



# A JOYFUL, HOPE-FILLED AND SERVANT COMMUNITY

**William Lowry - Seminarian of the Ballarat Diocese comments on the discernment paper -  
HOW IS GOD CALLING US TO BE A CHRIST-CENTRED CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA THAT IS A Joyful, Hope-Filled  
& Servant Community?**

***After reading this paper, what gives you hope?***

What gives me hope in this paper is the emphasis on the Council as a new impetus for the life of service, grounded in the imitation of Jesus Christ. As the Theological Vision outlines, our relationship to God should be the stimulus for our joy, our hope and life of service, as the ecclesial body of Christ. This paper could aptly take its subtitle from the words of St. Paul, "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9: 7b). My hope is that we as a Church can live up to that moniker, *cheerful giver*.

***What do you find challenging?***

What I find particularly challenging within this paper, currently studying for ordained ministry is the point of facilitating lay responsibility within the parish and the broader community. Within the parish context every member needs to be aware of their importance to the life of the community and have their aspirations and concerns heard and respected. How can pastors and parish leadership encourage all the faithful to *duc in altum* (Lk 5:4b), to put out into the deep and cast their nets in their respective ministries, to be a parish that radiates the light of Christ in the world.

***What are your thoughts on this paper in relation to your parish or the diocese as a whole?***

My hope is that we as a Diocese don't see the implementation of the aspirations within this paper as simply the work of the Council. Obviously certain proposals must be reserved to the conciliar process, but the Council itself can't strengthen our parish communities to be places of joy, hope and service on its own, that is our responsibility as members of these parishes. I pray we don't let this opportunity slip idly by, and motivated by the spirit of the council we bring the missionary impulse of the Gospel in joyful service to our own communities of faith.