



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS MEET POPE FRANCIS, PRAY AT ST PETER'S TOMB

Pope Francis has given his apostolic blessing to the Australian Catholic bishops and encouraged them to explore new ways of being missionary in Australia at this time.

Almost forty Australian bishops met with Pope Francis for more than two hours as part of their *Ad Limina Apostolorum* visit, translated as "To the Threshold of the Apostles" on June 24.

It was a high point of a memorable first day of the *Ad Limina*, which began with the bishops celebrating Mass at the tomb of St Peter.

The bishops raised with Pope Francis a number of topics that are of deep concern to the Catholic Church in Australia. Among them were the Church's work to eliminate child sexual abuse and to accompany survivors of abuse, the bishops' desire to support and minister to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the hopes for the Plenary Council and the need to find new ways of witnessing to Jesus Christ in Australian society in a time of change.

The Australian bishops also met with the various departments of the Holy See with responsibilities for different aspects of Church life.

