



Sharing the voice of Christian Initiation with the Plenary Council

Plenary Council Question:

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

1. Pray together 10 minutes
- 2.1 Read the question 30 minutes
- 2.2 Read the support material (from the encyclical the *Evangelii Gaudium – The Joy of the Gospel*, foundation document of this Council.)
3. Share & Listen 45 minutes
 - 3.1 Reflect: what have I experienced in this area?
 - 3.2 Share: a story of your experience in this area
 - 3.3 Reflect: how another perspective influences you
 - 3.4 Share: how another perspective influenced you
4. Pray & Respond 5 minutes
 - 4.1 Finish with Prayer
 - 4.2 Respond on-line

(The Team Leader will need extra time to respond on-line to the Plenary Council Committee about the discussion)

What is a Plenary Council?

The Australian Catholic Bishops have called for the 2020 Plenary Council, approved by Pope Francis. It is a formal gathering, where the affairs of the Church are considered in light of significant changes within society or crises of faith at any particular time. This Council has invited all clergy, religious, and most importantly, all the laity to participate, offering our voice to the discussions. The theme of our responses will be addressed by working parties, who will format our responses for the Plenary discussions.

Christian Initiation in the Period of Post-Initiation for the Plenary Council

In this time of post-initiation, RCIA groups are invited to read the supporting material from *Evangelii Gaudium*, (EG) *the Joy of the Gospel*, a foundation document for the Plenary Council. This activity begins to open converts to Church documents; values their opinions; and encourages them to reflect with us on this important question, *what God is asking of Australia at this time*. Pray together; share and listen to each other's responses. The Council needs to hear from *the whole Church*, even those on their conversion journey. Your team leader will collate the discussion and submit this to the Plenary Council Committee on-line.

1 Pray Together

Plenary Council Prayer

**Come, Holy Spirit of Pentecost.
Come, Holy Spirit of the great South Land.
O God, 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 recognise 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**

In keeping with this stage of RCIA, groups are invited to begin with an adaption of Intercessions taken from the Solemn Blessing Ordinary Time III

You may prefer to use your Parish Prayer or another form of prayer.

**R. May the Father bless us here today in His kindness and pour out His saving wisdom upon us.
All. Amen**

**R. May Christ Jesus turn our steps towards Himself and show us the path of charity and peace.
All. Amen**

**R. May the Holy Spirit continue to nourish us always, and through the gifts we have received, may we in faith persevere in living out our Christian mission.
All. Amen**

2 Read Question & Support Material

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

There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter! [EV 6]

Jesus leaves us the Eucharist as the Church's daily remembrance of, and deeper sharing in the event of the Passover. The joy of evangelising always rises from grateful remembrance: it is grace which we constantly implore. The apostles never forgot the moment when Jesus touched their hearts... Together with Jesus this remembrance makes present to us 'a great cloud of witnesses.' [EV 13; Heb 12:1]

The entire people of God proclaims the Gospel: advancing on its pilgrim way towards God. [EV 111]

We are all missionary disciples: the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work ... the presence of the Spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities and a wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively. [EV119]

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.' [EV160-161; Gal 2:20; Jn 15:12]

We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word, and different forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings...we should appear as joyful messengers of challenging proposals, guardians of the goodness and beauty which shine forth in a life of fidelity to the Gospel. [EV 167-168]

How many important things unite us! If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us. [EV 246]

A special place of encounter is offered (new mission as defined by St JPII) where 'believers and non-believers are able to engage in dialogue about fundamental issues of ethics, art and science, and about research for transcendence.' This too is a path to peace in our troubled world. [EV 257; Benedict XVI Ecclesia in Medio Oriente Propositio 55]

A true missionary never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him...in the midst of the missionary enterprise. [EV 266]

Keeping the missionary fervour alive calls for firm trust in the Holy Spirit...who 'helps us in our weakness'. But this generous trust must be nourished... [EV280; Rom 8:26]

3 Share & Listen

- 3.1 Reflect: what have I experienced in this area?
- 3.2 Share: a story of your experience in this area
- 3.3 Reflect: how another perspective influences you
- 3.4 Share: how another perspective influenced you

Some people think they are free if they can avoid God; they fail to see that they remain existentially orphaned, helpless, homeless. They cease being pilgrims and become drifters, flitting around themselves and never getting anywhere. [EV 170]

We need to practice the art of listening... an openness of heart ... without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur... anyone can have grace and charity, and yet falter in the exercise of the virtues because of persistent contrary inclinations. [EV171; *Summa Theologica* q.65]

I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots...Why not turn to God and ask Him to inspire their plans? I am firmly convinced that openness to the transcendent can bring about a new political and economic mindset...[EV205]

I speak with affection and with best intentions, apart from personal interest or political ideology... helping those who are in the thrall to an individualistic, indifferent and self-centred mentality to be freed from those unworthy chains...to live and think more humanely, noble and fruitful, which will bring dignity to their presence on this earth. [EV208]

There are other weak and defenceless beings who are frequently at the mercy of economic interests or indiscriminate exploitation. I am speaking of a creation as a whole. We human beings are not only the beneficiaries but also the stewards of other creatures. [EV215]

The Gospel has an intrinsic principle of totality: it will always remain good news until it has been proclaimed to all people, until it has healed and strengthened every aspect of humanity... The whole is greater than the part. [EV237]



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4. Pray & Respond

Closing Prayer

Creator God, we thank You for the encounter with one another today. We know that where two or three are gathered, You are in our midst. Thank You for being with us and for the courage to speak boldly and with passion; and have the humility to listen with open hearts to one another.

We ask You to continue to walk with us, as we discover the pathway toward the future You are calling us to. Amen

Respond by submitting online:

Remember our voice is important in responding to what God is asking of us in Australia
plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au

On the Plenary Council webpage, you will find a SUBMISSION link.