

Plenary Council – St Augustine’s Parish Survey Response

Response Rate & Type

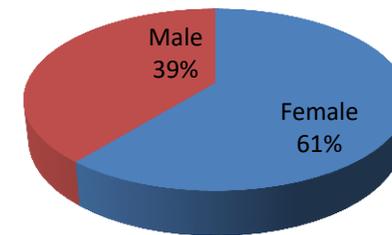
A total of 64 responses were received – 39 electronic and 25 paper. The electronic responses represent a return from 41% of those on the parish contact list. The total response represents perhaps around 20% of the adults over 20yrs who regularly attend Catholic services in Yass, Gunning or Murrumbateman. This is quite a reasonable response rate for a survey of this nature.

61% of the responses were from females – this is probably representative of the parish demographic.

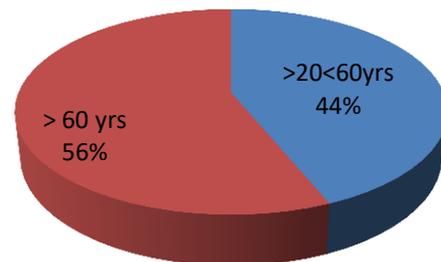
56% of the responses came from persons aged over 60, with the remaining 44% from those aged 20-60 years. No responses were received from persons under the age of 20 hence the results cannot be seen as indicative of the views of younger parishioners.

Only 1 response was received from a person who doesn’t regularly attend Catholic services. This is natural because of the way that the survey was distributed but means that the results only represent the view of current regular church goers.

Response by Gender



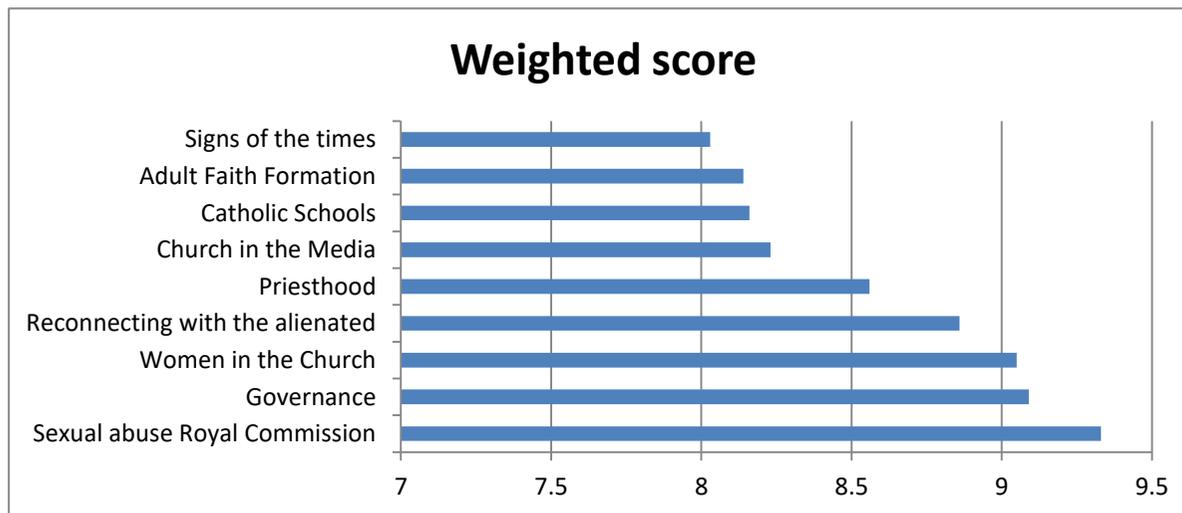
Response by Age Group



What Issues are the most important?

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 9 topics that were suggested for the Plenary Council agenda as a result of the parish workshop held on 17th October 2018 (see Appendix 1). Each topic received a rating from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important). The following table ranks the topics in order of importance to all respondents on the basis of the weighted score. The weighted score is calculated by adding all the individual ratings together and dividing by the total number of respondents (64). The table also includes the percentage of respondents that rated the topic the maximum score of 10. This gives a slight variation to the ranking order. Overall, all topics ranked quite highly but there is a significant difference between the highest and lowest ranked. The weighted rankings were similar for different genders and age groups except where indicated in the “Comments” section of the table. The response to the topics on “Catholic Schools” and “Church in the Media” was more polarised than for the other questions – ie there were some quite low ratings as well as high ratings.

Issue	Wtd Score (max 10.0)	% 10 Scores	Comment
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse	9.33	75%	More important to females and 20-60 age group
Governance	9.09	63%	More important to >60 age group
Women in the Church	9.05	64%	More important to > 60 age group
Reconnecting with the alienated	8.86	56%	More important to females and >60 age group
Priesthood	8.56	47%	More important to > 60 age group
Church in the Media	8.23	44%	More important to > 60 age group – wide range of ratings
Catholic Schools	8.16	50%	More important to females and >60 age group – wide range of ratings
Adult Faith Formation	8.14	36%	More important to females
Signs of the times	8.03	42%	More important to females and >60 age group



Do you have suggestions for any other topics you feel it would be important to be discussed at the Plenary Council?

33 people (52%) responded to this additional question – responses are listed below without edits.....

The Church's best work/mission has always been in the areas of social justice / working with the marginalised. This should be its main focus. Sharing of 'authority' with women - the majority of the Church (Parish/Diocese/National)

1. Formation of young people in our faith. 2. Peace in our world, our time. 3 Married clergy (as in other spheres of the Catholic faith) 4. Outreach to the poor. 5. The significance of education for growth of the spirit. 6. The many ways of worship and prayer

1. Married men should be encouraged to enter priesthood. 2. Priests should be allowed to marry. 3. Question: Is married clergy a problem with the Eastern Rites?

I feel the survey is badly constructed. Why start a sentence with "How can" and not give a space to answer. 5. Women deserve a more prominent place in the church. 4. should be widely discussed and prayed for

Teachers in Catholic schools should be involved in the preparation of sacraments with the parents and students.

Individual churches - many newcomers to districts find it hard to fit in, to get to know other parishioners. These people find it hard to keep their faith and become the "lost sheep". Not many churches seem to have a designated person or persons who welcome newcomers to the parish. Many people who are on their own are hesitant to put themselves forward when they move to another parish.

The Plenary Council should look at the church structure to make it more bottom-up rather than a top-down organisation. This would provide greater transparency in decision making. The laity would feel that they had a voice in the direction of the church.

How is the catholic church responding to diversity and inclusion (beyond same sex marriage) in society.

Engaging young people in the church. Maintaining small local church communities rather than moving to a transactional 'super church' model where people don't feel connected to their local faith community. The closure of small regional churches is a great loss to local committed faith communities. How can we attract young men to the Priesthood?

greater transparency within the church moving away from the autocratic approach of organising the church

The Church should stop discrimination against women & offer women the same opportunities as men, including priesthood. (I am a male).

Religious education for parents and children as a home subject supported by schools. Availability of resources in the parish.

Yes however I will make a direct submission via email. More importantly; thank you to whomever has created this survey monkey and all your efforts in attempting to engage the wider congregation.

A closer community between laity, priests, Bishops etc

Clergy. Married and female too

No doubt there are other topics but these are covering a huge area and if explored deeply would contribute to a revitalised Church

More help for divorced Catholics

More emphasis on instructing our children at school about the real presence at the eucharist and this should be encouraged to parents to do the same

For more people to be really aware of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament

Church being more in touch with social issues that affect all of us - and accordingly equip lay people and ministry with informed and reasonable information of issues: same sex marriage, we need to acknowledge different life choices

Spirituality - a new contemplative, mystic awakening

The Church should get right out of schools completely. Close all schools claiming to be Catholic. They are a source of division in the community and a waste of tax-payers' money. They are no longer Catholic schools but just private schools for the rich and snobs

Inviting priests from Africa and Asia to work in our parishes due to low numbers of Australian priests.

Cultural inclusion in liturgy

Baptism in The Holy Spirit Charismatic Renewal of Catholic Church

What can the Catholic Church do to increase its advocacy and influence around issues of social justice e.g. for refugees/asylum seekers, the poor/homeless in our society?

People seem to have lost their fear of hell and don't seem to care much anymore.

Modernise and stop being so negative and defensive because that kind of behaviour is actually the opposite of Jesus love

Where is the movement of the Holy Spirit within our churches? Many Catholics are not 'alive' in their faith. This comes through the Holy Spirit. I'd like to see parishes offering opportunities for parishioners to explore the gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit, most other Christian Churches do this so well and you can see the fruits! I strongly feel that this is key to enlivening the Catholic Church.

Not including celibacy, look at the way Priests are formed. Take a less institutionalised approach. More of an apprenticeship. Link them up with families. Give the professional supervision.

Why the church is not actively taking part in public debate re:- issues that concern the laity in Australia. Why they're not proactive on ethical & moral issues etc.

Yes - make all those who allowed this bad culture regarding child abuse to happen under their governance and tarnish our religion to be held to account.

How can the Church support the maintenance and growth of Catholic communities in small rural towns and villages?

Do you have any further comments regarding the Plenary Council that you would like to make at this stage?

14 people (22%) responded to this additional question – responses are listed below without edits.....

Process: 1. The wisdom and care of the whole Catholic community should be included. This requires strong presence and voice of "the laity". 2. Strong publicity so all the world can know the wisdom of the Holy Spirit

There should be an Assembly of Laity to select a delegation to the Plenary Council.

I am disappointed that there is not any mention of prayers in any of the articles I've read on the plenary council! Surely an Archdiocesan novena could have been suggested!! "More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of"

Our children are the church's greatest assets and the future of our church. There are definite leaders among them. But other children are shy, withdrawn and have no real understanding of their faith. Their recognition and needs should be acknowledged and be given every opportunity to understand their faith.

I hope that many positives come out of the conference, but history tells me to not get my hopes up too high.

That the decision making should also include individuals from outside the parish councils or prominent people in the parishes

From the structure it seems top-heavy with clerics. If the Church is really serious about the Council it needs input and decision making on a far wider scale. We don't need "yes" people but people who are faith-filled and able to be open to discuss and resolve in an intelligent way

I felt these questions were asking "how can" rather than suggestions as to how could

Get the church out of schooling! Then the other churches can close their schools too.

Great opportunity to reflect together as God's people

I really hope that the Plenary Council will not just be a "talk-fest", with lip service paid to its ideas and recommendations. I hope that, whatever its recommendations, they are acted upon by the church hierarchy. To do otherwise would be a betrayal of trust and a sign that the powers that be in the church had not learned from their lack of understanding of the thoughts of the majority of the congregation in recent times.

No. I am just disappointed that it is still so hard to be heard and the unwillingness to listen. The men in lofty lives who have never walked in the shoes of the modern family need to be more open about their shortcomings.

I hope that the Plenary Council marks a brave new era for the Catholic Church in Australia

I hope lay people will be heard and that this is not an exercise in futility

Appendix 1 – Survey Questions

1. Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

How can the Church at all levels deliver an empathetic, transparent and practical response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission?

2. Governance

How can greater participation of the laity in the decision-making process of the Church be fostered at national, archdiocesan and parish levels?

3. Adult Faith Formation

How can more opportunities for adult faith formation be provided within parishes?

4. Priesthood

What scope is there for reviewing issues relating to vocations to the priesthood including the issue of celibacy?

5. Women in the Church

How can greater participation of women in decision-making, leadership and ministry be fostered in the Church?

6. Reconnecting with the alienated

How can we reach out and reconnect with those members of the Catholic community who feel they have been marginalised and disenfranchised and no longer actively participate in the life of the Church?

7. Catholic Schools

How can our Catholic schools play a stronger role in faith formation and a play a more significant role in the life of local parishes?

8. Church in the Media

How can our leaders play a more constructive role in public debate on issues of social justice and morality including through the secular media?

9. Signs of the times

How can all members of the Catholic Church in Australia be people who read the signs of the times in a way that offers a fresh and hopeful vision for the future?

10. Do you have suggestions for any other topics you feel it would be important to be discussed at the Plenary Council?

11. Do you have any further comments regarding the Plenary Council that you would like to make at this stage?