

Questions for the conversation with Bishop Paul Bird

These are the questions that were presented to Bishop Paul Bird during a Zoom meeting with members of Australian Reforming Catholics (ARC).

1. ARC has always been concerned by the majority of Catholics who are now disaffected and largely disconnected from the Church. What do you think can be done about this, since they are unlikely to simply return to the Church as it now is?
2. The liturgy is where people experience the Church and there is so much preaching and interpretation of scripture that is simply uneducated. What are your thoughts on how the liturgy might engage educated minds?
3. I know of a situation where a priest engaged his parishioners' help in preparing his sermons because he knew he was a poor preacher. Would you encourage greater liaison and dialogue between the parish priest and parishioners, on a regular basis, on the substance, style and strategies for improving the quality of preaching and the liturgy?
4. How can the Church justify a closed communion table when Jesus made a practice of seeking out those considered sinners for meals? Why should the grace of the Eucharist be reserved for those already in a state of grace, rather than those in need of grace?
5. A bishop would be able to make changes that are only within his authority. What, do you think, are examples of significant changes that you would make at the culmination of a Diocesan Synod?
6. Diocesan and parish councils in Australia are formed, often without standard rules and composition, can be dissolved at the whim of a bishop or priest, and tend to be short lived. What are your thoughts on this situation?
7. We have had a Plenary Council with lots of input from people and very little response from the Australian Bishops Conference regarding immediate action. Is there any particular way that you can see where we might be able to keep that attempt to influence successfully alive?
8. Australia's Royal Commission into the Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse recommended no 'in house' investigation into Child Sexual Abuse, as did the Catholic Church's own Truth & Justice Healing Commission. Why do you think that the Royal Commission and the Truth Healing & Justice Commission recommendations have not been followed through?