



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

(By email and hard copy)

Thursday, 19 July 2018

Dear Fathers and Deacons

Re Plenary Council 2020: What is God asking of us in Australia at this time?

Since the official launch of the journey toward the Plenary Council 2020 earlier this year, many parishes have become engaged in the listening and dialogue process. Other parishes are seeking support to become involved in the process and there are other parishes who have raised queries about what resources are available.

This letter provides an update regarding resources that are available and further information about how parishes can become engaged in the Plenary.

1. The Plenary Council 2020 process

Firstly, it is important to remember that we are participating in a **process**. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference have provided a three-year plan for the Plenary Council:

- June 2018 - Ash Wednesday 2019: Listening and Dialogue Sessions
- June 2019 - November 2019: Discernment, Face-to-face encounters, Immersion and Retreats
- January 2020 - April 2020: Drafting Council Program and Documents
- June 2020 - September 2020: Feedback and Sharing on what has been heard and what the next steps will be
- January 2021 - April 2021: Consultation and Feedback / Finalisation of Documents

We are currently in the Opening Listening and Dialogue phase, which concludes on Ash Wednesday (6 March) 2019.

2. What is being asked of us during this current phase?

During this Listening and Dialogue phase, people around the country are being asked to reflect on the Plenary question: *What is God asking of us in Australia at this time?* A process has been devised for this and can be accessed via the Plenary Council website.

3. What is the first step for my community?

For parishes who have not yet commenced the process, it might be helpful to establish a Plenary Council 2020 team. This team could:

- Identify how to best engage the various groups in the parish, school and wider community
- Coordinate communications about the listening and dialogue sessions with the identified audiences



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The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.

- Coordinate a team to lead the sessions
 - Provide practical assistance in setting up for the sessions
4. How can we prepare our communities?

This is a new process for many of our communities, so how we introduce the Listening and Dialogue process to the community will be important. A range of tools have been supplied via the Plenary Website in this regard, including a week by week outline with bulletin announcements and intercessory prayers.

A short question and answer sheet about the Plenary Council 2020 is attached and also may be helpful as it provides an easy-to-read snapshot about the nature and purpose of the Plenary Council 2020 and the process leading towards it.

5. Listening and Dialogue sessions

It is recommended that each Listening and Dialogue group has between 4-6 people. The small number in the group ensures that each person in the group has the opportunity to speak. One member of the group should be appointed to facilitate the conversation.

The attached 'Tips for facilitating a Listening and dialogue session' may assist with this process.

6. Not sure how to move forward?

For people who are new to the Plenary process and feel they need further information, the opportunities below are available (more will be added if required).

These sessions are designed to assist people who feel they need more information about the Plenary process to enable them to activate it in their local community.

The briefing will provide:

- an overview of the context behind the Plenary Council 2020
- information about the nuts and bolts of the process
- an opportunity to participate in a listening and dialogue session
- an opportunity to commence planning the process for the local context of the participant

These briefings are open to individual parish representatives or parish teams and can be booked via the supplied trybooking link:

Wednesday 8 August, 6.30pm - 8.30pm
St Martin de Porres, Laverton
<https://www.trybooking.com/WXRP>

Thursday 9 August, 6.30pm - 8.30pm
St Mary of the Angels, Geelong
<https://www.trybooking.com/WWDM>

Saturday 11 August, 11am - 1pm
Cardinal Knox Centre, East Melbourne
<https://www.trybooking.com/WXSD>

Thursday 30 August, 7.30pm - 9.30pm*
St Francis Xavier, Montmorency
<https://www.trybooking.com/WXRZ>

**This session is being hosted by the Diamond Valley and Yarra Deaneries, and includes a talk on "Pope Francis' vision for a listening church" by Fr Noel Connolly, a member of the national facilitation team.*

We are grateful to the above parishes for hosting these sessions.

7. Plenary Council 2020 Resources

There are two websites where information about the Plenary Council 2020 process can be accessed. The Australia wide Plenary Council website (www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au) or via the Melbourne Plenary website: www.cam.org.au/plenary.

The Melbourne Plenary website aims to provide information and resources local to the Archdiocese. Several parishes are hosting listening and dialogue sessions that are open to the broader community, and we will publicise these sessions on this website. We will also continue to add local resources to this site which may be of assistance to groups as they hold their listening and dialogue sessions. Information about Diocesan listening and dialogue sessions will also be publicised via this site.

If you have any queries at all about commencing the process toward the Plenary Council 2020 or about the Plenary Council 2020 itself, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me via email: plenary@cam.org.au or via phone: 9926 5600.

With my very best wishes,



Cathy Jenkins
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