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28th September 2021



Dear Monsignor, Father, Deacon, Parish Leaders

Warmest greetings of peace.

We are mindful of the particular time we are living through in the State of Victoria. Our unity in prayer and service of one another allows the light of Christ to shine amidst the shadows of Covid-19. None of us ever anticipated that our lives would be so beset by the virus and its effects for such a long period. We seek the intercession of our Diocesan Patroness, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, for the sick, for those dedicated to the medical care of others, for those searching for a cure and the health of all nations. The impacts of Covid-19 are manifold and our pastoral outreach remains a priority. The invitation to be vaccinated remains a call to the common good of one another. We are mindful of those, who for a variety of reasons, are unable to participate in this medical strategy and whose care is paramount.

Sunday 3rd October 2021 will mark the formal opening of the First Session of the Plenary Council in Australia. The process of the plenary has shifted to remote engagement for the members which is not ideal; however, this will enable the Plenary to continue as scheduled. We – the Catholic Church in Australia - are all being invited into the spiritual journey of conversion and transformation through the Plenary process. Those who are members (participants) are acutely aware of the responsibility of holding the many faithful, heartfelt joys, hopes, anxieties and dreams of thousands who have participated in the processes of engagement, discernment and reflections along the way. The members who gather are being invited into engage deeply with the agenda: conversion; prayer; institutions; governance; structures and formation. We are being asked to listen deeply to the Holy Spirit in a manner which enables us to respond to Pope Francis' dream of a 'missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than for her self-preservation' (*Evangeliu Gaudium* 27).

I invite you to join us on this pilgrimage of the plenary. Sophy Morley has kindly outlined the many ways you can be part of these of days of the First Session and how you might invite your people to engage in prayerful dialogue. You are free to model your own liturgies on those prepared for the Plenary Council, and in particular, to use the readings and prayers which have been selected for 3 October 2021 which are particular to the Plenary.

Our own Diocesan Mass to mark the commencement of the Plenary will be prepared at St Mary's Cathedral Sale and uploaded for 3rd October viewing at <https://tinyurl.com/Sale-Cathedral-YouTube>. In view of current restrictions, you might bring this to the attention of your people.

Please pray for Fr Peter Slater VG PP, Fr Denis O'Bryan EV PP, Ms Lize Privitera, Ms Katherine Jelavic and Sr Mary Olofu SON (Cranbourne representing Religious Women) and myself as we enter this process holding the wonderful people of the Diocese of Sale with us.

Entrusting you to Our Lady of Perpetual Help,

With every peace,


Bishop Greg Bennet
Bishop of Sale

MOST REVEREND GREGORY BENNET BISHOP OF SALE

PO Box 1410, Warragul, Vic 3820, Australia P +612 5622 6690 E bishop@sale.catholic.org.au

www.cdsale.org.au