



Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Pastoral Research Office

Australian Catholic Bishops Youth Survey 2017



Report to the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Stephen Reid
Trudy Dantis
Annemarie Atapattu

August 2017

Report prepared by: Pastoral Research Office
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
Fitzroy 3065
Victoria Australia

Telephone: +61 (0)3 9953 3457
Email: office@pro.catholic.org.au
Web: www.pro.catholic.org.au

©Copyright 2017 Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

First printed August 2017

Introduction

In January 2017, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) received notification that in 2018 there will be a Synod of Bishops in Rome, the theme of which is: *Young people, Faith and Vocational Discernment*. A Preparatory Document for the Synod was issued, which included around 18 questions, particularly focusing on analysing and understanding the situation of young people in the country. The target age of young people considered by the Synod is 16 to 29 year olds.

The ACBC chose, therefore, to undertake an online survey of Australian young people so as to provide some preliminary information to assist them with their response to the Synod. The purpose of the survey was to help the ACBC understand the world of young people, particularly young people of the Catholic faith and those who have some connection with the Church, however tenuous that link may be.

In particular, the survey sought to:

1. Study the interactions between young people, the Church and society.
2. Examine the level of participation of young people in religious practices and other Church activities and their experiences of these.
3. Explore ways in which the Church might better engage with young people.

Young people in the target age group were invited to participate in the online survey. Invitations using a survey link were distributed via national and diocesan youth departments, Catholic parishes, Catholic schools, and other Church agencies which connect with young people.

It is anticipated that the results of the survey will benefit the bishops and the Church in Australia, and more widely, dioceses, parishes, youth agencies and young people, by contributing to an understanding of young people in contemporary Australian society and the contribution they can make to the Church in Australia.

The survey was launched on 24 May 2017 and closed on 2 July 2017, a period of almost six weeks.

Overall, some 15,000 Australian young people responded by completing or partially completing the survey.

About this report

This report provides a summary of results from the young people who responded to the survey from the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese.

Most tables show results for respondents from your diocese, together with a comparison to all respondents to the survey ('Australia'). This report also contains a more detailed commentary of young peoples' responses to some of the open-ended questions in the survey.

Because this was a voluntary activity that, with the exception of some secondary school students, respondents did in their own time, it is likely that there are some biases in the results. It is likely that the survey under-represents young people who are connected only marginally with a Catholic organisation, parish or school, and over-represents those young people who are highly involved or those who have a 'vested' interest in the

Church. It is also likely that the responses represent those young people who enjoy reading and doing surveys and does not represent well the opinions of those who do not enjoy such activities. In reading through this report, those possible biases should always be kept in mind.

Due to the strict timeline only a basic analysis of the survey results for your diocese has been done. If a more detailed and comprehensive report is required please contact Stephen Reid at the ACBC Pastoral Research Office to discuss options. (Generally, further analysis will be based on a low-cost fee-for-service arrangement.)

A copy of the paper version of the survey can be found at the back of this report.

An important note about copyright

All figures and quotes in this report have been derived from the Australian Catholic Bishops Youth Survey 2017. To cite or reference any part of this report, please attribute the source of the material as follows:

'This material was prepared by the ACBC Pastoral Research Office from data obtained from the Australian Catholic Bishops Youth Survey 2017.'

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The following tables provide a demographic overview of the **999 young people** who responded to the survey from your diocese, along with a comparison to all of the Australian young people who responded to the survey - just over 15,000 in total.

NOTE: The number of respondents to the question is indicated below ($N = x,xxx$). Not all respondents answered every question, so numbers differ from table to table.

Table 1. Age	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
16-18 years	92	81
19-22 years	3	7
23-29 years	6	13
Total	100	100

$N = 999$. Missing = 0.

Table 2. Sex	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Female	52	57
Male	42	37
Prefer not to say	6	6
Total	100	100

$N = 762$. Missing = 237.

Table 3. Country of birth (only top four listed individually here)	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Australia	92	84
Chile	1	These fields intentionally left blank
Mauritius	1	
Philippines	1	
Other country	7	
Total	100	

$N = 754$. Missing = 245.

Table 4. Mother's birthplace	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Australia	85	62
Another English speaking country	6	11
A non-English speaking country	6	25
Don't know	3	2
Total	100	100

$N = 755$. Missing = 244.

Table 5. Father's birthplace	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Australia	86	60
Another English speaking country	5	12
A non-English speaking country	6	26
Don't know	3	2
Total	100	100

N = 750. Missing = 249.

Table 6. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Yes	7	4
No	93	96
Total	100	100

N = 754. Missing = 245.

Table 7. Current situation	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Studying at school	93	82
Studying at university	3	9
Studying at TAFE	3	5
Employed full-time	5	6
Employed part-time	46	40
Self employed	4	4
Unemployed	17	18
Involved in home duties	35	35
Other	2	3
Total	209	201

N = 748. Missing = 251. Total exceeds 100% because respondents could choose more than one response.

Table 8. Current type of school attending (if currently attending school)	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Catholic school	99	96
Another Christian school	0	0
Government school	0	1
Another independent school	-	1
Home schooled	0	0
Other	0	1
Total	100	100

N = 691. Missing or N/A = 308.

Table 9. Previous type of school attended (if not currently attending school)	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Catholic school	72	66
Another Christian school	-	5
Government school	12	18
Another independent school	5	4
Home schooled	5	5
Other	5	3
Total	100	100

N = 58. Missing or N/A = 941.

Table 10. Are you employed in a Catholic organisation? (if employed full or part time)	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Yes	9	12
No	88	83
Not sure	1	3
Prefer not to say	2	2
Total	100	100

N = 373. Missing or N/A = 626.

Table 11. Type of Catholic organisation (if answer to previous question was 'Yes')	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Catholic School	69	62
Catholic Education or Schools Office	9	6
Catholic Healthcare Organisation	6	3
Catholic Social Service Organisation	-	5
Catholic Diocese	9	9
Catholic Parish	6	6
Other Catholic Organisation	-	10
Total	100	100

N = 32. Missing or N/A = 967.

Table 12. Are you a teacher in a Catholic school? (if answer to previous question was 'School')	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Yes	86	66
No	14	31
Prefer not to say	-	2
Total	100	100

N = 22. Missing or N/A = 977.

Table 13. Do you have a disability?	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Yes	6	5
No	87	89
Prefer not to say	7	6
Total	100	100

N = 753. Missing = 246.

Table 14. Type of disability (if answer to previous question was 'Yes')	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Sensory - affecting ability to hear or see	35	33
Physical - affecting mobility or dexterity	35	35
Intellectual - affecting ability to learn	33	47
Mental illness - affecting thinking processes	55	56
Neurological - affecting brain and central nervous system	23	30
Physical disfigurement	28	26
Immunological - organisms causing disease in body	23	25
Other	18	20
Total	248	271

N = 40. Missing or N/A = 959. Total exceeds 100% because respondents could choose more than one response.

The faith of the young people

In order to understand the background and faith of the young people who responded to the survey, a question was asked about how they considered their own faith. The young people could select from six options or an 'Other', which allowed them to describe their faith in their own words. Table 15 below shows the results by sex and age group.

Table 15. Respondents' self-description of faith	Female	Male	Age 16-18	Age 19-22	Age 23-29	Total - Diocese	Total - Australia
I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other faith activities	7	7	4	42	56	8	25
I consider myself Catholic or Christian and go to church activities sometimes	23	13	18	8	31	19	25
My family is Catholic or Christian, but I don't practice or get involved in anything	37	35	37	19	5	35	21
I'm not sure what to think about the Catholic or Christian Faith	7	10	9	8	0	9	6
I follow another religion or belief	3	3	4	0	0	3	5
I don't identify with being Catholic or any other religion	19	26	23	15	3	21	14
Other	5	6	6	8	5	6	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

N: Sex = 761. Age = 997.

Participation in Catholic groups, organisations and events

Respondents were asked the extent to which they had been involved in various Catholic groups, organisations or church activities, and their level of interest in those activities. The following table provides a summary of those responses.

Table 16. Participation in Catholic groups, organisations and activities	Yes	No, but would like to	No, not interested
Big events (World Youth Day, Youth Festival, conferences)	9	38	53
Service / outreach programs / immersions	14	37	50
Parish youth groups	14	19	67
Local events (rallies, camps, etc)	15	34	52
University chaplaincy initiatives	3	26	72
Social events / meeting new people	23	38	39
Youth Masses or liturgies	26	15	59
Community leadership (training or service)	14	33	53
Speakers & discussion initiatives (in parishes, pubs, other locations)	12	25	63
Prayer experience	23	17	60
Catholic school groups	32	17	51
Personal support services (counselling, mentoring, etc)	15	38	47
Vocation or discernment programs	2	28	69
Other initiative	4	15	81

Each row adds to 100 per cent.

Respondents were also asked to comment on one or two experiences of participating in the above-mentioned events and initiatives that had been particularly positive for them. Youth groups, youth festivals, Mass and liturgical gatherings and mission and outreach opportunities were the top four positive experiences as indicated by their responses.

YOUTH GROUPS:

Participating in youth groups was enriching because young people could make new friends, discuss issues and explore their faith in a comfortable environment. Youth camps were also an enjoyable experience.

Youth group experience has been invaluable. It's given me some amazing friends and an eagerness to know and understand my faith better

Parish youth groups can be a great experience for young people to get involved in their religion and interact with others with the same values.

I found that youth groups were effective as they built confidence within me and also helped me make friends. the youth group experience was a different approach to the Catholic faith and I liked how different and fun it was compared to Mass.

Parish youth groups. Although I am not a part of that community and am on the fence about my beliefs, I did find the youth group quite enjoyable mostly due to the range of activities presented and tolerance of an idiot like myself.

The youth Hillsong summer camp was a positive experience for me because it reminded me of the significance God has on everyone's lives and offered some beneficial insights.

YOUTH FESTIVALS:

Youth Festivals were popular for the opportunities they provided to meet other young people and listen to engaging speakers. Some of the festivals mentioned were World Youth Day, the Australian Catholic Youth Festival and the Ignite Youth Conference in Brisbane.

World Youth Day, and the youth camps that were run in my home diocese when I was a teen (Bathurst) were the most positive experience of faith I have ever known. Those events expose young people to like-minded others and develop a sense of community. Young people, myself included, can often feel alone as the only young person in rural parishes in Australia.

I participated in World Youth Day and the Days in the Diocese in 2008. I was young but it opened me to the idea that I was not alone in my faith and that it is a wide-spread. The joy that I experienced here is one of the reasons I have stayed with my faith as I got older.

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival was quite a positive experience where I was able to meet many people from across Australia who identify as Catholic. It opened my eyes to see how relevant the acts of the Church are to people within Australia.

The Ignite Catholic Youth Conference in Brisbane taught me a lot about the meaning of spirituality; it opened me up to the idea of being religious, more than just the religious aspect of my family life could have ever done.

MASS AND LITURGICAL GATHERINGS:

School Masses and Parish Youth Masses were particularly positive experiences for participants in this group.

I regularly participate in school Masses and liturgy and think that this way of connection with God is great. It provides a wider community to all who listen to the words and then reflect as a whole.

Being a part of youth Masses and liturgies has helped to strengthen my faith and be surrounded by people who share the same beliefs at a young age.

I have participated in many youth liturgies and have met many new people through these liturgies. The Catholic school groups have allowed me to make many new friends who have the same beliefs, attitudes and hopes for the future. All these have given me a sense of belonging in my parish and Catholic community.

MISSION AND OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES:

Activities and programs based on mission, outreach and service were inspiring as they provided young people with new experiences and the opportunity to help and serve others.

I went on my first mission school this year in Tasmania and it was one of the best decisions I've made in my life! My faith has grown once again even deeper and I have now made some beautiful deep friendships that will never be lost. :)

I've participated in an immersion program through my school with the Marist Brothers in Cambodia. This was the most life-changing experience for me. I came back far more aware of social justice, and the importance of playing my role in giving to others who need it.

I recently got back from an immersion from the Torres Strait Islands, and it was one of the best experiences of my life. I really liked giving service to the community and connecting with the Catholic faith from the view point of another culture.

I've been lucky enough to attend one immersion trip to Sydney with my local school, and I know that for everyone who attended, it has greatly changed our lives, seeing the little that some people have, and seeing that just doing little things (e.g. we cleaned a mentally ill person's house) can make a massive difference to their lives, and how welcoming these people are and how grateful they are for the little things in life. It made everyone reflect on our own lives, and taught us how to do good in the world. And now more than 75% of the people who attended the immersion trip have become leaders within the school community (including myself), and I believe this is because of the values and skills we were taught during this trip.

A social justice group St Vincent De Paul allows us to help others that need it through the Christian spirit.

Based on participants' responses, the following gatherings, organised or informal, are the top three most engaging and successful **within** the Church.

1. Mass and Liturgical Gatherings
2. Youth Groups and their activities, including camps.
3. Music concerts and Praise and Worship

Youth groups, youth mass, Adoration Holy Hours. I think all of these have active engagement of the congregation and the clergy in a way that encourages interaction. They force people to take an active role in the happenings and not to just be passive participants

Christmas and Easter—they provide a happy environment where everyone comes together and shares similarities with each other. It's very happy.

Small liturgies and youth groups where they play music, do activities and talk to people more informally rather than reading large passages from the Bible because these things are more engaging and make you feel more connected to the Church than Bible reciting.

Actually allowing the youth to participate and engage in the Sunday Masses and not just youth Masses once every few months. For them to be able to read, use the projector and other little things will make them feel more wanted and more engaged with the Church, in turn allowing for their spirituality to develop as their sense of belonging does.

Mass, liturgies, youth liturgies. Youth liturgies are successful because it gets kids interested in their faith at a young age.

World Youth Day, Good Friday Walk, Australian Catholic Youth Festival, youth groups, youth Masses. The success of these types of gatherings is the turnout by the young people and the activities, events associated with it.

Catholic youth groups because it makes you socialise with people your age (teenagers) and you can connect and interact with them easier than other gatherings.

Youth camps—having younger people run them (18-27 years), group sessions and activities focused around the Bible and how it has impacted people and how it is relatable in other people's lives. however, also activities not centred around the Bible.

Youth festivals and concerts, this is because it appeals to the younger age groups because it is social and out there.

I believe group concert activities provide the best avenue for young people, because they are relaxed and engage peers.

Based on participants' responses, the following gatherings, organised or informal, are the top four most engaging and successful **outside** the Church.

1. Organised social events - Concerts, parties, music festivals
2. Mission and outreach activities
3. Sports
4. Youth groups

Festivals and fairs. They're fun and engaging for the whole family.

Concerts—everyone likes good music and just hanging out at them.

Biggest Morning Tea, Picnics—Food, donations, coming together to support a charity, meeting new people. Youth Concerts—Hillsong, local musical groups (bands, choirs, etc.)

I think the ones (like youth festivals, etc.) where you get to have discussions and meet new people in a more informal environment are most successful as they are in a more welcoming atmosphere.

Youth festivals, music festivals, film festivals, cultural festivals.

Gatherings of everyone in the parish give us a good sense of community and oneness. Fundraisers and other celebrations are great to get involved in.

Volunteer work. It creates a sense of social responsibility and tolerance to those who are marginalized or incapable.

Having fundraising/special event days where the youth are able to help with the organisation and conducting of it allows them to feel more a part of the Church and that their contribution is wanted and needed rather than them being an inconvenience or annoying.

Feast day at school because there are many fun activities to do and the money goes towards Caritas and other relevant charities.

Netball and swimming. They are successful because many young people enjoy these sports and engage with them.

Sporting events—they allow people to be in a positive and enjoyable environment.

Youth groups give kids a chance to unwind and meet new people.

Youth groups are successful as they present a safe environment, that makes everyone feel heard, have fun and learn about faith.

Youth groups that involve music or pop culture.

To understand the experiences of participants at non-Catholic religious events, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had attended such events and whether they found it enjoyable.

Some experiences of enjoyable events:

I have attended two Christian multi-denominational conferences and they both had an atmosphere which set the mood. People came expecting an encounter with God which I feel made for an atmosphere where the Holy Spirit was welcome.

I have attended Mass at Uniting Churches and found it to be engaging and more open. I think having everyday people with families as ministers makes them more relatable and inviting.

Buddhist meditation. Excellent

I have attended a fair few Pentecostal Christian events. I found these uplifting and enlightening. Something I don't always feel after leaving my weekly church service.

I have been to a Bar Mitzvah and it was very enjoyable, much more than the Catholic church as Jewish people have good food.

Yes, we worship in many denominations. I was raised as Uniting Church ... I converted to Catholicism, however my husband was trained as an Anglican minister so we worship in more than one place. The worship is best with the Uniting Church most of the time.

Hillsong! It was so engaging for people my age!

Yes, I attended a Greek Orthodox Easter service and I enjoyed being exposed to new perspectives and practices, such as the walk around Beaumont St.

Some experiences of events that were not enjoyable:

Protestant worship prior to becoming a Catholic. Despite the progressive worldview of one church I was involved in, some elements of worship felt quite traditional (kneeling for the reception of Holy Communion) and the music especially was quite traditional (Wesleyan hymns). Non-enjoyable, however, was the worldly theology of the church, and failure to educate people in orthodox Christian faith, rather presenting an extremely liberal theological view of Christianity.

When to a funeral at a Baptist-type church once and it was terrible.

Yes, I have been to a Mormon church for 3 hours on a Sunday which was interesting but also quite boring and I would not do it again.

Yes, Seventh Day Adventist. Involved in that for 11 years because of school and hated it.

Influencers on young peoples' lives

A question was asked about the extent to which the respondents had been influenced by people or groups of people around key decisions and directions in life. Table 17 shows the degree to which such people had been influencers.

Table 17. Influencers on the young peoples' key decisions and directions in life	Has influenced a lot	Has had some influence	Has not influenced	Has discouraged	Not sure / Don't know
Family	79	15	3	1	2
Friends	49	42	6	1	3
School / teachers	20	61	13	3	4
University / lecturers	5	14	36	3	43
Parish or church community	4	21	43	11	21
Church or religious leaders	4	21	43	12	21

Each row adds to 100 per cent.

Young peoples' experience of being listened to

An important reason for undertaking the survey was to provide a forum for young people to voice their opinions, thoughts and concerns; that is, to listen to young people. Respondents were asked to rate their experience of being listened to by people from the Church, using a scale from 1 to 10, where '1' was 'Very negative' and '10' was 'Very positive'. The survey defined the term 'Church' as its people, practices and organisations, including schools. The following table shows a comparison of the mean scores between females and males, and between the different age cohorts. The scores for all Australian respondents are also shown.

Table 18. Mean scores (on a scale of 1 to 10) of respondents' experience of being listened to by people from the Church

	Mean score - Diocese	Mean score - Australia
Total	5.2	5.9
Female	5.3	6.0
Male	5.2	6.0
Age 16-18 years	5.2	5.8
Age 19-22 years	5.3	6.6
Age 23-29 years	5.9	6.5

The participants' responses revealed that there were three main factors that contributed to the **positive experiences** of young people— the experience of talking to people who valued their story, the positive attitude of the clergy, and the welcoming and supportive attitude of parishioners. Below are some positive experiences of being listened to that were shared by participants.

Being able to express my Catholic beliefs without being judged or feared by my faith.

Catholic schools I've been to have been very willing to receive feedback about teaching and aspects of topics learned in different classes.

I was supported by my Parish to attend WYD and when I returned home was asked to share my experiences with my community.

Being assured that God loves me regardless of my sexual orientation.

I found support when my father was diagnosed with cancer.

Throughout my whole Catholic schooling education, I have felt welcomed and free to voice my opinions in leadership roles and make a positive impact on the school.

After my mother died when I was 21, I found great support in people who I had completed Antioch with as a younger person.

My parish priest and the parish coordinator have been amazing in listening to me and helping me grow into a faithful person on my return to the Church.

My parish priest and bishop will always listen to me.

The three main factors that contributed to the **negative experiences** of young people were a negative personal experience with a church member, an occasion where their comments were ignored by the group and the seemingly close-minded, biased attitudes of people. Below are some negative experiences of being listened to that were shared by participants.

During Catholic school, the Church was seen as insular and difficult to communicate with. When I would raise questions regard suicide as I was depressed at the time I was told it was cowardly and a mortal sin. No help or outreach was provided. This hurt my spiritual and mental health as I suffered in silence for many years after that afraid of what my mind was saying. It was only as an adult did I talk to a doctor and get the help I needed.

I am not allowed to share any critical thoughts on the Church (even if I just want to help) and I feel like my voice is less heard because I am a woman.

Ideas and notions for more inter-church and ecumenical initiatives among local parishes were turned down by the parish leadership team.

Priests judging youth for not be able to attend Mass every weekend. With sporting commitments and work commitments it sometimes doesn't happen. I have heard priests say that means you are not a practising Catholic if you miss a weekend Mass.

Sometimes people don't want youth, or don't want to talk to them in the parish setting. I feel that sometimes we are just looked upon as though there's nothing really to say, so conversations don't get started.

Being told that as a 'young one' I should be seen and not heard.

Some teachers do not want to open discussion or allow for individual interpretation of texts and concepts and as a result many young people feel put off by religion or unable to participate.

Nobody listens because they think young people don't know anything

Biased opinion, as many people are old and traditional.

The inbuilt biases and stereotypes against LGBTQI.

Judgement, not understanding more modern struggles, expectations.

I was once made aware of a Monsignor's views that he considered young people to be inaccurate, irrelevant and ultimately not capable of significant leadership, which was particularly upsetting.

Issues facing young people today

A question asked respondents to consider some of the main issues facing young people in Australia today. Table 19 below shows the results.

Table 19. Main issues facing young people in Australia today	Per cent - Diocese	Per cent - Australia
Family life	28	36
Friendships and relationships	40	45
School or study	62	56
Work or employment	32	32
Environment	11	12
Spirituality and religion	8	17
Body image	51	51
Drugs or alcohol	54	53
Multiculturalism and ethnicity	8	13
Sexuality	26	38
Mental health	66	57
What to do with your life	32	32
Sport and health	7	8
Culture, the arts or music	3	5
Leadership in society	5	8
Social justice	15	15
Other	3	3
Total	451	480

N = 898. Missing = 101. Total exceeds 100% because respondents could choose more than one response.

When asked to indicate ways in which the Church could help them and their friends in today's world, many respondents believed that the Church could provide guidance, help and counselling for young people in dealing with personal problems and relationship issues.

Give advice and support in the issues young people struggle with in society today.

Perhaps provide better support networks in terms of caring for or helping young people to deal with issues such as mental health, school pressure and stress, social injustice. These could help raise awareness and help provide young people with the tools to deal with these issues in their own life.

By setting up support groups that regularly meet up to help assist each individual with certain issues.

By providing more youth care services and youth centres.

I think to help young people you need to engage in their interests, be able to talk to people without having to have a service every time. To allow people to focus on issues that they deem concerning, these often aren't terrorism and Jesus' miracles, these are 'What am I going to do with my life?' 'Whats the point of school?', 'Am I good enough?'. While you may have experienced these things, and don't think they're

important anymore, many young people are still going through this and it is a central aspect to their lives. Listen and give advice appropriately, understanding an individual's context.

A good support network and great sense of community so we feel a part of something and know that we have help when we need.

Similarly, there were an equally large number of respondents asking for more involvement opportunities for young people.

By listening to the youth of the Church to hear out ideas and the issues we're facing. Also providing opportunities for leadership within the faith community.

Build a community that crosses the generational boundaries. Provide events (can be as simple as morning tea after Mass). Allow the older members of the congregation to be role models for us.

The Church can help me and my friend in today's world through activities such as youth groups etc., as these types of activities aren't 100% praying and they involve help for young people.

Host events that cater to young people. More music, dinners or charity balls would be a nice way to get the word out on social media.

Schools and youth groups for example, allow young people to connect with others in the same age bracket and ask them for support.

Some respondents felt that the Church ought to be more open and inclusive, especially in terms of accepting different sexualities.

I believe the Church should emphasise how important it is to identify as whatever you like and not discriminate against someone on the basis of their sexuality. Whether someone is attracted to their own gender or the opposite sex shouldn't matter.

By being more modern. A lot of young people strongly disagree with the Church's social positions on issues such as abortion and gay marriage.

By keeping up with modern times to make themselves seem more open for young people to participate. The way the Church seems to be stuck in the past with archaic beliefs such as its stance against marriage equality makes young people feel like the Church is just old people that are out of touch with society.

We want marriage equality for our friends who are LGBTI. If priests were allowed to be married or if women could become priests you would have more people coming to Church as they would be seen as relatable.

Young people were also asked to indicate how the Church could use social media and technology to connect with them better. In response to this, there were several suggestions of a greater presence of parishes and clergy on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. There were also suggestions of having a Youth Ministry app or a diocesan app to provide regular news, faith formation tools and other helpful information. Respondents also said that they would like parishes and dioceses to have better websites with clear information about Mass timings and youth events and activities.

The Church could maybe spread their word a little bit more through social media such as Facebook i.e. suggesting religious events or opportunities coming up near you or by promoting the religion-related news around social media.

Use some of the biggest social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat to get across contemporary or relevant issues in the world today.

I've never considered this; however I think it would be highly beneficial for local incentives (local youth groups) to have a broader connection with Catholic schooling students through Facebook pages and Snapchat.

If they could make themselves more modern, a few memes and jokes wouldn't hurt, and really get people involved. For example, the NSW police force Facebook page now effectively place in a few memes and jokes, and their page now has far more followers, therefore they can spread news further and faster.

For me, while the Vatican and some of the other clergy have embraced technology many parish and diocese websites are lacking in good well thought out and design websites. My local parish does not have a wood website, and there is no use of social media. I am also unaware of the diocese use of social media as it is not promoted in our Church bulletin.

Social media and technology don't come to mind when I think of church, but on websites have a clear list of available Sacraments. Many friends comment that they want to know when reconciliation is on—we need a list.

Social media could connect more people to the Church community—online forums for discussion and daily prayer activities could reach more people.

It could provide you with information on places you may need help with, such as mental health issues.

Respondents who were not involved in church activities were asked to indicate ways in which the Church could connect better with them. In response to this, most suggested advertising youth events and activities through emails or on social media platforms such as Facebook as a means of direct communication. Another popular suggestion was to plan fun and interesting events and activities for young people and advertise them widely through schools and communities so that young people of other faiths might hear about them and have the opportunity to participate in them.

I'm involved in the Church only through my Catholic school. For those not involved, more open and consistent use of social media could help others connect.

Social media platforms allow for a broader audience with a more engaging way of presenting the information.

Via social media, television, seeing active groups in the community making a difference and getting to know them previously without being fully involved.

Make it fun and exciting, have activities that we would enjoy, that means having a variety of activities to interest most people with different interests.

Have youth groups that are more aimed at teens but also have events that have a focus on faith but also offer a range of things so it feels more accessible.

Opportunities! If many of us were given opportunities to help and engage with things then we would. We don't fundraise that often so it would be beneficial if there were more activities/retreats we could help in so we feel more a part of the Church.

Arrange group activities that are not religiously focused, but subtly promote Christian Ideology (e.g. Sporting Teams)

The experiences I have had with the Church have been through the school. Performing engaging, hands-on activities that are relevant to our youths' life, like technology, modern examples, etc. would leave an influential footprint in the mind of youth today.

Through school is the only interaction I have with the Church.

APPENDIX 1 – Copy of Survey (Paper Version)

Australian Catholic Bishops Youth Survey 2017



Thanks for participating in this survey. Pope Francis wishes to hear from young people and so the Australian Catholic Bishops have developed this survey to provide him with feedback. Your thoughts will contribute to a national submission that will be considered by Pope Francis as part of the **General Synod on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment** to be held in Rome in October 2018.

What's a Synod? A Synod is a special meeting of Church members including: bishops, priests, religious sisters and brothers, men and women. But it's more than a meeting – it's a journey and a way for the Pope to hear from the whole church on issues. After the Synod the Pope usually writes a special document for the whole of the church.

Who: This survey is for **Australians** aged between **16 and 29 years**. Note: if you are under 18, you may wish to discuss the survey with your parents.

How: This survey should only take about 10-20 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers, so just answer each question as honestly as you can. If you do not want to answer a question, just move onto the next one. In each question, simply tick the box which best represents your response or write your comments, and then move onto the next question.

Can I withdraw from the survey? Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You are not under any obligation to participate. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the survey at any time up until you hand in the survey.

Questions: If you have any queries about this survey, please contact Stephen Reid, ACBC Pastoral Research Office (E: synod2018@catholic.org.au).

Results: The results from the survey may be summarised and appear in publications or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify you in any way. Your privacy is important to us. Please go to the ACBC website to view the ACBC privacy policy to find out how we handle your information:

www.catholic.org.au/acbc-privacy/australian-catholic-bishops-conference-privacy-policy

Ethics: This survey has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (Review no. 2017-110E). If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of the project, you may write to the Manager of the Human Research Ethics Committee, care of the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

Manager, Ethics
c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
Australian Catholic University
North Sydney Campus
PO Box 968
NORTH SYDNEY, NSW 2059
Ph.: 02 9739 2519 Fax: 02 9739 2870
Email: resethics.manager@acu.edu.au

End date: This survey will close at midnight on Sunday 2 July 2017.

This is an opportunity to make your voice heard. Thank you for participating.

By completing the questions below you are consenting to participate in this survey.

Q1. Which diocese do you belong to? _____

Q2. If you do not know which diocese you are located in,
please just write in your postcode: _____

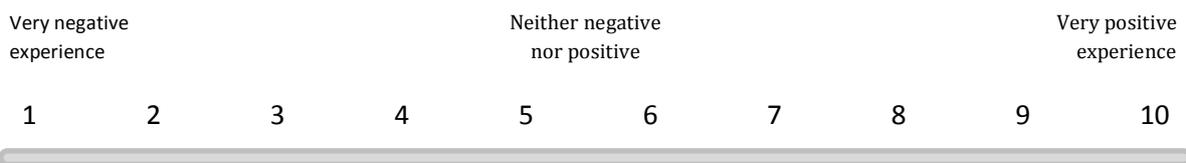
Q3. How old are you? _____ (Note, this survey is only for those aged 16-29)

Q4. Which **ONE** of the following best describes you?

- I am Catholic and regularly attend Mass and other faith activities
- I consider myself Catholic or Christian and go to church activities sometimes
- My family is Catholic or Christian, but I don't practice or get involved in anything
- I'm not sure what to think about the Catholic or Christian Faith
- I follow another religion or belief
- I don't identify with being Catholic or any other religion
- Other (please describe in just a few words): _____

Definition: in this survey you will find the term 'Church' used throughout. By this we mean its people, practices and organisations, **including schools.**

Q5. On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your experience of being listened to by people from the Church. (Write an X on the bar, or skip to the next question if you are unsure.)



Q6. Would you like to share briefly one positive and one negative experience of being listened to by people from the Church?

Positive experience:

Negative experience:

Q7. What do you consider are some of the **main** issues facing young people in Australia today?

	Please select up to 4 issues
Family life	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendships and relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>
School or study	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work or employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spirituality and religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Body image	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drugs or alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multiculturalism and ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexuality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>
What to do with your life	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport and health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture, the arts or music	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership in society	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social justice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe briefly): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q8. In what ways do you believe the Church can help you and your friends in today's world?

Q9. From your experience, how could the Church use social media and technology to better connect with you?

Q10. Below is a list of some of the opportunities for young people to participate in Catholic groups, organisations or church activities. Please indicate your level of participation. *(If you are unsure, just leave it blank.)*

	Yes, I have participated in this event	No, I've not participated but would be open to it	No, and not interested
Big events (World Youth Day, Youth Festival, conferences)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service / outreach programs / immersions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parish youth groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local events (rallies, camps, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University chaplaincy initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social events / meeting new people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Masses or liturgies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community leadership (training or service)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speakers & discussion initiatives (in parishes, pubs or other locations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prayer experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catholic school groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal support services (counselling, mentoring, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocation or discernment programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other initiative not listed above (describe briefly): <hr/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q11. Thinking further about the above-mentioned events and initiatives you've participated in, would you like to comment on one or two which have been particularly positive experiences for you and why?

Q12. What types of gatherings, organised or informal, are the most engaging and successful **within** the Church? In your opinion, what makes them successful?

Q13. What types of gatherings, organised or informal, are the most engaging and successful **outside** the Church? In your opinion, what makes them successful?

Q14. If you, or your friends, are not involved in church activities, how could we connect with you? *(Please skip this question if you are currently involved in church activities.)*

Q15. Have you ever attended a religious event that wasn't Catholic? What was or wasn't enjoyable? *(Please skip this question if you haven't attended a non-Catholic religious event.)*

Q16. To what extent have the following groups of people influenced key decisions and directions in your life?

	Has influenced me a lot	Has had some influence	Has not influenced me at all	Has discouraged me	Not sure / Don't know
Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School / teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University / lecturers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parish or church community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Church or religious leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

About you

These last few questions help us to find out whether different groups give different sorts of answers. For example, do females and males think differently about certain things?

Q17. Are you:

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

Q18. In which country were you born?

- Australia
- Chile
- China (not including Hong Kong or Taiwan)
- Croatia and other Former Yugoslavia
- Egypt
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- India
- Indonesia
- Iraq
- Ireland (including Northern Ireland)
- Italy
- Korea, Republic of (South)
- Lebanon
- Malaysia
- Malta
- Mauritius
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- North America
- Philippines
- Poland
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan (including South Sudan)
- United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland)
- Vietnam
- ...Other country (please name): _____

Q19. Where were your parents born?

	Australia	In another English speaking country	In a non-English speaking country	Don't know
Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q20. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- Yes
- No

***If you selected 'Yes' to the question above, please answer Q21 and Q22.
If you selected 'No' to the question above, please skip to Q23.***

Q21. If you attend Mass, is it at a local parish or an Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministry?

- A local parish
- An Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministry
- I don't attend Mass

Q22. Do you know about the local Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Ministry?

- Yes, and I am involved in it
- Yes, but I don't have anything to do with it
- No, I haven't heard of it before now
- Don't know

Q23. Which of the following best describes your current situation? *(Click all that apply.)*

- I am studying at school
- I am studying at university
- I am studying at TAFE
- I am employed full-time
- I am employed part-time or casually
- I am self-employed
- I am unemployed
- I am involved in home duties
- Other (please describe) _____

If you selected 'I am studying at school', please answer Q24.

If you did not select 'I am studying at school', please skip to Q25.

Q24. What type of school do you currently attend?

- A Catholic school
- Another Christian or church-run school
- A government school
- Another type of independent or private school
- I am home-schooled
- Other (please describe) _____

Q25. What type of school did you **MOSTLY** attend when you were younger? *(If you attended more than one type of school, select the type you spent the most time in.)*

- A Catholic school
- Another Christian or church-run school
- A government school
- Another type of independent or private school
- I was home-schooled
- Other (please describe) _____

In Q23, if you selected 'I am employed full-time' OR 'I am employed part-time or casually', please answer Q26.

If you did not select 'I am employed full-time' OR 'I am employed part-time or casually', please skip to Q29.

Q26. You indicated in a previous question that you are employed. Are you employed in a Catholic organisation (i.e. school, parish, hospital)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Prefer not to say

If you selected 'Yes', please answer Q27.

If you did not select 'Yes', please skip to Q29.

Q27. Please select the type of Catholic organisation you are **MOSTLY** employed in. (If you are employed in more than one sector, select the one you spend most time employed at.)

- Catholic School
- Catholic Education / Schools Office
- Catholic Healthcare Organisation
- Catholic Social Service Organisation
- Catholic Diocese
- Catholic Parish
- Other Catholic Organisation

If you selected 'Catholic School', please answer Q28.

If you did not select 'Catholic School', please skip to Q29.

Q28. Are you a teacher in a Catholic School?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q29. Do you have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

If you selected 'Yes', please answer Q30 to Q32.

If you did not select 'Yes', please skip to Q34.

Q30. How would you describe your disability? (Choose more than one option if appropriate.)

- Sensory (it affects my ability to hear or see)
- Physical (it affects my mobility or dexterity)
- Intellectual (it affects my ability to learn)
- Mental illness (it affects my thinking processes)
- Neurological (it affects my brain and central nervous system)
- Physical disfigurement
- Immunological (certain organisms cause disease in my body)
- Other (please describe briefly) _____

Q31. In what ways do you contribute to your Catholic community?

Q32. How does your Catholic community welcome you?

Q33. This question has been omitted from the paper version of the survey.

Q34. Would you like to add any further comments?

You have now completed the survey. Thank you for your response. Please keep the forthcoming Synod in your prayers.

Please visit the Year of Youth website: youth.catholic.org.au/year-of-youth, where you can find out more about this exciting initiative happening in 2018.

APPENDIX 2 – Ethics Approval

2017-110E Ethics application approved!

Pratigya Pozniak on behalf of Res Ethics

Wed 5/10/2017 11:01 AM



To: Trudy Dantis <Trudy.Dantis@acu.edu.au>; Stephen Reid <Stephen.Reid@acu.edu.au>;

Cc: Res Ethics <Res.Ethics@acu.edu.au>;

Dear Applicant,

Principal Investigator: Mrs Trudy Dantis

Co-Investigator: Mr Stephen Reid

Ethics Register Number: 2017-110E

Project Title: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Youth Survey 2017

Date Approved: 10/05/2017

Ethics Clearance End Date: 31/12/2017

This is to certify that the above application has been reviewed by the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (ACU HREC). The application has been approved for the period given above.

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that all conditions of approval are adhered to, that they seek prior approval for any modifications and that they notify the HREC of any incidents or unexpected issues impacting on participants that arise in the course of their research. Researchers are also responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the University's Code of Conduct.

Any queries relating to this application should be directed to the Ethics Secretariat (res.ethics@acu.edu.au). It is helpful if you quote your ethics approval number in all communications with us.

If you require a formal approval certificate in addition to this email, please respond via reply email and one will be issued.

We wish you every success with your research.

Kind regards,

Kylie Pashley
on behalf of ACU HREC Chair, Dr Nadia Crittenden

Senior Research Ethics Officer | Research Services Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) Australian Catholic University

THIS IS AN AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED RESEARCHMASTER EMAIL

