

Together on the Way



The Big Picture

The work of the Diocesan Assembly (which includes parishes, communities, schools, agencies and Diocesan Offices), is intimately connected to the 5th Australian Plenary Council and the 2023 Synod on Synodality. Ultimately, these three streams are connected and are heading in the same direction. They are about assessing the signs of the times and listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit so as to discern the way forward for the Church in the coming years and decades. It is a participation in the ancient practice of *synodality*. This is why we have been using the phrase *Together on the Way* in our resources and promotional materials for the Diocesan Assembly, Plenary Council and 2023 Synod.



The Diocesan Assembly, Plenary Council and Synodality each have their own processes and goals, which can be confusing. This document explains the Diocesan Assembly process, where we have been, where we are, and where we are headed within the context of all three.

The Diocesan Office is committed to supporting parishes, schools, communities and agencies to understand and participate in this process. If you need any assistance, please contact Sarah Moffatt (smoffatt@adelaide.catholic.org.au) or Peter Bierer (pbierer@adelaide.catholic.org.au).

Focus on the Archdiocese

It is helpful to see where we are in the broad picture. The work surrounding the Diocesan Assemblies can be divided into two major phases as illustrated below.



Phase One: Our Story, Our Mission, Our Future

A: Consultation and Discernment

May – August 2021

In May 2021 we invited all people in the Archdiocese to respond to the question “what do you think are the most important things to be discussed at the Diocesan Assembly?” The responses to this question, along with the local responses to the Plenary Council questions, “What do you think God is asking of us in Australia at this time?” formed the agenda for the 2021 Diocesan Assembly.

B: 2021 Diocesan Assembly

September 2021

At the Diocesan Assembly, over 450 people gathered over three days to pray, listen, dialogue and discern around the six discussion themes developed from the consultation (Inclusion and Healing; Leadership and Leadership Formation; Faith Formation and Spiritual Development; Parish Life and Liturgy; A Church that Listens and Responds to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor; Outreach and Accompaniment of Children, Families and Young People). 60 small groups developed 255 recommendations for the Archdiocese and its parishes, schools, communities and agencies. The Diocesan Assembly was also an opportunity to prepare for the first session of the Plenary Council and call for membership of the new interim Diocesan Pastoral Council.

C: Convening of the Interim Diocesan Pastoral Council

November 2021 – November 2022

The Interim Diocesan Pastoral Council was established as one of the goals of the Diocesan Assembly. The initial work of this interim council is to develop a vision and mission statement for the Archdiocese based on the discernment of the recommendations of the Diocesan Assembly; establish a Terms of Reference for the formalized Diocesan Pastoral Council; to discuss issues of pastoral importance with the Archbishop and diocesan leadership; and discern the key priorities and strategic actions for the archdiocese.

Phase Two: Together on the Way

A: Reflection and Feedback on the Recommendations of the Diocesan Assembly

May to August 2022



This is where we are currently located. In this step, all Catholic parishes, schools, communities and agencies in the Archdiocese of Adelaide are invited to reflect on the 255 recommendations of the 2021 Diocesan Assembly, provide feedback on the top priorities for the Diocese and for one's own community/context. The purpose of this process is to provide information which will shape the discernment of key priorities and actions for the whole diocese as well as to restate the responsibility each community has to responding to the recommendations.

B: Development of Key Priorities and Actions

August to October 2022

Between the feedback step and the 2022 Diocesan Assembly in October, parishes, schools, communities and agencies are asked to develop strategies which will assist each community in responding to the recommendations they identified in *Phase Two: A* above. These strategies will be compiled and shared at the 2022 Diocesan Assembly. It will also serve as an important step in strategic and pastoral planning for parishes, schools, communities and agencies.

C. 2022 Diocesan Assembly

21 and 22 October 2022 (Friday night and Saturday)

The 2022 Diocesan Assembly is still being planned, but the program may include:

- Reception of the Acts of the Plenary Council
- Archdiocesan Vision and Mission Statements
- Sharing of key priorities and actions
- Keynote presentations
- Discussion groups
- Prayer and liturgy

D. Integration and Implementation

Post-2022 Diocesan Assembly

Following the Diocesan Assembly and the publication of the Acts of the Plenary Council, the hard work begins. The Diocesan Office is committed to assisting parishes, schools, communities and agencies to be successful in their own work of integration and implementation of the key priorities and actions coming from these two occasions.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will be formalized after the 2022 Diocesan Assembly and will call for membership. The work of the DPC will flow from the outcomes of the Diocesan Assembly. We will also prepare with the whole of the Catholic Church for the 2023 Synod on Synodality. Archbishop O'Regan has been selected as one of the Australian bishop delegates to participate in the 2023 Synod.

As stated in the diocesan report to the 2023 Synod, we are committed as a diocese to being a synodal Church. This is not a passing trend or program, rather it is a way of being church for the third millennium. We have much to learn, but we will do it together on the way.