



# Continuing the Journey



The last twelve or so months of our Plenary Council Journey has required many unplanned changes because of the impact of COVID-19. What hasn't changed is the heart of the journey – the discernment process.

We are mindful of all those who have made a significant contribution to the Plenary Council journey so far through the responses submitted during the time of listening, dialogue, and discernment; as well as the work of the members of the Six Discernment and Writing Groups.

The other important milestone celebrated recently is the publication of the Agenda for the Plenary Council. It charges the Members with the responsibility of developing "concrete proposals" for the Church in Australia in response to sixteen questions born of the last three years of conversation and discernment. It is important for all of us to remember when reading the Agenda that it is to be addressed over the entirety of the time we "celebrate" the Plenary Council. This includes the first Assembly in October 2021, the months between the two assemblies and the second Assembly in July 2022.

We extend an invitation, another opportunity, to engage in the process and to listen deeply to the voice of the Spirit. You can do this by commenting on the agenda below or by responding on the next page.

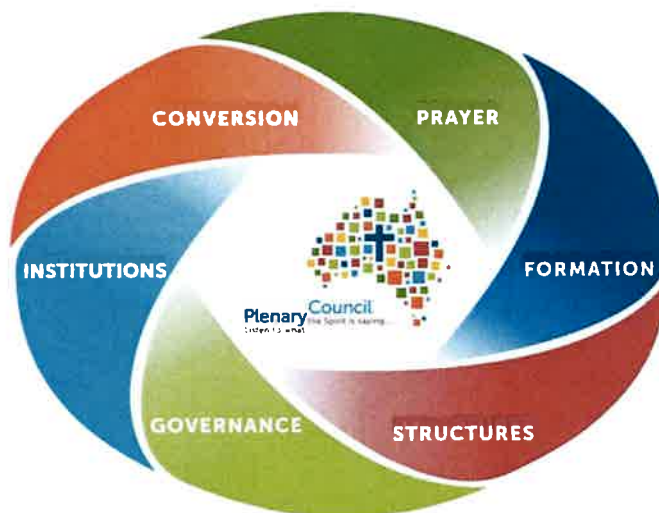
Responses can be made by either individuals or groups in your parish or community (adhering to COVID-19 restrictions). They do not have to be formal - they can be written or in poems or pictures, songs or prayers.

## FIFTH PLENARY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA **AGENDA**

As children of God, disciples of Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Members of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia are called to develop concrete proposals to create a more missionary, Christ-centred Church in Australia at this time.

*'I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation.'*

*Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 27*



Agenda continued next page

Comments on the Agenda can be made here:

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**Conversion**

- How might we better accompany one another on the journey of personal and communal conversion which mission in Australia requires?
- How might we heal the wounds of abuse, coming to see through the eyes of those who have been abused?
- How might the Church in Australia open in new ways to Indigenous ways of being Christian in spirituality, theology, liturgy, and missionary discipleship? How might we learn from the First Nations peoples?
- How might the Church in Australia meet the needs of the most vulnerable, go to the peripheries, be missionary in places that may be overlooked or left behind in contemporary Australia? How might we partner with others (Christians, people of other faiths, neighbourhood community groups, government) to do this?
- How might the Church in Australia respond to the call to 'ecological conversion'? How can we express and promote a commitment to an 'Integral ecology of life' in all its dimensions, with particular attention to the more vulnerable people and environments in our country and region?

**Prayer**

- How might we become a more contemplative people, committing more deeply to prayer as a way of life, and celebrating the liturgy of the Church as an encounter with Christ who sends us out to "make disciples of all the nations"?
- How might we better embrace the diverse liturgical traditions of the Churches which make up the Catholic Church and the cultural gifts of immigrant communities to enrich the spirituality and worship of the Church in Australia?

**Formation**

- How might we better form leaders for mission – adults, children and families, couples and single people?
- How might we better equip ordained ministers to be enablers of missionary discipleship: the Church becoming more a "priestly people" served by the ordained ministry?
- How might formation, both pre- and post-ordination, better foster the development of bishops, priests and deacons as enablers of the universal Christian vocation to holiness lived in missionary discipleship?

**Structures**

- How might parishes better become local centres for the formation and animation of missionary disciples?
- How might the Church in Australia be better structured for mission, considering the parish, the diocese, religious orders, the PJPs and new communities?

**Governance**

- How might the People of God, lay and ordained, women and men, approach governance in the spirit of synodality and co responsibility for more effective proclamation of the Gospel?
- How might we recast governance at every level of the Church in Australia in a more missionary key?

**Institutions**

- How might we better see the future of Catholic education (primary, secondary and tertiary) through a missionary lens?
- How might we better see the future of Catholic social services, agencies and health and aged care ministries as key missionary and evangelising agencies?

**You are invited to respond to the following:**

You are invited to share briefly the impact of COVID-19 on your life and your faith life.

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What has changed for you in relation to the Plenary Council since COVID-19?

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Any further comment you would like to share?

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**Responses can be submitted: Pastoral Ministry Office, PO Box 576, Ballarat, 3353 or email: [pastoralministry@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:pastoralministry@ballarat.catholic.org.au)**