

SUMMARY OF COLLATED FEEDBACK

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY AND LAY GATHERING (NOV/DEC 2011)

1. **Faith:** People and Priests value the **faith** that has been handed on to them. There is a felt need to nurture that faith, and express it in a way that is relevant and appealing in our time.
2. **Interaction between priests and lay people:** It is striking that priests see the innate goodness, the faith and hope of lay people as one of the most positive aspects of Church for them while the active encouragement and support of priests was mentioned by some groups of laity as very positive.
3. **Liturgy and Prayer** were seen by priests as energising and life-giving; people's involvement in Liturgy gives life to them. However, lay people saw Mass/Liturgy as a frustrating element of the life of the Church, and often experience the way the Eucharist/Mass is celebrated as out of touch with reality.
4. **Laity in Leadership:** The involvement of the laity in leadership roles within the Church is seen by both priests and people as something that gives hope for the future. The need to support and enhance the participation of laity in all aspects of the Church was named by both groups. However, both groups also identified difficulties and frustration in getting people to participate.
5. The **absence of women's voices** at decision-making level in a hierarchical Church and their exclusion from areas of ministry is experienced as deeply frustrating by both priests and laity. The seeming unwillingness to have it addressed as a crucial issue in the Church today is adding to people's frustration.
6. **Young People:** Both priests and people highlighted concerns about the seeming inability of the Church to connect with young people and the seeming irrelevance of the way we present faith and spirituality to their lives. Parents experience an inability to engage with young people around issues of faith. The need to communicate with young people at a faith and spirituality level in a way that is meaningful to them was frequently mentioned.
7. The **fallout from the abuse crisis** continues to impact on the Church at local level among priests and people. Faith and trust in the leadership of the Church has been eroded.
8. There is a great deal of frustration among both laity and clergy about the **hierarchical nature of the Church** and its perceived **disconnect** from what is happening on the ground. There is a sense of a divide between the local community Church and the institutional Church though a hierarchically model of Church is also experienced in some instances locally and discourages lay involvement.
9. The hierarchical Church is experienced as inflexible and **unwilling to engage with the difficult issues** which people feel strongly about. This is felt by the Church on the ground as an imposition of decisions that are out of touch with both priests and people. The new missal was consistently named as an example of this.