

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR COUNCIL DISCERNMENT GROUPS

On the 1st of July, the Plenary Council opened applications for the Discernment and Writing Groups that will play a critical role in helping the Catholic Church move forward in considering the Council's six National Themes for Discernment.

At Pentecost, the Plenary Council announced that after almost 17,500 submissions reflecting the views of more than 222,000 people were assessed, reflected upon and prayed about, the National Themes for Discernment had emerged.

The themes invited people to consider how God is calling the People of God to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is: Missionary and Evangelising; Inclusive, Participatory and Synodal; Prayerful and Eucharistic; Humble, Healing and Merciful; A Joyful, Hope-Filled and Servant Community; Open to conversion, Renewal and Reform.

Six groups will now be formed - one each to focus on those National Themes for Discernment - to review the responses made during the Plenary Council's opening Listening and Dialogue stage, including people's questions and stories.

The groups will also consider their relevant theme in light of Church teaching, of Church tradition, of Scripture and drawing from contemporary best practice within and outside the Church.

Each Discernment and Writing Group will be composed of people – lay, religious, priests, and bishops – gifted with faith, knowledge, skills and attributes suited to the role.

Plenary Council president Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB said there are many talented, faithful people across the country who will be able to make a valuable contribution to the next phase of the process.

He said while the Discernment and Writing Groups will have a particular and important role in the coming months, the broader Catholic community will again be called to take part in the national process.

“There will be opportunities for groups of people in parishes, schools, Catholic ministries, homes and other settings to also pray together, to reflect and seek to discern how we, the people of God in Australia, are being called to be a Christ-centred Church in those many critical areas,” Archbishop Costelloe said.

Those applying for the positions should be “visionary and open-hearted, faith-filled people who are committed to the faith, life and ministries of the Catholic Church in Australia and the mission of God”, the advertisements state.

The groups' tasks will include writing thematic working papers, which will contribute to the creation of the final agenda for the first Plenary Council session in October 2020.

Applicants will be required to provide details about their own affiliation with the Catholic Church and one of their referees must be someone who holds a leadership role within the Church. People with proven experience in communal discernment and shared decision-making are desirable.

Applications for the places on the discernment and writing groups close on Monday, July 22, with interviews to be held soon after. More information is available on the Office for Employment Relations website www.employmentrelations.catholic.org.au and the Plenary Council website www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au .