

A Plenary Council provides an occasion for the whole Church to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to our Church at this time. For this to happen, wide consultation of the entire Australian Church will be necessary so that all voices have an opportunity to be heard. A new relationship of trust and confidence has to be created within the Church in Australia and the wider community.

All people are invited to engage in Listening and Dialogue Encounters, which are an open and inclusive experience of listening, dialogue and discernment about the future of the Catholic Church in Australia

The Listening and Dialogue Encounter is an opportunity to get together with a group of friends, family or colleagues and spend some time thinking and talking about your experiences of faith, life and the Church. This Listening and Dialogue phase of preparation is open until Ash Wednesday 2019.

Responses can be made by either individuals or groups. They do not have to be formal - they can be written or in poems or pictures, rap songs or prayers. You are invited to submit your response on the other side of this card.

A Listening and Dialogue Encounter

Suggested steps for your gathering



STEP 01 Pray Together

You are invited to pray together. You might like to read scripture, you can use the prayer on the back of this page or just speak to God from your heart.

STEP 02 Read Question and Reflect

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?

Reflect on the question in silence.

- Write a list of all the responses to this question that come to mind.
- Share aloud with each other all of the responses you have written down.
- Working together, **choose one topic** from your responses to focus on for Step 3.
- *You can repeat Step 3 for each topic on your list of responses over time. You may want to get together again in future weeks and months in order to continue to talk with one another using these steps. Use this process for each question listed on the back of this page.*

STEP 03 Share and Listen

Reflect, Share and Listen

- **REFLECT: What have I experienced in the area of this topic?**

In silence, reflect on your personal experience of faith, life and the Church related to the topic area you have chosen to dialogue about. You may want to write your thoughts down or simply sit quietly with your thoughts.

- **SHARE AND LISTEN: Tell a story of my experience in this area.**

Take turns to share aloud with each other your personal experience of faith, life and the Church. When others are speaking, remember to listen with an open and humble heart.

- **REFLECT: How has another perspective influenced my own?**

After each person has shared, in silence, reflect on how stories shared by other people have influenced your own perspective. You may want to write your thoughts down or simply sit quietly with your thoughts.

• **SHARE: How has another perspective influenced my own?**

Show that you have listened deeply and openly to each other. Some phrases you may find helpful are: 'I feel your sharing has helped me to...' or 'From what you have shared with me, I now understand...

STEP 04 Pray and Respond

Conclusion

- **PRAY:** At the end of your first Listening and Dialogue Encounter, you are invited to pray together. You can use the words below, or you might like to say a prayer of gratitude in your own words.

*Creator God, we thank you for the encounter with one another today.
We know that where two or three are gathered, you are in our midst.
Thank you for being with us and for the courage to speak boldly and
with passion, and the humility to listen with open hearts.
We ask you to continue to walk with us, as we discover the pathway
toward the future you are calling us to. Amen.*

- **RESPOND:** Your voice is important to shaping the future of the Church.

Everyone is invited to respond to the following questions:

What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?

What questions do you have about the future of the Church for the Plenary Council to consider in 2020?

Do you have a story of your experience of faith, or the Church you would like to share?

Responses can be submitted to any of the following:

Pastoral Ministry Office, PO Box 576, Ballarat, 3353

pastoralministry@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Plenary Council, PO Box 747, North Sydney, NSW, 2059

www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au



Plenary Council 2020

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