



Diocese of Wagga Wagga



Plenary Council 2020

Aim:

To develop legislation and pastoral practices that will shape the Catholic Church in Australia for generations to come. “While it won’t affect doctrine, it will have legislative power to mould the practices within the Australian Catholic Church.”

Who is involved: The whole church body.

What is involved:

Prayer. Sharing our Catholic story. Dialogue. Listening and discernment. Response.

Process:

The “Listening and Dialogue Encounter” is the first stage of preparation and will continue until Ash Wednesday 2019 – this will be a time of ‘listening to God by listening to each other’.

People from across Australia – Catholic and non-Catholic, practising and non-practising, young and old, lay and religious – will be encouraged to open dialogue in their local parishes and faith communities with some direction given to facilitate the discussion.

These community-parish-diocese-etc based gatherings will produce summary reports which will be used to form the agenda for the actual Plenary Council.

Then 2020 will be a ‘Year of proposing’ and result in the 1st Session of the Plenary Council which will be held in Adelaide in October 2020. From this meeting, a discussion paper will be developed for the second Council session in May 2021 in Sydney. Any recommendations from sessions 1 and 2 will go to the Australian Bishop’s Conference who will submit these to the Pope for His approval, and the approved submissions will then be presented to the Australian Church for implementation.

Working out the process:

It is hoped that a diocesan facilitating team (or co-ordinating team) will be formed to carry the process.

It is hoped that a facilitator (or ‘animator’) will be appointed by the local priest and community in each parish and in each sizeable community (school, religious group, discussion group, etc) and they will be the contact point for that group. These facilitators will organise discussion groups for their communities.

If individuals want to make submissions, they are entitled and encouraged to do so. It would be preferred that group responses be submitted via the Plenary Co-ordinating Team so that we can be aware of the local points of interest for the people of our diocese.

It would also be good to see senior high school students involved (at least Years 11 & 12) – and teachers in our schools as well as parents of children in our schools – primary and secondary.

The support of the priest/s of the parishes/groups is necessary and vital for the participants to feel that they are part of the Church and for the discussion in the groups to be taken seriously. Priests, more than anyone else, need to be listeners in this process for the Church to have a future. Resources are available from the PlenaryCouncil2020 website to facilitate discussions and the broader process: <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/> (or just google Catholic Plenary Council for more information, videos etc.)

Included with this communication are the following resources downloaded from the Plenary Council 2020 website:

- The Parish Guide to the Listening and Dialogue Process
- Listening and Dialogue Encounter – Adults, Small Groups
- Listening and Dialogue Encounter – Youth and Young Adults

Please direct responses or submissions to the **Plenary Council 2020 Co-ordinating Team:**

P O Box 473, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650 or
Email: plenary2020@wagga.catholic.org.au

For further information or assistance, please contact **Fr Bernie Thomas:**

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