

THE HOLY SPIRIT & CHANGE IN THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH IN 2022

PENTECOST – 5 JUNE 2022

The Holy Spirit & Change in the Australian Church in 2022

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THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES

This Pentecost Sunday we focus on the Holy Spirit in our lives. And how we listen to the Holy Spirit.

The motions of the July Plenary Council have been published.

After much prayer to the Holy Spirit over the last few years, which concerns have been heard, and which concerns still await a hearing?

The full document is available at:

<https://bit.ly/FrameworkForMotions> as a Google document or as hyperlink: <https://bit.ly/FrameworkForMotionsLink>

All are invited to read them during the month of June.

Let us begin our reading by quoting today, a few of the motions and statements.

These include

- parish councils listening to people on the peripheries,
- enhancing the role of women in the church,
- prayer life,
- the ministries of lector, acolyte and catechist,
- lay preaching
- the three forms of Rite of Penance
- establishing a Laudato Si' Action Plan

“Dioceses supporting Parish Pastoral Councils to establish opportunities to listen to people on the peripheries – within and beyond parishes – and to develop plans to overcome experiences of exclusion, lack of acceptance and other boundaries. Diocesan Pastoral Councils will explore how to provide Parish leaders with formation and resources for training in these works of evangelisation.”

“this Plenary Council commits the Church in Australia to overcoming the impact of the assumptions that lead to inequality, and to “enhancing the role of women in the Church”.

This will involve:

- a. ensuring that women are appropriately represented in decision-making structures of Church governance at the parish, diocese or eparchy, and national level, and in Church agencies and organisations;*
- b. ensuring, through formal policies and intentional practice, that the experiences and perspectives of women are heard and considered. This is particularly important for matters which affect them distinctively;*
- c. ensuring that dioceses and eparchies value more publicly, recognise and, where necessary, remunerate more appropriately those women already leading and serving in the Church in various ways;*
- d. women engaged in ministry sharing their experiences and reflections on women’s ministry with our bishops, and reporting to Pope Francis’ reconstituted Study Commission on the Female Diaconate; and e. considering women for ministry as deacon – should Pope Francis authorise such ministry in light of the findings of the reconstituted Study Commission on the Female Diaconate.”*

“Motion: *That each Australian diocese and eparchy foster new opportunities for women to participate in ministries that are stable, publicly recognised, appropriately resourced with theological education and commissioned by the bishop. These ministries should engage with the most important aspects of diocesan and parish life and have a real impact on those communities.”*

“this Plenary Council affirms a sacramental and spiritually rich prayer life that is transformed and transforming. To promote people’s full and active participation in the Church’s liturgy as well as their spiritual nourishment through other forms of prayer, the Plenary Council encourages the provision of liturgical and other prayer resources and opportunities for formation at the national and diocesan levels.”

“Motion: *That dioceses promote widespread exercise of the ministries of Lector, Acolyte and Catechist.”*

“Motion: *That the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference establish provisions and guidelines for lay people to participate in a formal ministry of Preaching, as provided for in canon 766 of the Code of Canon Law”*

“Motion: *That the Plenary Council request an amendment to canon 767 to permit, where appropriate, those entrusted with this ministry of Preaching to preach in the Eucharistic assembly, under the oversight of the local ordinary. While this proposal refers to the liturgy of the Latin Church, the Plenary Council invites members of the Eastern Churches to consider whether similar provisions would be suitable in relation to their liturgies.”*

“Motion: *That the Bishops Commission for Liturgy institute a sustained program of catechesis of the Sacrament of Penance to promote an understanding and appropriate practice of each of the three forms of the Rite of Penance.”*

“Motion: That the Plenary Council request that the Pope consider whether the Third Form of the Rite of Penance might have wider use on occasions when it is particularly appropriate, granted an understanding among the faithful of its distinctive nature and requirements.”

“this Plenary Council:

- a. recognises the sacred duty to care for and protect the Earth as a common home for all God’s creatures, including the generations to come; and*
- b. encourages all Catholic people, families, parishes, dioceses, eparchies, religious institutes, and Catholic organisations to accept Pope Francis’ invitation to join the Laudato Si’ Action Platform and develop Laudato Si’ Action Plans as a vehicle for their ecological conversion.”*

“Motion: That, witnessing to their communal ecological conversion, by 2030 each Catholic parish, diocese, eparchy or organisation either develops its own or participates in an established Laudato Si’ Action Plan which includes the following elements:

- a. a public commitment;*
- b. a governance model, processes and procedures;*
- c. a mechanism for listening to the ecological wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples;*
- d. regular reporting on progress towards and accountability for defined goals and objectives; and*
- e. co-construction of those goals and objectives with the people they are meant to support and serve.”*

OURSELVES

Each weekend between now and the Plenary, we will quote more of the content.

We know from the infancy story in Luke’s Gospel how Zechariah and Mary responded differently to God’s revelation. Zechariah doubted, Mary trusted.

We trust that the Holy Spirit will show us the way forward. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will lead us a step at a time. Sometimes it takes a while to understand that the Holy spirit is prompting others in different ways to complete the fullness of our common prayer. Our responses are but a small part of a wider vision of solidarity in the Spirit with others.

We don’t pray that we are the centre of the prayer. Through the Holy Spirit, God is the very centre. May Jesus lead us on. We pray to the Holy Spirit to show us an understanding of where God is calling us now.

GOSPEL OF JOHN 14: 15-16, 23-26

With so much to pray about, let us listen as Jesus explains our relationship to the Father and to the Holy Spirit, the Advocate.

*'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever.
Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them,
and we will come to them and make our home with them.'*

and

*'But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.'*

This Pentecost, with next month's Plenary Council gathering in mind,
let us pray to the Holy Spirit, the Advocate,
to help us keep the Word of Jesus,
and to guide us in the many ways the Spirit calls us.

Let us pray.

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/060522.cfm>

Plenary Council website: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/>