

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

A **plenary council** is the highest form of gathering that a church – *all* the church – in a country can hold. It has the authority to make church laws as a result of its discernment. The responsibility for making these decisions falls on the *Conference of Bishops* who do so only after discerning the will of the Holy Spirit *with* the people.

The Plenary Council 2020 will be a formal meeting of lay and ordained representatives to make decisions about the future of the Catholic Church in Australia. It is an inclusive process with three stages. We are currently in the Preparatory Stage that aims to engage the whole Church, and even those outside the Church, in dialogue and discernment.

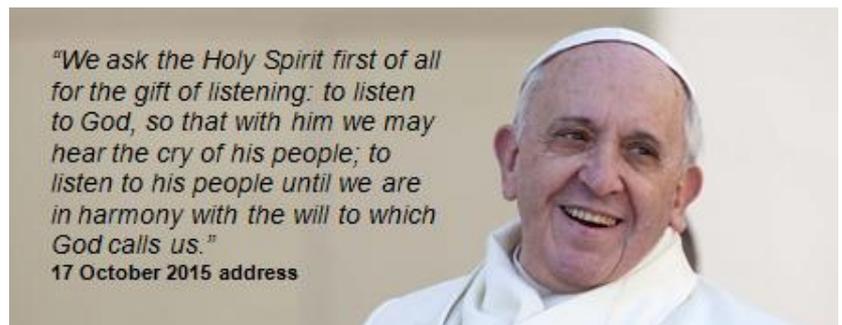
**Everyone** has a chance to participate and to express whatever the Spirit is saying to her or his heart to answer the question: **What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?**

The Plenary Council has its roots in the teachings of Vatican II and also of Pope Francis.

**Vatican II** recognized that, *“the Church has always had the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. We must, therefore, recognise and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings and its often dramatic characteristics.”* (*Gaudium et Spes*, 4). The Council expressed the importance of dialogue and participation in its discernment processes, by all the baptised in the Church, since the whole Church, not just the ordained, has been given the gift of divine revelation and the gift to interpret it faithfully.

### ***How can my voice be heard?***

You can contribute in many ways. OLR will be organising dialogue and listening sessions, as well as opportunities during Church liturgy, etc. You can also submit your thoughts/experiences/suggestions directly on-line (<http://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/resources/have-your-say/>).



Each person's perspective will be valued.

You can contribute more than one response. Your input can be especially powerful when contributed in a group dialogue & listening session as the discernment process includes listening to others just as we listen to the Holy Spirit. Individually we see a special viewpoint; together we see much more.

So...please join in one of our group sessions – or start one yourself!

**Speak boldly and with passion.  
Listen openly and with a humble heart.**

**Together we want to uncover how the Church will inspire Australians for generations to come.**

More information can be found at <http://Plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au> and keep informed through our parish website, <http://www.olr.org.au>