

Plenary Council 2020

Listening and Discernment

June 2019 – November 2019

Ritual

Commentator: Please be seated.

At all Masses this weekend we are celebrating the next step in the process of the Plenary Council 2020. The first step of listening and dialogue, which involved listening to the many stories of the people of the Church around the question 'What is God asking of us in Australia at this time?' has come to an end.

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During May, the Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council 2020 working with and other committees reviewed all the submissions from the Listening and Dialogue sessions held in parishes, church agencies and schools all around Australia. From this material the many issues raised will be placed into categories for the next step of this process.

The second step of the Plenary Council 2020 is Listening and Discernment around the issues raised during the Listening and Dialogue sessions. This part of the process will take place from June to November 2019.

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The Listening and Discernment step of this process is an opportunity to engage with the areas refined by the Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council 2020 and spend time in prayer and reflection as we focus on the future.

Let us now enter into a simple ritual marking the transition from Listening and Dialogue to Listening and Discernment. The symbol we are using for this transition is the olive tree.

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Commentator:

The olive branch is a symbol of hope and expectation of new life. In the book of Genesis we hear the story of Noah who sent out a dove from the ark when the waters of the flood were receding. The dove returned to Noah with a freshly plucked olive leaf and so Noah knew that the waters had subsided. With this sign of hope Noah also knew that there was now the possibility of a new life ahead.

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The oil of the olive tree is central to many of our Sacraments. It is a symbol of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and a sign of our call to service within the community of the Church.

Let us pray for the grace to live in hope of how the Spirit can change hearts, embracing with courage and humility the next step of the Plenary Council journey.

[As the antiphon is being sung the olive tree is placed with the Plenary Council Candle.]

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Sing: This day was made by the Lord, let us rejoice, let us be glad.
This day was made by the Lord, let us rejoice in salvation!

Commentator:

Clearly linked to this sign of hope is the Resurrection of Jesus, which we have just celebrated on Easter Sunday and is the ultimate sign of hope; life is not ended but changed.

Let us pray for the grace to surrender ourselves to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to be open to change, just as Jesus surrendered himself to the will of the Father.

Sing: This day was made by the Lord, let us rejoice, let us be glad.
This day was made by the Lord, let us rejoice in salvation!

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Commentator:

In today's Gospel of St John, we hear that Jesus breathed on the Apostles and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit'.

Let us pray for the grace to be generous of spirit and inclusive of all opinions as we continue to listen and discern, 'What is God asking of us in Australia at this time?'

Sing: This day was made by the Lord, let us rejoice, let us be glad.
This day was made by the Lord, let us rejoice in salvation!

Plenary Council Prayer

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Celebrant: Together we pray

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 to 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.

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Ritual

Final Blessing

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Commentator: Please stand

Celebrant: Let us Pray
May almighty God bless you in his kindness
and pour out his saving wisdom upon you.

All: Amen.

Priest: May he nourish you always with the teaching of the faith
and make you persevere in holy deeds.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May he turn your steps toward himself
and show you the path of charity and peace.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And May the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit
come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All: Amen.

Final Hymn

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This Day was Made by the Lord by Christopher Willcock

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