues were very hostile to the Church and the faith. I was secure in my faith but I kept my God and faith cards close to my chest due to the deep-seated prejudices of those around me. If I had expressed what I truly believed, they would have written me off. We became acquaintances and then friends. I respected who they were but also shared my values and beliefs and my Catholic identity. This openness and seeing good in them helped build bridges, facilitated working together in search of the truth and trying through our collaboration to do good for society. I currently work in a Catholic Tertiary Institution that is open to people from all faiths, creeds, values and beliefs. In dealing with this diverse range of people, once again I find people, the majority being young people, very hostile to the faith and with deep-seated prejudices. However most of these people are Catholic or former Catholics or grew up in a Catholic family or attended a Catholic school. Christians from other denominations and non-Christians are open to dialogue in contrast to the cultural Catholics who are closed. I wonder what has caused this and what can I do to reach them.

In 1976, we left our very Catholic families and country. Upon arrival in [-], we looked for a church. It was a small chapel with nuns and a community who welcomed us so warmly. We joined Marriage Encounter and had a small support group. After 7 years, we moved to [-] and in no time the bigger Filipino groups took us in Couples for Christ. We have been serving our parish, but it seemed we get nourishment in the community who allowed us to have regular prayer meetings with Bible studies, mission service around Australia and for the last 3 years, Papua New Guinea. I found CFC to have a deep impact on trans-parochial people who cannot be held in one parish, those who are in the peripheries of being comfortable—without commitment in their Sunday Masses and sacraments, those who due to the good life here, have no need for God. This is why I learned to be a missionary, to go where we are needed. Whenever [-], my husband, and I are in PNG, I think and act like a missionary, trusting in Him for protection in this very dangerous place, depending on Him to equip me in the words to say, praying that people will open their homes, hearts and ears to the message and teachings that we bring. It is clear to me that we are needed there to strengthen husband/wife relationships—without which our formation of youth ministries cannot stand firm. The sight of many young people praising, praying and singing is joy in my heart. May we live many more years to be part of God’s plan in Oceania. [-]—[-], [-], [-].

A friend helped me to discover why I should deepen my relationship with Our Lord. Consequently, I found my vocation to be a member of Opus Dei. This calling has changed my life.

I re-enter my submission and ask that please, please, please let this be responded to positively. I believed it when I submitted it and now I think it is absolutely imperative if the Australian Church is to move forward. I firmly believe it is what God is asking of us. The urgency behind this request that as many lay people, including women, as canon law allows, are delegates at the Plenary Council 2020 has been brought on by the news of this week regarding Pell. I love the Church and on [date] received a papal award, [-], and I spend my life in working for the formation of laity through my involvement in Christian Life Community and parish. Some background—one of my nieces was abused as a child (by a trusted friend who was also their family doctor) and now works for the DPP. On Tuesday this week when I read the article by Frank Brennan SJ, I thought it was a very balanced and the greatest impact on me was the final paragraph. In reading this, I was struck by the thought that this verdict is just the beginning not the end and that there will be further turmoil when the result of the appeal is known, no matter what the outcome of that is. I sent this article to my sister, brother-in-law and niece knowing Frank to be such a person who has always sought justice and because of his knowledge of the law. WELL What a shock I got when all three of them reacted to this with “here they go again—the Church is trying to cover up wrongs done”. Their comment was: “When will the Church listen to the victim?” I have spent days in prayerfully discerning what to say or not to say and have been put in touch with the pain and hurt felt by the victims of the sexual abuse of children. The Pell case has touched into this pain and the huge amount of anger in society and in our Church about the abuse and cover-up that has taken place. We need change in our Church. We need the guidance of the Spirit, prayer, discernment and humility. It is because of the above information that I am moved to put forward this submission again. It may seem a small step to include as many lay people as possible at the Plenary Council but I see it as one small step which might be seen as one huge step for our Church. We need more laypeople’s voices not only to work with bishops at the Plenary Council but to show that the Church is taking seriously the need for change. Yours in prayer, [-] [-].

Strong sense of community, place, of liturgical devotion, spiritual companionship and welcoming migrant Catholic within our local parish.

I am a woman religious aged [-] years. My ministry is parish Leader in a parish with no resident priest. The parish comprises three communities each with its own church and one parish primary school. The weekend Masses are celebrated by two priests from a neighbouring parish on alternate weeks. Each month the communities have one Sunday Celebration in Anticipation of Eucharist—liturgy of the word with communion. We have a few trained leaders, but the community is aging. I have permission to preach in the absence of a priest and to celebrate baptisms, again in the absence

of a priest. From time to time, the priest may not arrive—the roads closed due to bushfires, priests travelling to the wrong venue by mistake, arriving in an empty church while the community is waiting in another town, perhaps 50km away. I am usually there and step in to fill the gap, frustrated because I am unable to celebrate Eucharist. Each week I visit those parishioners who are sick, grieving, lonely, hurting. I hear many confessions, but am unable to give absolution, when they are in need of anointing, I cannot offer the sacrament. There are times when I want to walk away but who will then serve these people? Just as Nero fiddled while Rome burned, the institutional Church appears to be going about its business while all crumbles around and within.

The Immaculata Mission School held in Launceston 2017 helped me greatly in my faith. It focuses on loving Jesus through prayer, talks, fellowship, and mission. I think what touched me the most was the charity at the Mission School. There is such great love there because the people there love Jesus and spend time with Him (especially in the Blessed sacrament). By experiencing the love of my neighbour, it gave me a greater desire to love in return. 1 John 4:20 says that if we say we love God, but don't love our neighbour then we are liars. This is where I felt challenged and this is how God called me to grow and is still calling me to grow. I think it's true for the whole Church. If there is no charity, then how are we really loving God?

Daily early morning Lenten Mass as a child. Quality music liturgy training from qualified religious and lay persons. Sharing childhood with other families with the same values. Catholic social groups such as Hibernian Annual Picnic Day. Sitting in Mass towards the front of the church to be able to see the altar. Fish, no meat on Fridays, Shrove Tuesday pancakes.

I came to be closer to the faith through Opus Dei—as I did not have any formation, they helped me learn doctrine and how to live a Christian life by example as well. They taught me the possibility of entering heaven by sanctifying my work, which has helped me tremendously in my relationship with God.

Quite frankly it's a miracle I'm still Catholic. I was badly taught, badly catechised, and the faith in the post-Vatican II Church was watered down to the point of nihilism. Some of my most scarring spiritual experiences were guitar and tambourine Masses by which the Church was apparently trying to be "relevant" to youth. There were some good priests, but they tended to be the older generation. In recent years, I have had found far more spiritual guidance through more traditional forms of worship including the Latin Mass.

We have a BEAUTIFUL newly appointed parish priest (Fr [-]) who is making our Church Catholic again. He has brought back the Holy Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration and has introduced a Crucifix, The Divine Mercy and Our Lady of Fatima. He is always available for confessions and actually TEACHES from the pulpit at Mass. The two former priests removed the tabernacle, took out the kneelers and turned our baptismal font into an outdoor bird bath. Fr [-] was a cruel, violent bully who stopped all hymns to Our Lady, saying "She doesn't belong in the Mass." He very rarely said weekday Masses, only Communion service most days and stopped Eucharistic Adoration, absolutely SCREAMING at the poor elderly parishioner who asked if there was a possibility of having Adoration after Mass as it had been cancelled every month. He then slammed the sacristy door on her in front of a group of parishioners who had approached her to ask on their behalf, waiting for the answer. This elderly parishioner was a daily Mass attendee with her husband of over 50 years. Fr [-] persecuted all the faithful and crushed them to despair and sickness. They all left, only now returning with Fr [-] who is kind, gentle and approachable. Daily Mass consisted of 6 people under Fr [-], but now over 70 attend daily with Fr [-]. Our new parish priest is mending and repairing many broken people who are gradually finding the courage to come back to the Church. I have seen firsthand the absolute POWER priests have had over parishioners when they abuse their role as shepherds and absolutely destroy their flock but I have also seen the great grace and growth within that same parish when the parish priest has been a true model of Christ in all that he says and does.

I am divorced but not by choice. I wear my wedding ring as a sign of my fidelity to my marriage. I attend Mass and in other ways join in with Church activities. I have described myself for some years as a 'happy Catholic'. I also commit to service in the broader Australian community. I am appalled at

the slowness in the response by the Church to sexual abuse perpetrated by its own members especially priests. Time that can't be recovered now but lessons that must be now applied. I grew up in a parish blessed with many good people who made great effort to build a good family life in their 'domestic church'. Especially now I think the Church hierarchy can learn from the stamina of parents who struggle but never give up in trying to raise and pass on the faith. An older priest only this week recounted how he often found great insight and inspiration from the holiness of a good family on his own life. I have been fortunate to know so many holy people who work within the Church. The Church exists to help its members but in recent times the Church is diminished in many people's eyes as existing solely to protect its own hierarchy. Yet I personally know many within the Church hierarchy lead good and wholesome lives of constant service. Finally, I am very impressed by the development of the ACU course Graduate Certificate in Management of Not-for-Profit Organisations. This type of course has been badly needed for so long within the Church. It will support priests in parishes both in their own upskilling but also facilitate better use of others' professional skills. It's a sign I hope of things to come!

I have experience of a parish which was very successful in engaging a great many in the community to work together for their common good, both socially and spiritually. The gains were lost when a new priest was appointed who had no understanding of or desire to know about, the dynamics of what was happening in the parish. Of course, there were many complicated interrelationships, as in all communities, but I believe that once a community has a taste of cooperation, greater faith education, enthusiastic and well-trained liturgical ministers. It is horrible to be then led by someone who does not value these things.

I grew up in India in a Catholic family and tried to live a good Christian life but I cannot say that I had a strong faith. When I was 26, I experience Jesus as my Lord and Saviour through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. My life changed dramatically from that time. When I was 29, I married a man of strong Catholic faith and we brought up our three children in the Catholic faith. Our family moved to New Zealand in 1994. We were shocked to see what a secular country we had moved to. Fortunately, we joined an ecumenical Christian community which helped us to grow in our faith. We had to try really hard to bring up our children with Christian values and we succeeded to some extent. We have 3 children, two boys, aged 39 and 37 and one daughter aged 33. The younger two are strong practicing Catholics. Our eldest son wants nothing to do with the Church (and its hypocrisy as he calls it). We moved to Australia in 2007 because of my husband's job. We managed to find a good parish and again, a Christian community which has helped us immensely. We have been involved in the life of any parish that we have belonged to and tried to be valued members of our local communities. I have helped to run Alpha programs in our parish in New Zealand and have seen people touched in amazing ways. I am strongly Pro-life and very passionate about saving life especially the unborn. I am a volunteer with [-]. My husband and I have been married for 40 years and our marriage has been nurtured and strengthened by our Catholic faith.

I am 29 years old. My Catholic Faith is my most treasured possession. However, this was not always the case. I completed thirteen years of Catholic schooling and seventeen years of weekly Mass attendance over a decade ago as agnostic and ignorant of many of the basic doctrines of the faith. It was only through what was divine intervention that I am a Catholic today. This is a travesty and is typical of my generation. So many souls have been lost because Catholic schools and parishes don't teach the faith properly and many of the teachers and clergy either don't believe or don't care about it. Catholic youth end up growing up believing that Catholicism is boring or irrelevant because that is how many teachers and even clergy treat the Church. This has to change. The failure of the Church to pass on the faith to younger generations is the most urgent issue to be addressed by the Council. If it is not, souls will continue to be lost and the Church will continue its slide into irrelevance while it quibbles over other marginal politically correct topics.

Some Catholics compromise their faith. They become people pleasers rather than God pleasers. My son and I are regulars at church. I got very sick and so wasn't able to attend Mass. Father noticed and rang me to enquire after my health. He kept touching base and offered Mass for me. He showed

<p>support and a Fatherly love. He personally gave attention to my family and the situation making sure that I felt that I was not alone. He showed me Christ's love. Just like Jesus. This strengthened my faith and my families.</p>
<p>The power of the Eucharist and the realisation that I am we are the body of Christ. This has helped me accept the mystery in my life and seek sustenance for my future.</p>
<p>In our early married life's journey together, we were primarily influenced through involvement with other married couples and some priests, mainly in lay spirituality movements, particularly Teams (Équipes Notre Dame) and Worldwide Marriage Encounter. The process was one of prayerful listening to each other's stories and of being accepted and affirmed in the context of Church teaching. There was not much discussion about natural law but for us, they were examples of what Pope John Paul would later refer to as one of the Church's major resources for evangelisation.</p>
<p>I am a voluntary member of the St Vincent de Paul Society, the number years I have forgotten. The satisfaction from visiting clients in need is a joy.</p>
<p>Our new parish priest came to visit me in my home with the bishop. This was such an honour for me as I am housebound and rely on the Eucharistic Minister to bring me Holy Communion. He was extremely friendly and it felt like it was my own son. The elderly and housebound feel very isolated when they get old. We have spent our entire lives attending Mass and then very rarely see a priest after that when we can no longer get to a church. A Eucharistic Minister cannot hear confessions. We need more priestly visits.</p>
<p>I had many conversions, I was very far away from my faith when I was growing up but thanks to good and faithful religious Sisters, Brothers and priests, I was able to know and love God more. Also, thanks to lots of different opportunities in attending youth events, faith formations and camps and retreats, I was able to come back to my faith much stronger and to the person who I am now.</p>
<p>The priest always has to be available. In Italy, they were always available. Our new parish priest (Fr [-]) is kind and approachable. The former parish priest (Fr [-]) was worried more about the money than the people. He only had time for people who gave him money. He treated them well and others so badly. This money only gave him the power to do wrong things. The priest we have now is FANTASTIC. We really love him and we will do anything for him. We ALL love him.</p>
<p>Despite having grown up in a Catholic family and having attended Catholic Schools, my faith only started growing exponentially when I was at Uni. This was largely because of the faithful Catholics I had met, usually in group settings. It was through the grace given to some courageous people, who were willing and patient enough to listen to me and share their faith with me, in word and deed and probably prayer that I was able to come to know Christ. What sustained this was having access to different means of formation. The more I knew about God, the more I felt I could love him better. Some groups were great and I felt as though the things I was learning made sense. Ironically, what encouraged my desire to know even more about God was my experience with a University chaplain. I remember genuinely asking questions about the Church and being laughed at because I supposedly didn't know basic theology. I really admired a lot of the regulars because they were so knowledgeable but I also felt like I couldn't really approach them because I didn't feel smart enough, or that there was something else that was stopping me from feeling welcomed. I don't think this was intentional but as a Uni student, I did find it difficult and awkward to participate in activities that were specifically designed for Uni students. Because of this, I ended up doing my own research and seeking out other groups which was great, but in hindsight could have been dangerous. As a Catholic who loves God and is happy to adhere to the teachings of the Catholic Church, I sometimes find it difficult to live out my faith. To others, our beliefs seem too hard or too rigid to live by. It's true that numbers of those who identify as being Catholic are dropping but that doesn't mean that it's appropriate to dilute or compromise the teachings of the Catholic Church for the sake of appeasing particular groups or for growing the number of bums on seats. I've witnessed particularly youth related activities taking a more diluted response to supposedly "be more relevant" but some of these efforts can lessen the beauty of whatever is being diluted. E.g. Skits or question time during what should be the Homily. In reality, I actually feel more welcomed by some of our brothers and</p>

sisters in Christ from other Christian denominations. They're actually really good at reaching out to people and are happy to use secular activities as inspiration for their ministry. They make a solid effort to make me feel included and valued which is sometimes not the case in Catholic settings. But what stops me from jumping ships is knowing that Jesus, physically, is with us in the Catholic Church. I'm hoping and praying that the fruits of this will strengthen our faith and allow others to come to know Christ. May Our Lord with the intercession of Our Blessed Mother be with all of us, especially those representing us in this Plenary Council.

I have always been impressed with adult converts to the Catholic Church as I have witnessed in almost all of these individuals a grace, a clear sense that what they are doing is for something bigger than themselves. They have always been active in the parish. Yet they are self-effacing, easy to communicate with and feel like real good people.

I would not be who I am today if it wasn't for the Church, and I can't imagine what sort of mess I would be in otherwise. Pastors have been the single most significant influences in my life, specifically their intelligence and their selfless love. The closest friends I have made were facilitated by the Church. My wife I met only because of the wind of the Holy Spirit guiding us along to a Summer School of Evangelisation at [-]. I love the Church passionately. I am proud of it despite the ugliness of the sins its people commit and wish for all to feel at home in it, too.

We discussed the beauty of many movements and communities within the Church. People spoke about meeting Jesus in the unity felt with others when gathering to respond to a shared mission.

In Italy, growing up there were not enough seats in the church to sit down because they were all full. We had to bring our own chairs from home and sit in the piazza outside the church. Now the seats in these big churches are all empty. There are not enough people attending Mass. The exact opposite. Many we know have left the Church because of the priests. Many priests destroy lives because they were forced to be priests by their families or for the money and power. They are not happy and destroy the lives of others. These priests never had the faith to begin with.

The strong sense of the past, and the message of the priests in a parish have been attached too through its ups and downs and the strong sense of community and social justice that lives in its past, present and future members.

I have a daughter who is now 25 years old. When she was 17, she was very involved in the parish. She put up her hand for any volunteer work. She was the first to work the projector screen in the parish. She always sold raffle tickets for Father. She assisted with World Youth Day in the parish and had lots of other young friends in the parish. The former parish priest, (Fr [-]) ridiculed and embarrassed her in front of all her friends in the church. She was selling raffle tickets and he screamed at her in front of everyone. She came home and cried all night. He never once apologised or tried to approach her. She changed parish and refused to attend anymore. She still attends Mass but not in this parish. We need to KEEP our youths, not send them away! Priests need to represent Jesus IN the church during Mass but also AFTER the Mass.

After a lifetime of searching spiritually on my own, I certainly did feel the overwhelming joy of finally "coming home" when I was warmly welcomed into the Catholic Church through RCIA. As new Catholics, my family visited the Vatican and at the General Audience, surrounded by hundreds of Catholics from around the world (who spoke many different languages), Pope Francis led us in singing the Lord's Prayer in Latin (which was written thankfully on our invitation as I had never been taught Latin at RCIA). Together for a few moments, hundreds of people from all across the world were all speaking the same language—"Latin" the language of our Church. I experienced an immense sense of world peace and love for everyone in the room and an amazing feeling that not only did I feel welcome and belong to my little parish back home in Australia but now, I was part of a HUGE global FAMILY of Catholics and no matter where I went in the world (or where my children may go), we will always be "at home" in a Catholic church. When I returned home, our young Assistant priest, at the time, asked if I would like to experience the Traditional Latin Mass (Missa Cantata). I said "yes" and I experienced a sense of coming home at a much deeper level. I felt a sense of peace and inner stillness (prayerfulness) that I was not experiencing at our regular Sunday Novus

Ordo Mass with all its busyness. Our parish started Missa Cantata once a month that I attended with joy. It was well attended by parishioners from our parish and neighbouring parishes (some who would travel up to 2hrs to attend). My family attended the Christus Rex pilgrimage last year and it was wonderful to experience 400 Catholics (50% under 25yrs) singing the Rosary in Latin as we marched happily through the countryside. Positivity and hope for the future of the Catholic Church was very evident in their shining faces and it was a fabulous experience for my children to witness (as even attending Catholic schools they can feel isolated amongst their peers by being the minority that are practicing their Catholic faith). Free faith formation resources such as FORMED (St Augustine Institute) and our Perousia Media CD library are promoted in our parish and have greatly helped me learn about my faith and give me tools to explaining the Catholic faith with others. Our parish is very rare in a regional area and very blessed to have a Perpetual Adoration Chapel which has transformed the faith lives of so many (including myself). And finally, our dear priests. How blessed are we to have them! My RCIA experience and Catholic faith journey so far has been greatly enhanced by the support of two inspiring priests, in particular, who so openly shared (and lived by example) the beauty and truth of the Catholic Church.

I converted to the Catholic faith because I discovered Jesus in the Eucharist. My Catholic university friends and the Catholic chaplaincy helped me. The university Catholic chaplaincies are very important. They should be supported.

I have been humbled by my role as ambassador though unlike a real ambassador, there is no real authority in the role, just a hope and a trust that charity will prevail and the people of God take this opportunity to move forward together in a very Australian egalitarian, collaborative way using as a model, the beatitudes and listening to my fellow [-] parishioners who were passionate and sensitive about their Catholic faith. The conversations were reflective of the pain and joy of living the search of spiritual hunger in our world. I would have to say that the kindness and charity shown to me in this role provided all who participated with messages of hope and encouragement. Praise to Our Lord Jesus Christ and may He bless the Plenary Council in its future stages.

I arrived in Australia without any knowledge of Christianity. After my initial contact with Catholic and going through the process of RCIA, I believed that this God and Jesus were no stranger to me as I had glimpses of them long ago on my life journey in the past. I accepted the faith and got baptised with many questions still, regarding practices of the traditions. Gradually, through lots of workshop, retreats, studies, works and ministries, and my decision to join religious life, the picture of God has gone through an enormous evolving process. Today, I believe that God our creator is present in all creation in our universe. As species created by God, God's spirit is present within all, including our human being, animal and insects, all plants including a blade of grass I believe in God, not in any individual whose tasks are to be example living a life of Jesus, to bring compassion and forgiveness, not by words, sermons, lectures or writing books, but in their own ways of living that reflect God and Jesus.

As a 22-year-old male who often finds himself praying quietly at the back of a church, I have been approached by many an old lady and priest alike who tell me sincerely how good of a young person they think I am, whilst as if to convey with their eyes that the future of our Church rests on the likes of you! When I reflect upon why I continue to live out this faith in a society that is so critical of it, my mind is drawn to a variety of factors. I would like to share the following experiences to demonstrate the kind of support I have received to enable me to practice my faith as I do, and to provide context for the suggestions raised above. Perhaps I owe the deepest vote of thanks (after God) to my mother. For not only did she and the Greek Orthodox man she married live out and practice their faith, she went through many mundane struggles and trials to pass this faith on to her 7 children. Every Friday afternoon, we would wait in the playground of our Greek Orthodox School until the big white van would arrive supplied with the likes of soft drink, chips and lollies to appease us into attending 'Catechism'. The classes were simple lasting only 1 hour accompanied by 30 minutes of singing. In this time however, we were formed with a firm foundation in the Catechism, apologetics and musical tradition. Not only did these classes allow me to navigate my way around high school

intellectual dilemmas, such as the apparent clashes between faith, science and reason, they also gave me a community of young practising Catholics with whom I could travel in my faith journey—something I found lacking at my local parish. Towards the end of my high school years, I also voluntarily attended further philosophical and theological classes with my brothers. Most of these classes were taught by an elderly lady in a parish meeting room only 10–15 mins drive from home. Much of the subject matter was derived from simply worded paperback books written in the ‘Thomistic tradition’ targeted at a high school aged audience. I found these classes particularly valuable as it enabled my mind, which at school was engrossed in learning the likes of Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics, to be stimulated and enriched on a similar level regarding my faith. Since Year 12 in high school, I have been involved with Catholic volunteering organisations in Vietnam, India, and France and am hoping to soon go to the Middle East! I find that living out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are a great source of joy, inspiration and friendship for me and wish many other young people would benefit from similar experiences. Upon leaving high school to study engineering at university, I continued to be supported in my faith journey by the [-] Catholic Society. Here whilst socialising, I would engage in conversations of faith and morals and deepen my relationship with Christ through prayer and the sacraments. It is my hope that more Catholics will be just as supported in their faith journey!

I have been touched by many churches and homilies positively. The Church is available and accessible. I feel blessed in this country we have so many Masses to choose from, which makes missing Mass difficult I would like the churches in Australia to be more active in their communities like the Eastern churches who are always full, to be more innovative to bring families, the lonely and marginalised into our churches – for our Lord loves us, and wants us all to be with him in heaven.

No specific encounters, but I would like to emphasise how much I have benefitted from faithful Catholics, both priests and nuns, and also lay people who have patiently taught me so much. Once I started learning about my faith, I became like a sponge. I wanted to learn more and more. I firmly believe that we need to be as evangelical as the first Christians. But we need to arm ourselves with knowledge.

My experience of faith has grown through attending retreats run by ministries to help youth and young adults to grow in prayer and formation. As a 23-year-old, I felt called to take time away from my career as a full time nurse to join the [-] in a long term mission school which is a five month program run by the sisters. It is a full-time live-in experience of prayer and sacraments, community life, faith formation and outreach which allowed me to grow in my love for the faith and love for prayer. It was the first time where I felt like I could truly be vulnerable in my faith and with God. Before this experience, I felt as though the Church was not able to offer me anything that could help me connect on a personal level with God. I learnt how to pray effectively which was through spending time in Eucharistic adoration. I learnt that living in a community that practices charity and obedience really brings up and strengthens any community, which I believe is required in any parish in order to thrive. As a previous youth coordinator, I was criticised for the direction I was leading the youth in. I simply wanted the youth to remember that the ministry was not just a social group but was working towards learning about the faith. In my evaluation, parents made comments about how the youth would not find anything regarding prayer and formation interesting and instead, I should just play sport and make events where they could talk and simply “hang out”. Going against the culture, I was called condescending for my ways and unfit for the role. This really challenged me because I felt as though I was not welcomed for trying to serve God in the parish because I did not do what the parents wanted me to do, that it even affected my service in my service to the ministries outside of that job and parish. I believe we need to utilise and really support the ministries and apostolates that work towards faith formation in youth and young adults and to have a greater respect and support for those serving in youth ministry and young adults, especially today with the ever-changing culture of the world. I also experience same sex attraction, but because of retreats I’ve attended such as through the Sisters of the Immaculata and the theology of the body course, I’ve come to love and understand the faith and their views. But we also need to feel supported when

we're trying to live chaste and pure lives and not feel like we're alone in the journey. Ministries supporting these should also be given recognition and should be brought in the light and not just on the side as though it is not something to be proud of that we have ministries to help support such individuals.

Having been a happy, healthy celibate religious priest, doing great work in ATSI communities, parish and youth/young adult ministry and lay ministry training, my need to be married and wanting it to be sacramental and Catholic, meant I could no longer use my gifts in formal service and ministry while variously celibate men experienced no sanctions at all!

I am an Australian born Catholic of Irish descent. My ancestors going back centuries have been Catholics. I have been immersed in the Catholic faith since I was a child and have a deep faith. My contacts with the Australian religious are extensive, having been schooled in the Catholic system by an order of nuns, our children all attending Catholics schools for their education. In addition, I have a brother-in law, a priest (in a religious order) and various relatives who are nuns, and by marriage, brothers, priests and more nuns. It saddens me and disappoints me to see the way the importance (and relevance) of the faith in Australia has diminished over the last decades. I have travelled extensively and attended Mass in foreign countries and from this I deduce that there are some similarities but also differences in this regard in different countries. I am also aware of the very excellent work many priests and nuns have done and continue to do as individuals and as part of communities in schools, hospitals and parishes. How has so much gone wrong? Clearly, the (worldwide) revelations about sexual abuse of children and adolescents by clergy members have had a major effect. To explain how shocking these revelations have been to ordinary parishioners would take too long, I first heard rumours of it happening to altar boys (in the US actually) when my children were at a vulnerable age and were in fact altar boys, which was in the mid-late 80s. Since then, many stories have emerged, told to me by people of our age group. Clearly, there was a widespread problem going back a long way in certain environments. The Royal Commission has helped reveal the huge size of the problem amongst all institutions (not just the Catholic Church). However one wonders how could this have persisted and have been kept secret from ordinary Catholics for so long. Secondly, many (but not all) priests and bishops seem to have become isolated (especially in their thinking) from their own communities and seem not to have not been able to remember why they became a religious in the first place and the importance of Jesus' own teachings and examples about tending to the poor, the sick, the isolated, the disadvantaged, the sinners. Thus, many groups have been neglected and eventually felt rejected and shut out of the Church. I emphasise that not all priests or nuns have behaved in this way. Some are exemplary. I am filled with hope that Pope Francis will be able to lead a revival and change priorities in the Church. However, it has seemed to me that those who have been most inclusive locally (for example in regard to ministering to Indigenous communities) were actually discriminated against by the hierarchy and life was made more difficult for them. It has taken real commitment to stay active within the Church in the last 2 decades. We need action, active collaboration, more involvement of women in decision making, not just soothing words. It is beyond words now.

I grew up in a Catholic family and was baptised as a baby. I went to Catholic schools which exposed me to basic teachings about the faith, but mostly formed my conscience of what is right and wrong. My family weren't devout and only went to Mass sometimes, so I naturally lived that way also. It wasn't until I was 17 years old, about to graduate high school, that I encountered Jesus through a youth group. They taught me about having a personal relationship with Jesus, and my life from that point onwards changed for good. I found purpose, and truth, and have ever since been searching and learning more about who I am, who God is, and how to love others. I started going to Mass every Sunday, on weekdays when I could. I went to other Catholic retreats outside of my youth group and learned about Mary, the Saints, the Rosary and Adoration of the Blessed sacrament. I went to World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow. I went on a Long-Term Mission School for 5 months in 2017. And it doesn't stop, because the faith is so rich and vast and God is infinite, so you can always go deeper. The Church and its teachings and its people have guided me every step of the way.

My faith in the institution of the Church was severely questioned when we were told that WE were the people of God, that WE were the Church, but then increasingly TOLD that “the Church says: “” and I was never consulted, my opinion never canvassed. From then on, I found the Church less relevant in my life journey and my inspiration came in examples of magnificent, generous people living life well and to the fullest. They may not even have been Christians but embodied the simple Christian ethos which I love and endorse.

None of the above thoughts should detract from that gratitude we have for our priests and religious. A good priest, we have found, is the heart and soul of Catholic community; we have been very fortunate to be members of Augustinian and Servite communities in London and now members of the [-] parish of [-]. The urgency for action comes not only from the Royal Commission but also from the continued need for moral discussion and leadership in the myriad challenges facing our world, including—social media, that are eroding our freedoms, democracy and an sense of truth; environmental and societal challenges of climate change and demographic migration; the loss of faith, hope and love in a secular consumer society. These are challenges that need an outgoing, hopeful Christ presence that can bring insights founded on its wisdom of the Gospel and our tradition. A contemporary understanding of sin and forgiveness and the repudiation of the dualistic view of modern society that sees all in simplistic black and white, good and evil terms would be a good start. In multi-layered re-evangelization efforts, we believe community-based adult programs should be a real priority. Over the last five years, we have been personally involved in running an RCIA type program in London, called ABC, About Becoming Catholic and/or About Being Catholic. This small weekly prayer and discussion group following the RCIA guidelines, with a nod to the successful Alpha programs, held over 18 weeks has been a great personal experience of renewal for ourselves and many of the ABC participants. We would strongly recommend this as a practical way for growing a parish-based community and support in our Catholic faith.

I encountered Christ through the Couples for Christ (CFC) and Youth for Christ (YFC) community but was formed by the Sisters of the Immaculata in their mission school retreats. It was by this community I learned the teachings of the Church, and that it does not matter if you are charismatic or traditional but that if there is no love, we are nothing and I continue to serve our Church by helping out those in need.

The Church has shown me the Truth on how to love, it's through loving with logic and empathy that allows us to be Christ in the world. Christ never sugar-coated the Truth because He is the Truth and we need to let Australia know what that is with love upmost but not in lack of truth.

Going to a Catholic school when young and having a knowledgeable, informed, devout teacher of religion. Going into a church and having this nun point to the Blessed sacrament and then look at us—this impressed me with the reverence we need before the tabernacle. It has to do with spiritual sensibility.

I have a priest friend with whom I have walked the road of Emmaus for the past 40 years. We, each in our own ways, came to a deeper experience of the disconnect between the dominant theology and practice of the institutional Church and the everyday life of ordinary people. For both of us, there has been a painful letting go of a faith culture that no longer spoke to us as citizens of this contemporary age. In letting go of this world, we have journeyed in darkness continually questioning and wondering where the Risen Lord is within our everyday life in a language that makes sense to us. We have read widely from our different wisdom traditions, his science and myself, the social humanities. We have attended conferences, seminars, talks and he especially has committed himself to aligning himself with different social groups in our society. Throughout this long process, there has been an ever more expanding of an inclusive worldview as we in our own ways dialogue with our contemporary culture. Where has it left us at this moment in time? I think each in our own way has entered into an apophatic experience of the Mystery of God in our life, where apophatic or negative theology holds that none of our concepts can properly be affirmed of God, who transcends all human concepts. Still, there is a deep faith within us in the Presence of this God through the Spirit being with us in all our relationships of our life. That Presence is so intimate that words cannot

<p>capture Her/His reality. I believe that in this experience, it allows us to enter deeply into the absence of God in our contemporary world. God is there, but God's Presence is veiled in darkness awaiting recognition.</p>
<p>I left the Church for a year due to its institutionalism and through an encounter was asked not to throw the baby out with the bathwater, so whilst there is still a lot of bathwater, I keep my eyes firmly on the baby Jesus. Nevertheless, my firm belief that is through relationship that we encounter Christ.</p>
<p>Having worked for a period of time inside an archdiocesan office, I can say that my faith in the institution of the Church has been changed irreparably. Behaviour of bishops that I witnessed firsthand was truly dreadful and not in the best interests of the people they serve. I have seen phenomenal waste of resources, incompetence, unreasonable delays in making decisions, nepotism and terrible lapses of judgement visited on the people of [-]. Behaviour that would never be accepted in any normal, secular organisation, but which unfortunately is normal in our Church. My faith and that of their family is hanging by a thread. I can no longer support my Church with time or treasure. Until the current moribund leadership and Church institution we have today is able to focus itself on a humble mission of evangelisation, I see a very dim future for our Church in Australia.</p>
<p>Watching the people being faithful not their parish even amidst all the harrowing accounts in the media regarding sexual abuse. It is not about the priest or the hierarchy of the Church, but the people of God following the example of Jesus.</p>
<p>I had a reversion to my Catholic faith when I was 15 years old. I went to a Catholic youth camp where I encountered young people who weren't afraid to share their love for Jesus and that He was someone important in their life. At the time, I didn't have much of a relationship with God. I went to Mass on a Sunday but that was it. I never was really one to pray. What touched me initially in this camp was the love I felt from the young people who were serving in the camp. Their joy that spread through the jokes and games we played. How they included everyone that was participating in that camp so they wouldn't feel alone. But what really changed my heart was the night we had of prayer. A couple of the young people serving at the camp prayed over me and I was touched by God's love for me. I knew undoubtedly in my heart and mind that Jesus loves me and that would never change. I struggled a lot with bullying, with knowing my worth and purpose and I battled with depression and self-harm for quite some time. So this experience was a HUGE deal for me. I desired nothing but for everyone encountered to know the love God has for them. I did mission work speaking on the dignity and worth of the human person and living a life of sexual integrity to young people around Australia. That really shaped how I speak to young people about the faith and bringing this message to their hearts. I also discerned religious life for a few months and found a lot of healing. It also brought my relationship with God deeper. What my youth group, time as a missionary and a religious sister showed me was that we need to spend time with Jesus in the Eucharist. At the feet of Jesus in the Eucharist is where I feel His deep love for me especially during times of despair and discouragement. It's where I hear Him in the silence of my heart whisper how much He loves me. It's where my heart is continually changed and reminds me I'm a sinner in need of His mercy. Sometimes when I struggle speaking to God, I turn to His Mother because I know She'll always bring me to Jesus. The Rosary has been a great weapon in my faith that helps me fight off whatever demons I'm battling with myself. I'm very blessed to have encountered my youth group at such a young age. To have served in mission work with The Culture Project in Australia and that this country has this community build up the young people in the Catholic Church. And to have discerned with a religious community in Australia. What all communities have taught me is that love is the answer to everything that is happening in this world that is destroying relationships, communities, cities, countries and families. To love like Christ loves us. Fearless in proclaiming the truth. But always looking at those we encounter with love. The gaze of love Jesus has for us.</p>
<p>After growing up in a very loving parish as a boy, I fell away from practicing the faith in my 20's. I have to say that what attracted me back to the faith was firstly, the sacrament of Confession, a true</p>

understanding of the Eucharist and the fruitful challenge of the Church's moral teachings. I was also attracted to Gregorian chant, beautiful gothic or Romanesque architecture and solemn liturgy.

Being a Catholic and being faithful has been the most amazing thing in my life. I cherish how my faith has shaped my ideals but most importantly how it has enabled me to spiritually connect with people from all avenues of life. Jesus is the most perfect example of acceptance. To me, it doesn't make sense to preach the Bible to those who do not accept Christ, it is more important to be the comforter, listener, helper or whatever God calls us to be in assistance to others. Service to people is the best thing we can do. People will then see where this comes from and start to question in their own time. I am so blessed to have a wonderful community of faithful friends and priests who are always there for me and my family. What a blessing! I would also like to share the wonderful acceptance of parish priests who love to have my (noisy) children at Mass even though they may be a distraction for others. My parish is so supportive of my children just experiencing Mass. Even though they may not understand the ins and outs, they get to feel the presence of the Lord and experience the love of fellowship. What an honour. Children are the heart of our future and it is essential to the growth of our Church. The Catholic Church needs to focus on youth and how to bring them to Christ.

I was for the past two years a youngish patient in my 40s on daily dialysis. My wife was greatly impacted by all this change. I was not my normal self with all the toxins building up, and I had barely any energy at all. My wife was really finding it all overwhelming. So my marriage was put through the wringer over this time, and barely came out intact! I did seek support within the Church where I could. I received helpful spiritual support through my parish in the form of Anointing of the sick, and through the prayer of other parishioners, religious communities, and parish community groups of which I am most grateful. I also sought support from CatholicCare. I was hoping for maybe Christian counselling in particular. I'm still not sure if this is even a thing Catholic care offer? I felt my wife and I both needed some type of support for managing/adjusting to dialysis in our marriage, and advice on how to find a balance with this and work without going crazy in the process. But I was informed I did not really fit into their many categories covering family and marriage counselling, etc. The best they could offer was marriage counselling. I was informed it comes at a price and I would need to pay. I was a bit surprised that is how it works. I had thought government funding might cover this type of thing. As a dialysis patient struggling with work and daily life with a gruelling dialysis schedule and further declining health, we are not usually the type of people who have funds for this type of thing. People on dialysis especially usually cannot work at full capacity, greatly limiting their means of earning. So in the end I didn't use Catholic Care, and instead found other free advice/counsel from other sources. I am now also thinking that unlike a healthy person, many other people also with chronic health problems approaching CatholicCare are probably not usually in a good financial position either. Because of poor health, they are also of very limited means to earn the same as a healthy person. Maybe something further could be done about considering this too, the same way that clients of limited finances or those with limited job prospects may be considered. Also with a rapidly advancing aged population in Australia, I'm sure this could maybe be an area to offer services/advice.

I have had the privilege of being in a very active parish. A vibrant youth group has been a blessing as I have journeyed with them in faith. We have developed a social group as a result, growing in numbers each week because of the enthusiasm and programs that the group puts on in both social and catechetical areas. The commitment of the youths has re-energised the pastors of the parish for the last 7 years. The long-term parishioners have also shown their support in the initiatives of the youth and young adults group. Whilst this has been amazing for myself in the sense of community building, there have been several other priests that have helped and guided me along the way as it pertains to discernment. The interesting thing is that from the parishes that preach orthodoxy and love of the gospel truths, many fruits have been born. Marriage vocations, priestly and religious vocations have come from these parishes. I have watched priests say the Mass and not compromise on its form or style for primary and high school Masses, giving students an opportunity to worship

and become familiar with standard Mass worship, whereby they have grown in love for the sacrifice of the Mass as opposed to viewing it as a something that is boring. In compromising we do not give young people an opportunity to grow in their faith and see the beauty of the liturgy. We then ask ourselves why young people are not coming to Mass.

Have been a Catholic all my life but my involvement and understanding of my faith has changed and developed and continues to do so. Cradle Catholic. A lifelong Catholic, parishioner and acolyte at [-]. From a Catholic migrant family where only the women and children attended regular Mass, in later years felt a desire to understand and be more involved. Age 0–18 Catholic upbringing and schools, age 20–35 way too smart for any of that, age 35–50 kids, do I give them the same advantages? Age 50+ the Church and its community has meaning for me. A modern Catholic family that does not accept the dogma and old traditions. I’ve had all the sacraments at [-], was educated in Catholic schools from K–12 (and some uni) and have now taught in Catholic schools for eight years. My faith in and involvement in the Church are integral to my life. Mother Catholic; Father Anglican; brought up Catholic and went to Catholic school and mum took us to Mass on Sunday. Continued to go to Mass as an adult and active in the Church after retirement. My story as a Catholic is my story as a Christian: one of community, faith formation, being a person for others and ultimately sharing God’s love. Raised a Catholic by parents who never questioned anything the Church preached. Lifelong ... parishioner, employee, schooling. Raised to believe that it was a sin to not attend Mass and that my belief in God’s powers was important—how and why has this changed? I grew up in the era of plus and minus—one which was too far in the direction of everything having a sin. As I matured, I realized that those teaching that suggestion [that] everyone who did not practice as a Catholic went to hell was rubbish. Unfortunately, along the way with the relaxations following Vatican II which I embraced (and still do) wholeheartedly, we have lost relevance to the majority of young people. This year, retired and became a catechist. Been in a study group at [-] parish for more than two years. I’m not a Catholic but a fellow Christian also baptized in the name of Christ. Ecumenism and dialogue and understanding of human suffering are core to my heart. Brought up in the faith and went to Mass each week with Mum and Dad and my sister. My own story as a Catholic is one that I feel, over the years has made me a better person, be part of a Catholic community is very important to me, but over the years the community has changed and I feel it is very important to bring that back, to bring the youth back, for without them we’re at a standstill and actually going backwards. We as Catholics have a lot to offer, it’s very clear to me and hope for a better future. I was born into a Catholic family, attending Catholic schools, married a Catholic and bringing up our sons as Catholics to be “men for others”.

We feel blessed that we had the opportunity to be involved in experiences which developed our faith growth. Cursillo, Marriage Encounter, Antioch, Evenings for the Engaged, Ministers of the Eucharist, Communion to Sick which all helped in our faith growth more than we gave. Many of these were with support of our priests and in the home, which also benefited our own children. Over the last 20 years, we have been in an [-] parish where we feel we are part of their family and have been enriched by these priests we include as special friends. Likewise, their Sisters of [-].

One person’s experience listed here:

- Our son’s high school religious coordinator had a woman on the cross in her room! Need to choose a religious coordinator in high schools that are practising Catholics! In relation to the following question posed at the Session: “What issues do you think affect people’s attendance at church?”— Individual responses listed here:

- The ones that are increasing their attendance are Hillsong—lively—appears exciting very encompassing.
- People love to worship the Lord—old hymns should be mixed with new.
- Atmosphere at Mass.

As a recent convert, I found the way Catholicism was presented in the 90s and 00s to be completely laughable and embarrassing, which is why I spent most of life as an atheist. I converted 6 years ago, after temporarily being Protestant, and it wasn't until I met a holy priest that was able to explain the

faith to me on an intellectual level that I realised that I had been robbed of the faith by feckless attempts to dumb-down the faith to make it more appealing. It was through the actions of wonderful priests that challenged me to frequent the sacraments (not find ways to avoid them), to live a life of prayer (not one of meaningless action), to spend time in front of the Blessed sacrament, to attend Mass during the week, that I started to love Catholicism more and more. The majority of ex-Catholics I met while I was Protestant were those who had seen the dumbed-down version of Catholicism and found it uninspiring and worthless. This is a clarion call to the Church—the laity want to be challenged. They want authentic Catholicism. Sure, there are some who simply want their ears tickled—let them walk away if they don't want to hear Truth—many of the Jews did when Jesus told them about eating his Flesh in John 6. But we should NOT rob future generations of the faith as we were. Souls are on the line, and we have to do everything we can to get people to Heaven. The choice is yours—you will have to answer to God for your decisions—pray that they be the right ones. When Jesus returns, will He find any faith on earth?

Yes, a few years ago a gentleman in a hospital suffering from a terminal illness asked for baptism through a Catholic friend who had prepared him for baptism. I am a Catholic priest, and I was asked to do the baptism, as the hospital Chaplain and the local parish priest were both away. The man was ready for baptism and professed the Catholic Faith. I baptized and confirmed him, and administered Holy Communion. He died a couple of days later. This event expressed for me a series of realities about our Faith and our Church: God's mercy and the action of his grace, how friendship can be a channel for God to enter someone's life, and how the apostolic work of Catholic lay persons and priests co-operate and complement each other. It was an experience of what the Church is all about: the salvation of everyone.

I believe the Catholic Church has been of great importance in my life and I have found parishioners in general to be a very caring and compassionate people. The Catholic Church has done many wonderful things in Australia, hospitals and the good orphanages. All the work done by Catholic societies like St. Vincent de Paul and the Catholic charities. We should not forget this and be proud of the good things, whilst not covering up the things that have gone wrong and doing our best to make up for them in compassionate ways.

The individual responses of the experiences of the faith from 15 people who responded to an anonymous survey in our parishes is listed in the attached document. They are personal comments and not necessarily representative of broader views in the parishes.

I used to confess my sins to a priest in the booth but I realised most priests (not all) would just give you a sentence or two for advice, a penance and forgive you—that's all. It is just like sweeping the floors on the surface. So, I did it the Protestant's way. I'd lock myself in the bedroom—and pray to God—confessing all my sins. He does not speak to me in my ears but he speaks to me in my mind telling me a lot of things which brings tears to my eyes because it penetrates my soul (unlike in a confession booth). I suggest priests who conduct confession should study and have a degree in Counselling. A one-to-one confession is better than going behind a screen. If a priest cannot give good advice (instead of short and hurried advice) he should not conduct confession. I had encountered many priests who conduct confession in a business-like manner—so I prefer confessing my sins directly to God who has more time for me and speaks to me intimately.

First Story. Met with a bishop in the early part of this Plenary process. I'd actually been invited to speak on how to engage more people in the process as it was going slowly early on and after I'd given my opinions and they were very much focused on how do we reach out to those who have left our church, how do we reach out to those lost and I was met with a stern and unsympathetic response "I'm Not interested in them. I want to hear from those whose bums are on seats and who are putting money on the plate on Sundays"—I think it would be fair to say I was shocked but the good thing is that it only helped motivate me to getting involved and string to participate.

2nd Story. I was attending a meeting for volunteers in our parish and a young lady was reading out the new do's and don'ts of our working with children policies and realised when the young lady said, "From now on, you are not allowed to even speak to anyone under 18." And was told this is

<p>Australian law—which I am fully aware. It's not I thought how sad what has been placed upon us by our leaders—we have a broken system of management propped up by years of misuse—if nothing, this tells us we have major problems.</p>
<p>I grew up in a country area where the faith was held by families and the local community. There were satellite churches miles from town, and sometimes a priest but many times not. The stories and traditions told of previous generations where a priest might only visit once or twice a year. Now I live in a city area where I can choose to attend Sunday Mass at any hour that suits from 6am to 9pm, in any language I wish. I can choose the style of music and the homily that suits me. The priest is paid to do the praying and everybody else sits back and is entertained. I attended a country boarding school that was one of the first to have child sex abuse crimes made public. The Royal Commission has come and gone, and there are still matters before the courts. I met many magnificent people, friends, teachers, and clergy. I continue to be a part of the Church because of the many wonderful people doing incredible work. However, at times I wonder how such well-intentioned, well-resourced people can make such a mess and do such evil.</p>
<p>Sometimes we feel we are in a synagogue always reading in church about Moses and his followers. Let us make Our Lord first and His name is Jesus, not another Jewish name.</p>
<p>I went to a Christian brother for SD [spiritual direction] for a while, until he told me he didn't like the present Pope. I heard the same from a deacon in my parish. I worry about the kind of person coming out of the seminaries. Right-wing, complacent and proud of their "status". We have to break down the barriers between clergy and laity. Both parties have to come to terms with this task. I have known many clergy who are a treasure to relate to. They make being a Catholic special, "salvific". Of course, special people from any or many backgrounds can do that. Those people have to be welcomed into the ranks of the clergy, whoever they are; so it has to be attractive to them. And we the people will know who they are, so we can put forward their identities and encourage them to become ministers in the kingdom of God. Then we can have a truly Catholic Church.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Our faith is fundamentally 'political'—we are called to ask the uncomfortable questions of our leaders—to assert the way of Jesus even if that means speaking out against popular prejudice. Largely I have found silence in the public square.2. I am concerned for the Church as numbers continue to decline with those who identify as Catholics and attend Mass. I feel that evangelical churches are vibrant and flourishing. They preach good teachings and hold back on the condemnation and judgment. Their celebration is beyond the service and extends to a community event after every service. We need to celebrate with the Eucharist during Mass and then celebrate the 'community and faith'—celebrate Jesus, celebrate the people. I believe that we need to stop asking the community to come back to church. Go out to the community and hold their hand, rebuild trust, then invite them back to the faith and the Church.
<p>I grew up in an extremely active and ethnic parish community—we had ten Sunday Masses each week. The memories that marked my faith formation upon reflection were the ordinary witnesses of firstly my parish priest, and of the parishioners in the community;—throughout the day, if I ever stopped by the church at random hours, more often than not my mother and I would find our parish priest sitting in silent prayer before the tabernacle. —the deep devotion of the elderly in this parish were marked by their prayer groups that remain in church after Mass to pray as a community. Secondly, the beautiful chaplaincy team at the University of [-] meant that I had access to ongoing formation which eventually led me to meet different religious communities active in the archdiocese. I will forever be grateful [for] the emphasis that the archbishop at the time had for young adult formation at university. I received for the first time structured catechetical formation through a personal prelature that is active at universities. Then the Lord led me to a wonderful Franciscan community which was instrumental to my personal growth and healing. In summary, the diversity in the life of the Church in Australia has given me so much—but I believe it began with a parish priest who took time out of his extremely busy week to spend time of Jesus in the tabernacle.</p>
<p>When I went to WYD in 2016, it was the first time that I had actually delved into my Catholic Faith. I went to Mass every day, adoration, praise and worship, confession and praying the Rosary.</p>

<p>However, something that truly deepened my faith was when I went to weekly talks at a Maronite Catholic Church. These talks on different aspects of the faith let me gain insight and knowledge about things that my local priests never spoke about. My faith was greatly impacted because these talks allowed me to truly appreciate Catholicism. What I learned from these talks, I was then able to apply them to my prayer life and daily life. Without this new theological understanding of the faith, I think I would have been living in the same belief as many other people that religion is only between God and me.</p>
<p>As someone from a strong Catholic family, I had the benefit of a good Catholic upbringing and education. After school, I joined the local parish CYO where I met my future wife who also had experienced a similar faith journey. Throughout our lives, we have engaged in retreats, parish missions, family group activities and RCIA programs. These have helped to continue our faith experiences.</p>
<p>I have worked in schools, parishes, retreat and conference centres and a place of pilgrimage. I have worked closely over 45 years in Church circles and I continue to be challenged by attitudes, structures, lack of self-understanding by clergy ... in no way do I reject God or devalue the Church in what I believe it can be when we all work together for the good of God's people.</p>
<p>I was lucky to be brought up in a practising Catholic Family who looked out for and after others.</p>
<p>I, like many other people in Australia, live with a mental illness. It helps me so much when I am reminded of the humanity of Christ and of the divine mercy. Not when it's a wishy-washy truism, or when it's a way of saying we basically don't need God because he loves us and will save us anyway, but when it is based on how Jesus is in specific scenes of the gospels, and his personal encounters with people, when we can go into the scenes where he notices people, forgives them, cures them. It restores my hope and gives me a lot of peace, and reminds me that I am loved. I find mindfulness helpful as a practice, but fundamentally it is crucial for the basis of my hope to be in something or someone outside myself and transcending myself. When I can rediscover that, I am filled with gratitude, too, and then I want to share that with other people I know who share this struggle. The gospel of Mk 5 really moves me, not because I am possessed, but to see how Jesus knows that the man is there, in such a desperate state, and goes to him, even when everyone else has had to give up on him, when he's beyond anyone's help and seems to have 'failed' at life. There's no audience, etc., Jesus comes to find him.</p>
<p>I have accompanied a few people through their growing frailty and to their death (not a choice I made for myself, but one that God lead me to do). Through this, I was shown many things, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinary lives lived out soundly and with God have a huge impact on others. • When you draw your last breath, your skills, etc. cease to matter but the relationship you've developed with God is vital. • No-one else can give that to you. The events of our daily lives are where that grows.
<p>I have been involved in Catholic education in a range of contexts for over 40 years and an active member of parish life.</p>
<p>I was fortunate in that my parents were sincere practicing Catholics. I was educated by the Sisters of St Joseph in primary school and subsequently by the Christian Brothers at a leading [-] College, [-]. Like many of my school friends, I continued to university and obtained tertiary qualifications. Regrettably, many of those friends have now lost their faith as did my brother. I still have my faith and I am proud to be a catechist at two local public primary schools. Why did these highly educated Catholic men leave the Church and probably in a majority of cases become atheists? Is it because the Church seems to ignore all the continuing advances in human knowledge and still frames its teaching within first century knowledge. How many hundred years did it take for the Church to acknowledge Galileo was right?</p>
<p>I was lucky to grow up in a good private school which gave me a good formation and also encouraged me to question my faith and dive deeper into the Churches' teachings. The priest, at a parish that my family and I would travel 30 minutes to get to, would challenge us to become holier. He would not tolerate talking within the church after or before Mass in order to allow parishioners</p>

to listen to God's voice and pray without distraction. This priest inspired me to be proud of my faith since I was younger and even now I am able now to go out into the world and know that I am a little different because of my faith, and I am proud of these differences. However, it does sadden me to go into parishes around my area and see women and men with their backs turned to Our Lord, talking and ignoring the divine presence that they, themselves witnessed just a few moments ago within the Mass. These people believe that if they bring guitars and drums into the Mass, they will surely draw in youth but, as one of these young Catholics they aim to please, I find that this type of music doesn't assist in creating a glorious presence of God, which He deserves.

I am a twice revert to the Catholic faith. I had a good faith as a young child, mainly due to my grandmother and her very strong witness, e.g. daily Mass and daily rosary without fail, but after a very difficult childhood, including parental abuse and abandonment, I strayed. For many years I thought, yes there is a God but he is not a personal God, He is out there somewhere. I used to think, how could there be a personal God who allows these things to happen. I still wanted to bring my 4 sons up in the faith and sent them to Catholic schools. One of my sons decided to become an altar boy and I would sit in the church when the priest was teaching them. I think it was here that Our Lord started to touch me through His invisible presence in the tabernacle. From there, I attended a Church mission and went to confession for the first time in many, many years. I can say honestly that when I walked home, I floated, I felt so light it was tangible. What a burden my promiscuous and sinful life had been on me. I then started reading some books with beautiful messages from Our Lady asking us to pray from the heart, and so I began to really pray for the first time in my life. It was a beautiful time in my life. I became very involved in my parish for a number of years and then the parish became divided because the new parish priest wanted to make changes to an already beautiful church. I remember he called our church a dump. I left the parish feeling very disheartened with the people I thought were my faith family and friends, and drifted for a while trying to find somewhere to fit in, but I'd lost trust and there was nowhere I felt at home, I even tried other denominations. Eventually I fell away again and into a sinful hedonistic lifestyle. During the years away, I was given the grace to still know my sins, (my sin was always before me). I continued to believe that the true faith is the Catholic faith, and all its teachings in their fullness form the foundation stone of not only the Church, but also our own personal Catholic faith journey. I did try to justify my sinfulness but I knew in my heart that I was wrong, "sin speaks to the sinner". I eventually came back through praying the daily rosary. None of my sons practice their faith, the teaching they had at school was watered down, and there was nothing substantial for them to really grab hold of and desire to live by. So much needs to be fixed in our Church and it's not by justifying sinfulness, which seems to be the popular opinion right now, but by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist and the rosary, and by sound unambiguous doctrine.

My parents had a strong faith which they passed on to all their eight children through a good example. My own faith increased with the suffering I experienced over the chronic illness of my second child who has epilepsy and is autistic. My work as her carer has increased my faith.

The experience of my friend at work: My friend was educated in a Catholic school with proper religious education provided to students. Despite the influences of the Church at school, she never felt convinced about becoming part of the Church because of the way that the classes of formation was given: more often than not, she feels like the norms and customs of the Church had been imposed onto her and she was not given the freedom to question it e.g. during Lent, the teachers will tell the students to give up something for God—but not properly explaining to students WHY are we giving up something to God and to highlight that we have the full freedom to offer up something to God. A personal story of mine: I was brought up in a non-Catholic, non-religious family in Hong Kong. None of my family members knew much about the Catholic faith. However, I was sent to a Catholic school that was run by the Sisters of St Paul de Chartres in Hong Kong. Ever since I was small, I was given the opportunity to participate in the Holy Mass and to learn about the gospel during religious education classes. Provided with all the avenues to learn about the faith, I was able to receive the formation that I needed, in order to correspond to God's calling to me to become part

of the Church. With the support of the teachers in high school, who offered my extra doctrine classes in preparation of baptism, I was baptized in the church of my high school when I was 14.

When I was 24, I volunteered to help with WYD Sydney. At the time, I didn't know much about WYD, and really didn't have an experience of the Church outside of my own parish. Over the two years of preparation for WYD, I had the privilege of meeting and working alongside some extraordinary people, priests and laity. Their commitment to the faith encourages me to grow in my own, and many of them remain close friends of mine. Since that time, I have stayed involved in the life of the Church, and my life is so much richer for it. WYD was such a gift to me personally, and to the Church in Australia more broadly.

I know so many schools which have atheist, lesbian, or non-Catholic teachers who teach Religion/Theology, or are even the head of the department!

I came to [-] from Auckland New Zealand almost nineteen years ago and I am still looking for the presence of the First Peoples within our Christian community. At first, I thought it was location, there are not many Aboriginal peoples in my home area, but then that is no excuse ... where are the hymns? The prayers? The imagery? Only on Australia Day will we ever hear about the First People's plight of their harrowing journey of being displaced within their own homeland and still trying to survive their history of violence. Their story has made me sad that I am a part of a Church that is not involved in a big way to help them be of equal footing to someone like me—an immigrant been here for such a little while and yet reaping the rewards of my livelihood so far.

Amidst the turmoil of the Church in Australia, one figure has always stood out to me: that of the priest. I started attending regular spiritual direction with a priest in the confessional at the age of 15. It was at a girls' club and the spiritual activities were entrusted to priests of the Prelature of Opus Dei. Over the years, the wisdom and advice of this priest has helped me to deepen in my understanding and appreciation of the faith. He must have spent hundreds of hours in the confessional over the course of his life and I feel that this dedication to helping and guiding souls would not have been possible without his living apostolic celibacy. I feel that to get married and have a family is to share in God's creative power. Yet to give that up in order to be more dedicated to administering the sacraments to the People of God is a different sort of fatherhood and one that is spiritual rather than carnal. I think that married priests should be the exception (in the case of priests who were part of other Christian denominations and have converted to Catholicism) rather than the rule. I feel that we need to rediscover the identity and mission of the priest, which is identical to that of Jesus Christ and why apostolic celibacy is so key to the carrying out of this mission.

I am a daily Mass-goer and I would like to say how much strength being able to receive Jesus Christ has given me throughout the years; to be able to face the good and bad times. And this would not have been possible without the Mass. Having lived in Rome for a year, I was struck by the beauty of the churches there and how all the decorations and paintings, the marble and the richness of the artisan work, was a physical testament to the love of God of those who built those churches. In themselves, those buildings were a catechesis of sorts—a way of showing how much we owe to God and how we should adore, love and venerate Him, in one way, through the richness and care we have for everything to do with the Holy Mass. This love is something that is tangible, especially when in a beautiful church. Some examples would be St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, St Mary's Star of the Sea in West Melbourne, St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne—these churches inspire in me a sense of awe, that the ceremonies that take place in those buildings are not of this world, but are indeed a foretaste of the eternal life that is to come. Therefore, I would like to see more care given to the churches and the Holy Mass itself. I feel that the solemnity of the ceremony, celebrated without rush or hurry, with reverent movements by the priest (but not necessarily slow—there is a difference between reverence and slowness for the sake of slowness), brings people deeper into the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice. I would like that people are not afraid of using dignified items for the chalice and paten, that people are not afraid of a church being "too ostentatious" when in reality, it is well-

decorated for the glory of God. With regards to music, I think that it adds so much to the richness of the liturgy and, when well prepared and well planned, can help people to contemplate and pray. I think that 'Hillsong' type music can be very helpful and attractive, but perhaps it can be another separate event, outside of the Holy Mass. Again, whilst in Rome I had the privilege of attending a Mass with beautiful harmonies: modern music that helped me to focus on the actual Mass and the contemplation of the mysteries contained in the liturgy, rather than distracting me from it.

We are a group of 12 people who are brought together over coffee 2–5 Sundays per month after Mass. Many of us attend Mass at different centres. We are made up of a young couple expecting, a GP, a French widower, 2 single gay guys, 1 half of a gay couple of 11 years, an ex-religious brother with Masters in Theology, 3 current Uni students, one post graduate, one receptionist in a Health care facility, one Centrelink employee, one under 60 retiree from IT, one full time church music minister (keyboards), 2 part time music ministries—1 keyboards, one singing/liturgy preparation. The common thing is that we meet for coffee after Mass at [-] place several Sundays per month. Our families are known to each other and join the group when visiting. We met in the home of one of the group on Sunday 3 Feb 2019, these responses are from that meeting.

I was brought up in a Catholic family in NZ. From a very young age, we had the possibility of attending weekday Mass before school, and said the rosary as a family every day, and went to confession regularly. Because few people around us were regular churchgoers, my father would teach us catechism every Sunday, to [help] us understand of our faith and discover the love of Christ so that it never became an obligation but something we wanted to do. I attended a Catholic High School (in NZ), but the religion classes were mostly on Church history, or social justice, and I don't think that it really helped me much to discover how to grow in love for Jesus, the sacraments, or to think of how I could share my faith with others. I think in my class of 160 girls, there were only a few who went to regular Sunday Mass, and I think no one else went to Mass during the week, or only very seldom. We did have a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament but apart from scheduled sharing sessions in religion classes, and our class Masses perhaps twice a year, girls would seldom go to pray there. After school, I moved to Australia, and while studying met Opus Dei. It was there that I discovered the panorama of being able to have a personal dialogue with God through mental prayer not just vocal prayer, and how to be able to share the joy of knowing Christ with others through friendship. Above all, it was the discovery of being able to not just live with Christian integrity but the freedom of doing things for love. In my work now, I understand that service and loving others is the first way to bring Christ to them. Having constant formation and spiritual direction helps me to keep going, and renew my struggle when it would be so easy to get discouraged, but above all to continue to re-centre back on Christ, and to bring the joy of Christ to others.

As a young woman of the Church, I yearned to be involved in the liturgical celebration of my faith; I was excluded time and time again. In a time of great heartache, I returned to the Church for comfort and anonymity; comfort in the Eucharist and anonymity in the congregation. After study, I found employment in Catholic schools and I am so grateful for the charism and spirituality that was shared with me through the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Christian Brothers and Sisters of Charity. I want to be radical in how I love; I want to minister to those at the edge of society, without fear of reprisal and exclusion. As a 43-year-old woman, I still yearn to be a part of the Jesus' mission; if only I could.

As part of a migrant community, we have all bonded over faith and friendship through many years of growing up. We have continually looked after one another, whether it be spiritually or emotionally. Whilst understanding our bond needs to put God as the centre, we are all very glad that we do have one another growing up.

My faith is the direct result of a Grandmother who had quiet but unbending belief in her faith—she guided by example. She would not recognise the Church today. My faith is now tested by poor quality priests who don't contribute, welcome, give good guidance, are self-absorbed and often absent.

I had trapped into a terrible mortal sin for an entire year. I lost hope. I would be in and out of the confessional at least 3 times a week. I was struggling severely because I kept relapsing into sin. Then

I watched Gabriel's video on praying 4 rosaries a day. It was a struggle but I knew that I needed help because I was chained to that sin. I split the 4 rosaries throughout my day so I was constantly focused on Christ's life and meditating. I did this for 9 days and found that for the first time in a year, I was able to defeat that sin. If I prayed only one rosary a day, I would be severely tempted. When I completed all 4, I was not tempted at all. If I didn't pray until the evening, I would fall. I knew how to defeat the sin. I am now 3 months clean of a terrible sin that had enslaved me for over a year almost every day. I am a lot happier, and finally understand the power of the rosary because it saved me.

Despite rejection by my father for being gay, I am very involved in the Church's ministries. So many people do not know the Church's teaching on homosexuality. So often we hear the "Church hates gays" and that is NOT the Church teaching. An anecdotal actual story: One of my priest friends tells the story that when he was a curate in a country [state] church in the [-] diocese where I am from, there were 4 priests in the parish and 1 doctor. When he came back 20 years later, there were 4 doctors and 1 priest. It begs the question, where do people go for their healing now?

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.

I attended Sunday Mass every week for 63 years. I brought my children up to believe attendance was important. In recent years as I have taken my following of the Christ more seriously I have found the Church suffocating. I have found its exclusion of so many groups as immoral. I no longer attend Mass. I still class myself as Catholic and passionate about seeing a new form of Church rising from the stinking, mess that the present institution is. My children have a casual view to Mass attendance. They are each shocked by what they realise the Church has become, or even more worrying, what it always has been. This must not concern me as I see this as the action of the Spirit, leading them and me towards a more Christ like structure for the current time.

I was a cradle Catholic, and my parents took me to church once a month or so for several years, then once every few months. I came back to the Church via a youth group, which I joined mostly as a social thing. We did an activity called a "moment of Mary", where each person identified something in their week where they saw the influence of Mary. At this point, I still thought of God as an abstract thing with no meaningful love for us. Several months later, I was walking home after an upsetting day when I saw a particularly beautiful sunset. I thought to myself that God may or may not have intended that sunset specifically for me, but that if I lived as if He had, I would have a better life. That's when I started taking God's love seriously, and I think that sums up my reason for becoming a proper Catholic. I spoke to a person raised ethically Buddhist but spiritually atheist recently, and he mentioned that he would never have considered the possibility a sunset was chosen by God out of love for a specific person.

A story of why a couple in their late 20's would get married in the Catholic Church and how the women has been criticised by family and friends—all Catholics—as to why she would get married in the Catholic Church. See attached dialogue.

I have benefited from a Catholic upbringing but, cannot say it was my formal school based Catholic education that assisted me and if not for the blessing and providence of my parents, a good local PP and other clergy and religious and examples of pious living of older relatives, my own faith would have been devoid of the necessary examples of holiness and commitment. I and my children, and those of our Membership have seen many good teachers, but, the number of teachers actively engaged in parish life and 'being' Church is insignificant. I recently spoke to a Catholic School Principal who has now re-engaged with the faith but spent most of her teaching career in the Catholic system as a 'cultural' Catholic with no real understanding of the faith and no personal commitment and relationship with Jesus and the Church. This appears to be the case for too many, otherwise, excellent teachers.

In our parish, I think we have been responding to God's request to be inclusive; however, we need to involve young people in the church as altar-servers, and give some of the old folk a rest. [-] is in [-]. It should be the most vibrant, progressive church in Australia! I want to look at other churches and

see what they are doing and steal some of their ideas. Engagement is everything! I engage in silent personal prayer, Masses, reading and reflection. The diversity of our parish fosters these moments for me. I think we should not be 'living in the past' (think religion and science), rather we should think of others and not selfishly only of ourselves. We need to find ways in where we do not to give up when the practicalities of life are so hard and there is rampant materialism, economic and career insecurity? It feels like there is chaos 'all round' God is asking us to be 'somehow' resilient, positive and grateful, we are the luckiest people in the world to believe in God, so I feel that we should act positively and TRUST that all will be well and somehow it will be ok.

I have been fortunate to have encountered Christ through life's challenges and He thought me worthy enough to call back into the fold at times when my faith was waning. Since those times, I have been again lucky to encounter Him in everyday life. I didn't come across this epiphany accidentally; this realization came as a direct result of our family discovering the [-] and [-] community in 2013. From challenges of searching for a school for our daughter, divine grace would have us meet a family and the rest as they say is history. Our school has been instrumental in our continued faith journey. Whilst I was born and grew up in a Catholic household, church was something you went to on Sunday. It was an obligation not a relationship with God. I would attend retreats or other religious events over the years but as life gets busy, the room I had for God and my faith, became smaller. However, since being part of our school community which allows so many opportunities for us to live our faith, from daily Mass to recollection evenings and seminars on understanding the Catechism of the Catholic Church, I have learnt so much and have deepened my faith. It is still a continuing journey, but it is also nice to have a community to journey with. They truly have something special at [-] and [-] and I can only pray that it is something that they can perhaps share with the Church and other school communities.

Arriving Australia in 2015, I experienced the spirituality of the churches through mingling with the brothers and sisters in Christ in the communities. I witnessed strong faith communities established through many young adults group in different dioceses. I thank God for His presence of Love to guide me and make me to understand that He is the only God who can heal and save our souls. I thank God for reminding me that our daily life and work is also the way of sanctification of our souls as well.

My first experience of love in community was though a Catholic retreat run annually by the Sisters of the Immaculata now based in Franklin, Tasmania. It struck me the amount of love I received from people who barely knew me and from that very first retreat in 2011 my faith took on a new journey. I developed a stronger relationship with God because my heart was open to receive through the experience of love shown by the members of the community.

I would like to share a story about my journey to my faith by attending a Catholic school club. I found the Catholic school to be too hostile environment to ask the deep questions (I came from a very devout Catholic school) and found the Catholic school club to be a more approachable and friendly environment. For those that are curious, the school club allowed me to leave the school premises and enter into a calm place surrounded by loving like-minded devout Catholics. It allowed me to explore what the Catholic life is all about without the words. I asked only a few questions but when I saw how it was 'lived', I knew immediately that's what I wanted. I ask that the bishops can put more effort in building Catholic school clubs for senior school children where it is run by parishioners and/or an order. I advocate that the manager will only have a paid position but coordinate volunteers. I find that Catholic volunteers are far more genuine than those who are paid. This will also enable the operations of the club to be low cost.

My faith journey was largely encouraged and flourished under a number of different Catholic communities. The first being my loving family, who nurtured and raised me with good Catholic values taught through action, not theory. My parish taught me to live my faith both in the liturgy as well as at school and in public places through my behaviour and my sharing of the love of Christ and his Mother with others. High school was a dry period where, with hindsight, I can see I was not properly nourished and thus fell into all sorts of sinful behaviour that still prove difficult to overcome

<p>today. I never went to confession during this time and this is something my family never taught me either. It was only during university (I studied at [a Catholic university]) where I was studying to become a teacher that I was able to attend Mass regularly (nearly every day), reconcile myself with God, and receive catechetical instruction from Catholic seminars and pub talks, retreats, and good Catholic friends that were my age. The Church couldn't provide for me during high school but it has done well to raise me through my family, parish, and university.</p>
<p>Get rid of the homosexuals in the priesthood, ban Catholics from being Freemasons again, bring back the Latin Mass, bring back tradition. Pell is innocent.</p>
<p>Our group grew up in the Chinese Catholic Community Inc. Most of our parents are immigrants from Hong Kong and we attended a bilingual Mass (Cantonese/English). Our parents worked hard to build a community of love and faith, which inspired us to continue to remain faithful to the Catholic Church and deepen our relationship with God. We hope that we can continue to carry this mission and pass it on to the next generation and the generation after.</p>
<p>The Alpha program I attended last year (organised by our church community) was very good.</p>
<p>Having said the matters above, I'm very lucky to live and surrounded by the vibrant Catholic environment where lots of Catholic faith activities/events are on throughout the years. There are 5 sessions of daily Masses and various reconciliation time slots are available and adoration is also available. Amen to the Lord.</p>
<p>My faith journey has been blessed with some amazing people and some horrendous people. Generally, older clergy and religious have made my time as a Catholic challenging, whereas our younger more orthodox priests have been supportive and encouraging.</p>
<p>Having volunteered in various positions (helping the homeless, assisting asylum seekers), my eyes have been opened up to the generosity, caring nature and selflessness that the Church brings out in people. It is unfortunate that the members at the higher levels of the Church don't seem to have the same values.</p>
<p>My active involvement in the Church over 6 decades has been due to my parents' unwavering faith and inspirational, faith-filled people. Involvement in social action—YCW—preparing laity for priestless parishes through opening up the role of the laity as expressed in Vatican II documents was very important and valued but lack of community irrespective of continual efforts is frustrating. Decades of involvement in the RCIA has led to many questions rising: why do we impose restrictions and unrealistic expectations on candidates to attend weekly meetings when they have been evangelised in many cases by attending Mass with their families for years? I have witnessed families who have been turned away from Parent sacrament Preparation Evenings because they haven't 'booked in' prior and paid a deposit—what does this say about us? Would Jesus have turned people away?</p>
<p>Years ago, I was going through a difficult period in my life. I loved this man, we were engaged and my mother was hell-bent on busting us up. She won, till I saw her antics. I was so confused, lost, torn. I turned to my local parish (Bishop [-]). I sat down and poured out my heart to him. His words of wisdom helped me. I can only wish I can thank him personally. I ended up marrying my best friend. (19yrs, 4 kids later) ❤️🙏😊. Throughout these years, we went through so much. But my faith has got me through times of depression, family division from toxic mother, etc., miscarriages, suicidal from all the stress. But I always heard God's voice! Or my Angels protected me 🙏🌸❤️. One night I had a dream. I was on a ladder and I was falling. A man said "give me your hand!" I argued no, I was scared, I was calling my husband, instead the voice repeated the same words. Eventually I reached up and gave him my hand. I can honestly say that was Jesus was saying put all your worries, troubles and most of all my life in his hands and all will be okay! He has me! Amen. I'm so grateful. This was my most poignant moment, but have many more to share. One day after school, I picked my children up. We stood at the crossing to look both ways. The car on the left stopped. My son [-], 6, decided to step out onto the crossing. Suddenly a car on the right comes around the corner at high speed without stopping when I screamed out his name I to stop! In that split second, he actually turned back to look at me. Had he not, he would have been hit and flown so far. Till today, I thank St Michael for protecting our son. He actually stopped in that moment to looked back at me. The car</p>

was so close. My other children agreed that was a miracle because he rarely listened. Thank you God for all my blessings 🙏❤️🌸😊.

Having several siblings through the school system, I have seen the majority of the "good Catholic girls" bullied or teased because of their faith in the CATHOLIC SCHOOLS they are attending. This is not just teenagers. This is because the school is failing to implement the importance and value of holiness in the classrooms.

I have had the privilege of leading the Plenary Council consultation process in my parish, [-], including facilitating many listening and dialogue encounters. The people I met could be roughly split into a group of people who focus on Church dogma and fervently believe in a God who has laid down a whole lot of often arbitrary rules for us to follow without question, and a larger group of people who believe in a more loving, forgiving version of God, and tend to ignore "rules" if they seem inconsistent with a personal understanding of the teachings of Jesus; what might disparagingly be called a "cafeteria Catholic". I have done a lot of reading since starting this process. It is no secret that the Bible contains some truly bizarre and disturbing stories, particularly in the Old Testament, and many of the behaviours of the Old Testament God are at odds with the teachings of Jesus. Like many Catholics of my acquaintance, I would never wish to support or believe in a jealous, petulant God who would prefer His people to be cruel to the marginalised in our society rather than compassionate, but some Catholics truly do think that is what God wants. Surely this is a failure on the part of our leaders? It is because of and not in spite of my Christianity that I would not wish to support such a God even if it was the only way into heaven. Surely a heaven without compassion is not a heaven that Christ would want to be part of.

Yes, my name is [-] (I won't, as a matter of principle, submit anything anonymously). I was baptised a Catholic and raised in [-], where I attended all three Catholic schools (sadly, two are now closed). I was a dutiful altar-boy who can still recite most of the Mass responses in Latin. My initiation as an altar-boy, involved being locked in a toilet and having 'stuff' thrown all over me. Around 1970, I became interested in 'vocation': Christian Brother or priesthood? Somewhere in early 1973, I settled on priesthood. I met with the 'legendary' Mons [-] for my psychological 'examination' and then, was the first prospective seminarian to experience the then new-system of not having to 'appear' before a Board (one-on-one interview with Cardinal [-]). I was the classic 'product' of the Catholic system (blind faith?). I spent 2.5 years in the seminary at [-]. I met a variety of 'characters', several of whom have been, or are, in jail. Why did I leave? I just wasn't 'happy' that this vocation was for me. Shortly after leaving the seminary, I started at [a Catholic] Teacher's College, [-]. From this Catholic experience, a handful of other 'characters' ended up in jail. Locking myself firmly in the 'Catholic World', my first teaching position was at St [-] School, [-]. Around this time, I was married, the marriage bearing three wonderful children who, initially, were brought up in the Catholic faith. By the end of the 80s, the marriage had disintegrated; complex reasons (aren't they always?). My only further comment is that my ex-wife's father's funeral was held at [-] [-], presided over by an Irish priest who was to see jail time himself. A very positive experience of faith at this time was the pastoral care shown to me by Br [-] (Marist) who, literally, gave me refuge at this time of loss/grief. I went through the usual 'hell' of marital separation, involving three children. One now ex-priest tried to help by referring me to Fr [-] (I've often been mistaken for this nefarious individual!) who tried to entice me into a homosexual relationship (despite being exposed by A Current Affair several years earlier, he was still being moved around the Diocese of [-]!). After about 18 months, I met a wonderful woman, also separated and also a Catholic teacher. We lived together for a short time but wanted, for the sake of our blended family of six children, to get married. Annulments (a serious faith-test in themselves) were proving to be laboriously-slow. Under the guidance of three priests, we decided to be married in an Anglican church (with one of three presiding). I will stop here; the rest of the faith-story will be told by additional upload.

YES! I was in year 10 on a camp run by [-] (now [-]). In CONFESSION and EUCHARISTIC ADORATION, I deeply encountered the Lord. With Jesus exposed and people leading me into prayer and dialogue with Him, examining my conscience and allowing my sins to be burnt in a pit of fire after my

<p>absolution—for me that was a deep experience of the all-consuming fire of God, His love and His mercy. I am regularly brought to tears at Mass with priests that so reverently pray through the Mass, not desensitised to the Scriptures, prayers, and especially not Jesus in the Blessed sacrament. I'm 22, now trying to attend Mass as many days of the week as I can. I'm part of many faith communities, recently started a young adults formation group at my parish, love evangelisation and fostering ecumenism between Protestant friends, hoping one day they will come Home, but also allowing their horizons to be broadened and challenged with what they believe.</p>
<p>My experience was from another church, Hillsong church, it's engaging, alive and people are happy there, from the old to the young. I wish that the Catholic change to be modern, relevant, uplifting and a place not only to meet God but God helps us with the everyday living, family, community ... etc.</p>
<p>We have a lifetime of commitment that is being severely troubled by the disgusting sexual actions of a group. They thought that the Power given by Church authorities allowed them to please themselves to the detriment of victims and then families, and the 95% of other Catholics who may now doubt their faith in Jesus. Jesus has rarely been mentioned in so many of the statements of authorities who covered up these actions in the belief that it was to protect our Church at all costs. I do not believe that some believers will ever be able to forgive our Australian Church.</p>
<p>Through prayer and faith, our lives more abundance with the sacrament of marriage and now expecting our first child.</p>
<p>My experience of faith is as strong as ever but am traumatised by all recent events not just Pell but the lack of action and the hierarchical manner in which the Vatican and authorities conduct themselves. Have lost faith in any direction the Church gives and know this will be probably fall on deaf ears.</p>
<p>My comments above may appear overly critical but I am a committed, practising, devout Catholic and a very generous financial contributor. If I am off-side, can you imagine what the vast majority of Catholics who walked out years ago would be saying and thinking?</p>
<p>Things are not going too well for me but when I think all hope is lost, I find myself still holding on. For the past few weeks, the daily readings have caused me to have faith in the Lord. Even though it is just a little faith that could be overpowered by doubts easily, the Word keeps me going.</p>
<p>The grace that this limited opportunity has provided us as a community of faith to share and learn to know one another and seek to grow both as individuals and as a parish.</p>
<p>My family life in the country revolved around the Church with daily rosary as a family, Sunday Mass and benediction and involvement in all the liturgical feasts throughout the year. A strong influence was my mother and father's great faith and during those years, attending daily Mass and communion with my mother, having 2 aunts who were Josephite nuns and attending a Catholic School. Daily Mass was not possible for quite a few years with work and children, however for the past 20 or more years is again something I relish and draw strength from. A major influence from the mid-nineties was my introduction to Ignatian Spirituality and the Christian Life Community this has challenged and enlightened me and helped me grow and deepen my personal relationship with Jesus. There have been many wonderful people lay, religious and priests who have supported and helped me in my faith journey. A further development was Christian meditation which has further influenced and helped me grow as a person. The basis of my life is to place Christ at the centre. Seeking and finding God in all things draws me to continue to seek out opportunities to deepen my faith and discern God's call.</p>
<p>I have experienced God's presence in the Eucharist. He is alive in the consecrated host. The sacraments that He has provided through His Church has real power to heal us, to help us.</p>
<p>In 2012, I approached my parish priest about considering support for a remote parish in Timor Leste. The following year, a group of 10 people from our parish, many from the Parish Pastoral Council, visited the village to assess the proposition. In 2013, an unanimously voted agreement was passed to Twin with and support the Timor Leste parish. This has given an opportunity to so many of our parishioners to opened their hearts (and wallets) to the people we support in Timor Leste. We have</p>

accomplished renovations to the parish High School, including solar power; participation in a community water project; the development of an IT training programme for students and villages; the building of a school boarding house, with another to be completed next year; the building (ongoing) of a new church in one of the villages. Individual parishioners from our parish now fund 120 high school students to attend senior high school. We also coordinate immersion trips for our parishioners to visit the people we support, in Timor Leste. This project has not only strengthened my faith but also broadened my knowledge of, and support for, a wonderful group of people, far less fortunate than myself. It has done the same for many of our parishioners. We are so blessed to have befriended East Timorese people of such amazing Faith and love. This is family in Christ!

A few years ago, my family and I attended the Summer School at [-] which is run by the Disciples of Jesus. I saw young people who were on fire for God. They praised God and worshipped Him. I witnessed healings and miracles. This was very touching and moving. I believe that God is working in His Church. In spite of what is going on in the world, there are lots of faithful people—both single, couples, young people working for God's Kingdom.

My parents are responsible for shaping my faith.

I help run RCIA in my parish. Everyone who is a sponsor is always amazed at how much they have learnt about their faith from attending RCIA as a sponsor. Let's upscale this to the whole Church.

I recall a homily given by an old priest. His name was Fr [-]. It was at a Good Friday service at my parish of [-] [-] many years ago. He was visiting our parish that weekend. I was a young man just out of school at the time. I had my faith and was still going to Mass regularly, probably out of habit and a sense of obligation from my schooling but never really with spirit. His homily that Good Friday, his story; connected with my heart. It connected in a way that nothing else ever has. Through his words, the Holy Spirit touched my heart and I finally realised God's saving love for me personally. I felt humbled by God's saving love and I was moved to tears. I think that was when I honestly became a Christian. It was not when a bishop rubbed oil on me six or seven years before at my confirmation. That, to me was a meaningless and empty encounter. The memory of that old priest's homily, on the other hand, of his message, that moment in time and space and the feeling it stirred in my heart and soul has stayed with me and comforted me all my life. I will take it to my next life with a smile and with peace.

Dear Fr [-] and all, I am gratified to read the honest opinions of [-] and [-] and have to confess on a personal level, they express views I do not have a problem with. Unfortunately, these views are reality checked in my own parish which now has a priest from overseas along with a young one out of the Seminary (fed by time in Rome). All previous priests in the parish have been of Australian descent. The reality check is that they are both dictators and have driven parishioners into neighbouring parishes—reducing our parish congregation count from the 250–350 at each of the three Masses to counts of 84–120 which I have counted over the last couple of weekends. My consultation with parishioners that are left are not of the description [-] has made—they are happy to just be 'bums on seats' and return to putting priests back on pedestals they don't necessarily deserve or are so conservative in their view they will send our parish back to Medieval times. The priests have taken back everything they can lay their hands on that was well-run by lay people in the parish—my Bible Study Ladies group is one of the few structures untouched and its probably only because it coincides with the timing of the morning Mass. I feel I am one of the laity [-] describes—a mother of five who went to an Anglican Theology College with a Catechism always on the desk and earned a Bachelor of Theology and a Graduate Diploma in Pastoral Care and Counselling which in the present climate of my parish carries no weight or meaning whatsoever as all that is left are the ardent ultra-conservatives and laity who act like sheep. The ones who have left I believe are simply looking for a priest who speaks English intelligibly. [-] is right—they are wonderful ideals, how to translate this in a climate of authoritative in principle and authoritative in action, to authoritative in principle but democratic in action is at the heart of any concrete proposals which we need to arrive at and which having got this off my chest I feel better able to be objective about. I apologize that this comes from a personal perspective but for the most part would reflect the Schoenstatt movement

<p>which is essentially a Lay Movement where laity—consecrated (which I am) or not, Sisters (Consecrated laity) and priests work harmoniously within together.</p>
<p>My Parents, Grandparents, and generations before passed on to their children their faith and the fundamental belief that you embrace and live by it. Born in 1948, and one of 13 children, I grew up in [-] and was active in the YCW movement and also the Legion of Mary. A wonderful and humble priest mentored the groups and led me down a path of "seeking the truth" from the teachings of Jesus, and be ready for new beginnings as a consequence of 2nd Vatican Council. Now for many reasons, we fail from time to time and need to seek forgiveness. These failings have taught me not to stand by and watch evil. I studied multiple engineering disciplines and became a "leader" within the workplace from my early 20's working with multicultural teams. I have stood up against biased and bullying behaviour all my life, having experience it from a young age. I believe in the equality of all men/women, and within my sphere spoke out against all forms of derogatory and discriminating language and behaviour. Jesus' words "Love one and other as I have Loved you." and "do for others what you want them to do for you" Mathew 7:12 and Luke 6:31. I am not a theologian and I would not say I am widely read on all Church matters. However, in my life's searching for truth, I have acquired some excellent literature of gaining a greater understanding of the meaning of Love of God and Man, and hope I have made some progress.</p>
<p>The Sisters of Charity's mission has inspired me and continues to inspire me. I am incredibly challenged by the patriarchy of the Church.</p>
<p>I love my Church and I have grown up in a Passionist parish. I have learnt that with suffering, there is true love. Liturgy and tradition are the basis of ensuring we have a continuation of our faith and if we compromise on those, we are at the end. At my parish, we are trying to keep these traditions alive.</p>
<p>I try to find the Jesus in me, to see the Jesus in others. In the Church and in my everyday life.</p>
<p>I am an REC in a Catholic church and have worked with many priests. Some are wonderful pastors, kind, good natured and generous of their time ... others are cold, unyielding, ready to refuse requests, suspicious of any changes I would like to make in order to make liturgy meaningful for students. Some are loved by their communities, others are feared or just emotionally and physically absent. We teachers and RECs are highly skilled professionals who are often ignored, spoken to harshly, or just discounted. I would like this to change—priests cannot do without us and if we are not listened to, the future of the Church is shaky.</p>
<p>Growing up in the 50s and 60s was easy as it was an expectation that Catholics went to Mass. It was almost tribal like in practice. Great expectation was given to the Second Vatican Council through which we hoped the Church would prepare to move towards the 21st Century. Changes such as the Vernacular and physical changes in the Church continued to give us that hope. The 60s and 70s saw the Church alienated by many over contraception. The Church adopted a ban on the Pill rather than the concept of "your informed Choice" as it was in Humanae Vitae. The Church continued to lose the support it had in the past when it failed to address the clerical sexual abuse that was becoming more prevalent. Intransigence by the Church on issues such as married clergy further alienated many people from their traditional practice of their faith. St Peter was married. Why can't priests marry, it might stop or reduce child sexual abuse within the Church? My faith continues to grow despite the context of a damaged Church in which I continue to practice my faith. I am buoyed by those with courage who proclaim justice and reason such as Archbishop [-] but I am concerned by the growing conservative element within the Church who are trying to take my Church and its practices back to the 1950s and who remain convinced of their right to do so. We need a Church that is open to all, that appears open to all and one that reaches out in justice to all.</p>
<p>The relevance of the Church to me has been formed through its people and through relationships with me surrounding the gospel values. I have personally abandoned the Church for periods of time to find that it was not the answer. The Church has been served well by many of its members, however it is not knocking down the door of the cultures it's embedded in by showing its relevance to their need.</p>

<p>I have attended ACYF and pilgrimage to the Holy Land and had what I would call "top of the mountain experience". I have then returned to my parish—with the same old tired music, limited opportunity to take part in ministry in the church and priests who sometimes do not have the interests of parishioners at heart. I would like priests to see the faithful as active participants in the Church.</p>
<p>My faith is shaped by a commitment to a Christian philosophy which welcomes and embraces modern scholarship—biblical, theological and philosophical.</p>
<p>I have been on Pilgrimages to the Holy Land run by Harvest and PPs and this was truly life changing. A good parish priest can bring lapsed Catholics back to the Church through invitational sacramental Programs. I had a period of time that I was not a regular attendee at Mass and the gentleness, humility and acceptance of the parish priest at the time brought me to be a regular worshiper involved in multiple ministries through the connection he made with me at my oldest child's first communion.</p>
<p>I have been blessed to have amazing parish priests that have engaged myself and my family from when they were babies to now in their 20's.</p>
<p>The more I get involved in the church (parish), the more I can see everyone is circling around the clergies; if the clergy has integrity and capable, the situation is better but if it not, church can be worse than anything.</p>
<p>As an employee of Sydney Catholic Schools, I have had opportunities to attend a pilgrimage and numerous Spirituality days. These events have allowed me the opportunity to see Christ in relationships that are formed and in the natural beauty around us on these days.</p>
<p>The Church I grew up in as a teenager which shaped me was the glimpse of the Church as liberator of marginalised peoples.</p>
<p>Being blessed to be able to attend a pilgrimage to understand my faith better with like-minded people (other Catholic teachers) and have confidence to proclaim my faith in a safe environment.</p>
<p>I was born into a Catholic family and attended Catholic schools, Josephine and Marist sisters. My family attended Mass most Sundays. My grandmothers and mother were, like many Australians, my strongest influences when it came to my faith. My maternal grandmother converted from the High Church of England to marry my grandfather— she was amazing in her belief in the Catholic Church and always told me how lucky I was to have been christened Catholic. I was blessed to have a wonderful loving family life and my faith was not forced upon me, it was organic. It was reinforced by my school and community. I do love the sacramental traditions within my faith and I have been comforted in my darkest moments by my ritual of prayer and belief in God. My relationship with God has always flourished within the house of God, my family and community. I have been blessed to have met several wonderful nuns and priests along the way who have reinforced my faith life. I have had many "God" moments in my life where I have experienced God's work through other members of my parish and community. Being able to listen to others and God speak through others is a blessing. I see, hear and observe Christ in so many of the people I have encountered in my Church and parish. Christ has touched me and my family in many ways and at many times which I feel blessed to have experienced. I'm not sure if I was born into another faith what my relationship with God would be like. I'm not sure if I didn't have the "saint-like" grandmother taking me to Mass, telling me how "lucky" I was to be a REAL Catholic, whether my faith would be so strong? What I do know is that my faith has offered me hope and comfort when I have needed it most. My God and faith have flourished within the soil of a Church which bears both "good" and "bad" fruit. I am one of the lucky ones!</p>
<p>I have been involved in the Catholic Church my whole life. I am able to look beyond the wickedness of individuals only because I believe in the goodness Jesus brought to earth.</p>
<p>I have been part of a Catholic family all of my life going to Catholic schools, Catholic Uni and now teaching in a Catholic school. I am a practising Catholic with 5 children, all of who do not wish to go to church any longer. They believe they have been lied to. And I agree with them. There is no trust at the moment. The current priest at [-], even in this climate is currently asking the Year 10 students</p>

when they go to confession if they have had sex! I believe and I am sure you do as well that this is highly inappropriate; in fact, it has turned off many from now going to confession. I will not allow my children to go to confession if they were going to be subjected to this sort of talk. I don't believe it is the role of the priest to do this ... I also believe that priests should attend further education in giving homilies. Homilies should be connected to the Gospel and readings and perhaps how to follow Jesus footsteps today, it should not be a rant on homosexuality, sex and the belief that by reading certain magazines you will turn into a homosexual. Really, it's 2019. People now understand why others may be of a different orientation to themselves, but Jesus did not say, "go out and love only those who are like you." His new commandment stated "Love one another". The parish where I regularly attend church has an aging population; in fact, my husband and I are considered the young ones. We look around and there are no children unless they are there to be signed off to receive a sacrament and in this case many of the parents are not there. The children are dropped or car pool. Is this the answer? I don't think so. The Church needs to definitely change to embrace the young ones. Perhaps we should look at what the Anglicans or Uniting church's do for their youth. Where are our Catholic camps? We have World Youth Day but how many students can really attend when the costs are so high?

In my work, I constantly encounter families who are disconnected from the Church. This disconnectedness is not from the faith itself, but in the institution of the Church. IT IS THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH WHICH MUST BE COMPLETELY RENEWED IF IT HAS ANY CHANCE OF SURVIVAL.

The Church has hit the bottom but can be rescued by the laity. The arrogance of the Church hierarchy must end now! The current Archbishop of [-] must stop undermining attempts at redressing the sins of the Church—calling those who support justice—'demonisers or the apologists'. He must relinquish his post.

If it wasn't for my strong faith in God, I would not be a Catholic. The institutional issues in the Church are abhorrent and need to be changed to get more people to enter the Church and more young people to remain in the Church.

Although I'm still a practising Catholic, I often find the Sunday Mass quite boring. If I can't attend the Jesuits, I usually don't go.

I have had a close relationship with Jesus for as long as I can remember, in large part because of my mothers' deep faith. I consider it a precious gift which I work hard to pass on to my grandchildren. I love the Eucharist. While my relationship with God has changed over the years, God remains the most important person in my life. I falteringly try to dedicate my life to God and to doing God's will as best as I can. This makes it so much harder that the Catholic Church is such a toxic home. Jesus' Church has been taken over by a dominating, male clergy who is all too often, abusive. I was sexually abused by a priest in my late teens—late twenties which created enormous shame, guilt, depression and disconnection. I later came to see this more clearly as sexual abuse, and the poor response of clergy "authorities" made me realise how toxic Church culture is. It's very hard to be dedicated to a Catholic faith and try to pass on this faith to a new generation when the Church has so much toxicity. I try to live my faith and just go to Mass on Sundays, otherwise having as little to do with the institutional Church as I can manage. I have come to appreciate that the true Church is the St Vincent de Paul, Caritas, faithful teachers in Catholic Schools, people in Ministries overseas, the small army of dedicated Catholics who work, unrecognised, for a better world. They will be rewarded in Heaven.

My background has been an ecumenical one and Catholics were in a minority where we lived. Mass was celebrated in the Anglican church and the local priest was part of the whole community. The people around me shaped my faith by their actions and words. I have a deep faith in God and was prepared for the sacraments by my mother as there was no Catholic school available. Religion was a part of life and the hierarchy of the Church was not evident until my adult years.

Basically, I attend a Dominican Catholic school and my mother takes me to church each Sunday so I've had a pretty well-rounded experience of the Church. Although, personally, I 100% believe in the

<p>existence of God and the existence of a Jesus figure living 2000 years ago. However, I find that the way the Church is organised does not facilitate these beliefs in a way which nurtures a strong love and belief in God. Therefore, my faith grows when I pray to myself in times of sadness or in times of gratitude --> the Church does not help this.</p>
<p>Kristina Keneally's remarks, as well as those of Francis Sullivan, on Q and A (ABC) 4.3.19 articulate so much better than I possibly could my recent feelings and thoughts on the Church.</p>
<p>I am a cradle Catholic, fully schooled in Catholic schools, and now working in one and have always been an active participant in parish life. Sadly, as each year passes, I am becoming more and more disillusioned with the clergy. Several have disappointed me in the last few years—causing major embarrassment to a member of my family at my mother's funeral; prioritising a meeting over a funeral in another instance; judgmentalism in other instances; and most recently, the response of [-], among others (who had had 2 months to think about their response!), publicly calling into question the outcome of the Pell case and the integrity of the complainant.</p>
<p>As a young person, it is not cool to be Catholic. People are busy and don't have time. How can we adapt our Church and traditions to be more in tune and connected with our fellow Catholics?</p>
<p>A Participant who was not brought up in the Catholic faith spoke about a Nun who addressed the current issues in her life and then spent time providing a religious education which changed her life. A few of the participants related to the enrichment of their faith whilst they were members of the CYO and how this assisted them with relationships.</p>
<p>As a priest, I have always felt helpless when I listen to so many young couples feel discouraged at the sight of unaffordable housing as they start of in their married life. While most of them have the generous and honourable desire and intention to have children, the cost of living, especially homes is an indirect contraceptive influence on this. I strongly feel the bishops of Australia can muster resources to be able to help the many young couples who struggle in this way.</p>
<p>(See my submission) I was born and bred in South-Vietnam. Became a refugee. Lived 26 years in the Netherlands. Migrated to [-], Australia in 2005. Very active in the Church and with the people who do not feel affiliated with the Church but still seek to a meaning for their lives.</p>
<p>My children attend a Catholic Primary School and I am exposed to the [-] Catholic Schools program. I am exposed to weekly sermons in that parish which is Jesuit and progressive, and which I do not think is quite right, although I salute the efforts that are made. I see misreading of gospel messages commonly when issues of power are presented. In a very feminine/feminist world, these messages are subtly changed so that "niceness", "kindness", "tolerance" and in general, mushy sort of concepts are substituted for the messages of power and authority. Anti-violence is preached when it is not explicitly preached in the Gospel. Jesus points out that he could have asked His Father to send twelve legions of angels to defend him, but that was not what would have been wanted. St Paul (I think) tells the soldiers not to intimidate people and to be satisfied with their pay. Jesus forms a whip of cords and upsets the tables in the temple scattering the money changers wares and the animals with fury. He called the scribes and Pharisees all sorts of harsh names. He claimed all authority in heaven and earth had been given to him, and commanded his followers with that authority. The Church needs to realise that Love is God and not to be ashamed of the power of God. Love just happens to be a very effective form of power. The Church is ashamed of power, of being authoritative. There are good reasons for this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ It sets up the Church for mockery, 2/ Authority on earth does suffer corruption, 3/ The pretence of impotence is an effective power posture (strategic power politics currently prefers to use the victim or underdog "wedge" to split power). <p>The attack on hierarchy is historically old. I have been reading about the American and French revolutions. The concept of equality, of authority deriving from the consent of the governed, and of the creation of new types of governments to replace the monarchy, lords and commons with unicameral democratic government, has echoes back to the Roman republic, senate, consuls</p>

tribunes and eventually emperor. These debates were shaped afresh by Marx, and rage currently in a more social context in our world, since hierarchy of any sort seems to be attacked for no reason other than Marxist teaching. We are being sold the lie that hierarchy is our enemy, when it is the Marxists who establish the most hierarchical of state systems. Still, the use of hierarchy in society is difficult because of this propaganda recently, and because of the history of the American and French revolutions, and I'm sure other history. And our Church has the most beautiful hierarchy, which I value, and which I think is useful, and which is currently very, very timid, for all the reasons mentioned. There must be a way to preserve what is good in our hierarchy, and to use it for God's glorious will, and yet to somehow defend it. May I suggest as a start, that the archbishop's authority over [-] Catholic Schools be clarified to our community? There is too much glossy spin going on in that organisation, which is trying to be all things to all men. They have to satisfy government, unions, teachers, parents and the Church, and they do this by keeping it "nice", just keep it "nice" all the time. They speak of "gospel values" but they don't seem to actually have a representative that sits on the school committee and provides input to the school governing body from the archbishop. There is no contest between the archbishop and the Jesuits, because there is not a representative of the archbishop in the school. There may not need to be a contest, but what if it might be a good thing to have some competition of ideas? Wouldn't that be a good thing? We need someone from the archbishop overlooking these programs that are being introduced to our children, often by non-Catholic, non-government third parties such as "beyond blue" (and many others), which is now as much of a homosexual lobby group as a mental health "provider". Enrolment of homosexual activist "parents" is just around the corner in our schools, and we sit around and talk about bullying! This is absurd. It is not the child being bullied that is controversial, it is the catechism of the Catholic Church which is controversial. Are we going to have an archbishop who will stand with Church hierarchy and authoritatively deny enrolment to homosexual activist parents? Will the archbishop take a look at the appointment of principals and vice principals who espouse gender ideology, as I heard recently at Marist, where Mrs [-] said "calling out of gender stereotypes wherever they are seen in our children". Hierarchy 101.

I've just been reading the French revolution, Bonaparte, the Pope, all that stuff, the American revolution, it's all there. It's the same stuff.

I read how the corruption of the system of tithes and indulgences became the cause of the reformation, but interestingly prior to that, there were, if you will, various strands of Catholic activity within society, with the various mendicant and other orders being highly religious, and the papal, episcopal and diocesan priesthood being variable, and the rest of the population even more variable in their religious fervour, although all were Catholic, pretty much. This created a system of inequality of religious activity which could be equalised by the giving of alms, tithes and payment for indulgences, such that the mercantile class of Catholics, who had money but were time poor, could pay for their lack of religious fervour with money. In some ways, a win-win, but with obvious problems, ultimately exposed by the reformation.

I have found that rather than argue with activists or ignorant opinionated people, which never works, it is better to refer them to some really helpful reading. We need accessible good Catholic reading and we need to work on propagating it.

Every Sunday, I witness the Eucharist been treated as a cookie. The congregation line up and get handed Christ—the priest doesn't check that the host has been consumed prior to handing it out to the next person. The people simply step aside and chew on it like gum as they walk back to their seats. Are their hands clean? Are they in mortal sin? Have they been to confession in the last 12 months? Are any of them planning on kidnapping the Host? Are they consuming the entire host or is residue falling from their hands onto the floor? The true presence of Christ in the Eucharist is being questioned or seen as symbolic more and more by the congregation—for if they truly believed that

the Host was indeed the real presence of Christ, they would be crawling on their knees to receive this perfection. The fact is, communion in the hand, being doled out by the unordained is causing a scandal in the Church and diminishing the sacred nature. We call on the bishops of Australia to stop this practice—there is no advantage to communion in the hand. What purpose does it serve? There is only downside.

My father was not a Catholic so my parents were married in the sacristy which always upset my mother and of course as I grew to understand this, it also upset me.

At most social get-togethers of community I attend, the topic of the Church always arises. Very few of the attendees are practicing Catholics, although the majority are baptised Catholic and Catholic educated. Most only attend a Christmas Mass. They send their children to Catholic schools and fulfil the minimum requirements stipulated. They do not send their children to learn and embrace Catholicism. They express their abhorrence with the Church response to child abuse and its shunning of women from its ministries. All practicing Catholics suffer and share the shame. The congregation has no say in the running of the parish. We used to have input if we were lucky enough to score an enlightened priest. My experience has taught me that those priests are moved on, and replaced with the new '50's' style seminary educated priest, who has no rapport with the community. It's a travesty.

I have found being part of a Ministry quite rewarding. I currently hold the position of Chairperson of our Parish Pastoral Council. The role can be time-consuming but very rewarding at the same time. For a long time, I was a parishioner who would attend Mass and that was it. My parish priest asked me to serve on the Council and I am pleased to make my individual contribution to the parish. Further to that, I feel that I am serving God.

Paradoxically, my early religious years were both frightening and joyful. I was punished (by the fear of God's wrath and hell) and nourished in the knowledge of a loving Creator and the promise of an after-life and reunion with departed loved ones. Interestingly, my seven or eight-year-old mind rejected such concepts as Limbo because of its inherent unfairness and I was delighted decades later when the Church recognised my wisdom (no official recognition, but I could live with that). Incidentally, I likewise did not love God more than my Mother and Father—obviously the problem lay in the limited way the English language applies the word "love". As well, even as a youngster I considered myself first as a Christian, second as a Catholic though I was not shy to join in the war cry: "Catholics, Catholics ring the bell, while the Publics go to hell". They, of course, returned the courtesy. Jesus laughed though with a tinge of sadness. While Mass attendance was often irksome (usually because of "cold" or "reserved" or "boring" priests), the sacraments (most especially the Eucharist) were/are a blessing. An aside, Missions were sometimes rewarding and even fun. Nuns and Brothers were a mixed lot, but often, sadly, not exemplary. Some of the corporal punishment was brutal and scarred me until just a couple of decades ago. I have frequently been and am now an almost daily Communicant from which I receive deep joy and for which I give much gratitude. My life (and that of my wife) has also been scarred by addiction which an alert and better-trained priest might decades ago have tapped into and encouraged me to seek professional help. Unfortunately (such an understatement) it was always "three Hail Marys" and an exhortation to do better. I berated God for not "curing" me. Such naivety continued until late in life, I joined a 12-Step Program. The program—not the Church—has been my salvation. I acknowledge, however, that my Higher Power is God. There was a time when I would have been uncomfortable with women or married priests. I am not now. My faith has been much strengthened by the likes of Richard Rohr and Ronald Rolheiser. Ditto, Joan Chittister and Eckhart Tolle and Karl Jung. Ditto, programs/tools such as the Archetypes and the Enneagram both of which I would like to see frequently promoted and offered in all parishes. Oh, and is there any reason why church pews must be so damned uncomfortable? In fact, some of them are absolutely wretched. Not wanting people to fall asleep is all well and good but if you want bums on seats, then you'd better make the seats tolerably comfortable. And finally, a little radical offering: The Jews weren't solely responsible for the death of Jesus. It was me and you and every human on earth, some being less responsible, others more. Wouldn't it be great if we

could stop the blame game and even revise/moderate the New Testament? Blasphemy? I hope not. I will now take my leave and God bless you all.

My experiences with the Church in Australia have actually moved me away from someone who loved to go to church to someone who just goes there as a moral obligation. From the liturgy point of view, I haven't understood the love affair of the Church here with Latin and chanting style of singing hymns. I remember attending a Mass at [-] where the singing was totally not understandable, it sounded great, but held no meaning to me since I could not understand the words nor join in. It seemed more like an Opera performance, but if I wanted to watch an Opera, I would go elsewhere, not come to church. It was sadly the most disconnected experience I have ever had when offering Mass. The same is true of the [-], [-] Cathedral as well, although not as much a disconnected experience, the choir usually sing as a performance and do not lead the congregation, but the style also is more towards chanting which is pretty boring. Singing can be done more melodiously, vibrantly so that people can truly enjoy the experience of coming to church. It can also drive the participation of people up in Mass, like when you listen to a nice tune and just feel like singing along with it. As far as the issue with Latin goes, I think we have forgotten the reason why the second Vatican council chose to do away with it. [-] [-] recite the "Our Father" in Latin on the first Sunday of the month, but the majority of the congregation doesn't know Latin, so they just recite the words without any meaning. Are we not demeaning the Lord's prayer this way? Even Jesus spoke common tongue Aramaic in his time, instead of any exclusive languages, time we followed the same? So to sum it up, my feeling is the clergy has lost touch with the people. The Mass in our pillars of Catholicism in [-] ([-] and [-], [-]) is conducted in a way (singing, prayers) which would only make sense to them, rather than getting people involved in the celebration.

I am deeply saddened to think that the next generation of Catholics won't be churchgoers. And it's not through my lack of faith or direction that my sons choose not to go to Mass. They might not even value getting married in our faith tradition, or even have their children baptised Catholics. They see me without a voice in my Church, they see my frustration at being turned away from serving my community. In a home where they respect my voice and value my opinion on things, why is it different in the building two blocks away? They keep asking me why I bother. Jesus walked in the dirt and listened to people. Many of our priests seem incapable of doing this. Authentic ministry is getting dirty, and not always having the answer. That is vulnerability and humility. There is too much hiding behind 'Church teaching' going on. Enough is enough—stop it now. When I was working as a chaplain in a local hospital I was verbally abused by a woman who was very angry with our Church about the sexual abuse horror and inadequate response. Who of our clergy sits with people like this? I have no power in my Church and I feel responsible and want to be involved in responding to women with this pain. Where are the clergy? Of course, I have positive experiences, too—why else would I be persevering, if not for the fine examples of Church leadership, and of meaningful pastoral care I have experienced? The parish priest who said a funeral Mass of a non-Catholic parishioner, the sisters who visited me at home to meet our new baby, the sister who sat with my four year old to keep him settled while our youngest was being baptised, the Marist brother who started a school for students who couldn't attend mainstream schools, my Irish Catholic neighbour who provided shelter from the chaos in my own childhood home, my list goes on. We wouldn't be wanting better for our Church if we hadn't experienced better in the past. We need to get dirty again, and our priests need to be brave about what they have to do. Hiding behind embroidered garments, wearing a mitre when saying weekend parish Masses, referring to 'Church teaching' all the time and not being clear about being sorry for abuse of children does not look like Jesus to me.

I have seen a huge improvement to the education available to lay people in the last 45 years, this, and the ability to come together with people who care deeply about their faith has been of great importance to me.

By the age of 18, I discerned I did not want to become a priest. Yet, I have been inspired and blessed with a deep understanding, respect and solidarity for those who volunteer themselves and those whom the Lord has chosen to lead us. I did most of my studies in Catholic institutions. I even

graduated in medicine from [-] College, Bangalore, which is run by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India; then did post graduate studies and joined the faculty there. So, I was privileged to see scores of bishops and over the years, formed significant associations with hundreds of clergy and religious. I have lived with bishops, as their guest, on at least 3 occasions. I lived with nuns on campus (not in the same building!) for 13 or so years. At least 6 priests I worked with, went on to become bishops; and another 5 went on to become Provincials or Mother Superiors of their respective Orders. I have had nuns as my classmates, seniors, juniors and teachers. I have had at least 200 nuns as my students. And yet, dear bishops, if my exposure had to stop with the oddities of the first 3 bishops I encountered in my life, prior to medicine, I would probably have retained a warped opinion of bishops bordering on ridicule. God works in strange ways! I migrated to Australia 25 years ago and after some years swapped careers and became a GP, while continuing to help in the local parish. It was only 4 years ago when I was a Catechist teaching 'Christ our Light and Life, Yr 5, Chap 7' that I realised this history. Many believe "[-]" was the brain child of Mary Glowrey, saint-in-waiting—the Australian doctor who went to India and became a great missionary. When I graduated from [-], the JMJ nuns (the same order that Mary joined) recruited me to work in one of their mission hospitals. Mary died the same year I was born.

There are many stories of the Church's shortcomings, and few examples of faith that stand out. Unfortunately, the road of good intentions is paved with unnecessary tragedies mocked with half measures in some pretence to listen, just to appease the majority. The old strategy to be positive and eliminate the negative is not enough when 95% of the Catholic community has disengaged at some level. Judging and knowing what is convenient will not help, so some effort is needed to really understand the current situation and what could be possible. Vinnies might be a good example of Catholic organisations that say they are listening with aristocratic leadership that filters what is not convenient, with no vision, goals and actions to improve, and transparency is limited to what is necessary to promote their cause. Such a structure only inhibits more than it inspires faith and good works. Ask the right people directly to get a better picture of the alternate lifestyles that have replaced the Church for the majority of the Catholic community (Baptised).

The Adult Faith Education Team at Holy Family, [-], wanted some idea of what people need/want in their faith development. So in April 2018, we conducted a parish survey. While a couple of the survey questions forced people to focus and reflect on their personal faith journey, in terms of our objectives above, Ques 2, 3, 4 and 5 tried to nut these out. Over a hundred people responded; only a distillate is given below. For their faith development, parishioners would like:

- To be part of a small group for a specific period, would like a catalyst—to take step forward and experience God's presence.
- "Belonging" to the parish, participating in Mass, with understanding, with friends—to grow spiritually.
- "Gathering" in the parish for short seminars in small groups, to explore spiritual life and faith and learn more about the Bible and Catholic teaching, understand Mass and the sacraments—to grow stronger in faith.
- To find meaning in life through and with faith, friends and reaching out. There was a sense that people were keen to have an understanding of their faith, the background to the weekday and Sunday readings and were willing for talks, group discussion and good works.

The detailed results are presented in the attached documents; an executive summary is also attached. While I was involved in the entire process, from inception to tabulation, I did not personally prepare the attached documents. I have the group's permission to pass these on to the Plenary Council 2020 and the Archdiocese of [-].

No experiences of faith. A cradle Catholic, you might say. However, I have done a lot of reading, have a M.A. (T.S) from C.I.S. I belong to a group of women who are still attached to the Catholic Church, but through their reading are becoming disenchanted with the 'institution'. We will not give up on the teachings of Jesus, but we are really fed up with the way those teachings are interpreted and

<p>manipulated to support the status quo of clericalism. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza understood it— "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion" is the way we examine today's institution.</p>
<p>During my twenties, I experienced cross-cultural faith development with PALMS in PNG and the local community showed me the universality of Christian outreach. Again at the start of 21st century, in [-] parish, the outreach groups effectively did Christ's work with humility yet boldness and leadership, and prayer.</p>
<p>I've grown up in a religious family. My parents are devout Catholics, front row at Mass every Sunday without fail, pray the rosary every day, volunteer in the community, sing in the choir—I've always had amazing examples of what a good Catholic looks like through mum and dad. But going to Mass as a young person never really caught my attention, it was always what we did, but I never was excited to go. When I got older, I used to go to Mass as a sort of habit, but as work got hectic and life took over, I strayed from this weekly ritual. I worked in the non-profit world throughout my 20s and felt like this was my faith in action, even though the charity was not a religious based one. I think many young people today feel social justice in their outlet for good. It was not until when I was 32 and was asked to speak at the Vatican by a group called Voices of Faith about my work that I really started to get interested again in my faith journey. This group, Voices of Faith were full of faithful Catholic women from across the globe that felt a calling towards working for a more equal Church, a more just one where women are not treated as second class citizens. I started to hear stories of women from around the world who persisted in their faith, even with so many struggles. This inspired me, it motivated me and it showed me how strong these incredible women are in the face of inequality within their own faith and it drove me to want to support that. These encounters also showed me the depth and breadth of the Catholic Church—there is so much good they do, but unfortunately this gets lost amongst all the other issues. For young people to remain, to share the word of God, the positive aspects should be highlighted, the real stories, the truths of how the Church so good around the world. I am inspired to work for the better Church for our future because of Voices of Faith.</p>
<p>I still have a strong personal idea of being a Christian but my comments above display I feel it is now a personal journey and I do not have the respect for the Church or Church hierarchy to use them as an example of Christian example or leadership. I still go to Mass but am struggling to see the relevance of the Church in my life. From the decline in church attendance over the years, it seems many Catholics are struggling to see the relevance of the Church in their lives as well. With the advanced age of the people I see attending Mass, these attendance numbers will continually decline and I see a declining relevance to society of the Catholic Church in the future. With a track record, dating back centuries, of terrible Christian example and self-indulgent leadership the Church has been declining for a very long time. The Church seems incapable of adjusting to a world that has changed and is continuing to change. Every aspect of people's lives has changed except the Church. As a result, people feel the Church is out of step and becoming irrelevant. Unless Church hierarchy see this, accept this and embrace this BEFORE Plenary 2020 then they will not accept the changes necessary to make the Catholic Church relevant into the future.</p>
<p>I had a complete Catholic school education, but came out of school no longer seeing the Church visible in other civic institutions as other faiths are. The Catholic institutions at my university were not visible at all, and other than going to church on a Sunday, the Church has become invisible. I struggle to find the Church outside of the church building itself. I also find a widespread illiteracy amongst others my age in defending and really understanding the Catholic faith. There is a lack of understanding and discipline, whilst also being a lack of engagement with youth.</p>
<p>I am Maltese and I went to Catholic schools. When I was 28, I had an adult conversion through the Charismatic renewal. I belonged to a prayer group and we met weekly to pray and we also socialised together. Through this, my husband converted to Catholicism. We grew in ministry together but our 3 children are non-practising and our grandchildren are also non-practising. I believe we tried to instil the faith but to me, we have lost 2 generations in our Church. My children went to Catholic schools and we gave them good example.</p>

<p>My previous parish had priest administrator inflicted on it who seems to want only to regress to pre-Vatican II. Our current parish priest is excellent and fully supports Social Justice.</p>
<p>I am a devoted Catholic and love the essence of the Church. I raise my family to be Catholic but I know that they are not as interested in the Church, so I must respect that too.</p>
<p>My relationships with people have helped me the most to have a relationship with Jesus. Through each other, we are the Church. We must support each other.</p>
<p>I am a catechist and enjoy teaching children Catholic faith.</p>
<p>I grew up in the dreaded, confusing aftermath of Vatican II, and I feel that it very much let persons like me down. During the 1970s and 80s, the Church's message seemed incoherent and opaque. Indeed, was it still the Catholic Church? Or was it an institution that was determined to show to its (now rapidly dwindling) members that it was hip to modernity. Or was it there to learn of us? (like as if we knew what the hell what we were doing). When will the Church ever apologize for that period? When will the Church ever openly confess to the hellish fruits of the "spirit-of-Vatican II" tree? (e.g. Caligula-like sex abuse, rampant heresies, collapse in church attendance, collapse in vocations, the spiritual ruin of so many of the laity; when will this package of woe and humiliation ever be spoken about?). Whilst growing up there appeared to be two Churches; the traditional one that my grandmother instilled both in me and my siblings and which I loved with all my heart; and the post-Vatican II thing. However, in my late teens I left the Church ostensibly because of my same-sex-attraction; but really it was because there seemed to be no person or group to help me live the Church's teaching on the matter. Much later, I drifted back and came across some Gnostic-like priests who told me that the gay life wasn't sinful, and that the main thing was to work through my "issues" (though not address my sins), do meditation exercises, and do social justice stuff. If there was anything that was going to deny me happiness and grace then these teachings were it. Miraculously (and it could have only been through divine intervention; my grandma in heaven perhaps...) I began to study traditional Catholic texts as well as authors such as GK Chesterton, and these put me on a happy path to God. I also met like-minded priests and laity and joined the Courage group, and have not looked back. This experience helped teach me that "nice" people who want to exercise their compassion upon you, but are so often wolves in sheep's clothing, are some of the worst people to encounter on a journey to God. You can usually see their inner wolves at the moment you disagree with them, or challenge their "nice" credentials. Their errors are a real problem for the Church. That said, there appears to be an emerging resistance to error, and a desire to gently but firmly correct it. It is still only embryonic, but I have not seen it until now, and it is very positive and needs fostering. I have also noticed young persons going back to traditional Catholic texts and thinkers, and this too needs fostering. Of course, the Catholics who are true to the Church's teachings will probably not respond much to this plenary initiative, and the "progressives" (progressing to where?) will use their activist skills to put forward erroneous demands. Please, do not be fooled by these like I was; traditional Catholicism is the kindest gift you can give, and especially to those in error.</p>
<p>The majority of teachers and students in Catholic schools are not practising. I was considered a religious freak by my son's friends because I went to Mass. After WYD 08, my son's class was forced to say the rosary in front of the statue of Our Lady in front of the church or they would get detention. This was advertised as increased numbers praying after WYD. The RE Co-ordinator was up on child abuse charges. One teacher said to all young hormonal males that they should all have their private parts chopped off. My son said how dare I make him think going to Mass was normal because he was bullied and ridiculed at a Catholic school for doing so. He was an altar server. He came back from being overseas for 6 months to the changes in the wording in the Mass and couldn't believe how distant and negative the wording had changed to. He said he wasn't a grievous sinner and was fed up with the way the Church looked down on people and stopped going to Mass. He does yoga and meditation now. He used to have such a strong relationship with God as a child. So sad. My other son was brought up on the 3rd rite of reconciliation so to suddenly not be forgiven</p>

unless he tells a priest what he has done, especially when he feels he hasn't really done anything wrong, he just couldn't justify.

We have known priests who are Christlike leaders. Humble. Prayerful. Inspiring models. We have known priests who are anything but: perhaps personally devout but weird or worse. We have known brothers and nuns who are models of Christ. We have known women and men who have inspired with their infectious faith. The most inspiring for us recently was a gay man, a judge, who spoke to us with humble certainty about the central significance for him of the Eucharist. The Church has been preoccupied with sex for most of our lives. Not love, kindness, charity. Sex. A taboo on sex prior to the contraceptive pill, when an unwanted baby might be the outcome, was justified. But no longer. Time to focus on Jesus' words. Stop the Pharisaic behaviour and return the Church to its Founder, Jesus Christ. Start to offer hope to our despair.

I was helped a lot by meeting people of Opus Dei who helped me to learn more about God and how to pray and put the virtues into practice—to try to be a saint in the middle of the world. My nephew has just come back from a mission with the Immaculata Sisters and has changed overnight from being a disobedient teenager to a mature, helpful and considerate teenager. Young people need more input and contact with good people and organisations. With goodness really—which is God Himself. Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

I have been attending Mass every week since I was 5 years old at [-]. I am now 42 years old and have a family with 4 kids and being open to life, want more by the grace of God if he wills it. Throughout these years, I have only ever experienced insipid liturgy, bland with terrible music, lazy "feel good" sermons about how God loves me (but demands very little). I suspect that the very priests and most of the parish community have hardly recognised the Mass as the sacrifice of the Cross made present. None of this sustained me as I struggled through my teen years and early adult life. I continued to attend Mass because deep down I felt that the world was not quite right and that there was something deeper—so I preserved with Mass. In my early 20s with the advent of the Internet, I discovered the true Faith. I discovered encyclicals of the past, the Catechism, the lives of the Saints—of the challenges of the heretics and apologetics. I lapped it all up—all the wisdom and knowledge of the faith ... but I lacked a proper community to share it with and I had no "Liturgy" in which I could properly adore and worship God and encounter him at the foot of the Cross, to offer my sacrifices up with his at the Mass. In my early 30s, working in the city, I encountered Opus Dei—Father [-] (now deceased) and found their men-only, recollections, talks, circles to be a great source of wisdom and fraternity. They did not shy away from the truths of the advice and gave practical advice in how to work at my marriage, to work with virtue and how to essentially survive in the Faith in the modern world. Finally in my early 40s, a young priest Father [-] was stationed at [-] a parish near me and started offering the Mass in the Extraordinary Form on Saturdays. I found a Liturgy that was God-focused, that was truly heaven on earth. He was transferred out to [-] only recently—but for the 20 months he was there—my soul was uplifted.

My "faith" in the Catholic Church (its prayer atmosphere and dignified Mass Liturgies response by attendants from week to week) has been sorely deflated and doubts of belief annoying. There are too many individuals not caring for a Christian Community. [very little genuine fellowship after Mass or get-togethers] I have often wanted to attend other Catholic parish praying parishes with suitable liturgies and a far greater active participation by most attendants. I have already experienced true Holy Spirit-filled Communities who witness the Presence of Jesus. (Charismatic churches: Catholic, Anglican, Salvation army, Pentecostals and especially the 1976 Catholic Charismatic Renewal Conference and WYD 2008 in Sydney). We need priests and more bishops to visit and feel belonged to us parishioners who I guess are poorly instructed *about who Jesus really is*. Regularly read/view Catholic literature/programs; read the Bible, pray the Rosary; practise corporal/spiritual works of mercy, etc. I was brought up a Catholic in the 1950s but I experienced Christian Community living in various parishes in Australia in my 30's. My 3 encounters with The Mystery while talking about Jesus Christ on a 1 to 1 basis 40+ years ago has sustained my belief and commitment to Our Lord on whom I depend daily.

My story is about my younger son. He went to Mass every week because my husband and I told him that he needed to have a spiritual life as well as an academic, sporting and social life. He even contributed to Church life by altar serving and helping with the AV equipment. After sitting through Masses that were far from stimulating, he told me at age 16 that he was going to try a local Pentecostal church. He was immediately welcomed into the church. There were a lot of young people. There were young worship music and lights. There were groups led by mentors in their 20s on a Friday night. There were 2 services on a Sunday—one morning and one night. My son is a born leader (he was school captain) and a person who loves to jump in and help. Now, he goes to all their services every weekend, runs their lighting and does the lighting roster. He is in charge of a group of year 6 boys every Friday night. They also have social activities outside the church too. The environment is positive. He is constantly being affirmed and thanked by everyone for what he does for their church. My 18-year-old son has been baptised AGAIN in the Pentecostal church. He does a lot of Bible-reading and is trying to get Jesus known in all schools. He has been lost to the Catholic Church and is a huge gain for his new Pentecostal church ... and they know it. Imagine what he could have done for the Catholic Church had he been recognised for what he was doing with his AV work and if he had been nurtured and given responsibilities and praise ... what could have been???

My family has had many bad experiences with priests. My biggest concern is the failing formation in the majority of the Church. Priests need to be holy or they do more harm than good with their ordination. Better few faithful than many unfaithful. God's intervention is the only reason I am still Catholic and that I love his Church so much and will defend it to death, it wasn't people in the Church itself.

1. Our Blessed Lady is always there for me when I need her.
2. I always ask God to help me and in many ways. I do find some times my life is easy and my kids are saved.
3. My daughters don't attend church because they said there are too many contributions and one priest said not to put coins in as they are too heavy. Some priests' homilies are too long so people get bored. Homilies can be said in 20 minutes, no more!
4. My faith has been tested a few times, but the one I'd remember most was when I had a car accident and all I could do was call Him! He saved me and in fact everyone who came to my assistance said 'Someone' was looking after me.
5. An assistant priest of our parish 35 years ago did a door knock of the area of the parish. He made himself known to us. Before long I became a Catechist, Minister of the Eucharist, Minister of the Word, also got involved in the sacramental program, and alpha program, all because he did a random door knock in our neighbourhood. Our neighbour jovially pointed him to our house. He told him that we were a house of sinners.
6. I feel calm and restful after each visit to church.
7. More communication needed to share our stories as we are open to change and suggestion.
8. My father was a Baptist. We were raised as Christians, Catholic as per my mother's faith. When my father died, both priests (Catholic and Baptist) joined at the service, and both honoured his life with the most touching words. They showed it is possible to unite the churches.
9. My conversion through the Divine Mercy in Poland. I found the living God, the grace of God. I travelled alone to find him.
10. I became a follower of Jesus. I read the Bible. I go to church every Sunday and other days. I like being a Christian to love God and worship the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
11. I approached a priest and requested that we the lay people hold a cenacle for the Marian Movement of priests. The priest joyfully accepted and offered the lay people to pray the cenacle while the Blessed sacrament is exposed.

I am a convert to Catholicism, and often struggled with an apparent disconnect that often exists between the way Mass is outwardly celebrated (all too often adorned with extraneous details unrelated to the Sacrifice and Presence) and the profound depth of what is really going on. I attended a Mass celebrated in a profoundly beautiful way, adorned with nothing but the priest's

prayerfulness and reverence. He would pause before the Confiteor and actually give the congregation time, in silence, to meditate on their sins. When he elevated the sacrament, he did it very slowly, with his eyes fixed on Christ, and adored him for a full twenty seconds. After communion, there was sufficient time to just dwell in silence with the Lord who was dwelling within us. The experience shaped me by showing me how God can be loved by waiting with Him in silence, if done in a spirit of love.

In 2007 at the [-] parish, there was a priest who bullied and harassed the active volunteers in that parish. A complaint was lodged with the Integrity-in-Ministry Section, and I basically felt that nothing was really done to address the problem. It was so bad that one of the priests this priest was mentoring had a nervous breakdown and returned to his home country. It was only when another priest that he was mentoring complained, that something was done ... and Gee! guess what that was ... he was moved to another parish. Being at the receiving end of behaviour unbecoming of a member of the clergy, and then not being taken seriously by Church Admin is really offensive and upsetting. That is the reason why so many people go parish-shopping, and some even leave the Church altogether. That experience opened my eyes to the fact that there are some dodgy priests out there—and that if things are that bad, to vote with your feet.

Attending the Latin Mass with a parish full of people under the age of 30 and/or with young children, being part of the community there and returning to the faith of our ancestors, has helped me really understand that the Church is more than just about me and meeting my needs. It's about Jesus Christ's kingdom coming on this earth, about all of us drawing nearer to Him every single day and giving the opportunity to every person on this earth to know Him and love Him. We have great reason to be hopeful and joyful.

I am fully immersed in trying to live as per the Gospels which shape our Catholic Church. I am trying to live it every hour of the day and it shapes my life. Prayer is very important to me, especially for the oppressed and the poor. I give regularly to Catholic charities but don't have any problems with Mt 19:24 (as I am an old age Pensioner and don't have a stash hidden under my bed). I look forward to meeting my Master and Heavenly Mother when I am fortunate to leave this earth. I hope I can give a good account of myself.

In my mid-20s, I was part of a youth group. This group attended Mass and the sacraments regularly, as I also did. I felt a strong sense of community and this gave meaning to my spiritual life. In my parish today, sadly, I don't feel this anymore.

In my parish, [-], most I have listened to prefer to say the Apostle's creed at Sunday Mass please. "Consubstantial???"

I accompanied my teen to support her fund-raising venture after Sunday Masses. She was amazed at the generosity of the parishioners towards her venture. She didn't understand why they would be so generous, and so warm in their good wishes towards her. Even though we attended Mass every week, this was her first personal encounter. I explained that this is what a parish family is. They pray, they are practical in their support, and they care very much for each person. She was used to giving, but this experience of receiving was a wonderful revelation to her.

Our local church [-] [-] has a very holy priest who has set a great example of what priests should be doing with lots of devotions, rosaries and Adoration. He helps the community and spends time with everyone and is a real presence of Christ which I haven't found in other parishes.

Having real relationships with priests has greatly helped me in seeing them as real men. Their ministry is essential, and we are blessed to have them and their commitment.

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 Sydney.

Country	Number of respondents
Australia	650
Angola	1
Antigua and Barbuda	1
Armenia	1
Austria	4
Brazil	1
Burkina Faso	1
Cambodia	1
Canada	1
Chile	1
China	4
Croatia	1
Egypt	7
Fiji	1
France	1
Germany	3
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	12
Hungary	2
India	22
Indonesia	5
Ireland	8
Israel	1
Italy	7
Kenya	1
Latvia	2
Lebanon	6
Malaysia	10

Country	Number of respondents
Maldives	1
Malta	6
Mauritius	2
Mexico	1
Myanmar	1
Netherlands	5
New Zealand	16
Nigeria	3
Pakistan	1
Peru	1
Philippines	24
Samoa	1
Seychelles	1
Singapore	6
Slovakia	1
South Africa	2
Spain	3
Sri Lanka	3
Sudan	2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	21
United States of America	13
Uruguay	1
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of...	1
Viet Nam	6
Not stated	226
Total	1,103

APPENDIX 2: COMPLETE LIST OF GROUPS FROM YOUR DIOCESE

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

Name of group	Group size
St Vincent's College	826
Kairos Prison Ministries	679
St Canice's Parish - online responses	600
Knights of the Southern Cross NSW	500
UTS Catholic Society	364
Kenvale College	300
St Martha's Catholic Primary School	266
Women and the Australian Church (WATAC)	259
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea	200
St Benedict's Church	200
Mary Ward Network Australia	200
Sacred Heart Cabramatta, Pastoral Team	153
St Therese (MASCOT) Parish	135
Warrane College	130
St Catherine's Parish, Gymea	85
Parish of Our Lady of the Way	80
Piazza 'House Church' - a women's group that has been meeting since 2012	70
ACU Short Course in Theology (Sydney) - The Future of the Church in Australia	70
Italian Community at St Joseph's Parish Moorebank	67
Band of Brothers	60
St Mark's Drummoyne	55
Year 6 students at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	52
Archdiocese of Sydney	52
Community of Paddington/Edgecliff/Double Bay	50
All Saints Liverpool	50
St Joan of Arc Parish, Haberfield NSW	50
Catholic Parish of Epping & Carlingford	48
St Martha's Parish	48
Catholic Youth living in the Liverpool area	47
St Joseph's Parish Como/Oyster Bay NSW	45
University of Notre Dame Australia (Sydney Campus)	40
Daughters of Charity	39

Name of group	Group size
St Michael's Catholic Parish, Meadowbank, NSW	38
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe 3	37
Ephpheta Centre	36
Sisters of St Joseph Boards	35
International Emmanuel Community	35
St Michael's Hurstville	35
St Joachim & St Anne Tongan Community	35
St Aloysius Cronulla Plenary Submission	33
Mulcare Family	33
Concerned Catholics	30
St Brigid's Catholic Church	30
Parishes of Rose Bay and Dover Heights, NSW	30
St Brigid's Justice and Peace group	30
St Francis Xaviers Ashbury	30
OLSH SISTERS	30
Lane Cove 2	30
Lane Cove 4	30
Lane Cove 5	30
St John of God Parish Auburn	30
Lourdes Parish	28
Our Lady of the Way Catholic Church Bundeena NSW	28
Neo Catechumenal Way	26
Ecology Group North Sydney Parish	25
St. Bernadette's Parish	25
St Mary Mackillop Parish Rockdale City	25
St Michael's Hurstville	25
1st Neocatechumenal Community Our Lady of Lourdes Earlwood NSW	25
Lane Cove group 1	25
The Catholic Parish of Bondi	24
St Peter Chanel Berala	24
Holy Spirit Parish North Ryde	24
Catholic Education Office - Diocese of Parramatta	23
Social Services and Outreach Organisations	23
Social Services and Outreach Organisations	23
Holy Innocents Parish Croydon	23
Lane Cove 6	23
Lane Cove 7	23
Lane Cove 8	23

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Pastoral Team at St Patrick's Church, Church Hill NSW	22
Movements	21
Fire & Hope (Youth of Emmanuel Community Int.)	20
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe 4	20
Catholic Residents Marian Court Retirement Village	20
Epping Catholics	20
The Grail (Sydney Group)	20
Holy Spirit Fraternity, Waverley, of the Secular Franciscan Order	20
Sisters of Mercy	20
OLSH Randwick Parish Plenary Council Discussion Group	20
Edmund Rice Centre	20
Little Company of Mary Health Care Board of Directors (Calvary)	20
Lane Cove 3	20
Lane Cove 9	20
Lane Cove 11	20
Tongan Catholic Liverpool	20
St Augustine's Parish	19
HNOM Social Justice Group	19
St. Therese Padstow	18
St Michael's Hurstville	18
St Vincent's Ashfield Parish Social Justice Group	18
Belmore Tongan community	18
Chinese Catholic Community (Skye Group)	18
A group of parishioners at St Kevin's Eastwood	17
St Joseph's Enfield Catholic Church	17
St Joseph's Enfield parent school community	17
Good Samaritan Education	17
Our Lady of Fatima Prayer Group	17
St Pats Primary Students	16
St Joseph's, Riverwood	16
St Therese (Mascot) Parish - Youth Group	16
HNOM Group + Marist Laity Group	16
Sydney faithful	16
Creston College	15
Marist Fathers Community of Elderly Priests and Brothers	15
Mater Dei Blakehurst and St.Raphael's Sth Hurstville Survey Individual Responses - grouped	15

Name of group	Group size
Parish of Sydney Harbour North-Blessed Sacrament Clifton Gardens	14
Social justice group	14
Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart	13
Family	13
Antioch	13
St Brigid's Parish, Raymond Tce	13
Bosco Social Justice Group	13
Our Lady of Fatima Kingsgrove representative committee	13
Parish Pastoral Council	12
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe NSW 1	12
Grp 3 of Catechists	12
Yarraton	12
St Joseph's Parish	12
Mater Dei Legion of Mary	12
Liturgical scholars forum (hosted by ACU Centre for Liturgy)	12
St Michael's Hurstville	12
St Joseph's Rozelle parishioners	12
MacKillop Coffee Group	12
Pax Christi Australia (NSW)	12
St Brigid's Marrickville Catechists	11
Five Dock parish group	11
St. Therese Denistone	11
Do Not Contact	11
Strathfield Catholic Forum	11
St Vincent De Paul Redfern	11
Holy Name of Mary Parish Hunters Hill - Scripture Prayer Group	11
5St Joachim's Parish Lidcombe	10
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe NSW 2	10
Group 13 Book Club Liturgy	10
Group 18 11-18 Book Club 'New Church'	10
Mary Help of Christians Parish, Sawtell	10
Sutherland Parishioners	10
Yarraton	10
St Paul of the Cross Dulwich Hill	10
Nil	10
St.Stephen's Catholic Church. Tea Gardens	10
St Gregory's College Campbelltown - Leadership Team	10

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Peakhurst Youth	10
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe NSW	10
Lane Cove 10	10
Lane Cove 12	10
Australian Ursulines Sydney Encounters Group	9
St Joachims Parish Young Adults Ministry Lidcombe	9
Catholic Immigration Samoan group	9
St. Therese Denistone	9
Mix	9
Sydney Health	9
Myall Coast Parish	9
Chinese Catholic Community	9
Khoury family	9
Catholic Men's Fellowship, Sydney	9
Monte Sant'Angelo Senior Leaders	9
Catholic Women's League	8
Meditation Group, Holy Family Catholic Church, Menai NSW	8
St Joachim's Parish Lidcombe NSW 3	8
Bible Study Group	8
Catholic Church	8
St Joachims Parish	8
Ann Kerley group with observing convenors	8
Catechists	8
St Michaels, Hurstville	8
John the Baptist Primary school	8
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe 2	8
St Mary Queen of Heaven Parish; Georges Hall	8
All Hallows' parishioners' group 2	8
Parishes of Sydney Harbour North-St Josephs Neutral Bay	8
St Pats Primary Parents	8
Friends of Parish	8
St Pats College Students & Tchrs	8
Tuesday Morning Group	8
Group formed independently of the parish as the parish was not taking any action on Plenary Council meetings	8
St Michael's Hurstville	8
St Michael's Hurstville	8
Sunday Group	8
Marian Group (Fraternas)	8

Name of group	Group size
Prayer Strategy- Spheres of Influence	8
Parish of St Felix de Valois Catholic Bankstown	8
Chinese Catholic Community	8
Stenson, Clark group	8
Couples For Christ (Australia) Oceania Mission Ltd - Youth For Christ	7
A group of parishioners	7
St Patrick's Sutherland Parish Group 1	7
St Vincent de Paul Group	7
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe 1	7
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Sefton	7
St Patrick's St Vincent de Paul Group	7
Christian Life Community: Peakhurst local group	7
Christian Life Community, Xavier Terrace Group, Lavender Bay	7
St. Therese Denistone	7
Lakes Parish	7
The Hickling/Jones families	7
St Christophers Panania	7
RCIA 2016-2018	7
Our Lady of Fatima Peakhurst	7
OLF Peakhurst	7
St.Raphael's South Hurstville Bible Reflection Group	7
Chinese Catholic Community	7
St Anthony's Parish Clovelly	7
Catholic Earthcare, Australia	7
Sunday Group Group SG	7
Our Lady of Fatima Peakhurst	7
Dominican Justice, Peace &Care of Creation,Sydney	7
St Joseph's Enfield parent school community	7
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	7
Mater Dei Blakehurst and St.Raphael's Sth Hurstville Listening and Dialogue Session1	7
Catholic Chinese Community / Chinese Chaplaincy Parra Diocese	7
All Saints Parish Liverpool (small group)	7
Linda Praum	7
St Christopher's Panania	7
Holy Family Parish Menai, Friday evening group. 26.10.2018	6
Subset of Srs of St Joseph	6

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
St Patrick's Sutherland Parish Group 1	6
St Patrick's Sutherland Parish Group 1	6
St Patrick's Sutherland Parish Group 3	6
Generation Awakening	6
SVdP group	6
Meditation group	6
CWL	6
St Patrick's Primary School	6
Pastoral council	6
Krtm	6
St Parishes of Sydney Harbour North-Therese Beauty Point	6
Parishes of Sydney Harbour North- Sacred Heart Mosman	6
Group 1 9-11-18 JPV	6
Group 2 9-11-18 JPV	6
Group 3 9-11-18 JPV	6
Group 5 9-11-18 JPV	6
Group 6 9-11-18 JPV	6
Group 7 11-11-18 Engadine	6
Group 8 11-11-18 Engadine	6
Group 9 11-11-18 Engadine	6
Group 10 11-11-18 Engadine	6
Group 14 18-11-18 Parish Group 1	6
Group 15 18-11-18 Parish Group 2	6
Group 17 11-18 Book Club Priesthood	6
Peakhurst SG Saturday	6
Parish Pastoral Team	6
St Pats Coll. Sutherland	6
Dominican Education Australia	6
Chinese Catholic Community	6
Submission from Assistant Priests and Parishioners at St Francis - St Joseph, Paddington, Edgecliff and Double Bay	6
St Joseph Roseberry	6
Sisters of St Joseph Lakemba Community	6
St Brigets	6
St Michael's Hurstville	6
St Joseph the Worker/ St Peter Chanel	6
St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School parents	6
Our Lady Of Mount Carmel	6
St Vincent de Paul Redfern	6

Name of group	Group size
Marian Group (Fraternas)	6
Ryde-Gladesville Parish Parishioners	6
Holy Family-group	6
Nagle Apartments Sutherland	6
St Patrick's Sutherland 2nd Parish Group 1	5
St Patrick's Primary Guildford	5
St Patricks Primary , Guildford NSW	5
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Guildford	5
Christian Meditation Group, Menai.	5
St Patrick's Parish, Sutherland	5
Parish Pastoral Council	5
Holy Family Parish	5
Holy Family Church	5
St Pat's 'Wrap With Love' Group	5
Epping Bible Sharing Group	5
St Brendan's School	5
Christian Life Community group at West Ryde	5
A group of parishioners -- 2nd session	5
All Hallows' parishioners' group 3	5
Sisters of St. Joseph	5
SKYE Youth Group (Discussion Group 1)	5
Our family-	5
Discussion	5
Prayer Group	5
Holy Family Parish Menai	5
Parishioners of St Stephens Tea Gardens	5
Chinese Catholic Community	5
St Peter Chanel Parish	5
St Peter Chanel Parish	5
D Day, A Day, C Dalby, B & T Sheehan	5
Jenni Hickson	5
Calvary Ministries	5
Holy Name of Mary Parish Young Adults Group	5
Our Lady of the Annunciation Pagewood	5
Adult Faith Education Team, Holy Family Parish, Menai	5
St Patrick's Sutherland 2nd Friday Group	4
St Patrick's Sutherland 3rd Friday Group	4
Holy Family group A Oct 22	4

Appendix 2: Complete list of groups from your diocese

Name of group	Group size
Holy Family Catholic Parish, Menai, Monday evening group B, 22.10.2018	4
Holy Family Menai group 23 Nov	4
Discussion group, St Columba's, Paterson, NSW	4
All Hallows Parish Five Dock Plenary Council Group	4
Ms	4
Holy Family Group	4
Small clergy group in Diocese of Parramatta	4
Parishes of Sydney Harbour North- Sacred Heart Mosman	4
Parishes of Sydney Harbour North- Sacred Heart Mosman	4
Family	4
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe NSW	4
Two generations of Non-lapsed Catholics	4
The John Berne School Year 9 RE class	4
691 961 08678	4
Friends	4
Peakhurst Wednesday Group SG	4
Group of friends	4
Liverpool Antioch	4
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	4
A small group of Chinese Chaplaincy	4
Parish PC Suggestion Box	4
Carlingford Cantonese Alpha	3
Holy Family Group 29 October.	3
St Patrick's Sutherland 4th Fri Mtg	3
All Hallows Church Five Dock	3
St Mel's Catholic School	3
St Charles' Primary School	3
Family group	3
St Patrick's, Saturday Group	3
Grp 1 of Catechists	3
Grp 2 of Catechists	3
Grp 4 of Catechists	3
Grainne Norton, Deirdre Grusovin, Diana Tolliver	3
St Christophers Panania	3
Group 4 9-11-18 JPV	3
Liturgy Consultation	3
Sutherland Parish Box	3
Blessed Sacrament parishioners	3

Name of group	Group size
Holy Family Parish Menai	3
St Christophers Panania	3
St Therese's Lakemba	3
A group of Loreto Sisters	3
St Christopher's Panania	3
St Josephs Como/ Oyster Bay	2
Mater Mates	2
St Michael's Hurstville	2
St Michael's Hurstville	2
Therese and Alison	2
Ann and Michael O'Hara	2
We are a married couple - you did not have a way of showing that earlier.	2
Mr & Mrs Howard	2
Couple in Redfern	2
B & Bon Marriage	2
St Joachims Parish Lidcombe NSW	1
Holy Family, Menai Adult Faith Education Team	Not Stated
Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford	Not Stated
Catholic Parish of Epping & Carlingford	Not Stated
Catholic Parish of St Kevin	Not Stated
St Michael's Hurstville	Not Stated
Lifted Live Group Diocese of Parramatta	Not Stated
National Catholic Education Commission	Not Stated
Catholic Religious Australia	Not Stated
Bernadette Payne	Not Stated
Holy Family	Not Stated
Sacred Heart RCIA Group	Not Stated
St Peter's Surry Hills NSW	Not Stated



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