

Plenary Council 2020

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

Listening and Dialogue Encounter Session Outline

The invitation to participate in a Plenary listening and dialogue session is open to everyone. This Plenary Process is helping us to develop a habit of dialogue as a national church and within our local communities. As such, groups are encouraged to meet more than once, with the suggested time for each gathering anywhere from 60-90 minutes. The group may choose to focus on one or two topics at each meeting.

By gathering with fellow parishioners, family members, friends and colleagues, new ideas may emerge, and this might help us discover themes or questions that we may wish to share.

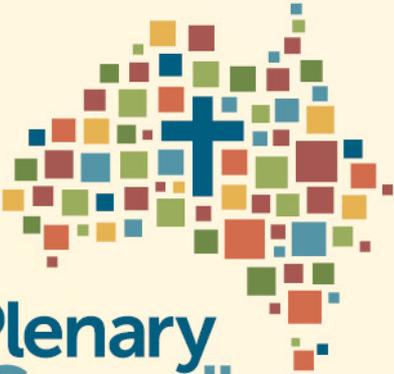
The following outline is offered as a suggestion for groups to follow in setting up a listening and dialogue encounter.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- It is advisable that discussion groups are composed of than 4-6 members, to ensure each voice is heard.
- Assign a **facilitator** in the group (parishes might invite members of their Parish Council or leaders of Lenten/Advent groups to fulfil this role). Watch this short video with suggestions for facilitating a group: <https://www.cam.org.au/plenary/Resources>
- Assign a **scribe** for each group (different from the facilitator) who will record what the group discusses. Ensure there is a clear understanding of what to record.
- Two discussion guides have been prepared to cater for adults and for youth. Choose which process you are going to follow. Copies are available to download from: <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say/>.

THE SESSION

- **PRAY.**
Gather the group with a shared prayer. You may wish to use the Plenary Prayer or listen to the Plenary song "Listen" by Peter Pellican. Copies of the prayer and song are available from <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources>.
- **SHARE.**
To begin, the facilitator may provide a brief context for the Plenary process, as well as the timeline for the Plenary Council so everyone has an understanding of how their contribution fits into the overall Plenary. One suggestion is to listen to Archbishop Mark Coleridge's audio podcast from the ABC "Religion and Ethics Report", where he discusses the origins of the Plenary and Pope Francis' vision for a Synodal Church where: *everyone listens to everyone, those who vote do so as those who have listened, all listen humbly to the voice of the Holy Spirit and all are learners.*



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- Share Pope Francis' teaching on us as a 'listening church of missionary disciples', as he writes in *Evangelii Gaudium*: "In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization. The people of God is holy thanks to this anointing, which makes it infallible *in credendo*. This means that it does not err in faith, even though it may not find words to explain that faith. The Spirit guides it in truth and leads it to salvation^[96] As part of his mysterious love for humanity, God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an instinct of faith – *sensus fidei* – which helps them to discern what is truly of God. The presence of the Spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities, and a wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even when they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression. (EG, #119)
- **ENCOURAGE.**
Encourage the group to take a prayerful stance; a discerning heart; to be open, bold and honest in their sharing. Encourage too respectful listening; not debate nor 'instructing'.
- **EXPERIENCE.**
Follow the steps as recorded in your chosen Listening & Dialogue handout (Adult or Youth).
- **COLLATE.**
Collate the responses under the particular questions addressed:
 1. What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?
 2. What questions do you have about the future of the Church for the Plenary Council to consider in 2020? (if you would like to do this as well as question number one)
 3. Do you have a story of your experience of faith, or the Church that you would like to share? (Individuals only)
- **SUBMIT.**
Once the group is ready, submit what has been discussed and reflected upon through the National Plenary Council website: <http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say/>
- **CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE.** Decide when the group will meet again to discuss other topics raised.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

A number of resources have been published and made available online including articles and video reflections on the Plenary:
National Plenary Website: www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au
Melbourne Plenary Website: www.cam.org.au/plenary

Or contact Cathy Jenkins, Diocesan Coordinator:
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