

Diocesan Assembly Consultation Analysis

In preparation for the 2021 Adelaide Diocesan Assembly, the Archdiocese of Adelaide conducted a broad consultation of people in parishes, schools, agencies and communities. The question people were asked to respond to was, „What do you think are the most important things to discuss at the Diocesan Assembly?“ Over 1400 responses were returned via the online form or postage paid post card. The analysis below reflect the 1238 responses received by the deadline, 16 August 2021.

Identified Themes:

1. Adapt to a Changing World
2. Accompaniment/Outreach
3. Parish Life
4. Migrant/Cultural Communities
5. Lay Movements
6. Liturgy
7. Prayer and Spirituality
8. Formation
9. Church Leadership
10. Clergy
11. Governance
12. Justice and Action
13. Social Issues
14. Inclusion
15. Sexual Abuse Crisis
16. Agencies, Social Services and Health Care
17. Catholic Education
18. Archdiocese
19. Diocesan Assembly-specific
20. Plenary Council
21. Other
22. Age Groups

Consultation Themes:

Sample Table:

THEME	Frequency of Responses
Theme Title	
<i>Sample responses from the consultation.</i>	

THEME	Frequency of Responses
Total Themes: 112	<i>Total Responses counted: 1,238*</i>
<hr/>	
1. Adapt to changing world	84
<hr/>	
<p>"Learn to be open to change, not too ready to disapprove of change - think about it and pray about it."</p> <p>"Language which is inclusive of all. - The absence of women in the language of the church matters enormously. Invisibility in words equates with invisibility in consciousness and significance. Words are tools of resurrection. When, oh when, will that be so for women in our church, our local church...?"</p> <p>"May the motto of the assembly be the words of St. Pope John XXIII: "we (the Church) are not on earth to guard a museum, but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life." Amen to that! True then. True now."</p> <p>"The diocese needs to develop to show there is capacity to change to suit the needs for the modern world."</p>	
<hr/>	
<hr/>	
2. Accompaniment/Outreach	
MISC	69
Those who left the Church	14
Married	10
Mature Adults	19
Children and families	105
Young People	289
<i>Total, Accompaniment/Outreach</i>	
506	
<p>"Mercy - What does it look like in the mission of the Archdiocese, in everyday life? How is/can the Archdiocese demonstrate a culture of merciful inclusion? Think of clergy who are being excluded as well as lay people: those who are intentionally excluded. How does this fit with the Gospel?"</p> <p>"Restoring our role as a Missionary church. "There is no Christian that is not sent". We need to be more outward looking and have a supportive framework to carry this out."</p> <p>"Can we talk about new ways of being the church, being missionary disciples, taking on the model of Christ as wounded healer, and empowering ALL who are call to lead and serve in ministry."</p>	

"To be truly missionary we need to return to our basic principle of being a christ-centred church, embracing and nurturing small communities, which are able to foster formation, spreading the Gospel and support the local priests."

"Those disconnected from the church need to be actively engaged with-particularly those marginalised by outdated attitudes."

"Marriage enrichment courses and classes for young people discerning"

"Caring for our elderly, lonely or disabled parishioners; making sure that no-one is forgotten; those who can no longer get to church on their own, get assisted; that everyone is made to feel important - all ages and circumstance."

"Reach out to young families & young people who seem disengaged with parish life and church attendance"

"Family Ministry"

"It seems very apparent that many young people are totally switched off from religious contact, but at the same time are very caring, loving and responsible youngsters of whom we as parents are very proud. How can we the church ignite their enthusiasm"

"Youth Ministry"

"Provide support and listen to the voice of the Youth. Create opportunities for young people to participate in the leadership."

"Accompaniment of children and young people, including those experiencing diverse gender identity;"

"Start University Mass Chaplaincy - CRITICAL!"

"- How to overcome challenges that young people are facing. To listen to what young people have to say about the community around us. Help young adults to set goals and how to achieve them"

3. Parish Life	
MISC	20
Finances	12
Volunteers	13
Employment	15
Regional	11
Pastoral Care	38
Sacrament prep	27
Mass Attendance	87

Parish liturgies	61
Effects of COVID-19	8
Programs and activities	72
Welcoming and inclusive communities	62
Community life / groups	108
Leadership	9
Pastoral planning	39
<i>Total, Parish Life</i>	582

"Encourage a sense of community within each of the parishes by welcoming new parishioners and supporting social activities across all cultures"

"As each Parish forms it's own vision, the vision should be owned by the Priest , The Pastoral, all Ministries and the Parishioners."

"What can be done to help our many rural and remote parish communities continue to have a spiritually functional, healthy and sustainable Catholic faith?"

"Address the Sacramental and pastoral life of the Church and what might enable us to live even more our faith in this place, and celebrate in diverse ways to meet diverse needs, all within the Unity of being Church with and for each other and for our world."

"How to help parishes to find other income streams as COVID and recovery has impacted on finances."

"How can we attract more volunteers to take part in parish life, why must it always be left to the same few"

"Investment in faith formation of children and youth. We need to employ more youth workers in our schools and parishes to run programmes and groups which give children and teenagers a path to follow in life, based on the life and teachings of Jesus"

"How can the diocese and wealthier parishes financially support rural and poorer parishes with the provision of effective Pastoral care workers"

"The impact of covid on the mental health of priests, parishioners and office staff. The parish workers have often borne the brunt of parishioners frustrations. But everyone needs support"

"Pastoral care for people who are homebound, institutionalized or who have suffered a traumatic event. Insufficient care at present"

"Reach out to young families & young people who seem disengaged with parish life and church attendance"

"Accommodating people with disability or who cannot make it to church, maintain and reinforce streaming as an alternative and inclusion in outreach, more accessible Mass times in country and suburban parishes"

"How to encourage more younger families to be involved in parish life. Our local parish is aging, all the while many younger families with children either do not attend mass, or do only for special occasions like Christmas, Easter and family events."

"Youth participation in the liturgy of the word. And more opportunities to meet and participate in youth events in parishes and other parishes"

"To be a truly inclusive Church that welcomes ALL so that all people feel a sense of belonging and connection to the Church"

"Community is very important. This is hard to achieve using the 'Large parish' model. Perhaps communities need to be formed and nourished - several forming a 'parish' but emphasis on 'Community development'"

"Each parish needs a masterplan that is derived from the 8 Gospel pathways, rather than spending on pet projects. Finances must be used to support our footsteps along the pathways. Buildings that are only used as business/investment properties, whilst the youth don't have anywhere to meet for prayer and a meal, are a road sign that we have strayed off the pathways and gotten lost."

4. Migrant / Cultural communities

19

"A welcoming church that is inclusive to the multicultural Christians and remain a Missionary church"

"Multicultural understanding and sharing of cultures within the church to create more unity within church members."

"Deepening the engagement of a newly formed multicultural Church. Addressing racism within the Church is an important part of this subject. As well as avoiding the mistakes of the past century in the Church in structurally sidelining ethnic communities through such structures as the well intentioned by disastrous migrant chaplain program of the bishops conference."

5. Lay Movements

7

"How can we empower lay ecclesial movements to come together for common missions?"

"Be open to the move of the Holy Spirit through Catholic movements within the Church"

"Discussion about opening new communities would be important to myself and many people as well as discussion about a permanent place for our existing communities to meet. While God is present in our community, we often cannot meet due to low availability of spaces/churches/halls"

for our services. Any discussion about the Neo-catechumenal Way in Adelaide will be very important for many people here.”

6. Liturgy

MISC	33
Prayers and Readings	41
Homilies	32
Music	28
Diversity of celebrations	8
Cultural expression	0
Contemporary	49
Latin Mass	11
Eucharist	34
<i>Total, Liturgy</i>	236

"All readers must be trained to read the Word of God: clearly, slowly and louder for everyone to hear and understand."

"The Liturgy needs to be improved - Banality will not inspire anyone. Poor homilies, no musical excellence, ugly vestments, no beauty in the decoration of the churches."

"How can we bring back reverence in the Mass?"

"The centrality of the mass to the Faith. Joyful services that avoid sermons that are overlong religious lectures without contemporary relevance."

"Making the readings at Mass more accessible to the congregation as the readings are difficult for the congregation to grasp on hearing."

"Introduction of inclusive language in all areas of church liturgy. At present it is degrading for women to be totally ignored in the wording of scripture, prayers some hymns used in our liturgies."

"The youth need to be inspired, young families need their needs met. Old people need to be uplifted. We need charismatic preachers that have tasted the love of God and can share."

"Return traditional hymns to our church services"

"Contemporary music is the way to attract and retain children, teens, families and young adults."

"Church needs to engage children. Maybe some more contemporary music - videos of the stories. My kids hate coming with me because they says it's so boring."

"How to facilitate diverse liturgical expression (including those attached to the traditional Latin mass) that retains unity and renewal"

"When not all are able to receive the Eucharist, how do we still engage them in the Holy Mass?"

"I feel we need more focus on the Holy Eucharist, the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

7. Prayer and Spirituality	
MISC	23
Reconciliation	44
Commitment to prayer	24
Spiritual guidance	15
Devotions	36
Adoration	25
<i>Total, Prayer</i>	
	167

"Priests need to avail themselves to offer the Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation. A few priests avail themselves regularly during the week. Sadly, there are priests who only avail themselves by appointment or do not advertise any availability to offer the Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation"

"A return to the Third Rite where, as a community, we acknowledge that we fail, but with the help and encouragement of our Lord and with the support of each other, we move forward in our service to our God and to each other."

"More prayer opportunities as a community; Rosary, Holy Hour, 24 hour adoration"

"Help everyone into meditation and contemplation. It's the "inner room". Prayer of the heart. Without it we are in wilderness, yet it's not emphasised. Churches are full of noise and movement and chatter and standing and sitting and reciting. Calm and quiet down! Explain meditation and contemplation. Make it the centre. Dennis Edwards used to have weekly meditation sessions with parishioners"

"As the Spirit leads Catholics to "grow up" in their Faith - this causes internal chaos at times... more Spiritual Directors are needed and funding for more lay people to be trained who can't otherwise afford the time or cost. With good spiritual direction some Catholics, may decide not to leave the church but to Trust that we are sometimes led to "deconstruct" and then "reconstruction ". This leads to building a personal and communal future. Recommitment and new energy can begin then."

"Open our catholic churches for perpetual Eucharistic Adoration and Prayer"

8. Formation

MISC	131
For young people	46
Relevance to today's world	25
Adult Formation	18
Catechesis	54
Of Leaders	27
For evangelisation and mission	24
<i>Total, Formation</i>	305

"How do we as a faith community support individual faith response in children and adults that accentuates agency, conscience, freewill and responsibility"

"Greater emphasis on the study of Scriptures"

"A common faith formation program for parishes, including prayer and study groups that explore ecclesial realities and contemporary issues."

"How can the young people access the "Word of God" in a language they can understand - Art, music, lifestyle etc."

"Making all scripture and prayer accessible and relevant to children and their families: help families to be more aware of who we are as a Catholic College- our Faith is the basis of our learning."

"Adult Faith Formation: sharing of current theology, scripture, social justice, ecumenism to support people in our parishes to be more empowered with knowledge and understanding of our faith in today's world."

"To strongly emphasize affirming both the intellectual and spiritual traditions of the church, doubling on more cogent hands-on catechesis of the faith, and prudent evangelism."

"The role and formation of lay leadership in the diocese should continue to be advanced. We need to continue to promote senior female leadership, openness, visibility, and good governance, particularly in the light of the findings of the Child Abuse Royal Commission."

"Lay formation, Leadership for Mission Formation - Scripture, Spirituality, Faith Sharing, Lay-led Liturgy Formation (Validating as an Option). Formation for Leadership & Mission"

"Provide training and courses in mission and evangelization."

9. Church Leadership	
MISC	40
Young Leaders	21
Role of Laity	73
Role of Women	74
<i>Total, Leadership</i>	
208	
<p>"Quality leadership at Diocesan and Parish level is required if we are to rebuild our church and also to to mandate Our Lord's commission 'to go make disciples' (Matt 28:19)"</p> <p>"Servant Leadership: The whole institutional hierarchy and the parish administration must be trained to excel in servant leadership skills. Isn't there a parable that has the shepherd amongst the sheep, rather than leading them from the front or driving them forward from behind?"</p> <p>"Gender and leadership roles in the Church"</p> <p>"If the Catholic Church in Adelaide is serious about engaging young people the church needs to employ youth workers full time to work in primary & secondary schools & possibly colleges / universities. Youth workers can work with the school to groups, activities, retreats with a focus on God / faith / living out a Christian faith."</p> <p>"Recognising lay leadership and developing truly collaborative approaches to responding with love, compassion and generosity to the needs of the isolated, marginalized, oppressed members of our community and world."</p> <p>"To utilize the skills, knowledge, experience and faith-filled commitment of lay leaders in our parish communities e.g. to provide homilies that bring scriptures to life by speaking to the social issues and daily realities of people's lives, work and community experiences."</p> <p>"Of course acknowledgement of women in the Australian Catholic church, not just as cleaners, doers of flowers, makers of cups of tea - but recognition of their gifts - Ministers of Word and Eucharist, to the sick and homebound, members of PPC's, mentors to Sacramental candidates. The list goes on"</p> <p>"The gender imbalance in the Church is problematic. Not only is the hierarchy a "boys only" club, but even God gets reduced to being considered male."</p>	

10. Clergy	
MISC	56
Bullying of Parishioners	10
Clergy Formation	24

Married priests	62
Women clergy	80
Collab/empowering laity	22
Clericalism	25
Missionary/Migrant priests	44
Seminarians	2
Recruitment/Vocations	46
Decreasing numbers	17
Supporting priests	20
<i>Total, Clergy</i>	408

"We need priests that are dedicated to the need of the people of the parish. To guide us help us to understand the word. To be approachable when needed and to be one with everyone"

"Education of priests and ministers in current theology, scripture scholarship, pastoral issues - to improve the quality of the sermons (so many are v. antiquated theology) and how priests treat those of us in the pews."

"Allowing our clergy to have the option of marrying, this could be a way of opening the path to once again increasing numbers that can lead the Catholic faith with confidence, and being able to relate more consistently with family life."

"Allowing women to be ordained as Deacons, with a view to becoming priests, thus moving the church into the 21st Century and onwards!!!"

"I would like to see greater collaboration between Priests and Laity. More involvement of Laity (male and female) in Parish and Diocesan leadership. Training for Priests with an emphasis on getting to know each other, working together, the importance of two way listening and mutual respect prior to them moving to a new Parish. It is important to enter a new Parish with respect for existing lay leaders and existing structures and an open mind for what could be through working together."

"How to confront clericalism so that the many gifts of parishioners can be called upon and given a place in parish life."

"How does the Archdiocese plan to support our many overseas Priests who struggle with language, cultural differences, the tyranny of distance and isolation from their culture? These priests are doing a wonderful job, and have so much to offer, but are often totally isolated from other members of their cultural community just because of their placement around the Diocese."

"Vocations - not just priests but equipping lay people to also serve communities."

"Shortage of priests and what part lay people will play"

"I am concerned by the workload of some of our priests."

11. Governance	
Misc	28
Accountability/transparency	15
PPC	13
DPC	7
Synodality	19
<i>Total, Governance</i>	
82	
<p>"Lay involvement in the church governance in a real way to avoid more scandal like child sexual abuse"</p> <p>"Take a look at the recommendations in the Light of the Southern Cross Report. So many of them apply to our own local church"</p> <p>"Greater involvement of the laity in decision making at both parish and diocesan levels"</p> <p>"Enable collaborative leadership in a parish, especially by means of Parish Councils and various Committees and by discouraging the kind of clericalism that places the priest as the sole arbiter of all things, disregarding the history of the Community, the cultural differences within, the contribution and wisdom of its elderly parishioners and the desires of the people to BE the People of God in that place."</p> <p>"The formation of a Representative Diocesan Council working in conjunction with & supported by Parish [or Regional] Pastoral councils."</p> <p>"Empowerment of the Laity in Ministries, a Synodality of the People of God at all layers starting from the Laity within parishes, this should be mandatory on an annual basis;"</p>	

12. Justice and Action	
MISC.	52
Response to the poor	63
Ecology/Climate Change	63
ATSI Reconciliation	12
<i>Total, Justice</i>	
190	

"Can we have a church where Social Justice as of Jesus of Nazareth is at our core - homelessness, underemployment, abuse of nature, asylum seekers, Indigenous welfare, suicide etc."

"A church that is actively present in the "existential peripheries" - a church that is poor and is with the poor (e.g. Aboriginal people, the unemployed, the homeless, etc) A church that is attentive to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth"

"We must prioritise care for the earth, there is no time more important than now. There are so many switches we can make and initiatives we can implement."

"How we can make church more accessible and engaging for young people, a more inviting environment for disabled people, LGBTIQ people and indigenous people."

13.Social Issues	
MISC	38
NFP/Contraception	9
COVID-19	58
Euthanasia	9
Abortion	14
Poverty	5
Racism	8
Mental Health	28
<i>Total, Social Issues</i>	
129	

"To work together as being one... Being a leader in the Community working with the Australia’s First peoples. Aboriginal Reconciliation"

"In this age that seems so "anti-life" we need to show an unequivocal respect for the dignity of the human person, at all stages of life. The Church has lost a lot of moral credibility due to the scandals that have emerged, so an upmost respect for marginalised persons, seeing Christ in all, is the only way forward."

"Topics such as racism and inclusivity for minority groups also should be discussed as that is one of the major issues young people are currently battling"

"I work in the Psychology and Education field. I see much fear in our society, leading to loss of hope and despair. I have concern with the fear that is being cycled in our society from Covid and also subsequently in our Church."

"Young people and mental health issues is also a major issue that should be discussed, Things like providing more mental health services/funding is something the church can help with."



14. Inclusion	
MISC	77
People with disabilities	7
ATSI	19
Refugees and Migrants	22
Marginalised People	29
Divorced Catholics	18
LGBT+	38
<i>Total, Inclusion</i>	
210	

"How to become a more inclusive worshipping community"

"To be inclusive, accept people of all cultures and genders. Show our values by what we do, not what we say only."

"Inclusivity: We have lost many faithful people in recent times who are feeling disillusioned with our Church. How do engage with them, invite them to conversation and listen and learn with them so that we can become a more relevant church in a modern world? Likewise with others on the margins, how do we continue to truly hear their voices and be inclusive of them as part of church?"

"How do able-bodied and differently abled connect to church"

"The opportunities are that health and wellbeing are needs to grow in our community and the challenges are our small Otherway community needs to grow bigger, and also reconciliation needs to be a priority"

"Australia's inhumane treatment of Asylum Seekers and Refugees"

"How to be a welcoming church Community, particularly for the marginalised and those living in poverty."

"I would like to see divorced people to be more accepted and embraced by the church"

"I believe the best way to fulfil the mission as the People of God is showing acceptance towards the LGBTQIA+. By actively educating the Catholic community about respecting the different gender and sexuality expressions, we can truly learn to accept those around us. We are all God's children so we should love and treat one another equally"

15. Sexual Abuse Crisis

MISC	6
------	---

Child Protection	7
Ritual reconciliation and acknowledgement	33
<i>Total, Clergy Abuse</i>	46
<p>"Continue to have open discussions re sexual abuse of vulnerable people within our church - publicise the organisational structural changes now in place to reassure us all that such damage will be openly aired"</p> <p>"More transparency regarding abuse in the church"</p> <p>"Affirming that child protection, safeguarding policies and procedures must continue to be at the centre of the Church's life."</p> <p>"Conduct a Rite of Lamentation to acknowledge the hurt caused by clerical sexual abuse to victims, their families and the wider Catholic community"</p>	

16. Agencies, Social Services and Health Care

MISC.	4
Outreach	3
<i>Total, Agencies</i>	7
<p>"To celebrate the difference being Catholic makes to the place of South Australia - the diversity of students and their families supported by Catholic Ed; schools commitment to Laudato Si'; the families supported by Centacare and their support for Indigenous communities and social justice; multicultural communities of faith; Catholic Healthcare..."</p> <p>"Discuss how we as a diocese, could a) support and affirm the work of existing agencies who help the poor in the name of our church B) How can we do more?"</p>	

17. Catholic Education

MISC.	54
School-parish relationship	54
Religious Ed	77
Mission and Purpose	21
<i>Total, Catholic Ed.</i>	206
<p>"The requirements for formal leadership in Catholic schools."</p>	

"Many people's only connection to church is via Catholic School so they should be places to find good Catholic role models & those to journey alongside"

"Among the most important things to discuss would be what it means to be a part of a wider catholic school community and how this community takes into consideration how everyone will approach what it means to be Catholic from a different angle. Being open-minded and accepting of different people's definitions/relationship's with God is vital, thus, making sure these definitions are heard, embraced, and clearly communicated is vital. In a world where everyone's relationship with God is different, this must be addressed clearly."

"The integration of school and parish communities - finding/creating new models"

"Our parish has an R-12 college with over 1000 students of which 60% are reputed to be non-Catholic. Only 13 students made their First Eucharist this year. None of these have been sighted in the church either before or after making their First Communion. No youth over 10 attend Sunday Mass"

"Why are our Catholic Schools so popular with both Catholic and Non Catholic families and yet Catholic churches are struggling to get people, especially families, to church on Sundays or to participate in Parish life?"

"Sacraments should be taught in School so that all young children have the opportunity, not just those whose parents have time to be involved"

"I am concerned that the religious education in Catholic schools, particularly in secondary schools, do not seem to be bearing fruit, with young people not attending Mass. How Effective is Religious Education in secondary schools?"

18.Archdiocese	
MISC	10
Communication and Technology/ PR	60
Services	40
Vision and mission	40
Ecumenism / Interfaith	28
<i>Total, Archdiocese</i>	138
"Discussed the best way to get back the trust of people in the simplest way possible."	
"How can we restore the reputation of the church in the eyes of the public"	
"Making strong connections within the Archdiocese-events with people from across Adelaide."	

"Training to enhance the proper use of technology to build our future of faith filled catholic community and training on social media usage to avoid damaging effects on our faith."

"Is there a way to allocate more Diocesan Resources to helping alleviate the consequences of poverty"

"Church Office does not understand parish workings. Bureaucracy rules and practicality of parish life is not understood"

"The Archdiocese should have a Team that focuses on studying and developing the tools we need to have Catholics back in our Churches?"

"Like any parishioner, I am not clear about the mission of the church. Ideally , its mission is the responsibility of Christ's follower"

"To be connected and build a new culture of respecting, listening, uplifting, accepting, caring, sharing, every step let's ask personally, as a community, what will Jesus do to bring this new society"

"There should be more ecumenical services in our Church and others e.g. Anglican and Lutheran"

"How to partner with other faiths, minority communities, and secular organisations to contribute to a genuine solidarity"

19. Diocesan Assembly – specific	3
Dialogue and listening	53
<i>Total, Assembly</i>	56
<p>"At the Diocesan Assembly, it is important to develop and strengthen the relationship with each other as a diocesan family and to become more aware of the diversity and richness of our diocese. To listen to and share with others’ experiences of faith and life. It is also important to share ideas on how we can begin to implement new pastoral initiatives in our parishes, schools and across the diocese."</p>	

20. Plenary Council - specific	22
---------------------------------------	-----------

21. OTHER	43
Catholic Identity	25
Secularism	35

"To uphold and maintain the traditions of the catholic church."

"Rebuild trust into our church"

"Unity within the Church. We need to promote the beauty and truth of our Catholic way of life through example, evangelisation and outreach. We need to be a united church."

"How to reach out in this materialistic, consumer driven society"

"How can we keep the flame of the church alive and relevant in an increasingly secular society when religion (particularly Catholicism) is not just seen as uncool to talk about but rather often deemed inappropriate?"

22. Age Groups	
Under 16	101
16-29	171
30-45	132
46-65	317
65+	437
NA	80

**Only responses received by the 16th August deadline were included in this analysis. The remaining responses will be counted for ongoing analysis and discernment.*