



Speaking the truth in love

Eph 4:15

My dear people,

Plenary Council 2020

With the permission of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, the Bishops of Australia have resolved to hold a Plenary Council in 2020-21 for the Catholic Church in Australia.

The purpose of a Plenary Council is not to change Church teaching or discipline. Rather, its purpose is to help promote the flourishing of the faith, and propose ways that the Church might do this in response to contemporary opportunities for and obstacles to people achieving their ultimate end, communion with God in heaven.

Plenary Councils do not happen often. The last one in Australia was in 1937 and was at a time when the young Australian Church faced many challenges such as the rise of Communism. Now, eighty years later, the Plenary Council takes place at a time when the Catholic Church in Australia is once again confronting a series of challenges, both different from and similar to those of 1937.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted many failings on the part of some members and leaders of the Church. This has had a profound impact on the Church in Australia that will play out for some time yet. However, this is but one of the challenges for the Church in contemporary secularising Australia. There are many others that are worthy of discussion, discernment and prayer and the Plenary Council is giving us the opportunity to do so.

Some areas that the Plenary Council 2020 might consider are:

- How can we combat the virulent secularism in some quarters of our society and the rise of atheism, especially among young people?
- How can we renew and support the family, the parish and the school which have traditionally been such wells of evangelical energy for the Church in Australia, until recently?
- How can we best evangelise, re-evangelise and transmit the faith, proposing the Catholic vision of the human person, relationships and morality under grace?
- How can we ensure that we are praying and worshipping God in ways that are worthy and welcoming?
- How can we best reach out to and care for those on the margins?
- How can we promote, form and support good marital, priestly and religious vocations?
- How can we strengthen the Catholic identity and mission of our key Catholic agencies?
- And all the other questions on your mind!

Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP, DD BA LIB BTheol DPhil
Archbishop of Sydney

Pentecost 2018 to Pentecost 2019 has been designated as a year of “dialogue and discernment” in the lead up to the Plenary Council. During this time, you will have an opportunity to participate by giving your input on these matters and many others that you may have by engaging with our Archdiocesan Plenary Council Working Group co-chaired by Bishop Terry Brady and Associate Professor Sandy Lynch. I encourage those in our parishes, schools, universities, agencies, lay groups and movements, along with clergy and bishops, to enter into the Plenary Council process as we move towards the first session of the Plenary Council in October 2020.

Plenary Council Prayer

*Come, Holy Spirit of Pentecost. Come, Holy Spirit of the great South Land.
O God our Father, bless and unite all your people in Australia And guide us on the pilgrim way of
the Plenary Council.
Give us the grace to see your face in one another and to recognize Jesus, our companion on the road.
Give us the courage to tell our stories and to speak boldly of your truth.
Give us ears to listen humbly to each other And a discerning heart to hear what you are saying.
Lead your Church into a hope-filled future, that we may live the joy of the Gospel.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Bread for the journey from age to age.*

Amen

*Our Lady Help of Christians, pray for us
St Mary Mackillop of the Cross, pray for us.*

Yours sincerely in Christ



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