

Plenary 2020

The Catholic Church in Australia will hold a Plenary Council in 2020. The last Plenary Council held in Australia was back in 1937. A Plenary Council is a formal gathering of all local churches in a country. It will be attended by bishops, clergy, religious and lay people and will seek to look where God is leading the Church in Australia. The agenda of the Council will be formed based on feedback received from local "listening and dialogue" sessions on the topic of where God is calling us. To date more than 40,000 voices have contributed to this phase of the three-year process.

The "listening and dialogue" phase continues up until 6 March 2019.

Our parish sessions held in November 2018 and February 2019 resulted in passionate and thoughtful discussions.

Here are the topics raised by our parishioners who attended the sessions.



Leadership & Governance within the Church

"Transparency in hierarchy, in accountability, in decision making – the church is not above the law- structures are too rigid – boys club false piety that alienates and is seen as deception."

"Lay people should play a greater role so that all power is not in the hierarchy."

"Fair distribution of wealth and advocacy for Justice – to equate to the Gospel message of Jesus - Love one another as I have loved you"



Plenary Council 2020

Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

God is asking of us:

To be:

- Non-judgemental
- Respectful towards– divorced, same sex
- Inclusive
- Hopeful
- Relevant (to all age groups)
- Reach out
- Engage
- Greater voice – young, old , women
- Acceptance
- Love and support (eyes wide open in practical ways)
- Do something

The Priesthood

"Re- evaluate structures and teaching of priests for their psychological and emotional maturity.

Priests must be at least 5 years out of schooling before entering the seminary

Study for priests should occur at least 50% in co-ed open Universities"

"Optional celibacy – with a significant need for married priests."

Change is needed

- Mass – empty chairs why??
- Running of Catholic schools (catholic priest doesn't run the school)
- Pomp & pageantry (\$\$\$ around this!!)
- Songs at Mass
- How to teach R.E.
- To have a greater social voice – Refugees
- To be a force to reach out to others
- To bring children back to the Church
- Strip back to core messages of the Gospels - LOVE

Closer Connection to God and Prayer

“To trust in God, to develop a relationship with God, to show joyful witness to family and community by example.”

“Reconnecting to Jesus’ teaching and finding more relevant ways to share the gospel through both genders in leadership.”

“Renewed understanding of what is prayer – actions connecting us with God, not necessarily formal prayer.”

“God is asking us why have you forgotten? ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.’”

The Sexual Abuse Crisis

“Acknowledgement and removal of priests from priesthood for those found guilty of paedophilia – Bishops to take responsibility including at Vatican level - OWN the MISTAKES.”

“That church funds are not used to support the legal costs of paedophiles within the clergy.”

Acceptance & Acknowledgement

“We the members of the Church need to accept- take on board the hurt the Church has done – acknowledge....what has happened e.g. sexual abuse; injustices toward gay...divorced, then – we are sorry – what do we do now? Our sorrow seen by our actions e.g. selling Church property to properly compensate victims of sexual abuse.”

Climate

“Recognition of climate change and the urgency for real action- Advocacy and Awareness.”

Future Church

“The structure [the buildings] need to change – more spiritual hubs for daily gatherings.”

“The main church will be like a ‘fire station’ – it will act when needed e.g.: sacraments/ funerals /weddings.”

“Contemporise /modernise.”

Problems with Rules

- You can get married if.....
- You can get baptised if.....
- You can go to the catholic school if.....



Plenary Council 2020

Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

The role of Women in the Church

“Inclusive of women in leadership roles in the church, in decision making and with voting rights so that gender balance is significantly addressed.”

“Deaconate of women / priesthood for women.”

“No blocking of the language of women becoming priests/popes/ leadership as this blocks hope for change.”



A More Inclusive Church

“How do we reach / welcome all people to be in relationship with God and all people to feel they belong to our church?”

“More inclusive stance for marginalised – Divorced/ LGBT/ IVF/ Contraception/ mental illness/ elderly.”

“Gender fluidity and how it will be addressed within church and schools?”

Church as relevant to today’s world

“The structures from Rome down don’t seem to facilitate this.

Remove clerical hierarchies and add lay councils.”

To keep up to date on the progress of Plenary 2020, go to:

www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au