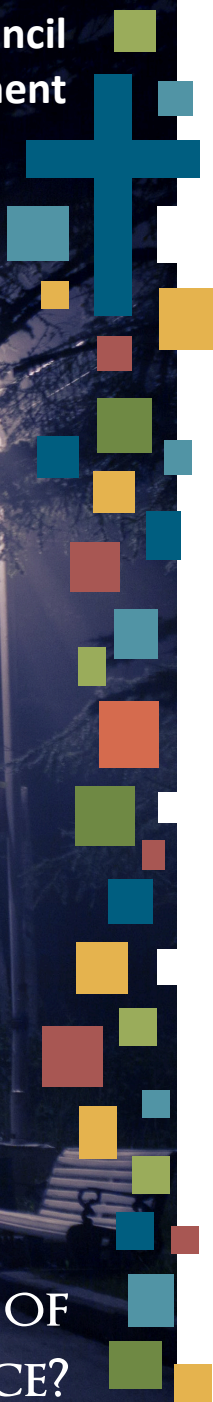


Journey towards the Plenary Council Reflecting on a Theme for Discernment

First Sunday of Advent 2020

HOW DO WE FORM CENTRES OF
JOY, HOPE AND SERVICE?



FROM THE READINGS

Lord, you are our Father, we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand. *Isaiah 64:8*

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways ... *1 Corinthians 1:3-4*

Stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming. *Mark 13:35*

FROM POPE FRANCIS

What word or phrase stands out for you?

Despite these dark clouds, which may not be ignored, I would like ... to take up and discuss many new paths of hope. For God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family.

Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 54

If only this immense sorrow may not prove useless, but enable us to take a step forward towards a new style of life. If only we might rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices, beyond the walls that we have erected ... We must not lose our ability to listen.

Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 35

Difficulties that seem overwhelming are opportunities for growth, not excuses for a glum resignation that can lead only to acquiescence. ... Let us renounce the pettiness and resentment of useless in-fighting and constant confrontation ... Reparation and reconciliation will give us new life and set us all free from fear.

Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 78.

FROM A PLENARY COUNCIL THEME



How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is A Joyful, Hope-filled and Servant Community?

[www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/]

Take a few moments for stillness and prayer to respond to two of the challenges suggested in this theme paper, for your parish, community, a group, or for you personally:

How do we ...?



- make our own, the joys and hopes of others, especially those most in need?
- build vibrant communities of faith, joy, hope and service?
- encourage and support parishioners to be part of parish life?
- help them become involved in parish ministries, such as: hospitality, bereavement, preparation for Baptism, Marriage and other Sacraments, social events, outreach to those in need, work for justice or youth ministry?
- improve communication and share good news?
- engage more positively as a Church with society as a whole?
- deepen understanding that worship, prayer and service are connected and Christ is present in all?
- strengthen connections between Church communities, parishes, diocese and organisations?

Selection of suggested challenges summarised from Plenary Council Discernment Paper: A Joyful, Hope-filled and Servant Community



A PRAYER

O God of Hope and Promise,
in a world of crisis, challenge,
heroism and new possibilities,
we wait for you and long for you this Advent.
Grant us eyes to see beyond limited horizons,
ears to hear the joy of your message
and hearts and hands
to create a hope-filled future. Amen.

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Acknowledgements: *How is God Calling Us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is A Joyful, Hope-filled & Servant Community? Continuing the Journey of Discernment toward the Plenary Council, Sydney: Plenary Council, 2020 (Discernment Paper); Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, Encyclical Letter, 2020.*

