



Disconnected Catholics research enters consultation phase

Catholic dioceses, organisations and other interested people will have the opportunity to respond to a research project which explored why some Catholics have stopped going to Mass.

The findings of the Disconnected Catholics research project were presented in summary form to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference at its November 2006 meeting. The full report has now been published.

Forty-one people aged from 29 to 74 were interviewed for the qualitative research project. The reasons they gave for ceasing to attend Mass covered a range of church-related issues as well as inter-personal, cultural and societal factors. However, half the participants said they still attend Mass occasionally and almost one third said they might return to weekly Mass attendance in the future.

The Bishops commissioned the research, which was carried out by the Pastoral Projects Office of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. At the time of its preliminary release, they said the findings would be a valuable tool in forming pastoral strategies to help people return to the practice of their faith.

The full report, released this week, provides many personal accounts from those interviewed in the research. Director of the ACBC Pastoral Projects Office, Mr Bob Dixon, said that, in asking for this research to be carried out, the Bishops have shown a desire to understand the views and experiences of Catholics who have stopped going to Mass

With the release of the full report, the project will now enter its second phase, of consultation.

“We have designed a process of consultation to seek responses from leadership and consultative bodies in dioceses and other Catholic organisations,” Mr Dixon said. We also welcome feedback from others who read the report. The purpose of the consultation process is to assist us to prepare recommendations that will help the Church enhance its pastoral practices at national, diocesan and parish level. The report will act as a stimulus to discussion and action in the Church right around Australia.

The consultation phase will close on Friday, August 31, 2007.

Hard copies of the report, which cost \$22 including GST, can be ordered by emailing admin@ppo.catholic.org.au or copies can be downloaded free of charge from www.ppo.catholic.org.au.

For more information, contact Bob Dixon on 03 9953 3457.