



**Plenary Council 2020**  
Listen to what the Spirit is saying...



## The 6 NATIONAL THEMES for DISCERNMENT









*With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."*

As we move into this second stage of the Plenary Council journey we continue to seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Beginning in July 2019, we are called to reflect on Scripture, Church teaching and our contemporary situation, in order to discern the answer to this question. The fruits of what is discerned during this time will help shape the agenda of the first session of Plenary Council in October 2020.

This National Theme for Discernment is inspired by the voices of the People of God who expressed a desire for individuals and groups within and also beyond the Church to find a better welcome and be incorporated more into her life and mission. There was a call to renew forms of governance and leadership in the Church, to find ways formally and informally of being co-responsible for ministry and mission, seeking structures and processes of collaboration, shared decision-making and financial co-responsibility in order to enable this greater involvement of lay people particularly of women, young people, people of diverse cultural backgrounds and people with disabilities. There was an expressed need for stronger connections across the many parts of the Church, and with other Christian traditions.

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The Snapshot report for this theme will be released on 23rd June.  
The Comprehensive report for all themes will be released on 28<sup>th</sup> July

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## How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is prayerful and Eucharistic?

*"When they were at table, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognised him."*

*(Luke 24:30-31)*

As we move into this second stage of the Plenary Council journey we continue to seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Beginning in July 2019, we are called to reflect on Scripture, Church teaching and our contemporary situation, in order to discern the answer to this question. The fruits of what is discerned during this time will help shape the agenda of the first session of Plenary Council in October 2020.

This National Theme for Discernment is inspired by the voices of the People of God who shared how deeply they treasured the Eucharist and the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. There was a call for stronger and more engaging preaching, with an emphasis on the Word of God and connection to daily life, some seeking a uniquely Australian expression of prayer and Eucharistic celebration, drawing from the wisdom and rituals of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and also bringing together the many migrant communities which make up the Church in Australia. There were many divergent expressions of ways in which people and communities encounter God through their experiences of prayer, music and liturgy, and a desire for catechesis, training and formation for those in ministries related to these.

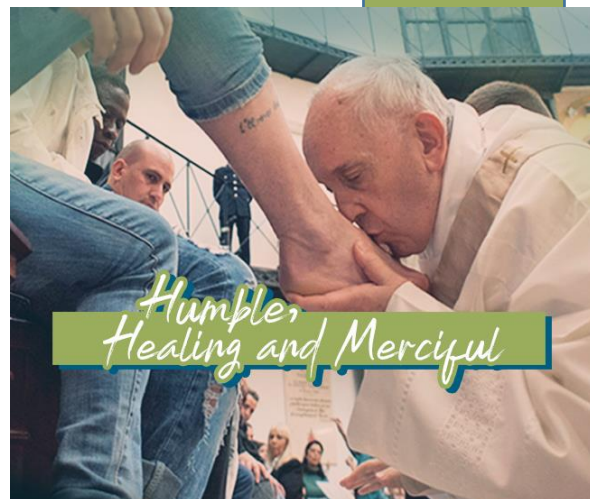
Keep the commandments  
Contemplative spirituality  
Greater leadership from priests  
Acknowledge Christ's presence in the Eucharist  
Church to act as a guide for Australian society  
Importance of Communion services in rural parishes  
Better formation for liturgical ministries and sacramental programs  
Better communication of what the Church does  
Authentic faith teaching in Catholic schools  
Return to traditional pre-Vatican II ways  
Renewed call to holiness  
Greater leadership from Bishops  
Remain faithful to Church teaching  
Greater focus on Jesus Christ  
Greater support for RCIA  
Pray the Rosary  
New translation of the Mass (inclusive language)  
Remain faithful to Church teaching on marriage  
Better attention to all aspects of liturgy  
Mass to be appealing to Youth and Children  
Greater emphasis on prayer and Sacraments  
Eucharistic adoration  
Return to Traditional Latin Mass  
Keep the faith  
Greater involvement of the laity  
Greater focus on the Word of God  
Cultural Masses  
Better homilies  
Greater attention to music in the liturgy  
Affordable adult faith formation courses  
Charismatic spirituality  
Listen to the Holy Spirit  
Greater trust, faith and hope in God

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## How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is humble, healing and merciful?

*"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."*



As we move into this second stage of the Plenary Council journey we continue to seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Beginning in July 2019, we are called to reflect on Scripture, Church teaching and our contemporary situation, in order to discern the answer to this question. The fruits of what is discerned during this time will help shape the agenda of the first session of Plenary Council in October 2020.

This National Theme for Discernment is inspired by the voices of the People of God who expressed a deep and faith-filled trust in God and a need for lament and healing within the Church, acknowledging the sexual abuse crisis as a turning point for the Church in Australia. It identified the need for relationship and reconciliation among many within the Catholic community, and with the wider Australian society, particularly with Australia's First Peoples and with all of creation. A desire was expressed for stronger prayer and sacramental life and more effective outreach to those who seek healing, as a renewed openness to and sign of God's mercy.

Greater focus on the Word of God  
Greater trust faith and hope in God  
Better training and support for youth leaders  
Better implementation of Royal Commission Recommendations  
Healing liturgies and public signs or acts of reparation for clergy sexual abuse  
Special care of youth  
Outreach to rural parishes  
Care for the family  
End discrimination of LGBTQ  
Restore the Third Rite of Reconciliation  
Youth to be involved more in Church community  
Mass to be appealing to Youth and Children  
New translation of the Mass  
Greater focus on Jesus Christ  
Fight for human rights issues  
More transparency and accountability regarding clergy sexual abuse  
Inclusion of the divorced and remarried  
Defend right-to-life issues  
Outreach to all the baptised  
Greater access to Mass and Reconciliation  
Greater connection with and inclusion of Indigenous Australians  
Stronger parish communities  
Be a witness in society  
Greater emphasis on prayer and Sacraments  
Heal and move beyond the clergy sexual abuse scandal  
Baby Boomer generation to listen to young Catholics  
Greater recognition of Eastern Catholic Churches  
Transparency in governance and decision making  
Focus on the new evangelisation  
Outreach to the wider community  
Reduce margins between rich and poor  
Allow contraception birth control  
End Clericalism  
Greater leadership from priests  
Care for the environment  
Listen to one another more  
Establish more youth programs

The Snapshot report for this theme will be released on 7<sup>th</sup> July.  
The Comprehensive report for all themes will be released on 28<sup>th</sup> July.





## How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is a joyful, hope-filled and servant community?

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All*

*who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Each day they met together in the Temple; they broke bread in their homes; they shared their food with great joy and sincerity of heart; they praised God and won the favour of all the people."*

*(Acts 2:42-46)*

As we move into this second stage of preparation for the Plenary Council, we continue to seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Beginning in July 2019, we are called to reflect on Scripture, Church teaching and good practice, to discern the answer to this question. The fruits of what is discerned during this time will shape the agenda of the first session of Plenary Council in October 2020.

This National Theme for Discernment is inspired by the voices of the People of God who expressed a yearning for the Church to be a sign of God's kingdom for all people in Australia – to be able to see the Catholic Church in action, and to recognise Jesus. There was an expression of faith-filled hope in the capacity of the Catholic community to celebrate together, to show what it is to be a follower of Christ and to be loved unconditionally by God. There was a call to contemplate the Gospel call to be a servant Church for the good of all people in Australia – particularly for refugees and asylum seekers and other people who are vulnerable or at risk. Many responses called for greater sharing of the story of the good works done by so many people and organisations of the Church. Some responses expressed a hunger for strong witness of faith, especially by priests, young people and female leaders in parish and school ministries.

Renewed call to holiness  
Faith formation for parents  
Better use of finances  
Parishes involved in planning for the future  
Listen to one another more  
Greater trust, faith and hope in God  
Cultural Masses  
Liturgy of the Word and sacramental programs  
Putting Gospel values in action  
Keep the faith  
Youth to be involved more in Church community  
Care for neighbour  
Share the faith with others  
Authentic faith teaching in Catholic schools  
End Clericalism  
Greater inclusion of all people  
Greater focus on permanent deacons  
Greater connection with and inclusion of Indigenous Australians  
Pray the Rosary  
Greater focus on the Word of God  
Stronger parish communities  
Defend right-to-life issues  
Greater access to Mass and Reconciliation  
Listen to the Holy Spirit  
Mass to be appealing to Youth and Children  
Better selection and formation of candidates to priesthood  
Creation of small communities/groups within parishes  
Church to act as a guide for Australian society  
Greater attention to music in the liturgy  
Acknowledge Christ's presence in the Eucharist  
Overseas priests  
Contemplative spirituality  
Outreach to all the baptised

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## How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is open to Conversion, renewal and reform?

*After John the Baptist had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee and began preaching the Good News of God. He said, "The time has come; the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Good News"*

*(Mark 1:14-15)*

As we move into this second stage of the Plenary Council journey we continue to seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Beginning in July 2019, we are called to reflect on Scripture, Church teaching and our contemporary situation, in order to discern the answer to this question. The fruits of what is discerned during this time will help shape the agenda of the first session of Plenary Council in October 2020.

This National Theme for Discernment is inspired by the voices of the People of God who expressed a desire to do things differently in response to Christ and the experience of our people, accepting that faithfulness to tradition requires change that is both personal and communal. Respondents also affirmed the important role of the clergy, expressing their appreciation for their vocation and recognising the need for support and ongoing formation and accompaniment. Some asked for a consideration of alternative approaches to ordained ministry, some for a greater inclusion of laity and different groups in the Church's life, some for new models of governance and leadership, and some for a renewed fidelity to the Church's teachings. There was also a call for a renewed life of prayer and communion with one another, including understanding the many different ways in which we encounter God and experience a conversion of heart.



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The Snapshot report for this theme will be released on 21<sup>st</sup> July.  
The Comprehensive report for all themes will be released on 28<sup>th</sup> July.