

**Having a Say in Selecting Our Bishops**  
**Report of an Online Survey Conducted by Catholics for Renewal**  
**Full Report**

**Catholics for Renewal**

<http://www.catholicsforrenewal.org.au>

1 February 2017

---

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	3
Introduction.....	3
The process for selecting the new archbishop of Melbourne.....	4
Response profile by diocese.....	4
Why a relatively low number of responses? .....	5
Respondent profile .....	6
I. Identifying the most pressing needs of the Melbourne Archdiocese.....	7
Major themes of the responses on the most pressing needs .....	7
1. Need for leadership .....	8
2. Need for a more pastoral approach .....	12
3. The need to make changes to how the Church is governed .....	13
II. Desirable qualities of the next Archbishop of Melbourne.....	21
Desirable qualities for a new Church leader in detail .....	22
Conclusion .....	32
Attachment: Responses for 20 dioceses other than Melbourne - available from Catholics for Renewal website	

# Having a Say in Selecting Our Bishops

## Report of an Online Survey Conducted by Catholics for Renewal

**Abstract:** Most Catholics have few, if any, opportunities to have their say on the current state of their local church and what they are looking for in a new leader for their diocese. Catholics for Renewal has provided this opportunity through an online survey. The questions were simple but sought open-ended replies to give people a chance to express themselves freely. Whilst this was complicated to analyse, it has yielded excellent and detailed feedback. Most respondents took the time and made the effort to spell out their hopes and concerns in depth. The responses showed an acute sense of the need for change, often spelling out in detail the changes they suggested were needed in specific areas. The responses addressed at length the qualities of the type of bishops they are looking for. Overall, these concerned Catholics showed widespread dissatisfaction with the current state of their local diocese and parishes. Their dissatisfaction referred to current governance arrangements, and the need for a stronger pastoral focus and more effective leadership from their bishop and his willingness to consult widely. The results of the survey indicate strong belief that many bishops do not recognise or understand the realities of 21st Century Catholics. The results also show the strong desire of concerned and informed Catholics to have a greater role in the selection of their bishop and the governance of their diocese and local parish. The feedback includes helpful suggestions on how this can be achieved.

## INTRODUCTION

The invitation to take part in the survey on the website was based on the following introduction:

- *At this critical time for the Church in Australia a number of dioceses (six as of 31 March 2016) are without bishops, and given Canon Law requirement that Bishops at the age of 75 submit their resignation to the pope for consideration, several Australian diocesan bishops are likely to be appointed in the not too distant future, including a new archbishop for Melbourne. In consultation with others, Catholics for Renewal has created a 'free form' survey inviting a wide representation of Catholics in Australia to suggest in their own way what qualities and attributes they would like in a bishop to serve the needs of their Diocese/Archdiocese.*

The introduction to the survey also noted that the two main survey questions were drafted to assist the process set out in Canon Law for the Selection of Bishops. Canon law sets out a process for selecting the most suitable candidate for the diocese but regrettably has little regard to the needs of the specific diocese. Survey respondents were also provided with a link to a document entitled 'Possible Needs of Australian Dioceses: Some Examples'. The document had the following preamble:

- *The following notes on the needs of Australian dioceses are included with the survey only to prompt reflection and to assist in thinking about diocesan needs. The notes have been extracted mainly from a presentation to Spirituality in the Pub entitled 'Choosing the next Archbishop of Melbourne', by Dr Peter*

*Wilkinson on 1 June 2016.*

The document focused on church leadership and governance, and current issues facing the Church. Included also were statements from Pope Francis on the desirable quality of bishops.

### **The process for selecting the new archbishop of Melbourne <sup>1</sup>**

Canon law (c.377) provides episcopal selection processes leading to the consideration of the Supreme Pontiff, who “freely appoints bishops”. C.377 §2 requires that, at least every three years, the bishops of a Province or the bishops’ conference is to compose and send to the Apostolic See a list of those who are “more suitable for the episcopate”. The process for choosing a new bishop for a specific vacancy requires the Apostolic Nuncio to play a central role. The Nuncio must seek the suggestions of the president of the conference of bishops and other senior Church officials, and, “if he judges it expedient”, seek individually and in secret the opinion of others from both the secular and non-secular clergy and from laity “outstanding in wisdom” (c.377 §3). He then prepares a confidential short list of three preferred candidates (known as a ‘terna’ or ‘ternus’). Normally, individuals to be consulted are sent a formal questionnaire to be filled out and returned in the utmost secrecy.

### **Selection criteria for bishops as specified in Canon Law**

Canon law provides that episcopal candidates must be at least 35 years of age, and ordained for at least five years. They are also required to have a ‘doctorate or at least a licentiate in sacred scripture, theology, or canon law from an institute of higher studies approved by the Apostolic See, or at least truly expert in the same disciplines’. In terms of their qualities, they must be men who are ‘outstanding in solid faith, good morals, piety, zeal for souls, wisdom, prudence, and human virtues...’. It is the circumstances and needs of the archdiocese must also guide the Nuncio’s choice of candidates as the selection criteria include being ‘endowed with other qualities which make him suitable to fulfil the office in question and qualities suited to the office’. The candidates must also be of ‘good reputation’.

The Nuncio then sends the list of three candidates and his report on the state of the diocese to the Congregation for Bishops in Rome, made up of some 30 Cardinals. They will examine the list at one of their regular meetings, and may either approve or reject it, add or delete names, change the order, or may request an entirely new list. When the Congregation has finalised its views, which will include its own preferred order of candidates, and any doubts and questions it has, including minority opinions, the list is presented to the Pope. The Pope may seek other advice, disregard the Congregation’s views altogether, and appoint whomever he wishes. But most likely, he will accept the recommendations and make his decision known within days. Once received, the Congregation notifies the Nuncio who, in turn, contacts the candidate and asks if he will accept. If the candidate does accept, the appointment is confirmed and made public; if he declines, there is silence, and the process continues.

### **Response profile by diocese**

The total number of respondents was 146 which included three respondents from the initial pilot survey. However, only 77 of these respondents were from parishes in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. As the survey was designed to identify first the pressing needs of a specific diocese

---

<sup>1</sup> The following description of the process of selecting a bishop is based on the relevant canon law and on Wilkinson, Peter, 2016, ‘[Choosing the next Archbishop of Melbourne: how it should occur, and why this is important](#)’, Address to Spirituality in the Pub, location?, 1 June.

and then the qualities expected of the presiding bishop, the results make more sense if they focus on a specific diocese. While respondents from all vacant and other dioceses were invited to respond to the survey, Catholics for Renewal put additional effort into publicising the survey in the Melbourne Archdiocese by writing to each parish priest and a number of pastoral associates. The 64 usable verbatim responses from 20 dioceses or archdioceses, other than Melbourne, are to be found in a separate attachment to this report. The distribution of responses by diocese is shown in Table 1. These responses have not been coded because the small number of responses per diocese make this analysis unnecessary.

**Table 1: Distribution of responses to the survey by diocese**

<b>Diocese</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Diocese</b>	<b>No</b>
Brisbane	11	Wagga Wagga	3
Sydney	7	Lismore	2
Bunbury	6	Clonfert, Ireland	1
Canberra Goulburn	6	Geelong	1
Broken Bay	5	Maitland-Newcastle	1
Adelaide	4	Orange	1
Ballarat	3	Sale	1
Bathurst	3	Sandhurst	1
Parramatta	3	Toowoomba	1
Perth WA	3	Townsville	1

### Why a relatively low number of responses?

Why only a small number of respondents to the survey? As noted above, the focus of the survey was on the Archdiocese of Melbourne. A mailout addressed personally to each of Melbourne’s Parish Priests and a letter to some 80 pastoral associates appeared to produce little or no publicity for the survey. The Catholic Church’s lack of a tradition of open participation in the process for selecting a new bishop meant that few parish priests were prepared to endorse the survey.

The low response rate was influenced by other factors as well. The time-consuming nature of the open-ended responses requested made it likely that only the most interested respondents would do the survey. Other Catholics who knew of the survey may have a parish centric view of the Church and felt they lacked knowledge of or interest in the needs of the archdiocese.

Some of those interested in the topic of the survey may have been reluctant to do the survey for fear of retribution from Church authorities. Evidence for this is that several respondents did not complete the questionnaire once they were asked to provide their personal details, which we had requested to show that the respondent was acting in good faith. This response suggests that some Catholics are afraid to express their views on Church matters, especially if they hold an official position within the church and fear that their responses could in some way have been identified. If this was the case, this is not a healthy situation for any organisation seeking to operate in an open and transparent way.

It is important to note that even official surveys, endorsed by the Bishops themselves, have produced low response rates, as shown by the questionnaires seeking to provide input to the

first and second Synod on the Family.<sup>2</sup> This was in part to do with the complex nature of the issues canvassed. It was also due to the language of the questions for the first Synod survey which Archbishop Coleridge described as ‘opaque’.<sup>3</sup> However, the low response rates were also, no doubt, due to the lack of experience that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church has had with consultation exercises of any sort. As Archbishop Coleridge noted: ‘... the questionnaire seemed the work of people who simply weren’t used to this sort of thing’.

The way the National Church Life Survey was administered in October 2016 shows how a survey of the faithful should be designed and administered. The issues canvassed were relatively simple and not abstract and the survey questions were well designed. Most importantly, the questionnaire was administered to parishioners at Mass. This showed official endorsement of the survey as the Mass celebrant introduced the survey and explained its purpose and value. Parishioners also had the time allocated to the homily to fill out the survey and completed surveys were collected directly from the pews.

### Respondent profile

The profile of the Melbourne respondents differs from the expected normal distribution of the adult population of Catholic churchgoers. Women churchgoers are under-represented in the survey, accounting for 42 per cent of the Melbourne respondents and 43 per cent of all respondents. Data from the 2011 National Church Life Survey shows that 61 per cent of Catholic church attenders are women.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of age, two-thirds of respondents both from Melbourne and in total are 66 years and over and nearly a quarter are aged 51 to 65 years. The respondents for Melbourne aged 50 and below account for 11 per cent. In terms of the age of the male respondents for Melbourne, nearly three quarters (73 per cent) are aged 66 years compared with just over half of the women (56 per cent) in the same age group. The age gap between men and women is less for all respondents.

The 77 respondents from Melbourne come from 56 parishes. The respondents come from a broad geographical spread of Melbourne’s parishes. One parish has five respondents, followed by a parish with four respondents and three parishes with three respondents.

The survey results, therefore, are not representative of the Catholic church-going population. There is a high proportion of aged 66 and over and of the men in this age group. This age profile of two-thirds of the respondents means that they grew up in a highly traditional Catholic environment, self-consciously separate from the rest of the society in terms of the language of its liturgy, its prohibition on ‘mixed’ marriage, and even special dietary rules. This older generation entered adulthood just before, during or at the end of the Vatican Council II in 1965 and so experienced two entirely different worlds: one closed and one taking faltering steps to engagement with the wider society.

The survey respondents can be best viewed as Catholics in good standing, with the capacity to

---

2. [http://www.cam.org.au/Portals/0/2013/Documents\\_PDF\\_WORD/Stories/SYNOD-DOCUMENT-1-November-2013\\_CAM%204.pdf](http://www.cam.org.au/Portals/0/2013/Documents_PDF_WORD/Stories/SYNOD-DOCUMENT-1-November-2013_CAM%204.pdf)

3 Archbishop Mark Coleridge, 2016, 'From Wandering to Journeying: thoughts on a Synodal Church', The Cardinal Knox Lecture, Catholic Leadership Centre, Melbourne, 16 May.

4 Claudia Mollitor, Ruth Powell, Miriam Pepper and Nicole Hancock, 2013, ‘Comparing church and community: A demographic profile’ NCLS Occasional Paper 19, Table 3.

articulate their views at some length and a strong sense of urgency to make their views known. The responses reflect the considered thoughts of Catholics who are deeply concerned about the state of their Church in Australia and their Church in Melbourne in particular. They have spent some time thinking about and spelling out, what attributes or qualities are required for the new archbishop to respond to these perceived needs.

## **I. IDENTIFYING THE MOST PRESSING NEEDS OF THE MELBOURNE ARCHDIOCESE**

The first set of survey questions related to the needs of the diocese: e.g. what is the first most pressing need of your diocese, what is the second most pressing need and what is the third most pressing need. The instructions also asked respondents to spell out each priority need in terms of three points.

The content analysis was carried out by one person identifying the themes of each response at different levels from the specific to the more general. Each response was also coded by an even more general category called tone of the response such as critical of current practice. The coding by theme and tone was then cross checked by other members of the survey team.

The intention in the report is to make full use of the actual words of the respondents organised under each theme. The main body of the report cites the responses that best illustrate a specific theme. In some cases, responses repeated the wording used in the background prompt document. This applied particularly to responses on the desirable qualities of bishops which made use of Pope Francis' own words such as 'someone with great gentleness ... not the psychology of a prince' or 'a shepherd with the smell of the sheep'. To ensure full transparency all responses not cited in the main report are reproduced in a separate attachment, under each of the main themes and sub themes.

### **Major themes of the responses on the most pressing needs**

A list of the identified pressing needs was compiled by combining the responses on the first, second and third priorities. The result was 228 responses from the 77 respondents. Table 2 shows the relative importance of four major themes revealed by the content analysis. The responses were classified in terms of their tone or emphasis. Nine out of ten responses about the needs of the archdiocese called for a change from current custom and practice. Half of the responses called for a change of approach in general and 40 per cent referred to the need for specific changes in institutions. The remaining one-in-ten responses called for a return to simple basis values to the past in some way.

**Table 2: major themes of three most pressing needs of the Melbourne Archdiocese**

<b>Major theme</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Related to changes to governance	41
Need for greater pastoral focus	23
Need for leadership	23
Traditional response	12
Total	100
N	228

These general themes were identified by including several sub themes. The 94 responses under the governance theme includes also other specific responses related to governance. These were responses that made specific mention of ‘empowering the laity’ (20 responses), need to address clerical sexual abuse (14 responses), for church leaders to consult before making decisions (9 responses), have women participating in the Church at all levels (5 responses) and the need to reduce clericalism (2 responses). The theme of pastoral focus includes 22 responses that specifically mentioned the need for a more pastoral approach. In addition, 14 responses specifically mentioned the need for a social justice focus, 9 responses called for parish life to be revitalised, 5 responses wanted greater efforts to engage with non-active Catholics and 3 responses requested greater support from the Archdiocese for the clergy.

The leadership theme was raised specifically in 50 responses. These included the need for leadership, often related to how leadership should be exercised. Three responses highlighted the specific need to rebuild trust in the Church. The 28 responses defined as traditional included calls to return to the past of the pre-Vatican II Church, a return to gospel values or the need to practise the simple virtues.

The ranking of the first most pressing issue is different to the ranking for all three issues. One-in-three respondents (35 per cent) stated leadership as the first most pressing issue, followed by close to one-in-three (32 per cent) stating an issue related to governance processes and structures. The slightly greater weight given to leadership as the first most pressing need of the archdiocese simply acknowledges leadership is the primary requirement for any organisation, and as critical to good governance.

## 1. Need for leadership

One-in-four of the most pressing needs of the archdiocese identified by respondents was the need for leadership. As noted above, leadership was ranked just ahead of governance per se as the priority issue. Most responses related to leadership called for a change in approach, ranging from a general call for change to more specific changes. The following actual comments reflect the general call for change

- *A demonstrated willingness to face the challenges meeting the Archdiocese, an openness in recognising them and in developing meaningful means of meeting them.*
- *To have a bishop that provides a clear, honest, transparent voice and who can communicate succinctly, well and often to all members of the archdiocese as well as the wider community.*
- *A holy insightful and capable leader. This would have to be someone of considerable learning who could consult and be ready to listen and to take advice. But not someone who was reluctant to take decisions or who had no depth either in theology or common sense knowledge. This person would have to understand the way others think and how social institutions work.*
- *Restore the faith of the people in the Catholic Church and its hierarchy - the Church is the people and the hierarchy are there to serve the people (not the reverse!).*



### *Leadership that is relevant to the contemporary world*

Others wanted a church leader to ‘make the Catholic Church relevant to all Catholics, especially the young’, or to be ‘relevant to today's world’ or simply to ‘involve the youth’. Others wanted a leader to enable the church to respond better to the contemporary world, and to redress the failings of past leaders:

- *to have a young Archbishop to replace Archbishop Denis of Melbourne - Someone young and someone who will connect to the youth of today and work with women and immigrants coming to Melbourne.*
- *to provide ‘a contemporary vision for the church in Melbourne, here and now, articulated after careful consultation with all the people’,*
- *working and leading the Church to cope with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*
- *To re-establish the relevance of the Church in modern society. In Australia, some 89% of Catholics no longer attend Mass on a regular basis due to the failings by the leadership of the Church (not because of social change as many Church leaders would like to believe). Many Catholics are now looking for a deeper relationship with God through a personal connection (not through the Church leadership where some give the image of being modern day Pharisees). Our Church is now facing the greatest crisis since the Reformation.*

Another theme was for a strong leader in the public sphere, expressed in the following terms:

- *To speak openly on behalf of the Catholic Church on moral issues.*
- *Strong public voice on concerns concerning morality*
- *For the archbishop, be more forthright in terms of directing the clergy to preach on Church morals including the care for the poor and refugees*
- *A bishop prepared to articulate and advocate in the public media no matter how difficult.*
- *Communication/dialogue with the parishes. The present Archbishop is, sadly, virtually invisible to regular churchgoers, and I am hard-pressed to know his opinions on any substantive current issue. Contrast this with the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, Philip Freier, who regularly has opinions published in The Age and is not afraid to confront difficult issues.*

Many emphasised the need for compassionate leadership: ‘a compassionate leader willing to listen carefully’; ‘Awareness of the needs of people in this era’, ‘An example for the whole people’; ‘Authentic, congruent Christian leadership’; and ‘To show mercy’.

Several people referred to the example of Pope Francis.

- *The archdiocese of Melbourne needs a person who will lead by example - in the style of Jesus, in the style of St Francis of Assisi, in the style of Pope Francis.*
- *To fill the vacant office of Archbishop of Melbourne with a pastoral priest in the mould of Pope Francis who listens to his people, works with them and does not rule over them*
- *Pope Francis shows true openness without compromising his true beliefs. The Melbourne archdiocese could do with a man who emulates those open characteristics.*

Others spelt out in some detail the qualities that the leader of the church needs to have:

- *1. A people person...can relax with most people. 2. Someone who feels & makes others feel that he can relate with them. 3. A person who is generous & welcoming to people that are far removed from people that he would normally spend time with. Reach out genuinely to people who are lost souls looking for help... Broken marriages, strayed Catholics & people who need a welcome back.*
- *Pastoral witnessing not only to Catholics but to all of society. Real sacrificial witnessing that goes beyond tokenism so that it is seen as genuine, generous and courageous.*
- *A truly merciful bishop, prepared to take the church out in the public square to minister to all 2. A bishop absolutely in alignment with the pontiff 3. A bishop open to change.*
- *To get in touch with the grassroots in the 230 parishes at a Francis level in their language and symbol. They need to communicate good teaching and good work which is not reaching the pews 2. Strong leadership for past child abuse era where many bishops have gone missing on the public stage because morale is very low in many flocks and sneers, lies and misrepresentations go unanswered and become public fact 3. The need for renewal with the 2020 synod and establishing lay consultation / synods.*

A leader who can focus on social justice issues was also highlighted.

- *The Archbishop needs to be a person of the people. A person who can truly connect with the people- who talks with conviction about the social issues that occur in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. For example, I hear and admire the wonderful Brendan Nossal from the Salvation Army about the homeless in our city, but I hear nothing from the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. I know about the Sacred Heart Mission and its wonderful work, but I don't see the hierarchy of the church out supporting its work.*

## *Rebuild trust in the church by addressing clerical sexual abuse*

Leadership to rebuild trust in the church by addressing the issue of sexual abuse by the clergy was a key theme of many respondents.

- *To re-build trust in the Church. Following the appalling manner in which the Child Sexual Abuse matters have been dealt with, and a gross excess of clericalism over many years, many Catholics and non-Catholics have formed the view that in relation to any matter where a moral or ethical judgement is required, the most moral and ethical decision will be that diametrically opposite to the official view of our Church.*
- *To re-engage many of the Catholics who have turned away from the Church because they have been disillusioned by the fact of, and official Church handling of, child abuse by priests and religious, an unambiguous sign of change is required. An effective sign would be that the archdiocese become incorporated as an organisation, so that it is open to being sued for failure in duty of care, by victims of abuse or any other harm perpetrated by clerics or any other employee of the archdiocese.*
- *The need to acknowledge the deep damage that has occurred in the abuse of people in Catholic organisations and the failure of the hierarchy to respond in a just and a truly pastoral manner. 2. The need for an awareness that many Catholics are bewildered at this time. What does it mean that faithfulness to the church has been betrayed them? 3. Leadership in listening and searching for a theological understanding that has energy and power in our contemporary world.*
- *The bishop, priests and people of the diocese must confront openly, honestly, and together those issues that have caused many good Catholics to distance themselves from the Church, the Eucharistic celebration, and the sacraments. Foremost of these is the issue of child sexual abuse which continues to gnaw away at trust and credibility. There has to be a greater understanding of why two generations of young Catholics have turned away from the Church, even after 10 or more years of education in Catholic schools.*
- *Sexual Abuse: To have a leader who publicly acknowledges: (a) the church's complicity (through cover-ups) in the horrendous child abuse that has destroyed so many lives; and (b) that its compensation schemes and support services have been, and are still, woefully inadequate and adversarial. He must be willing to act: (c) setting up financial and emotional support services that are real and effective, not just window-dressing; and (d) taking a sensitive approach to the damage suffered by victims (a prime example of insensitivity and being out of touch was the decision to spend huge sums restoring the burnt-out Gardenvale church to its original state, which will only revive the horrid memories of its abusive past.) I grew up in the Oakleigh church, and although I wasn't a victim of sexual abuse, I clearly recall the paedophile (...) conducting church services there, and it is a very bad memory to have. I would be very happy for the Oakleigh church to be demolished and replaced by a completely different, modern, warm, community-friendly and functional building. I realise*

*this won't happen while the church is still intact, but if it were seriously damaged, why recreate the scene of so much misery????*

## **2. Need for a more pastoral approach**

One in four of the most pressing needs of the archdiocese identified was the desirability of a more pastoral approach. What this means in practice is suggested from the following individual comments:

- *Pastoral leadership: which means choosing a bishop who has integrity, able to use the language of the ordinary people and be available for dialogue. 2. There are many people who have been affected by clerical abuse at primary and secondary level, survivors and their families who are still waiting to be healed, comforted and recognised as worthy people of God. 3. We need rituals, healing services, education, understanding and acceptance, nurtured and nourished after being shunned by church officials up until now.*
- *An understanding of the diverse needs of today's Catholics, including but not limited to the following, & to actively work to meet those needs: 1. Greater access to the Sacraments, especially Communion by intinction & the fourth right of Reconciliation, 2. Divorced & remarried Catholics & their re-admittance to full communion in the Catholic Church, & 3. A more accurate translation of the Roman Missal, especially the unequivocal fact that Jesus Christ died for all.*
- *Whilst respecting tradition become less rigid with liturgical practices and make better use of interactive communication techniques to more intimately engage people across different age - groups, including a strong emphasis of responding to the imagination and needs of young people.*
- *The Spirit of Vatican II and Ecumenism: need to be revived in practical ways. The last two Archbishops of Melbourne were very similar in that they preferred conservatism in politics and church matters. The spirit of Vatican II has been allowed to fade; ecumenism is all but dead.*
- *Outreach to all members of local community, of all faiths and no faiths no manipulative newsletter from members warning or beseeching parishioners who to vote for or support.*
- *A valid and sustainable response to shortage of clergy - importing foreign priests is not valid or sustainable. Many of the imported priests have a limited facility with English and lack a cultural understanding and sensitivity to Australian conditions e.g. in the way we should treat women and children.*
- *Solving the matter of priest shortages in a way which respects sound pastoral and ecclesiological principles*

### 3. The need to make changes to how the Church is governed

As noted above in the overall profile of responses, governance related issues were mentioned by two-in-five respondents (41 per cent). Some responses were simple and direct, calling for a change in approach.

- *1. accountability 2. transparency 3. poverty*
- *Conducting church affairs with maximum transparency*
- *Transparency and sharing.*
- *Full Transparency of church affairs*
- *1. rejection of clericalism 2. subsidiarity 3. table fellowship*

The following statement was one of the most emphatic and detailed in the range of governance issues covered:

- *Church leadership and governance must embrace and implement the highest standards of good governance in the Archdiocese, including:  bringing full gender balance into all diocesan structures, organisations and agencies;  implementing co-responsible decision-making at all levels;  ensuring full accountability to the faithful of the Archdiocese;  conducting church affairs with maximum transparency;  fully engaging with the *sensus fidelium* (the sense of faith of the faithful), so that all the faithful can become involved in a 'communal search' for a shared diocesan vision of goals and methods of evangelization;  seeking reforms to institutional Church governance locally and universally, repudiating and ridding the Church of all vestiges of clericalism, a major factor in the abuse scandal.*

Another statement offered a similar level of detail and sense of urgency

- *The most pressing need is to open up the channels of communication and dialogue between the People of God - clergy and laity - of the Melbourne Archdiocese and the diocesan bishop (Ordinary), so that together, and co-responsibly, all the Faithful under the leadership of the bishop can better understand the state of the archdiocese, its needs, its challenges, its possibilities, and conduct a "wise and realistic pastoral discernment" (Evangeliu Gaudium, n. 33) about its pastoral and missionary dimensions. It will be imperative that the bishop acts transparently and allows himself to be held accountable to the Faithful of his diocese.*

#### ***Governance changes related to the need to address clerical sexual abuse***

Other responses wanted changes to how the church addresses the issue of sexual abuse of the clergy and religious.

- *Transparency and honesty in dealing with the Church community, especially all those affected by clerical sexual abuse, past and current. This includes a*

*resolution of the ongoing valid claims against the Church, with a complete acknowledgement of the failings in the past by both individual clerics and the Church hierarchy.*

- To re-engage many of the Catholics who have turned away from the Church because they have been disillusioned by the fact of, and official Church handling of, child abuse by priests and religious, an unambiguous sign of change is required. An effective sign would be that the archdiocese become incorporated as an organisation, so that it is open to being sued for failure in duty of care, by victims of abuse or any other harm perpetrated by clerics or any other employee of the archdiocese.*
- Reconciliation, compensation for those abused by priests. A genuine approach to these people. We cannot move forward till this is addressed justly.*
- Consistent application of our child protection measures. Currently there is a lack of consistency in approach.*
- 1. Empower laity 2. Reduce clericalism 3. Make a realistic response to child abuse and stop coverup.*

#### ***Major governance changes proposed: involve the laity more in the church***

The need for the church leadership to consult more widely was a common theme. These comments were related to calls for more involvement of the laity in the life of the church:

- Conversation about ways lay people, particularly women and married men, can be in positions of influence/leadership in the Church*
- More involvement of the lay community, with adequate information and support being provided so that they could play a more constructive role in the day to day working of the Church.*
- A genuine recognition of the skill and faith resources of lay persons (both men and women), and a willingness to engage with them in meeting the challenges facing the archdiocese. This is decades overdue!*
- Able and committed men and women who could keep in touch with parishes and serve as a consultative council for the diocese.*
- Conversation about ways lay people, particularly women and married men, can be in positions of influence/leadership in the Church*
- More involvement in the liturgy by the parishioners, not just lip service.*
- Empower laity, Reduce Clericalism, Make a realistic response to child abuse and stop coverup*

- *Pastoral care of Catholic population. The laity must be included more in decision making within the Archdiocese. Some Priests are openly flouting the teaching of the Church as expressed at the Second Vatican Council. - This needs to be stopped & laity within these communities & parishes given the opportunity to participate in a modern & caring Church.*
- *The archdiocese should employ more lay people in administration, including at the executive level, with gender balance a feature of such employment. This would make more visible the reality of the Church as the people of God, as distinct from the mass of lay people being required to live by the precepts and understanding of the ordained clerics.*
- *Acknowledgement of the rights of the Laity in the life & structure of the Archdiocese, including but not limited to: 1. The Creation of a Diocesan Council, 2. The Creation of a Diocesan Plan, & 3. The calling of a Diocesan Synod.*

Two respondents made specific reference to the need to involve the laity in the selection of bishops:

- *There needs to be greater involvement of the faithful in the nomination of candidates to lead the Archdiocese.*
- *Consultation with the people of the diocese with respect to the appointment of the archbishop and assistant bishops.*

### ***Major governance changes proposed: involve women at all levels of the Church***

Calls to involve the laity included emphatic statements about the need to involve women at all levels in the church. Several statements about the role of women in the church were simple and direct:

- *Including women in decision making; Involvement of women in decision making at the institutional level; Openness to an increased role for women in the Catholic Church.*

Other statements were more critical of the church's failure to involve women:

- *The governance of the archdiocese of Melbourne needs to be renewed and restructured to give to its female members a far more equitable share in the planning, decision-making, execution and review of all its ministries and activities: pastoral, education, health, welfare, administrative, cultural, financial, communication, missionary, ecumenical, and inter-faith. Women should not be excluded from any positions or roles in the diocese which, by their nature, do not require ordination. Women should be encouraged and supported to gain higher qualifications so that there is a deep pool of talented women to be appointed to senior positions on merit. Further delay in this area is unacceptable.*

- *A bishop open to addressing the scandal of gender discrimination in our church. To redress this scandal and bring about change.*
- *Women should have more authority in the Church. At the moment, we are second class citizens. Women should have more say in the Parish, Diocese and at Vatican meetings*
- *The role of women in the church needs to be acknowledged, explored for further development particularly in areas of shared power in the appropriate areas.*

Some respondents elaborated on the roles women should take on. These ranged from having more say at each level of the Church to achieving gender balance in all diocesan structures, organisations and agencies.

- *An examination of power structures so that women can meaningfully participate. This is nowhere more important than at the level of diocesan curias and the national bishop's conference. (Canon Law should not stop such a process even though it appears to do so.)*
- *Bringing full gender balance into all diocesan structures, organisations and agencies*
- *Gender balance in decision making in church affairs. Gender balance within the ranks of the priesthood*

### ***Governance changes proposed: need for a pastoral plan and pastoral council***

Many replies related to governance referred to specific issues and the changes they wanted to see. Such issues included the need for ‘Diocesan Pastoral Planning’, ‘Need for a Diocesan Pastoral Council’; ‘Develop a Diocesan Pastoral Plan in consultation with all the faithful’; ‘Expansion of the spirit of inclusion of the faithful in the destiny of the church through the establishment of an effective [Arch] diocesan Pastoral Council’; and ‘Diocesan Lay Council (as presumed by Vatican 2 [sic]), and a Diocesan Pastoral Plan (as would necessitate engagement with laity)’. Other comments offered more detail about what was needed:

- *Draw up a Diocesan Pastoral Plan that reflects a new approach based on an acknowledgement of shortcomings of the past.*
- *Priority 1:- Develop a Diocesan Pastoral Plan to identify future needs of the Archdiocese, to formulate strategies to address these needs, and to develop detailed, staged plans to implement these strategies.*
- *Realistic pastoral planning for the future. For the last two decades, there has been a total absence of planning. When a parish becomes vacant (through death or retirement of the parish priest), the parish gets “twinned” with a neighbouring parish, without any consideration of the communities, or of the workload on the priest.*



- *Developing a diocesan pastoral plan which has a clear plan for missionary outreach and a radical rethink about current parish boundaries to achieve this and the leadership gifts required to run new parishes. This must involve discussion of identification of gifts for service in a collaborative and non-hierarchical manner.*
- *To develop a collaborative pastoral plan like Parramatta so people from ground up know where we are going and given a pathway to do it. ... Be aware that the people left in the pews and who have left are well educated so you energise them with ideas not nineteenth century piety.*

One respondent, in calling for the setting up of a Diocesan Pastoral Council, spelt out what its membership should be and what it should have the power to do:

- *Priority 1:- Establish a Diocesan Pastoral Council, as provided in Canon Law, to be the key diocesan consultative body on pastoral matters. It should be composed of clergy, religious, and lay persons (male and female), representing all the regions of the archdiocese, its various social conditions, professions and apostolates, and it should be empowered to make pastoral recommendations on matters such as the crisis in ministry.*

### ***Specific governance changes proposed: need for a diocesan synod***

Related to the calls for the need to consult more widely and involve the laity in how decisions are made, many respondents made specific reference to the need for diocesan synods to ensure a more consultative system of governance. One respondent made specific mention of the urgency of doing so: ‘Priority 1:- Hold a Diocesan Synod as soon as possible to prepare for the National Plenary Council proposed for 2020’.

The more detailed responses on the need for diocesan synods are presented below:

- *To start work on establishing the structures and processes in the archdiocese to enable synodality to become a reality in which the laity and clerics can meet and exchange views on pressing matters needing addressing in the church under the pastoral oversight of the bishop. The agenda for such a meeting should be negotiated and not exclude pressing issues in the church. For example, being open to address the shortage of priests issue by exploring new ways of bringing the Eucharist to the people, including the deployment of married priests, optional celibacy and an open discussion of the role of women in leadership positions.*
- *hold a long-overdue Diocesan Synod, synods or other assemblies that can bring together the priests, religious and laity to express their views on matters proposed by the bishop and important to the local church. Need to do this as soon as possible to prepare for the National Plenary Council proposed for 2020.*
- *The resurrection of the traditional Diocesan Synod in the hope that the responsibility for the future of the church of Melbourne might be extended to a more inclusive profile of the faithful.*
- *Hold a Diocesan Synod, (synods or other assemblies can bring together the*

*priests, religious and laity to express their views on matters proposed by the bishop and important to the local church)*

***Specific institutional changes proposed: do away with clericalist attitudes, lift the morale of priests, do not import priests and change how they are trained***

Several respondents saw this as one of the archdiocese's most pressing needs: the need for different kinds of priests, less clericalist in attitude:

- *Catholic parishes need to be revitalised with a diversity of ministers who are dedicated to service and mercy, not to judgment and control. Priestly and religious vocations, drawn from the local church and immunised against the scourge of clericalism, need to be fostered and supported with a carefully devised and attuned formation program.*

Another respondent noted the lack of morale among existing priests:

- *The priests as a body are almost bereft of morale; and are disillusioned, and badly divided. The presbyterium needs to be rebuilt.*

Nor was the importing of foreign priests seen as the answer:

- *A valid and sustainable response to shortage of clergy - importing foreign priests is not valid or sustainable. Many of the imported priests have a limited facility with English and lack a cultural understanding and sensitivity to Australian conditions e.g. in the way we should treat women and children.*

Several respondents suggested increasing the supply of priests by allowing them to marry and for women to become priests.

- *More priests especially local men. We could solve the problem of shortage of priests by bringing back good priests who have left the ministry because they married. We could also allow other young Catholic men who wish to be ordained and marry. If we can allow Anglican married men to become Catholic priests, then there is no theological or moral reason that we cannot have Catholic married men ordained.*
- *More priests. If married Anglican priests who convert to Catholicism are accepted as priests, why can we not invite our own priests who left the priesthood to marry to return as married clergy?*
- *Admit a shortage of priests & take strong steps to face reality of 21st century that priests need not only come from male celibates.*

Two views were offered on how to reform the formation of priests and religious.

- *Vocation promotion - the diocese should work with other religious orders. Look at Melbourne we have 3 theology schools because all the orders and the diocese can't work together. Why is this so? - everyone is doing their own thing - that's wrong - we should be all under one God and one bishop working together for the good of the church.*

- *The provision of appropriate training and education to men training to become priests in the Archdiocesan Seminary. The training now provided to seminarians is of poor quality and is focused on producing a sense of the high status of clerical life compared to the laity. Seminarians are not challenged to read and understand recent theological movements and developments (e.g. theologies of feminism and environmentalism), and are not encouraged to conduct research. Instead they are expected to produce essays etc which merely regurgitate the very basic material they are taught. In conjunction with improved training, the nexus between Opus Dei and the Seminary should be definitively sundered. At present seminarians are encouraged to attend Opus Dei functions and some become socialised into Opus Dei attitudes and practices as they receive 'spiritual direction' from Opus Dei clerics.*

### ***Specific governance changes proposed: change how parishes operate***

Different views were expressed on what should change in how parishes are governed. One respondent placed the blame for difficulties parishes are experiencing on the lack of interest and support from the hierarchy.

- *Relations between the church hierarchy and the parishes need to be significantly improved. Parishioners by and large regard bishops and the church hierarchy as remote figures who hand down orders to priests and people without engaging with them at any human level. There is a high degree of mistrust of the hierarchy by many Catholics, especially following the findings of Royal Commission.*

Another respondent was concerned about the lack of connection and cooperation between parishes.

- *We need to have more cohesion in our parishes. We seem to have become quite segregated. While some autonomy is necessary because of the shortage of priests, it would be good to encourage cooperation between parishes*

One respondent suggested response was for more autonomy to be given to the parish priest to run the parish in close association with the parishioners:

- *For the power to return to the parish priest in governing and running his parish in humility and love serving and supporting his parishioners needs. That he be in control with the support of local parishioners. That this be transparent and a dynamically interactive, consultative process with parishioners. For the priests selected to be true servants of men as Jesus called the Apostles to be.*

However, a more common alternative view was the need for far more involvement of lay people in how parish are governed and conduct their business:

- *Let the laity run the parishes*
- *More lay people working in catechesis and parish formation*
- *Resources for the formation of laypersons to be able to be involved properly in*

*pastoral governance and administration, and not merely in a token way.*

- *More involvement of the lay community, with adequate information and support being provided so that they could play a more constructive role in the day to day working of the Church.*

This view was supported by other critical comments about the parish priest's current role in parish governance and the governance of the parish school.

- *The parish priest has absolute say in his parish and school, so the parish council can deliberate and come to a decision about a pressing issue and the priest can reject it outright. Why bother having a parish council? The priest should not have the final say about the running of the parish school unless he is a registered teacher.*
- *Pastoral priests, assistance in their roles by lay people, priests not hire and fire in schools, leave that to the experts.*
- *Remove the responsibility of parish priests for the conduct of parish schools. Some priests interfere in the role of the school principal. I think that there can be some confusion between the roles of the diocese, the Catholic Education Department, the parish priest and the school principal.*

## II. DESIRABLE QUALITIES OF THE NEXT ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE

There was some overlap between the comments given in response to the question about the most pressing needs of the archdiocese and the comments provided about the desirable attributes and qualities needed for the new archbishop. As noted above, many respondents focused upfront on the need for leadership and a greater emphasis on pastoral care as the most pressing needs of the archdiocese. The major themes of the responses to the question about what attributes and qualities the new archbishop should have covered similar issues: the need for a new archbishop to have a pastoral approach, the need to return to basics, to address governance issues, and to speak out on public issues. Other responses wanted a new archbishop to make a radical break with the past or to understand the contemporary world (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Major themes of responses to the three main attributes/qualities of a bishop to serve the needs of your diocese/archdiocese, per cent**

Major themes	Per cent
Pastoral in approach	39
Back to basics	20
Governance	16
Leadership	14
Speak out on public issues	6
Radical break with the past	3
Understanding of contemporary world	2
Total	100
N	249

The theme of pastoral care often referred to the example of Pope Francis or echoed his words such as ‘a shepherd with the smell of the sheep’, or ‘someone with great gentleness . . . not the psychology of a prince’. The theme of back to basics refers to Christ-like attitudes, behaviour, holiness, humility or personal integrity. The attributes deemed traditional in tone covered such qualities as defender of the Catholic faith against the encroachment of secular society.

Governance refers to attributes related to the openness to consulting with others, willingness to be accountable and to lead in a collaborative way. The need for the new archbishop to be inclusive of a range of groups within and outside the church is a common theme of these responses. The importance of showing leadership was another theme, usually referring also to the adjective ‘strong’. The word ‘vision’ was also used as well as the need to ‘*be open to a variety of possibilities for our ever-diminishing church*’. Another key attribute mentioned by some was the need for the archbishop to speak out publicly on moral and social justice issues.

In terms of the tone of the replies, the predominant emphasis was critical of current practice (31 per cent). The next most important tone identified was an emphasis on being inclusive (19 per cent). Only 17 per cent of responses have been categorised as traditional. The age profile of the tone of the responses shows some marked differences for the above three categorisations of responses.

The age and gender profile of the different tones of the responses are worth noting. On the one hand, older respondents (aged 66 and above) were more likely to be critical of current practice or emphasised the importance of being inclusive. On the other hand, the age profile of the respondents whose response was categorised as traditional were notably younger, with half

under the age of 66 years. The differences in terms of gender, men were more likely to be critical of current practice. There was little difference between men and women for traditional responses. However, women were slightly more likely to offer a reply that emphasised the need to be inclusive.

### **Desirable qualities for a new Church leader in detail**

One response reproduced below stands out for its comprehensiveness, use of New Testament sources and detailed reference to the relevant words of Pope Francis.

#### ***Desirable qualities of the next Archbishop of Melbourne***

*Aside from the specific qualities set out in canon law (c.378), he will have the qualities listed by St Paul in his first letter to Timothy 3: 1-7 and 5: 17-19 - "...irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not aggressive but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money, able to manage his own household well and keep his children under control with perfect dignity ... have a good reputation among outsiders" - and in his letter to Titus, 1:5-9 - "...[someone ] blameless, not arrogant, not irritable, ... not greedy for sordid gain, ...a lover of goodness, ... just, holy ..., holding fast to the true message as taught ...." ;*

*he should also be someone whom Pope Francis has said should be "...a pastor, close to the people, a father and brother, someone with great gentleness, patient, and merciful...not having the psychology of a prince, ... able to support the movements of god among his people' ... 'a shepherd with the smell of the sheep', someone 'who will foster a 'missionary communion' ..., who at times, will 'go before his people' pointing the way', at other times 'simply be in their midst with an unassuming and merciful presence', and at other times 'walking after their people and helping those who lag behind'. but above all, he will be someone 'who will allow the flock to strike out on new paths', ... 'foster a dynamic, open and missionary communion', and 'encourage and develop a pastoral dialogue, with a diocesan synod and a diocesan pastoral council ...out of a desire to listen to everyone, and not simply to those who would tell them what they would like to hear';*

*he will be a person 'whose principal aim with these participatory processes is a missionary desire to reach everyone', who 'will abandon the complacent attitude that says: "we have always done it this way";*

*someone who will be 'bold and creative in rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization' in Melbourne, and do it with 'an adequate communal search', for otherwise his proposals will be illusory.*

*Hopefully he will be a bishop who will 'not walk alone, but rely on all his people as brothers and sisters under his leadership, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment' (Evangelii Gaudium, nn. 31,33).*

### **Need for a leader with a pastoral approach**

Responses included the following.

- *I would expect a bishop to have a number of genuines - genuineness of dialogue when speaking, at all times and the ability to be closer to the people and not*

*aloof. #1*

- *a relational nature and willingness to witness lovingly to all of society. a vulnerable, humble but courageous person who understands that 97 per cent of the church is lay and 50 percent of those are female.*
- *A bishop who connects to the people and doesn't let authority get to his head.*
- *A good pastor, who is interested in and relates to people (both laypersons and clerics) as a pastor. The image is the good shepherd (Popes John XXIII & Francis), not the American company director style.*
- *foster a dynamic, open, missionary communion*
- *a pastoral heart - someone who has served time in the parishes, and knows people well*
- *generosity of spirit.... be a loving person ..open to receive love & return it. be involved with families... just ring and say I would like to call for a cuppa. let people know the real person.... not look like a remote superior person.*
- *an ability to listen to the concerns of the faithful, and to communicate the results of the listening in an open and meaningful way.*
- *the person who is chosen should have a clear understanding of the problems faced by married couples.*
- *humility and simplicity of life. lack of airs and graces.*
- *a bishop after the heart of Pope Francis...one who smells of the sheep and doesn't just look after his wealthy friends ...*
- *a leadership style that will bring him close to the people and that is not remote or aloof.*
- *a diocesan bishop must seek to ensure that as far as possible he has the 'mind of Christ' in every aspect of his life. Above all, he must be at the service of his people and their needs, especially those who are poor, disadvantaged, marginalised, or discriminated against. He needs to be merciful, non-judgmental, zealous for justice and anxious to search out those who lost their way. He must foster ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue and have a missionary as well as a pastoral outlook.*

### **Support for the clergy**

Some responses highlighted the need for the new archbishop to show support for the clergy of the archdiocese.

- *A bishop who is prepared to get to really know his priests and care for them. walk with them rather than just sit in an ivory tower and issue orders and directives.*
- *To be able to acknowledge the priests as co-workers not serfs*
- *Support priests who are ill from overwork*
- *A bishop who is prepared to enter into dialogue with his priests...find out what their hopes and dreams are...what ministries they might be interested in.*
- *The chosen person should have the support of his fellow clergy and also be respectful of the position of female religious members.*

### *Need for compassionate and caring leader*

Other responses made more direct reference to the need for a compassionate pastoral leader.

- *having the willingness and ability to listen to all members of the congregation, no matter what their standing is in the community. have 'the smell of the sheep' as Pope Francis put it. Be willing and able to talk to the simplest person as well as the highly qualified. one does not need to be highly educated in all areas, one just has to have the will to listen to and talk to each person with the dignity they deserve, the holy spirit will do the rest.*
- *being able to relate to all kinds of people in a compassionate and caring manner.*
- *1. mercy 2. compassion 3. relatability - people need to relate to the new archbishop.*
- *2. a demonstrated track record of openness and compassion after the manner of Pope Francis.*
- *a person who has a deep love for Jesus and reflects this relationship as a humble person who has a love of God and a love of his neighbours (the laity, religious and other clergy) and can be a missionary in his own city. such attributes and qualities include the ability to effectively consult and work with lay women and men (not just with people he expects to agree with him).*
- *...must implement and promote the 'mercy' theme of the current Pope....*
- *an excellent ability to warmly and respectfully engage openly, patiently and transparently with and listen non-judgementally to and learn from people of all ages and backgrounds.*
- *1. in the true sense of the word to be humble in knowing he has part of the truth, not the whole of it. 2. he knows how to forgive and be forgiven. 3. he can move*



*with people and join in conversations at all levels.*

- *4. a caring, active, visible presence. 5. a leader who listens to others first- and not just to yes men. 6. someone who is keen to include women in all aspects of the church's work.*
- *a listening bishop, who leads by inclusion of others, especially the laity, in decisions affecting the church's mission in the world. This can be risky and sometimes messy (not unlike the synod on the family). Hierarchical structures and ways of thinking and decision making are the antithesis of this approach.*

Other responses on the desirable attributes of a bishop were simple, often emphasising the need to return to basics.

- *authentic gospel discipleship*
- *most important is love. To love, love, love. To nurture and foster the brotherhood of man. to love one another as "I have loved you". To be a living example of Christ's words. living by example to lead all to eternal life. To be merciful like the father and to welcome all poor sinners back to the fold without judgement, condemnation nor persecution.*
- *fully human and open to growth in his own search for wisdom and holiness.*
- *being an obviously holy and good person.*
- *a man of prayer who can listen, discern and trust God's revelation.*
- *a father*

Other responses proposed a return to their perception of the Church of the past:

- *1) solid personal faith. believe in god (as in the eucharist, spiritual warfare, miracles). Catholicism is not social justice; social justice is the outcome of the faith, not the cause. Otherwise the US Navy could be a religion - they distribute food parcels too.*
- *the first and most fundamental quality any bishop must have is personal holiness." The bishops who pray the divine office, make regular retreats, and schedule regular confessions for themselves are better equipped to serve as Christ's emissaries.*
- *the bishop of the diocese to have the courage to pursue the church's point of view and teaching with respect to the secular push for same sex marriage and euthanasia. The bishop to be a strong defender and promoter of our catholic education system, and be able to explain why Catholics have the need to set up their own education system.*

- *the church doesn't need the world, rather the world needs the church and Jesus will be with us until the end of time. We don't seem to remember that.*
- *Tough action - sack/defrock dissidents, or tell schools/churches not to be hosting yoga. I have heard some dissident priests, but nothing ever happens. Quality more important than quantity, if some are teaching the wrong stuff*

### **Importance of good governance**

Some 16 per cent of responses on the desirable attributes or qualities of a new Church leader emphasised particularly the need for that leader to introduce reforms to how the Melbourne Church is governed. The following responses spell out why these reforms are sought, how they should be exercised and what the reforms need to cover.

- *I believe that the appointment of the archbishop of Melbourne archdiocese will be the last chance in a very long time to appoint a leader who will introduce the necessary reforms to make the catholic church & her bishops credible & relevant to today's Catholics & the wider community. I believe that current & former bishops as a group lack credibility & relevance because to many Catholics the bishops do not lead the church that Jesus Christ established. In spite of the many positives of the catholic church in Melbourne, how do you explain to a non-believer the reprehensible & non-Christian behaviour of the clergy involved in the molestation of children, the subsequent cover-up, & the legalistic approach to compensation. An empathetic leader who respects the sensus fidelium, and listens to and learns from his people; most importantly a leader able and determined to build an aligned Christian spirit amongst all the faithful, clerics and lay people, particularly respecting the equality of women.*
- *A deep understanding of good governance policies and practices. The appearance by Cardinal George Pell before the Royal Commission clearly illustrated that good governance is not understood by many in the clergy. The church's governance practices, as explained by Cardinal Pell, would not be acceptable in most Australian corporations. The vow of obedience has not served our church well. A priest or bishop must not leave his intellect, morality and ability to provide independent judgement at the door when he is in the presence of a superior within the church hierarchy.*
- *an archbishop who acknowledges the rights of the laity in the life & structure of the archdiocese by: 1. creating a diocesan council within 3 months of his appointment, 2. creating a diocesan plan within 6 months of his appointment, & 3. calling a diocesan synod within 1 year of his appointment.*
- *A deep understanding that in this complex age the institutional church in a number of ways is no different from other types of modern institutions and needs to adopt modern governance and operational processes and practices to be able to cost-effectively meet the needs both of God and Caesar.*
- *An archbishop who: 1. publicly acknowledges the wrongs of the past, 2. replaces the legalistic view of compensation with one based on Christian*

*charity & the inherent rights of the victims, & 3. reviews all compensation to date & uses the wealth of the archdiocese to ensure that all victims receive all they need in terms of money, goods, & services to have the best quality of life possible in their particular circumstances.*

- *A willingness to undertake bold reform of governance and the system of pastoral appointments, and an ability to bring others with him in this mission.*
- *1. strong leadership 2. a carefully developed master plan for the future 3 lay participation in decision making*
- *Readiness to question canon law and its criminal aspects.*

### ***Need to give women a much greater role in the governance of the local Church***

Several responses related to the importance of improved governance have referred in particular to the need to give women a more equal role in Church affairs.

- *Involvement of women in decision making at the institutional level*
- *Must actively embrace the potential contribution of women by sharing responsibility and governance with women. not just a patronising approach or a bit of window-dressing eg a token nun on a committee somewhere.*
- *... the bishop must have a healthy regard for women, not be afraid to dialogue and be open to a woman's experience of oppression in church circles.*
- *... someone who is keen to include women in all aspects of the church's work.*
- *... recognition of essential role of women in the faith community at all levels.*

### ***Style of leadership open to good governance***

The following comments emphasised the need for a style of leadership respecting good governance.

- *1) deep fraternal and pastoral care for the people. 2) willingness to share leadership and governance 3) openness to ongoing dialogue and synodality*
- *He must be willing to have a synodal collegial outlook, rather than a monarchical one, and be accepting of the recommended institutes of diocesan synod, diocesan pastoral council and council of priests.*
- *One capable of delegating administrative tasks to competent men and women.*
- *Ability to include a vastly wider spectrum of the faithful in the maturation of the community of the church. The principle of co-responsibility is paramount as a model of leadership.*

- *Collaborative rather than dictatorial in style, surrounding himself with advisors whom he consults and listen to, rather than sycophants and yes-men.*
- *Capacity to hold himself accountable to all the stakeholders in the life of the church. In today's church, there is no longer any place for rampant clericalism, dictatorial and patronising attitudes and rule by edict.*
- *A leader who is prepared to introduce major change in ensuring that the archdiocese addresses its real priorities*
- *The bishop needs to have the desire to listen to everyone, and not simply to those who would tell them what they would like to hear. This requires setting up opportunities for pastoral dialogues, such as regular diocesan synods and working with a properly resourced diocesan pastoral council.*
- *A team person - willing to engage with and listen to a wide variety of people, and works well with them, who doesn't make decisions from on high, in an autocratic way.*
- *Effective leadership skills. An essential skill for any leader is the ability to draw together, and openly listen to, a diverse range of experience, skills and views when deliberating on any matter of significance. an effective leader accepts responsibility, sees himself / herself as accountable to all stakeholders (not just the boss), and is transparent in his/her actions.*
- *The bishop should have a strong sense of accountability to his people and be determined to change the dysfunctional governance culture that presently exists in the church (this diocese and beyond to Australia and the world) so terribly illustrated in the immoral cover-up of paedophiles.*

### ***Need to address the problems caused by clerical sexual abuse***

Good governance also refers to the need to address clerical sexual abuse.

- *1. Should be prepared to compensate generously to victims of paedophile priests. 2. should report paedophile priests to the police. 3. should not transfer known paedophile offenders to other parishes*
- *Empathy with those who need support for any reason, especially those who have suffered from clerical sexual abuse.*
- *Responsive to wrongdoing in the church.*
- *An attitude of transparency. In the past, the issue of the scandal of child abuse was made worse by secrecy and covert power structures. The windows need to be opened so that fresh air might revitalise the whole of the church.*
- *A diocesan bishop should be close to his priests and those preparing to be*

*priests. He should seek to rid himself and his present and future priests of all traces of the scourge of clericalism. He must never cover up the crimes of his priests, especially those committed against innocent children, and he should tell his priests that this will be his policy.*

### ***The need for the new archbishop to consult widely***

The need to consult widely was strongly endorsed.

- *the bishop should hold regular meetings of laity from the parishes.*
- *an ability to set up methods whereby the talents of lay people can be identified and utilised.*
- *ability to communicate with church members*
- *ability to communicate with all congregations, with transparency about the aims and agendas of the archdiocese. It is far too distant at present*
- *priority 1:- the bishop should:  'allow the flock to strike out on new paths',  'foster a dynamic, open and missionary communion', and  'encourage and develop a pastoral dialogue, with a diocesan synod and a diocesan pastoral council ...out of a desire to listen to everyone, and not simply to those who would tell them what they would like to hear'.*
- *I would definitely like a bishop who was consultative rather than one who is isolated and who relies on a small group of like-minded people for advice. Isolation doesn't necessarily lead to greater growth or greater holiness. mostly, it leads to rigidity.*

### ***Need to be inclusive***

Many responses referred to the need for the new leader to be inclusive.

- *He should be a good speaker whose message is accessible to all.*
- *Strong inclusive leader*
- *Understanding of his archdiocese and the needs of the people (and not just Catholics)*
- *True pastoral concern for all people in the diocese - clergy, religious and lay.*
- *being able to relate to all kinds of people in a compassionate and caring manner.*
- *Sensitivity to people (male and female).*

- *communication and engagement with the community (not just the Catholics) - including lots of listening.*
- *Tolerant of gays and divorcees*
- *Prepared to listen and embrace everyone*
- *1. an open, humble and visionary leader, like Pope Francis! 2. recognises the need for the catholic church to modernise and move forward, adopting the spirit of Vatican 2. 3. become more of an inclusive church, not an exclusive church for the arch-conservatives!*

### ***Need to speak out on public issues***

Other responses referred to the need for the new leader to have a public profile.

- *... Australian bishops need to be more involved in matters of social justice. they need to make a stance on social issues in the community.*
- *to speak openly on behalf of the catholic church on moral issues.*
- *fearless, articulate and persuasive advocacy.*
- *A socially aware person, who is able to relate to the people of Melbourne. clearly, he is the leader of the church doctrine, but he has a role in making the doctrine 'real.' Melbourne needs an archbishop who can talk about real social issues in a people centred manner with some warmth and authenticity.*
- *A leader who is prepared to speak up on social issues in accordance with catholic social teaching*
- *Francis proposes that bishops be prepared to take the lead on key moral issues e.g. who at times, will 'go before their people' pointing the way'*
- *To communicate well with the parishes and be active in the wider community.*
- *Engage, listen, speak, go for a walk, go to the footy. Don't just issue statements and then retreat into a bunker, or remain aloof from discussion. Don't be afraid. Trust the holy spirit.*
- *A strong bishop is his willingness to stand up for the truth, no matter the cost. Indeed, for 2,000 years, bishops have been among the chief defenders of the faith — from the early church, through the reformation, and to the modern era. our contemporary shepherds must continue that venerable tradition.*

### ***Need for a break with the past***

Almost one in three (31 per cent) of responses on the desirable attributes of a new archbishop

were critical of past practice. Some of these responses called for a radical break with the past.

- *A complete break from the current crop of possible candidates that maybe in key positions elsewhere in the country. No more yesterday's men.*
- *An archbishop who: 1. publicly acknowledges the wrongs of the past, 2. replaces the legalistic view of compensation with one based on Christian charity & the inherent rights of the victims, & 3. reviews all compensation to date & uses the wealth of the archdiocese to ensure that all victims receive all they need in terms of money, goods, & services to have the best quality of life possible in their particular circumstances.*
- *Much less pomp and money spent on expensive vestments and trappings.*
- *Lack of pomposity including the abolition of outdated titles, clothing and ritual which today is increasingly associated with superstition, power and medievalism. Simplicity!*
- *Get rid of the fancy dress, such as mitre and crozier and don't sing mass from beginning to end. Be normal.*
- *Christ told the apostles to serve not be served. Our bishops need to forget about preaching in pomp and ceremony, but instead be able and willing to get out with the people, to take a keen interest in the poorest of the poor and be willing to lead by example.*
- *To be a prophet and mystic who is prepared to speak out on crucial issues even if it means criticising the Vatican bureaucracy, being fearless and without favour*
- *He has to be Australian in mind first and not have his roman education overshadow the rich traditions we developed here in establishing a church, welcoming migrants and turning convicts into good citizens.*
- *Regardless of his vows of fidelity to Rome, he needs to use his clerical authority to govern and lead from Australian perspective as our best bishops have always done. Their first priority is to look after the flock not the bricks, mortar and fidelity to an institution created by Constantine but the church established by Jesus and enshrined in Gaudium et Spes.*
- *The bishop has to recognise that the church exists in the general society, in the 21st century. The anti-modernist idea of the church holding firm against the world has only succeeded in driving people away from itself. People can survive without the church, but not without the world, the city, the current times. Bishop Vincent Long Nguyen of Parramatta appears to be guiding his people to walk a catholic path, without arguing that secular law should reflect the church's understanding of the will of God.*

## CONCLUSION

The survey has special value because it gave full scope for respondents to say in their own words what the pressing needs of their diocese are and what qualities a new bishop needs to address these needs. These responses by informed Catholics are considered and thoughtful and in many cases are detailed, as shown in this report. Most responses reflect a deep level of dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs in their parish and diocese. The hierarchy's poor response to clerical sexual abuse is one major cause of dissatisfaction but it is not the only one nor is it the major issue that respondents are concerned about. More important is the perceived need for leadership which understands the realities of today's world for Catholics, and is open to wide-ranging and genuine consultation. Above all, informed Catholics want their Church leaders to be bound by good governance practices which ensure that each diocese operates in more transparent and accountable ways.