



The Journey So Far

2016 After years of discussions about a national event for the Catholic Church in Australia, the Bishops confirm they plan to host a plenary council, scheduled for 2020.

2017 **JUNE** The Bishops Conference appoints an executive committee for the Plenary Council, drawing together priests, religious and lay people from across Australia to advise the bishops on the Council process

NOVEMBER The Plenary Council Facilitation Team, led by Lana Turvey-Collins, commences its work. It is confirmed that the Council be held over two assemblies – one in late 2020 and the other in the first half of 2021.

2018 **MARCH** Pope Francis grants formal approval for the Church in Australia to host the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia. He also endorses the choice of Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB as president of the Plenary Council.

MAY The Listening and Dialogue phase, inviting people to consider the question “What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?”, opens at Pentecost. The phase runs until March 2019

JUNE The first gathering of the Local Coordinators Network is held, with representatives from dioceses and eparchies

2019 **JUNE** The six National Themes for Discernment are announced, drawn from the voices heard during the Listening and Dialogue phase.

AUGUST Steering Committee formed to oversee planning for the Council assemblies, supported by various sub-committees.

JULY The National Centre for Pastoral Research publishes Listen to What the Spirit is Saying, a report on the Listening and Dialogue phase that ran to more than 300 pages. Diocesan reports would follow.

SEPTEMBER The Listening and Discernment phase opens, inviting people to reflect on the six National Themes for Discernment through prayer, listening, sharing and discernment.

2020 **MARCH** Archbishop Costelloe officially “calls” more than 250 people to the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia. Canon law dictates a large proportion of the members; others were called from the local churches (dioceses, eparchies and ordinariates).

MAY Six papers on the National Themes for Discernment are published – prepared by groups comprising bishops, clergy, religious and lay people with expertise in the relevant thematic area. The papers will help inform the working document and Council agenda.

APRIL With the COVID-19 pandemic having reached Australia, the Plenary Council assemblies planned for October 2020 and April 2021 are postponed until October 2021 and July 2022.

NOVEMBER Mindful of the ongoing impact of COVID-19, it is decided that the first assembly of the Council be held in “multi-modal” format, combining online and in-person participation.

2021 **FEBRUARY** The working document for the Plenary Council, entitled Continuing the Journey, is published.

JUNE The agenda for the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia is published.

MAY Fan the Flame prayer campaign launched for lead-up to opening of first assembly

OCTOBER First general assembly of the Plenary Council held