

THOUGHTS FROM HSSF PARISHIONERS ON FORUM WITH ARCHBISHOP PETER COMENSOLI ON 30 MAY 2026

FEEDBACK FOR FR MARTIN TANTI

OVERALL

Archbishop Peter Comensoli hosted a two-hour forum for HSSF parishioners in the Mary McKillop Hall of the Sacred Heart School and Church on 30 May 2026. He requested a note from it be prepared to assist the newly formed Pastoral Council in their deliberations on parish strategy and programs. This note is based on the responses from 12 of the 40 participants in the forum. The points are a mixture of practical and faith-filled thoughts that respondents believed important and that Fr Martin might like to know.

Overall, the forum was assessed as being an enlightening, respectful, inspiring and successful gathering of parishioners with the Archbishop to share ideas. It gave us a practical experience of the synodal process of listening, sharing, discerning and walking together as church.

CHRIST BEING ACTIVE IN HSSF PARISH (Evangelism in our lives)

- **Fr Martin's example as Parish Priest and leader** – All respondents acknowledged Martin as friendly, inclusive, welcoming, sincere, honest, caring, dedicated, hard-working and good with children and the elderly. He provides genuine pastoral support for funerals, students, parents, the ill and those in need. He has restored and improved our parish life and exceeded the expectations of those who prayed specially for a Christ-like pastor.
- **Leaders & parishioners volunteering and active in 15 HSSF Ministries** – Eight respondents affirmed the work of the Mass Centre leaders, Social Justice initiatives (Vinnies, Remexico, BASP and Communion to the Sick), outreach & missionary initiatives, Pastoral and Finance Committees, liturgy & choirs and others. The work of many quiet achievers was acknowledged.
- **Christ-like community working through people** – Six respondents highlighted the unity and tolerance being exhibited by three distinct church communities and by individuals, now gathered as one flock under one shepherd, enabling the parish to operate well. The parish is continuing towards being inclusive, welcoming and hospitable, where all are valued, heard and encouraged to participate.
- **Increasing Mass attendance and numbers of baptisms** – were noted by two respondents.

WISHES FOR FUTURE AND MY OWN INVOLVEMENT (Being missionary disciples)

- **Participation of more young people and families** – Eight respondents noted this is vital for the parish future, is facilitated by inviting/welcoming/speaking with them, by a structured approach with schools, by programs to educate parents on fostering a spiritual life for their children and by including a role for grandparents. Archbishop Peter noted that younger people (10-30 year olds) are transient and that programs of interest to them at other parishes with suitable venues may be worthwhile. He referred us to CAM programs & resources (including the Proclaim Office, the Bethany Way and/or the Alpha program) and to outreach via Vinnies which could be of use.

- **Expanded activities with Aged Care, for those at Home and for the Ill** - Four respondents desired more people working with Communion to the Sick and aged care visits. Could be one of key roles for newly formed Parish Pastoral Council.
- **Parishioners showing missionary example by our own lives** – Three participants encouraged us to do this with neighbours, grandchildren and others. We can all be missionary disciples, inspired by the Holy Spirit, demonstrating Christ's way through our words, actions and witness.
- **Assistance for Fr Martin** – Four respondents noted the large scope of work in pastoral, liturgical, aged care and youth programs for the three HSSF communities. They suggested more assistance for Fr Martin and more use of existing ministries to enable new/extended pastoral initiatives and some administrative programs to become feasible.
- **Power of Prayer for the Future** – Several respondents reminded us of this core element of our Christian faith.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF ARCHBISHOP PETER

- **Acknowledgement of failure of Bayside Catholic Mission** – Six respondents noted that Archbishop Peter apologised several times for the difficulty and stress caused working as parishes in the BCM. Parishioners were grateful for these apologies and publicly thanked Archbishop Peter for them.
- **Parish Involvement & Activity Programs for Men** – Four participants noted the scarcity (approx. 15%) of men at the Forum and discussions of what might attract more into active parish life. Archbishop Peter referred us to Men Alive, SIP and the possibility for a HSSF men's program.
- **What is Pope Leo like** – Three respondents recalled that Archbishop Peter related that he had met Pope Leo once. He had been to Australia, including Melbourne, several times previously in his role as head of the Augustinians. Pope Leo was noted as having the ability to listen intensely to people he meets, to think carefully and then to act. The group admired his ability to stand up to country leaders who are not making the world a better place and to advise them to seek more for peace and Christ-like behaviours. Pope Leo will be visiting Sydney for the 2028 Eucharistic Congress.
- **How will Synodality work** – Three respondents recalled that Archbishop Peter advised that Synodality is not about changing 2000 years of Church tradition and teaching. It is being Church, walking together, listening and discerning under the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The CAM Diocesan Synod will be held in October 2026 and will focus on themes of Youth, Formation and one other.
- **What is the Cathedral's "Light for the City" initiative** – Two respondents recalled that the \$200 million initiative is to maintain and upgrade the Cathedral and its surrounding area. In the 1840s the cathedral was built much larger than needed for Catholics of the day. This current initiative, due for completion by 2035 (the bicentennial of the founding of Melbourne) will include necessary maintenance for the cathedral building (including its spire and roof); will provide gathering, historical and mission spaces for the half million visitors per year; and will centralise some administrative functions. CAM parishes will be asked later this year to contribute towards a \$60 million share of the costs.