

RESPONSE TO THE PREPARATORY DOCUMENT OF THE XV ORDINARY GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
*YOUTH, FAITH, AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT*

New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

October, 2017

# Table of Contents

<b>Methodology</b> .....	4
<b>Demographics</b> .....	5
1. Gathering Statistics .....	7
2. Evaluating the Situation .....	9
<b>a) Young People, the Church and Society</b> .....	10
1. In what manner does the Church listen to the lived situations of Young People?.....	10
2. What are the main challenges and most significant opportunities for young people in your country / countries today? .....	11
3. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success <i>within</i> the Church, and why? .....	12
4. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success <i>outside</i> the Church, and why? .....	13
5. What do young people really ask of the Church in your country / countries today?.....	14
6. What possibilities for participation exist in your country / countries for young people to take part in the life of the ecclesial community?.....	15
7. How and in what manner is contact made with young people who do not frequent Church surroundings? .....	16
<b>b) Pastoral Vocational Programmes for Young People</b> .....	17
8. How are families and communities involved in the vocational discernment of young people?.....	17
9. How do schools and universities or other educational institutions (civil or ecclesial) contribute to young people’s formation in vocational discernment?.....	18
10. In what manner are you taking into account the cultural changes resulting from the development of the digital world? .....	19
11. How can World Youth Days or other national or international events become a part of ordinary pastoral practice? .....	20
12. In what manner is your diocese planning experiences for the pastoral vocational programme for young people?.....	21
<b>c) Pastoral Care Workers with Young People</b> .....	22
13. How much time and in what manner do clergy and other formators provide for personal spiritual guidance? .....	22
14. What initiatives and opportunities for formation are in place for those who provide pastoral vocational guidance? .....	23
15. What personal guidance is offered in seminaries?.....	24
<b>d) Specific Questions According to Geographic Areas</b> .....	25
a. Why and how do religious gatherings by those who are non-Catholic exercise an attraction on young people? .....	25
b. In what way can the values of a local culture be combined with Christian teaching, while also giving importance to popular piety? .....	26

c. How is the language used in a young person’s world incorporated in the pastoral care of young people, especially in the media, sports and music? ..... 27

**3. Sharing Activities..... 28**

1. List the main types of pastoral activity in accompaniment and vocational discernment in your present situation. .... 28

Sharing Activity 1: Encounter..... 29

Sharing Activity 2: Leadership..... 30

Sharing Activity 3: Service ..... 31

## Methodology

---

Questions in this research were based on the preparatory document and the spirit of the meaning behind the questions. Data collection methods used included:

- 8 Focus Groups
- 1951 Youth Surveys
- 254 Youth Leadership Surveys

This research is based on focus groups and surveys which were participated in by youth and youth leaders across the country. Initially four focus groups were conducted to inform and explore options for survey questions and to more deeply understand the views of youth and their contexts. These focus groups were conducted by key youth leaders in each Diocese.

From these focus groups, and based on the questions outlined in the Synod preparatory document a survey was drafted by Dr Ann-Marie Kennedy, a Catholic University Researcher. Questions pertaining to each area of the preparatory document were created, at times with the use of existing scales. Once approved, the survey was launched online via Survey Monkey. The survey was completed by nearly 2,000 people with their demographics reported below.

Along with this, a youth leadership survey was drafted and launched for leaders across Church and this was completed by 254 respondents.

Along with these, data was also gathered at further focus groups at the “Chill with the Bishop” evenings. Again, this was to ensure that the specific views of youth, their concerns and opinions would be collected beyond the survey.

The findings presented in this report are from the focus groups, youth surveys, youth leadership surveys, and vocations and formation leaders. Focus groups and the Youth survey were analysed by Dr Ann-Marie Kennedy. A mixture of regression, manova and frequency statistics were used to analyse the surveys. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the focus groups and qualitative data. Youth leadership surveys were evaluated and summarised by a team of Church Youth Leaders. Where a specific question was not answered in a survey, that question was not included in the analysis. Outliers were also removed for statistical purposes where necessary. While the majority of respondents were Catholic, representatives from all other religions and those with no religious affiliation also took part. In order to gain their view on all areas, as instructed, every youth participant was provided with the same questions. At times this may have lowered the mean scores for some questions.

## Demographics

---

There were 1951 responses to the youth survey, the key demographics of which were:

**Gender:** 74% female, 25% male

**Age:** 16-18 year olds (72%), 19-30 year olds (28%)

**Regions:** Every region in New Zealand was represented in the sample. However, most responses came from the larger regions with: Auckland (39%), Waikato (18%), Canterbury (15%), and Wellington (9%).

**Marital Status:** Unmarried and single (76%), In an unmarried relationship (18%), Married (2%), Engaged (<1%), Civil union (<1%), Other (<1%), Unanswered (3%).

**Parental Status:** No children (95%), children (3%), unanswered (2%)

**Education level:** For those under 18 years, unsurprisingly, the majority had primary or secondary education as their highest level of education. For those over 18 years, 59% had tertiary qualifications and 14% had postgraduate, with the rest having primary or secondary educations. Most respondents were currently studying, just 15% were not.

**Employment:** 54% are in paid employment with 45% not (1% did not answer this question). 59% of under 18s are not in paid employment, and 33% of over 18s are not in paid employment.

**Ethnicity:** All ethnicities identified in the New Zealand census were represented in the survey. The majority were European (52%), Asian (20%), Maori (9%), or Pacific (7%).

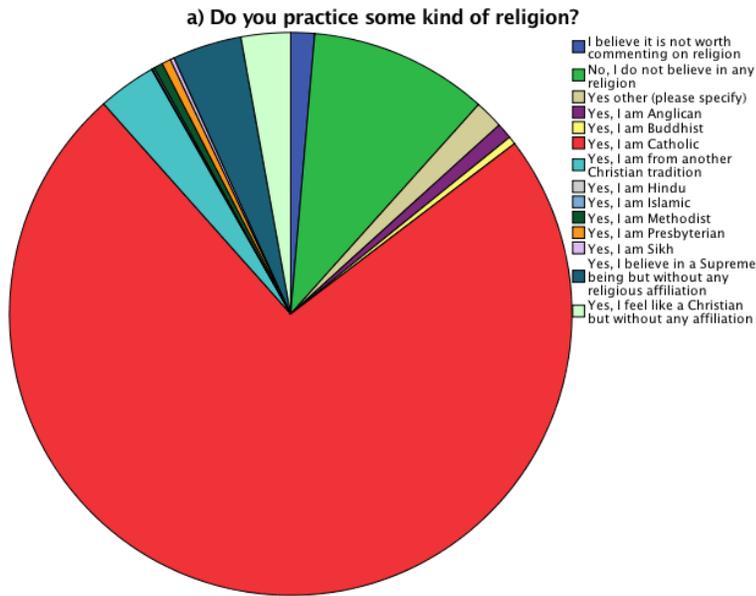
**Religious affiliation:** While the majority of respondents were Catholic, all other religions identified in the New Zealand census were also represented (as per the figure below).

### **Youth Leadership Survey Demographics:**

There were 254 responses to the youth leadership survey, the key demographics of which were:

**Ethnicity:** All ethnicities identified in the New Zealand census were represented in the survey. The majority were European (64%), Asian (13%), Maori (8%), or Pacific (15%).

**Regions:** Almost every region in New Zealand was represented in the sample apart from the West Coast and Chatham Islands. The majority of responses came from the larger regions with: Auckland (40%), Waikato (8%), Canterbury (13%), and Wellington (9%).



**Respondents:** The following table presents the type of people responding to the youth leadership survey:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Lay Person	50.78%	98
Parent	19.17%	37
Deacon	1.55%	3
Priest	5.18%	10
Professed Religious	4.66%	9
Teacher	18.65%	36
Seminarian	2.07%	4
Pastoral/Youth Worker	30.57%	59
Chaplain	5.18%	10
Group	11.40%	22
Another Capacity		75

# 1. Gathering Statistics

Question	Answer	Source
Number of inhabitants	4,802,454	(Population clock estimate as of 31 Jul 2017) <a href="http://m.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/population_clock.aspx">http://m.stats.govt.nz/tools_and_services/population_clock.aspx</a>
Birth rate	1.87	As at December 2016 <a href="http://m.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/births/BirthsAndDeaths_HOTPYeDec16.aspx">http://m.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/births/BirthsAndDeaths_HOTPYeDec16.aspx</a>
Number of people aged 15 – 29 yrs	1,005,420 (Provisional estimate as of 30 June 2016)	<a href="http://m.stats.govt.nz/~media/Statistics/Browse%20for%20stats/NationalPopulationEstimates/HOTPA30Jun16/npe-jun-16-tables.xlsx">http://m.stats.govt.nz/~media/Statistics/Browse%20for%20stats/NationalPopulationEstimates/HOTPA30Jun16/npe-jun-16-tables.xlsx</a>
Number of Catholics	492,105	(as of Census 2013) <a href="http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/religion.aspx">http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/religion.aspx</a>
Percentage of Catholics	11.60%	(based on usually resident population 4,242,048 on Census night 2013). <a href="http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/religion.aspx">http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/religion.aspx</a>
Average age for marrying	29.9 for men and 28.2 for women in 2010.  Average age for all marriages: 32.1 for men and 30.0 for women.	<a href="http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/marriages-civil-unions-and-divorces/MarriagesCivilUnionsandDivorces_HOTPYeDec10/Commentary.aspx">http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/marriages-civil-unions-and-divorces/MarriagesCivilUnionsandDivorces_HOTPYeDec10/Commentary.aspx</a>
Average age for entering the seminary and consecrated life	2013-2017 inclusive the numbers are as follows:  First Yr entrants, average age 27yrs (range 20 to 37yrs).  Transition* students average age 39yrs (range 29 to 56yrs).	Figures provided by the Rector of Holy Cross Seminary, Auckland, New Zealand Sept 2017  *(ie recognises previous study elsewhere or age/life experience)
Young people not in the labour force	15-19 yrs: 54.3% 20-24 yrs: 22% 25-39yrs: 16%	(NILF - "Not In Labour Force" in NZ which includes students, workers) <a href="http://www.stats.govt.nz/~media/Statistics/Subsites/Social/content/Excel%20files/Labour-market/lab-force-particip.xlsx">http://www.stats.govt.nz/~media/Statistics/Subsites/Social/content/Excel%20files/Labour-market/lab-force-particip.xlsx</a> (100-x to work out percentage outside labour force)

Young people in the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 15-19yrs: 36.3%</li> <li>- 20-24yrs: 70.7%</li> <li>- 25-29yrs: 78.8%</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.stats.govt.nz/~media/Statistics/Sub-sites/Social/content/Excel%20files/Labour-market/employment.xlsx">http://www.stats.govt.nz/~media/Statistics/Sub-sites/Social/content/Excel%20files/Labour-market/employment.xlsx</a>
NEET	15- 24:13.6%	<a href="http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/income-and-work/employment_and_unemployment/LabourMarketStatistics_HOTPDc16qtr/Commentary.aspx">http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/income-and-work/employment_and_unemployment/LabourMarketStatistics_HOTPDc16qtr/Commentary.aspx</a>

## 2. Evaluating the Situation

---

## a) Young People, the Church and Society

---

### 1. In what manner does the Church listen to the lived situations of Young People?

Respondents to the **youth survey** were asked whether the Catholic community cares about their well-being and opinions, if the Catholic community is willing to help them, and whether it considers their goals and values.

- On average, respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the Catholic community cared about their well-being, opinions, goals and values, or was willing to help them.
- Looking at the responses in more depth however, 50% of respondents felt that they somewhat agreed that, or strongly agree that the Catholic community was willing to help them and cared about their well-being than feel neutral towards, or disagreed with those statements.

**Youth focus groups** felt the following:

- Youth are not listened to.
- Some parishes do listen but in general young people have not been listened to, until this survey, especially in small towns. Overall, they felt that the Church does not **actively** listen to the lived situations of young people, which was echoed in the youth leadership survey. Young people felt their opinions were not seen as valid and that a top-down approach was taken instead of a grass-roots, bottom up one.
- Others felt that parishioners, leaders and sometimes priests were hard to approach and intimidating. With no way to just drop by and informally ask questions.
- They wanted to have priests and community members spend more time with them, building real relationships and connections to the community.
- They felt that only those with the opportunity to join youth groups or councils are listened to, although membership of parish councils was looked on favorably.

**Youth leaders** felt similarly but added that:

- Active listening is occurring mostly through Catholic high schools, youth groups, or events that enable young people to feel as though they are listened to on a personal level. Many respondents shared their hurt and concern that young people are not listened to by 'overworked' clergy or lay people working in Church. They feel as though the **Church** is attentive to the pastoral needs of the 'very Catholic' however, those on the edges simply fall off.
- The responses shared that there is a need for more 'open opportunities' for young people to feel comfortable enough to have a place/person to share their thoughts with. The results also showed that emphasis needs to come from higher in the parish than just a local youth group leader or worker so that all are encouraged to listen to the lived situations of young people.

## 2. What are the main challenges and most significant opportunities for young people in your country / countries today?

A list of opportunities and challenges was collated through **youth focus groups** and included in the **youth survey**. Respondents somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the following opportunities were the greatest in their lives (there were no statistically significant differences between genders). The list is presented in order of importance to them:

1. Having access to information
2. Technology
3. Being encouraged to think for themselves
4. Being encouraged to grow/learn as a person
5. Education
6. Access to grants and scholarships
7. Being able to be anything they want to be
8. Easily connecting with people
9. Expressing themselves

The average rating of challenges is lower than it is for opportunities, meaning that people felt more neutral towards the list of challenges. However, this may show a bias to trying not to complain in the survey. Therefore, those that had the highest ratings are still presented here. The following are the list of the greatest challenges in young people's lives, also listed in order of importance (with no statistical differences found between genders):

1. Making decisions about the future
2. Mental health
3. Doubting myself
4. Stress
5. Having too much to do
6. School/University/Education
7. Being judged by others/reputation
8. Making a difference
9. Being perfect
10. Being rejected by others

The full list of opportunities and challenges can be found in appendix B.

3. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success *within* the Church, and why?

**Focus groups** were used to determine a list of Catholic group gatherings, and respondents in the **youth survey** were asked how likely they were to participate in these. Those that respondents are more likely to participate in are presented below in order of likeliness:

1. Volunteering and community activities
2. Fundraisers
3. Competitions or challenges
4. Sports events
5. Retreat
6. Sunday Mass
7. Community leadership (training or service)
8. Inspirational speakers and discussion initiatives (in parishes, pubs or other locations)
9. Youth conferences/festivals
10. World Youth Day
11. Youth masses
12. Church youth groups

It is perhaps interesting to note that youth groups are bottom of the list, with activities where community engagement and service, or competitive events top the list (there were many more options provided to respondents that they did not choose to participate in, see appendix B for the full list).

Respondents were also asked how likely they would be to attend if a youth-oriented event had the following. They were more likely to attend a youth event if it featured (in order of importance):

1. Getting to spend time with friends
2. Friendly and inviting people
3. Messages were relevant to them as youth
4. Being in a safe environment
5. Good music
6. Getting to meet new people
7. High energy/vibe
8. Inspirational and engaging speakers/messages
9. Less formal
10. Passionate leaders
11. There were experienced and effective youth group leaders
12. Fellowship
13. Emotion and passion inducing experiences
14. Games
15. Sports

In planning future events, the above indicate the preferences of youth. A full list of events and characteristics are available in appendix B, these are divided by region in appendix D.

4. What kinds and places of group gatherings of youth, institutionalized or otherwise, have a major success *outside* the Church, and why?

**Youth focus groups** revealed the following were positives of youth gatherings outside of the Church:

- Modern music played by a band was one of the main draw cards of outside gatherings. The music described is similar to a concert in that it may be pop or rock music, upbeat and positive mood inducing.
- Gatherings where there are more youth also attracted them, as opposed to many Catholic congregations where there are not many youth at Sunday Mass. This allowed them to bond and make new friends with people their own age.
- A vibrant, energetic feeling at an event also drew them towards it, with kind and friendly, inviting people.
- Provision of team activities, games, competitions/challenges, sports, movies or anything that was entertaining and helped young people to interact with one another and make friends was preferred.
- Overall, anything where young people could get together with their friends and 'hang out', or make new friends, that was relevant to their age group, was preferred. Their comments were not to say that they needed to be entertained by the Church, but points towards social events instead.

Specific examples include:

- Camps
- Festivals
- Concerts
- Sporting events
- Competitions
- Fundraising
- Community work
- School
- Shared housing
- Parties
- University clubs

## 5. What do young people really ask of the Church in your country / countries today?

Respondents in the **youth survey** were asked a series of questions that were from an engagement scale. The scale asked them what they wanted from the Church and whether they wanted the Catholic community to help them to:

- Influence the Church
- Become passionate about the Church
- Connect with others and the Church
- Help others
- Have like-minded discussions
- Have entertainment and fun
- Seek assistance for themselves
- Express themselves and their ideas
- Provide personal validation

Overall, respondents did not particularly feel that they wanted to **influence** the Church, or that they wanted **entertainment and fun** from the Church. The rest of the responses varied by age group with provision of **Personal validation, Connecting with others, and Passion** being the most important for 16 and 17 year old respondents. However, the rest of the respondents were reasonably similar in seeking the following from the Church in order of importance:

1. Passion
2. Like-minded discussion
3. Connecting with others
4. Validation
5. Helping others
6. Assistance for themselves
7. Self-expression

**Focus groups with young people** reveal they would also like the following:

- Catechesis lessons for a deeper understanding of their faith and Catholic practices, possibly through Bible study. This is for personal growth and the ability to practice Catholicism in everyday life.
- Relatable and relevant messages and teachings, suited for their age group and 21<sup>st</sup> century contexts.
- Personal encounters with Christ through inspiring speakers, and ministry and praise and worship sessions. More passion, empowerment, inspiration, emotion and modern music were requested.
- Feelings of belongingness in the community, acceptance of young people and their differences and opinions among the congregation. Active listening to young people's opinions and representation on councils.

6. What possibilities for participation exist in your country / countries for young people to take part in the life of the ecclesial community?

The **youth leadership survey** responses show that there are many opportunities at a parish, school and diocesan level for young people to engage in activities and communities.

At the parish level, these include the following:

Parish youth masses, youth groups, sacramental programmes, Challenge 2000, Young Vinnies, parish missionaries, world youth day.

At the school Level:

College weekly Masses, sacramental programmes, social justice opportunities, prayer/liturgy.

At the Diocesan Level:

'Youth' Events, SetFree, LifeTeen Summer Camp, Jesus for Real Camp, TCI papers, Hearts Aflame, music-based conferences, Youth Ministry conferences, Young adults and youth activities based in parishes.

The majority of the respondents identified more than one local or national event/activity which would allow them to participate in the Church, however, there were a lot that saw parishes focusing mainly on providing for middle-aged and senior citizens rather than for young people.

Additionally, asked by some was whether the **Church** merely likes seeing young people at events but doesn't really want to invest in young people. Suggestions were made for what investing personally in people looked like, these were:

- investing in resources
- training people to work alongside young people for the long run
- personal invitations to take part in church activities.

## 7. How and in what manner is contact made with young people who do not frequent Church surroundings?

From the **youth leadership survey** data, consensus is that there is little, if any, contact made with young people who do not frequent church/faith communities. Many of the respondents shared that they found Catholic schools to be the only tangible way that they can see Church engaging with young people who do not frequent church/faith communities, but this is still not the Church. They feel as though the Church or parish is not well invested or interested in reaching out to young people who are not 'regulars' in church/faith communities.

There were a few activities respondents felt showed an authentic desire of the Church to reach out to those not already invested in the Church. From most mentioned to least mentioned, these included the following:

1. Schools
2. Personal invitation from young people to youth groups/activities
3. Social media
4. Personal invitation to small groups such as St Vincent de Paul
5. Challenge 2,000 rural camps
6. Logos
7. Sacramental programmes and marriage preparation courses.

One person commented on how attending a marriage preparation course encourages the couple to think more about their faith in a deeper way.

A few respondents stressed that it was not a true act of **going out** to people who do not frequent church/faith communities but rather the Church **waiting** for people to come to them. One person made the comment that there is a lot of work done to emphasise coming home or coming back, but no one ever thinks of addressing why they left in the first place.

There were also comments that suggest there is little space to form young people, because the preparation for confirmation occurs when the young people are children, not as teenagers, as it was originally set up.

Overall, the respondents felt as though the Church was doing little to contact or invite young people who do not frequent church/faith communities. If contact is made, it is through personal contact by the young people themselves.

## b) Pastoral Vocational Programmes for Young People

---

8. How are families and communities involved in the vocational discernment of young people?

Overall in the **youth survey**, family has the most influence over respondents' vocational discernment along with friends. While the community and the church still have some influence, it is less so. The questions were based on the preparatory document's description of vocational discernment.

Respondents feel the following:

- Their families currently provide them with help surrounding their vocational choices and they feel is the most effective at doing so.
- Families and friends help form and shape them as they grow up, and provide them with support and help recharge them, more than the Church or their community.
- Again, families and friends encourage respondents to explore their options more than the Church or their community.
- Families and friends also help respondents to reflect on their choices and life, however the Church also plays a larger role in this than their community does.
- The Catholic Church is the most influential in helping respondents use faith to discern their vocations, along with their family.
- However it is also their family and friends who help them to recognise how happenings in their life (such as the people they meet, and the words they hear or read) affect their emotions, desires and feelings.
- With family, friends, and the Church to a lesser degree helping them to interpret how to act on their inner desires and emotions.
- However, respondents did not feel that it was the role of the Church in general to help them to discern their vocations as much as their family and friends.

Specifically, respondents would like to be helped with their vocational discernment through (in order of importance):

1. people sharing their experiences of their vocations and their journey to choosing a vocation
2. talking directly with people who have a vocation they are interested in
3. observing people who have a vocation they are interested in.

While the following was suggested in **focus groups**, **respondents** said they were less likely to feel the following would be as helpful:

1. Having a specific spiritual advisor or director.
2. Having a vocation buddy.

## 9. How do schools and universities or other educational institutions (civil or ecclesial) contribute to young people's formation in vocational discernment?

In the **youth survey**, respondents felt that:

- Educators had more of an influence on their vocational discernment than the community and the Church, and that they wanted help from them in this aspect of their lives.
- Educators represented an effective option for help in vocational discernment for them. They also felt that educators encouraged them to explore their options very much, and helped to shape and form them as they grew up, more than the Church and community.
- Educators were also a source of support for them, more so than their community or the Church.
- Educators also helped them to reflect on their choices and life, to recognise how happenings in their life (such as the people they meet, and the words they hear or read) affect their emotions, desires and feelings, and help them to interpret how to act on their inner desires and emotions.
- They did not feel that education or educators helped recharge them or helped them to use faith to discern their vocations.

According to the **youth leadership survey**:

- Catholic high schools offer religious experiences including liturgy, masses, participation in prayer, classes, retreats, service activities, special character programmes and one-day vocational programmes. Several respondents mentioned the importance of the Religious Education curriculum and taking a genuine interest in young people.
- Some questioned how young people not attending a Catholic high school receive formation in vocational discernment. One respondent queried whether they would hear a priest speaking about vocational discernment on Vocation Sunday. Some see Catholic high schools as the most significant and influential voice our youth have today. Others queried whether Catholic high schools are doing enough.
- Universities have student-led Christian groups and Tertiary Chaplaincy which facilitate weekly prayer meetings, bible studies, informal interaction with other Christians and guest speakers including on vocational topics. However, it was noted that participation in these ministries relied on young people seeking them out and there was concern that many do not.
- Asking young people how they are going and encouraging them to find their strengths and weaknesses, especially as these link to their life purpose and future career options, were seen as important.

## 10. In what manner are you taking into account the cultural changes resulting from the development of the digital world?

In the responses to the **youth leadership survey**, the digital world was clearly acknowledged as part of our world today. Young people live on social media and this has changed our culture. One respondent said *“move with the change, not change the tradition”*.

- Facebook, Messenger and websites were the three platforms most commonly mentioned as being in use by respondents.
  - Many parishes and schools are using Facebook to inform, educate and evangelise.
  - Even the culture of the digital world is changing, one example given was that if a leader emails young people, they now need to message those young people on Facebook or text them asking them to check their emails.
- One mentioned the idea of having a youth app for young Catholics in New Zealand.

The Church is not seen as being up with the times.

- Young people are finding it more difficult to conform to church teachings as they are continually bombarded with secular images that go against church teaching through digital media. Others were concerned about how the digital world is impacting negatively on self-esteem of young people.
- The Church is not seen as doing enough to provide an alternative view on digital media. It was seen as important that the messages we do put on digital media remain true to our Church teaching and tradition.

Some respondents saw the digital world as having a **positive impact** on our culture, for example the digital world connects young Catholics around the world and provides access to resources and materials that would not previously have been available.

- Some groups are using the digital world to promote strong faith community, particularly in areas where physical damage has occurred to places of faith, eg after the earthquakes in Christchurch.

A smaller number saw the digital world as being **negative**, eg that “young people are brainwashed by devices” or that digital media is having little or **no impact** on culture, believing that cultural changes would have occurred regardless of digital media.

- Several expressed concerns about reducing personal interaction as a cultural change. Building healthy relationships is still seen as being important. Some mentioned the importance of having times when we put aside our phones and actually open our bible or spend time face to face.

## 11. How can World Youth Days or other national or international events become a part of ordinary pastoral practice?

Respondents from the **youth leadership survey** were supportive of regular events that are well publicised and are seen as an ordinary part of pastoral practice.

- Good communication from the Diocesan youth ministry team was seen as important.
- World Youth Day Christchurch, World Youth Day Auckland and Caritas Challenge were all mentioned as good examples of larger/regular events.
- Some indicated an interest in having music events.
- A few advocated for weekly/fortnightly gatherings in local parishes rather than national or international events.
- Others expressed concern that major events only take place once a year and there was mention that there was little on offer at a national level.

Concerns in this area included:

- How to involve young people on the fringes of church who are not part of a youth group and do not go to church.
- That much of our ministry is ethnic-community centric and that this disenfranchises Pakeha (white) youth.
- Finance was seen as a major obstacle. Some raised the expense of attending World Youth Day International and how this was now only possible for the financially elite. Others talked about the cost of attending local and national gatherings. With local gatherings this included the cost of attending, eg. transport costs (a big issue in Auckland, also South to North Island). One spoke of a levy placed on ministry and others talked sponsoring young people to participate in retreats, training programmes and potentially covering the cost of pastoral workers both in parishes and as youth workers or chaplains in secondary schools.

Several respondents talked about how there is no point in encouraging pastoral practice with young people unless parish communities are genuinely willing to embrace young people and allow them to use their gifts in their faith communities.

12. In what manner is your diocese planning experiences for the pastoral vocational programme for young people?

According to the **youth leadership survey** findings:

- About a quarter of the respondents were unsure or unaware of experiences for a pastoral vocation programme.
- Some respondents mentioned vocations committees at parish or ethnic community level.
- Others spoke of vocations components in programmes such as school retreats, camps and Diocesan festivals and events such as local World Youth Day celebrations.
- Social media was seen as one way of building connection and an interest in vocations.
- One respondent noted that some religious congregations are offering discernment programmes, retreats etc.
- Another respondent mentioned how World Youth Day International is a pastoral vocational experience for some.
- Many comments indicated that much more needs to be done in this area, both at Diocesan and local community level.

## c) Pastoral Care Workers with Young People

---

13. How much time and in what manner do clergy and other formators provide for personal spiritual guidance?

***Youth Leaders over-whelmingly experienced a lack of involvement by clergy in young people's pastoral care, with one respondent describing this as '..an area of concern in NZ.'***

Priests were described as being too busy with the everyday running of their parishes, combined parishes or regions. Being already of retirement age, with not enough young priests or seminarians to support them, youth leaders believe priests are often perceived by young people as old or out of touch. Sometimes the experience has been that they are too focused on rules and not enough on welcome – *"I see little evidence of the shepherd and more evidence of the boss."*

Catholic school involvement (e.g. school Masses, being regularly present), was seen as one of the ways that priests connect with young people pastorally.

- Sacramental Programmes, in particular those of initiation, reconciliation and marriage were also seen as prime opportunities.
- Another valuable manner of connection mentioned was catechetical and faith formation talks and being a presence at youth group, retreats, exposition and events.
- For those who have made contact with a vocations director, spiritual direction is an ongoing part of their discernment time.

Youth leaders also recognised that there are a few religious and lay people who help provide supervision, mentoring or accompaniment but not many are trained for this. It was noted that lay involvement needs to be well-managed (not out of obligation, or in order to take control).

Youth leaders also offered some ideas that they saw as alternatives to the current overwhelming lack of pastoral and spiritual care of young people.

- Ethnic community models: These communities raise up their own lay adult leaders and parents for youth groups, events and movements eg. the Filipino Youth For Christ family model with 'house parents,' and the Samoa and Tongan groups which have parents, Aunties and Uncles helping to lead every youth event.
- More pastoral care and spiritual guidance of church workers.
- Good, energetic, enthusiastic, approachable, priests.
- Good, holistic training for lay leaders.
- More youth workers or youth organisations such as Diocesan Youth Teams and Young Vinnies.

*"The problem arises when people do not ask for help and are too scared to approach clergy. This could be due to a variety of reasons like some people not knowing priests or being afraid to admit their mistakes...But again if people do not ask, how is a priest to know that they are struggling? It's about encouraging people to speak out and create an atmosphere in which it is okay to approach the clergy, and not be afraid of wanting help."*

#### 14. What initiatives and opportunities for formation are in place for those who provide pastoral vocational guidance?

The vast majority of **youth leader** respondents knew of no opportunities and initiatives available for formation of those who provide vocational guidance. One described it as a “...*real shortage of Spiritual Directors and good courses that are offered for those who care for our young people.*” While another simply said, “*Mainly when someone is ready to stand down we ask for volunteers.*”

The opportunities that were mentioned included

- professional development for teachers in Catholic schools and through The Catholic Institute Courses and National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS)
- the Auckland diocesan Youth Ministry leadership and mentoring programme
- The Catholic Institute (TCI) Certificate in Catholic Youth Ministry and Good shepherd College Theology Degree
- diocesan courses - it was noted that there is a particular need for more and better pastoral training of lay leaders in Sacramental Programmes, Children’s Liturgy and youth group running
- Youth for Christ guidelines, Young Vinnies training
- Christian sports coaching and High School Careers training people
- Protestant courses
- annual diocesan Vocations Conference with input from specialists
- Australian diocesan opportunities for seminarians.

## 15. What personal guidance is offered in seminaries?

**Seminary staff** are tasked with the formation of students in accord with the Ratio Fundamentalis (the document by the Congregation for Clergy pertaining to the training of priests), allied with various other Vatican documents (e.g. Pastores Dabo Vobis) and instructions also from the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.

Essentially this involves formation of the human, spiritual, academic and pastoral dimensions and skills of a candidate for priesthood. Seminarians receive both group-based and one-to-one tuition, the latter especially in regard to their human and spiritual formation and direction. The formation programme currently takes approximately 6.5 years.

## d) Specific Questions According to Geographic Areas

---

a. Why and how do religious gatherings by those who are non-Catholic exercise an attraction on young people?

According to both the **youth survey** and **youth leadership survey** the following are attractions to non-Catholic religious gatherings:

- **Modern music.** Young people are being drawn into non-Catholic religious gatherings because of more contemporary, lively and high quality music. Most saw this as a result of investment in quality equipment and the style and performance of the music being played, likened more like a concert than a religious gathering found in Catholic communities. Interestingly, music at non-Catholic gatherings is often perceived to be better, but these gatherings are also seen as places where Catholic communities can thrive. There was a feeling that the talent in the Catholic community is under-utilised. Music was seen as a critical attraction but something that the Catholic community could better develop, especially in the Mass.
- Another key theme was that of **belonging and community**. Many respondents spoke about the importance of the Catholic community and the way that it welcomes young people. Often young people feel attracted to a gathering because their friends are also attending. Just because of sheer numbers (especially high numbers of young people), non-Catholic gatherings also tend to draw young people in. It is possible that these numbers are high especially as there are fewer of these gatherings on a Sunday than Catholic Masses, therefore gatherings are more likely to reach a “critical mass” which makes young people feel like they are part of something that is alive. Some related the ability to reach young people and galvanise community in the investment into youth programmes and youth pastors made by non-Catholic Churches. There also seems to be a concerted effort by those within the community to get to know people personally and show they are valued as an individual.
- A further key theme in responses was that of **hospitality**. This links strongly to the theme of belonging and community, but relates more specifically to particular elements that make these non-Catholic gatherings attractive to young people. Examples of this include the use of food to show hospitality and also the use of a physical environment that is attractive to young people (venues which are set up well, with high quality sound systems etc.)
- Finally, a common word used in responses was “**relevance.**” This relevance of non-Catholic gatherings was referred to in relation to the way the gatherings themselves are structured, the music and language used, the messages being shared and the way that these are communicated i.e. engaging and confident preachers and also the use of multimedia and lighting.

Additionally, the **youth focus groups** felt that these gatherings were less formal with teachings relevant to their age group and often featuring inspiring speakers. They felt these gatherings were more energetic, uplifting, passionate and empowering to youth.

b. In what way can the values of a local culture be combined with Christian teaching, while also giving importance to popular piety?

We have interpreted this question within our context of Aotearoa/New Zealand which is influenced strongly firstly by bi-cultural relationships and emphasis (Maori and European) and secondly by an ever increasing multi-cultural reality which is now predominantly Pacific Island and Asian. Aotearoa/New Zealand has also been a steadily increasingly secular country. For many, this means that practice of faith is limited primarily to a private matter for the individual, impacting little on public life.

As with the **youth leadership survey**, respondents discussed the early missionaries first proclaiming the Gospel to Māori and that the integration of Māori and Western Culture remains a pressing challenge. This integration of Māori and Western Culture illustrates the values of local Māori culture being combined with Christian teaching. Faith practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand attempts to integrate Māori language and custom into faith (e.g. music, prayer, welcoming ceremonies, house blessings, ground breakings for new buildings). Many respondents reflected these attempts at combining Māori culture into Christian faith teaching and practice. One respondent reflected on the need to find the things these two have in common so that there is an increase in shared understanding.

Another different element of local culture being combined with Christian teaching can be seen in respondents' comments about "youth culture." There is an on-going challenge to translate faith into the culture of young people in our increasingly secular society. How young people live their faith in Aotearoa/New Zealand at this time in history requires on-going work to bring the two together.

One respondent highlighted the way that the values of a secularised local culture may or may not be able to be combined with Christian teaching. For example, our local culture in Aotearoa/New Zealand values equality, tolerance and justice which closely align with Christian teaching. However, other Christian teaching and practice do not align in a way that easily can be combined with local culture. Currently there is a strong difference of values overall in the culture of Aotearoa/New Zealand regarding homosexuality, contraception, issues around life and death and divorce that are at odds with Christian teaching. This is a great challenge to address.

Popular piety in Aotearoa/New Zealand is extremely varied due to the diversity of our bi-cultural/multi-cultural society. Early in its history, Aotearoa/New Zealand was dedicated to Mary the Mother of God and we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption as our patronal feast day. There is a strong Marian foundation and practice throughout the Church in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Many early hymns in Māori were composed in honour of our Lady and often Mary is depicted in art within local culture or adorned with items of cultural significance. Many Catholics in Aotearoa/New Zealand are recent immigrants and bring with them practices of popular piety which are strong in their culture.

As Aotearoa/New Zealand is influenced by large Western cultures often practice of faith is translated into Christian practice which relates to this influence. For example, during events for young people music is often performed in a contemporary way and the influence of pop culture and media can be seen in the translation of faith practice offered to young people.

c. How is the language used in a young person's world incorporated in the pastoral care of young people, especially in the media, sports and music?

According to the **youth leadership survey**, an on-going challenge in the pastoral care of young people in Aotearoa New Zealand is the way we use language in the Church and how catechesis and theology is translated into language that young people can understand and which makes sense in their lives.

- One great challenge that we have faced in New Zealand in recent years related to language has been around the revised English translation of the Mass which took place around seven years ago. For many people (from a range of ages) this has been a challenging transition as many find the new translation to be even further disconnected from everyday language. It was acknowledged in responses to this question that within our Mass there is currently little room to be able to incorporate language used in a young person's world into the pastoral care of this particular element of our faith.
- Respondents to this question frequently commented on the need for formation of young people to be delivered in a language they understand and that they frequently use. Pastoral care needs to be done in a way that is relevant to the young person and their culture and in language that they understand. This can be achieved by using language that is familiar and used in popular culture.
- Most respondents seemed to agree that the Catholic Church does not speak young people's language. Religious language is almost a foreign tongue to most lay people and many find it to be alienating, exclusive and off putting. It is possible that the Church does not even really realise that the language it is using is not normal. Young people tend to respond to humour, colloquial language and conversation and they can get this through the media, music, television and their social interactions with each other and their families. They do not often get these things in their interaction with the Church.
- There was an acknowledgement that there are some places within the Church where the language used in a young person's world is incorporated into their pastoral care. This is especially true of youth groups and events organised with young people as their target audience. Other places will use contemporary music well to lead young people in prayer, using the style of music they listen to often to connect them with their faith. There is also an on-going need to consistently re-evaluate how we use social media as a Church, the messages we share and how we communicate these.

### 3. Sharing Activities

---

1. List the main types of pastoral activity in accompaniment and vocational discernment in your present situation.

- RCIA
- Theology of the Body
- Teachings through the Catholic Discipleship college
- Congress such as Mercy International Day, concerts, RCC, WYD,
- Marriage preparation programmes
- Sunday youth groups
- Concerts
- Conferences
- Hearts aflame
- Hearts aFlame days of retreat
- Youth for Christ
- Jesus Youth
- Youth camps
- Youth groups
- Young Church Ministry (wellington)
- LifeTeen and Lifeteen Youth Camp
- Prayer Assembly of Youth for Christ in the Parish
- Eucharistic adoration
- Aotearoa Youth Festival
- Frontline Formation Programme
- concerts, some social events attractive for young people  
locally celebrated World Youth Day
- WYD experience in Christchurch 2016
- Setfree
- Passionist Youth and Adult Events
- Challenge 2000
- Caritas Challenge
- Marist Youth Leader
- Young Vinnies
- Young Catholic Leader programme
- Maori Pastoral Care
- Logus
- UNIV
- Exalt

## Sharing Activity 1: Encounter

**Description:** Encounter activities incorporate a wide range of activities, from youth camps, festivals, concerts, summer schools and formation weekends to informal groups, masses, youth ministries and conferences for young people through the six dioceses in New Zealand.

While the parish community has a role in promoting participation in youth-centred activities, largely the work is carried out by designated youth leaders and/or members of the diocesan team. Activities have been developed in different regions, at different points in time as a response to needs, requests and identified gaps, all with the ultimate goal of involving and engaging young people in a relationship with God.

**Analysis:** The goal of these encounter activities is that of bringing young people together to celebrate their faith and who they are, to share their own faith story and their future. The intention of these activities is to invite young people to actively respond, trying to get people to live their faith and fostering their gifts.

They are seen by some as addressing a 'broken link', which could be a person's relationship with Jesus and/or with the Church. These are aimed at focusing on a person's personal experience with Church, taking them deeper into that relationship with themselves, with God and others (in their church, their community etc.) These activities have the goals of fostering personal and spiritual growth, and meeting the needs that may not be being met by a young person's school, social group or parish – those of faith and connectedness.

These activities are seen by many who responded as opportunities for young people to have their voices heard in a safe and supportive environment and it was somewhere they could share their faith. Many of those who responded to our survey, commented that encounter activities give Catholic youth a chance to come together and feel a sense of fellowship and connectedness, greater than they can gain by listening to a homily at their Sunday mass. Sessions such as 'Chill with the Bishop', youth groups and Catholic Youth leadership programmes empowered those who attended had an opportunity to have their voices heard and to also hear the different perspectives of others. Agreed by youth leaders is the importance of the quality of an event, ie. The level of professionalism, the quality of speakers, national or international standing of performers etc.

**Evaluation:** The general feeling from these findings and discussions out of these was that goals are being met on some levels but not on others. The lives of young people and working families mean regular activities are more difficult to maintain, with one-off events, particularly those with music, social activities and food often more successful in drawing young people in. There is a lot of work happening at the grassroots level throughout the dioceses, where those involved are pulling together to make things happen but at the same time, local communities could be more enabling.

The communities that young people found meaning and belonging seem to be outside the traditional parish structure. While New Zealand is unique in that there isn't a great barrier between Church hierarchy and the community, there is a feeling that parishes are not all open to hearing the voice of their people. "The Church needs to ask how do we work at the Parish level to reconnect people with Church?" "We need to re-fresh our Parish liturgy to more strongly involve the personal as well as the community and provide that sense of belonging." A significant challenge for the Church here is its changing demographics and the differing expectations and interpretations of worship between generations and ethnicities. What will the Church look like in the future?

## Sharing Activity 2: Leadership

### **Description**

The Church's leadership programmes are varied. These activities are focused on accompanying young leaders through their spiritual journey and leadership development including high school leader programmes, church youth leadership, retreats, camps and tertiary study (The Catholic Institute). These take place largely outside of the Church.

### **Analysis**

Leadership development is an integral part of youth ministry New Zealand. The underlying goal of leadership activities within the New Zealand context is the nurturing of young people on their faith, training them for future leadership roles and equipping them with skills which will enable them to participate more fully in the life, mission and work of their local community.

The focus of many of these activities is on responsible participation, celebrating and utilising diverse gifts and affirming talent and ability. These activities provide opportunities for young people to learn about and experience leadership in a wide variety of roles.

There are few or no leadership programmes at the Parish level (these are usually done at the diocesan, school or community level). For example, a group in the Hamilton Diocese run their own training, as do a youth group in Tauranga.

Often these initiatives have been set up in response to a recognised need. Another example is the Marist Youth Leader group, where there has been a sharing of resources between dioceses and an openness of working with other groups, which is unique to New Zealand because of its size.

### **Evaluation**

Again, the size of the country and Catholic community has allowed some freedom and informality in the development of some leadership programmes. For example, Youth Ministry is not seen as a profession in its own right – Youth leaders comment that there has been no formal guide or standard in developing youth ministries so they've simply done it themselves. Another example is Young Catholic Leader (YCL), which is a five-day Catholic leadership course for secondary school students which is run in the dioceses. This has grown out of knowledge and young people have taken the skills they've learned from school and operate quite separately to the parishes. This has had an effect on the diocese (ecclesial effect), it's less hierarchical and seen as less main stream church.

General feeling among those working with youth in the Church is that while the goals of these leadership activities are generally met and the Bishops are supportive, there is a disconnect between parishes and what's happening at the grassroots level, which is effecting awareness and participation and overall cohesion.

## Sharing Activity 3: Service

### **Description**

These groups, initiatives and events encourage the involvement of young people on the fringes of church, in serving others eg. Young Vinnies, Challenge 2000, Caritas Challenge and mission teams.

Service-defined activities take place in the community, and are not bound by the Church. The goals of these activities are about going out to those in need, being involved in a range of practical, value-based and satisfying activities that connect people and help youth feel like they're making a difference, through the use of their skills. This is building on the encounter activities in developing relationships with others by serving with them, supporting our family and walking the talk.

These activities provide a foundation/reason for bringing young people together to celebrate their faith and who they are. By facilitating these opportunities and inviting young people to actively respond, youth leaders feel that ultimately they're enabling people to live their faith, foster their gifts and provide an opportunity for them to live their faith.

### **Analysis**

Youth leaders feel inspired by Pope Francis "seeing the need." Young people feel they have a voice in effecting change through organisations such Caritas and Vinnies. The hands-on and practical nature of this type of activity has held great appeal for many young Catholics, those both active or inactive within the Church. Advocacy, working with the vulnerable, the at-risk or just helping others in general were activities which are intergenerational, inclusive and something that even those who felt broken themselves could contribute to. Meeting the needs of others was seen as a material way for young people to experience Christ through others, and not to feel necessarily 'hemmed in' by the Church. One comment that was made spoke to this - in helping others, it feeds our own self-esteem and self-worth.

### **Evaluation**

There was a question around whether or not the goals of this activity were being met. There was a feeling among youth leaders that many young people felt they needed to go outside of the Church to feel a sense of belonging, to address the breakdown in community and to actively serve the needs of others. There seemed also to be a disconnect in the communication of what is being done by Catholic agencies (such as Caritas and St Vincent de Paul) and sharing that with the wider community. The Church is very much seen as hierarchical and very structured and not necessarily active out on the street.

For those who were actively involved in service activity there was a strong sense of being inspired to live their faith, a need to address the breakdown of community and that this is ground-level kingdom building. The practical living out of what we've been called to do.