

First Assembly of the Plenary Council, Oct 2021

The concise Tweet version

Introduction

This is the concise version of Tweet-sized summaries of the best input from the livestreamed parts of the First Assembly of the Plenary Council. Use them to get a high-level feel for what went on, and then you will know where to begin delving deeper. At the end there is additional commentary from other online sources.

May these days of grace be known as the [#PlenaryCouncilOfTheHolySpirit](#)

Gleaned from the First Assembly

Homily 3 Oct Perth

The Lord remains faithful to His promise of guidance through the Holy Spirit. Only in Christ can the Church be a sacrament of communion and unity. Much of this [#plenarycouncil](#) work is to be done on our knees.

Open session 3 Oct [#PlenaryCouncil](#)

"We cannot hurry the river, we must understand the river, the current, and work with its ways, we watch our bush foods, and wait for them to open before we gather them"

(Ed. We could replace River with Holy Spirit or Grace and it is still true.)

Open session 3 Oct [#PlenaryCouncil](#)

We may experience Pentecost dramatic, turning everything up-side-down, or in the still small breeze. He will speak through all the elements of the Council, active and passive. God is not hindered by lockdown, and lack of chats over coffee.

The words of the first nations peoples are echoing stronger than others at the [#PlenaryCouncil](#).

eg. Open session 3 Oct: 'Once we welcome you, we have a duty of care to make sure you are safe and taken care of'

(Ed. That's quite a profound commitment. What do we offer in return?)

4 Oct Small Group report [#PlenaryCouncil](#)

Hope of seeing first nations peoples ministering to first nations people: There are no first nations priests. What are the obstacles? (Ed. Dare we dream of a first nations seminary in Port Pirie diocese, and a first nations rite?)

4 Oct Small Group Report [#PlenaryCouncil](#)

Hope of becoming a caravan of solidarity working/walking slowly so that none of the vulnerable are left behind. How do we as a Church walk side by side on the road towards Jesus Christ? Not going fast, but slower and more securely.

4 Oct Small Group Report [#PlenaryCouncil](#)

'The school is to support family, not to replace family.

Schools full, churches empty. Success in producing missionary disciples? (thumbs down emoji)

(Ed. Qs not asked. Why support something unfruitful? Luke 13:7; What about more home school support instead?)

Luke 13:7 "For three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none.

Cut it down: why should it be taking up the ground?"

4 Oct Small Group Report #PlenaryCouncil

Centrality of relationships, starting w. deep encounter w. Jesus Christ. Formation through relationships, accompaniment & study: needed for all, in faith first, then discernment of gifts & talents, apprenticeship, mentorship.

(Ed. @FJMallon (clapping emoji))

5 Oct Homily #PlenaryCouncil

Good Samaritan & Mary of Bethany; one active/doing discipleship, other being discipleship.

Each choosing appropriate response to the situation.

In the 1st case active love was required; in the 2nd case spiritual response was required. Both are needed

5 Oct Open Session #PlenaryCouncil

Fr Richard Lennan: The Church is missionary because God is missionary.

Our task is to sniff out the presence of God in our world. Called to be a light to nations/peripheries.

Be open to be surprised by the Spirit at work in unexpected places

5 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

Eastern churches share our missionary impulse.

We need to know & understand the other rites, by experiencing them, and 4 mutual learning.

Do we need an entity to facilitate this mutual exchange/enrichment for both children & adults?

(Ed. Two thumbs-up emojis)

5 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

Holiness is as much about looking out as looking in.

Jesus as servant leader, inspires the leadership of the whole priestly people.

Review ways of seeing things and ways of doing things.

Professional supervision of priests was considered.

5 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

Governance exists to serve mission, & must support the mission to evangelise.

Jesus working through people is Who does the saving, not structures and governance.

Recommend reading: The Light From The Southern Cross report.

Where to download the report (scroll to bottom): <https://thingsbotholdandnew.com>

Where to download the official ACBC response to it: <http://armidale.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Bishops-Response-Light-from-the-Southern-Cross.pdf...>

Slowness of implementation is an issue raised by the small groups and #PlenaryTracker

Homily 6 Oct #PlenaryCouncil

Avoiding bad things isn't enough, we must pursue the good.

Provident God renew Your Church in Australia today!

First purpose of the Church is worship. We must be our nation's powerhouse of prayer.

With Prayer we can face both dreams & difficulties.

6 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

The Our Father calls us into relationship, culture & faith,

like a songline, showing us who we are & leading us forward.

NATSICC already identifies 5 areas to work on. Uluru Statement: 'From The Heart' is important.

Read it. Promote it.

Documents to read: <https://natsicc.org.au/assets/eatsicc.pdf...> and <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement> The NATSICC 5 Areas are 1.Cultural awareness training, 2.Formation for ministry, 3.Welcoming space via ritual, 4.Acknowledging traditional custodianship, 5.Inclusion & consultation

6 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

Desire for God is also nourished by Him.
Liturgy involves body, soul, spirit, & must be beautiful.
Every prayer is to lead to the Eucharist, even Eucharistic Adoration.
Develop prayers for family use, like a modified Liturgy of the Hours.

6 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

Clerical formation cannot be completely outsourced to the seminary;
praxis plus orthodoxy is needed.
Discernment of leadership capability is essential.
Consider online learning while immersed in parishes w. accreditation & accountability.

6 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

Acknowledge new movements & agencies as examples of working together w. the gifts of the Holy Spirit in collaboration not competition.
Being connected 2 mission is essential 4 discerning structures, it can't be one structure type fits all

6 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

Jesus is our model of non-judgmental nurturing. Governance is the way we welcome and invite to participation; about how power is exercised; about being in dialogue and not in judgment.
Pls read: The Light from the Southern Cross document.

6 Oct Small Group report #PlenaryCouncil

Desire to see education through missionary lens.
Considering spiritual directors in all schools.
Much frustration & going around in circles, yet still seeking convergence of vision.
Intention to form ongoing working party from this group.

Homily 7 Oct #PlenaryCouncil

Plenary Pilgrimage does not belong to us, but to the Lord.
The Master has entrusted these duties & responsibilities to us.
We have nothing to offer which does not come from our Master.
Metanoia only brought about by prayer & discipline of the Spirit.

Homily 8 Oct #PlenaryCouncil

Moving forward involves suffering & distress. In all things God is with us.
We will be vulnerable, there will be difficulties. Any moment could be a time of grace; stay awake, recognise the opportunities, & act on them to share the Gospel with people

Homily 9 Oct #PlenaryCouncil

Let us not lose sight of our primary task, & the work of the Spirit, to reveal the face of Christ among us, a face of dignity and pain w. traces of many cultures. As Jesus has said, Do Not Be Afraid.
Leave behind what hinders us & follow in His ways.

Q1 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

We are on a mission of contrition.

Have small groups in parishes, with yearly parish gathering 4 mutual encouragement.
Synod for diocese every 3 years. Encourage small family-based groups.
Have governance body to oversee mission and accountability.

Q3 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Support Uluru statement of the Heart
Implement NATSICC's 5 practical recommendations
Promote 'on country' learning
Include 1st Nation people in all decision making levels
Commit to Reconciliation plan process
Commit to well-being of 1st nation peoples

Where are the #PlenaryCouncil proposals for Q2 & Q4?

If they exist, not publicly announced yet. They were on topics of healing wounds of abuse, serving the vulnerable and partnering with other organisations (faith based and secular).

Q5 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Worship of God begins w. concern for our common home
Adopt Laudato Si's 7 point plan, in all sectors of church society; parish, school, convent, etc
Embrace interdisciplinary education
Enable a home for our future generations for the Gospel to reach

Q6 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Our desire for God/prayer, is nourished by God
Discipleship must B intentional
Need for individual & household/family group prayer
Popularity of Adoration may be starting point for reaching youth
Discipleship support via podcasts & other online media

Q7 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Desist using term immigrant communities
Mutual enrichment of rites needs organisation & coordination
Enshrine diversity don't just acknowledge it
Need more exposure to Eastern Rite prayer & worship
Need priests able to minister to own language groups

Q8 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

All mission is grounded in encounter with Jesus
Leadership to be grounded in Gospel servant leadership
Formation opportunities to be provided everywhere; cities, regions, rural
Leadership formation to be inviting, communal, experiential, integrated

Q9 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Fund evidence-based study on pre & post seminary programs; test in Aust context
Extend accompaniment time for potential vocations
Extend existing formation to laity
Have Year of Prayer for ALL vocations
Family stress is barrier to vocational calling

Q10 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Continuous clergy formation 4 mission Cross pollinate between Rites
National standards 4 pre-seminary processes
Discern candidate's kerygmatic desire
Match needs & gifts: new priests AND parish community
Develop method to discern episcopal vocations

Q11 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Leadership support team 4 mission in each parish w. guidelines
Invest in programs that make, attract & keep disciples:
<https://divinerenovation.org> & <https://gomakedisciples.org.au>
Parish forums to encourage dialogue
Promote basic ecclesial communities

Q12 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Reason & function of mission always based in Christ
Structures: uniformity in some things, diversity in others
1 inclusive
2 collaborative not competitive
3 flexible, open to learn from others
4 aspirational, dream big
5 possible, heed limitations

Q13 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Mission leader essentials: mature faith & quality skills
Governance to be fit 4 particular purpose (not same 4 all)
Seek unanimity & consensus, deliberative votes not just consultative votes
Re-cast power around loving service
Study diaconate 4 women

Q14 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Governance needs synodality, coresponsibility, continual review, willingness to improve
View civil best practice in light of Gospel values
Have professional development, accountability, annual reviews
Seek power balance
List which roles open 4 laity

Q15 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Desire 4 inclusive yet authentically Catholic
Schools can be places of listening and dialogue
Education entities develop healthy relationships with parish, diocese
Ongoing working group needed
Read
https://vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html... & <https://ncec.catholic.edu.au/images/AFramework4FormationMission.pdf>

Q16 Proposals #PlenaryCouncil

Dialogue needed between diocesan & agency leadership
Desire for ongoing part in plenary process

Regular forums to discuss & plan mission
Catholic social teaching underpins all mercy agencies
Needed: formation on mission & on Catholic social teaching

Homily 10 Oct #PlenaryCouncil

Jesus' face we have sought to see; His voice we have sought to see
Listening to each other w. new ears, looking at each other w. new eyes
Holy Spirit draws us beyond fears & into love
Birthing process: slow, painful & messy, but yet joyfully fruitful

General Commentary from outside the Plenary Council process:

4 Oct, Open session #PlenaryCouncil Why couldn't the vote on the Minutes be held after the livestream rather than during it? An extra minute each from the working groups would be much better, and less likely to turn viewers off.

Worthwhile thought from 3 Oct #PlenaryTracker, among our Expert Advisors there should have been at least one first nations elder. Where did we get the idea that wisdom is only to be found in academia? The best experts to have, of course, are living Saints. #PlenaryCouncil

From Plenary Tracker Ep. 2: Creation is God's oldest voice in this country.
(Ed. Comment, interesting to hear first nations people refer to river people, salt water people, fresh water people; and also how expectations of care for the land for first nations people are distributed at birth via totem.

Ep.3 of #PlenaryTracker on the #PlenaryCouncil agenda Q2 & Q4 was thought provoking!
Abuse of power still happening, not limited to children, and not limited to sexual crime (bullying).
Measures still needed re independent inquiry, accountability & lessening trauma from reporting

'To discern what the Holy Spirit is saying we need to expand our notion of listening, to 'look' at what the Holy Spirit is 'doing' in the churches, especially in & through those who individually, but even more importantly, corporately, are Living in the Spirit.' Dr Peter McGregor 1/2

This is exactly the path I was on - working out where to look for what the Holy Spirit had done in Australia in the past, as a guide for what He wants to do now - back when I was preparing submissions for theme 6 of the #PlenaryCouncil :Open to conversion, renewal and reform. 2/2

#PlenaryCouncil discussions need evaluation in terms of short & long-term cost-benefits.

The Marriage agenda, the Great Mystery, always loses out in the short-term.

But without it I fear our pastoral efforts over the long-term will fail: Francine Pirola

<https://marriageresourcecentre.org/correcting-mission-drift/>

Married couples are the untapped resource to power the revival of our communities.

Their impact on the mission of evangelization is immense.

Awakening & empowering the Sacrament of Matrimony could be our single most influential strategy:

Francine Pirola #PlenaryCouncil

(Ed. Amen!!!)

God's 1st self expression: Creation

God's 2nd self expression: Family

God's 3rd self-expression: Scripture

God's best self-expression: Jesus
Stewards of these self-expressions of God: Church
Who hovered over, formed and inspired them? the Holy Spirit.
These 5 then, Creation, Family, Scripture, Jesus, the Holy Spirit,
have to have primacy in #PlenaryCouncil discussions,
But only Creation had an Agenda Question!
And the Holy Spirit isn't even named in the Agenda Questions!

In one of the early YouTube updates on the Plenary Council Assembly, Archbishop Porteous noted with some concern the lack of any distinctively Catholic and Christian visual imagery in the online prayer sessions.

#PlenaryCouncil Abp Fisher intervention: Wake up Catholic Australia! Wake up to the flood of non-practice! Wake up to the pandemic of moral confusion. Wake up: the vocational grounding of the Church is shaking. 'My Church is in ruins: rebuild My Church' <https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/plenary-voices-wake-up-catholic-australia-urges-archbishop-fisher/>

Therefore it can't be business as usual anymore. Business as usual is what's got us here. Incremental change as largely promoted at #PlenaryCouncil cannot fix this. Radical change is required, esp. in schools; quality of preaching; leadership styles; openness to dynamic charisms.

Frustrated w. the nebulous We Shoulds in #PlenaryCouncil small group reports.
Instead: In my local situation, (describe) the implementation of Agenda Q. No.N, could look like this..: or God is calling me to do.. would aid discussion. eg getting 1st Nations elder on parish council

How much more fruitful the lead up to the #PlenaryCouncil would have been if we had asked, 'What is God calling me to do?' instead of 'What is God calling us to do?'.

Whenever we use 'us', it largely lets 'me' off the hook, and passes responsibility to anybody & somebody else.

We often wonder where the #PlenaryCouncil members think all the volunteers are to carry out all their proposals. Willing, able and available persons are in short supply in most parishes where 95% attendees are aged 75+ (Ed. This comment got the most social media traction)

Amen, Philippa, Amen! #PlenaryCouncil <https://catholicweekly.com.au/plenary-voices-dr-philippa-martyr/...>

(Ed. Come Holy Spirit, renew Your Church, inspire us with fresh, creative solutions to the impasses we face as we seek to turn outwards and focus on the mission to bring the good news of Jesus to others.)

'Ditch the meaningless Catholic Church jargon and turn to the greats, urges Dr Philippa Martyr'

Notes

If you have found these Tweet length summaries useful, please share them.

For the longer 21 page version go to

<http://www.societyofsaints.net/blog/first-assembly-of-the-plenary-council>

Plenary Tracker episodes can be accessed via YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/JohnGarratt1>

Livestreamed Masses and Open sessions via

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPKFmOZcjfMQ9SfcotyZjg>