



## Introducing Marie Shaddock

Marie Shaddock is one of the Diocese's Plenary Council Delegates. Marie is a member of the Ouyen Parish, with a history of broad involvement, both formally and informally, in Catholic Church activities.

Marie has also been a partner in family-run small business enterprises, and she understands the pressures many families and individuals face in today's world. Marie is the mother of seven children, who are all now young adults. She is a trained teacher and supported Catholic education in Ouyen with the local parish school until it closed.

Marie is truly active in her local parish, she prepares church bulletins and powerpoint presentations for Mass, she organises and delivers the parish sacramental ministry and with others, has instituted regular Eucharistic adoration in the Ouyen church.

The youth of her area are of special interest to Marie and she has run a youth group which incorporated a social justice focus. Marie has also supported young people from the parish by accompanying them to attend national youth gatherings. She has helped to run Lenten study groups and the Alpha course, is active in the CWL and represents our parish on the Sunraysia Regional Assembly. At diocesan level, Marie has been a member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council for the past six years. She has completed a Certificate in Pastoral Ministry from Dayton, Ohio.

Her work often involves considerable personal commitment in terms of time spent travelling to events. In our rural and relatively remote area, where people are stretched in many ways, she has been instrumental in helping to foster spiritual growth and in representing Catholics from our local Mallee communities.

Marie expresses her feelings on being named as a delegate below:

I am still getting over the amazement of being accepted as a delegate and I have to say that I am somewhat terrified at the prospect because I feel so inadequate and ordinary. For me the restrictions of COVID-19 have really only made it seem that bit more surreal, because it seems like nothing is happening or changing. The fact that I now keep a journal as part of my commitment to the Plenary process reminds me that this is 'real' and that we are part of a rapidly, changing world in which everything is effected.

Whilst life seems to be put 'on hold' I think it is also a great opportunity to further reflect and discern what it is that God wants of his Church here in Australia. The enforced shut-down of our lives at present, allow us to see what may have remained hidden previously - buried by our 'busyness'. I think the Corona virus has helped us recognise what is really important. We can live much more simply, and for many of us it is a matter of getting back to the basics. Our faith has been challenged but only on the surface. Our beliefs remain the same but the ways we live out our faith have been turned upside down or simply taken away altogether.

It is these changes and challenges that force us to take a long hard look at ourselves, how we practise our faith, how we can be nourished by it - and that is not a bad thing. To me that is the essence of the Plenary, taking a long hard look (and listen) to what is really going on and what is needed. I feel humbled and at the same time overwhelmed by being able to be present at something which is really monumental for our country, and which many others will be closely following. This time of restriction has made us more aware of each other, and more concerned for each others wellbeing and it is a real opportunity to open the doors to the Holy Spirit and allow him to show us the way. God always brings good out of a situation.