

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
VIRTUAL CATHOLIC MENS GATHERING 2020



*"They were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other Apostles,
Brothers - what then must we do?" Acts 2:37*

RESOURCE for HUBS and Hosting Sites

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1. Overview

The ACBC National Catholic Men's Gathering for 2020 is being offered as a free event for registered participants. This modified program will be delivered in one introductory session (25 minutes) and four pre-recorded modules of approximately 1 hour in length, available from Saturday 15th August 2020.

Each module will offer input from a variety of speakers and musicians, along with a response and questions for group discussion or individual reflection. The program offers flexibility so that you may participate individually or gather with others from your parish/diocese or men's ministry group.

As an initiative of the Australian Catholic Bishops, the aim of the ACBC National Men's Gathering is to inspire and encourage men with a vision for personal discipleship, service and mission in the family, parish/diocese and the world. The online virtual program hopes to reinforce that it is important to gather as men in the faith environment of the Church and be challenged to ensure the Gospel is alive in our homes, parishes/dioceses and our communities.

Registration is free at bit.ly/cm2020event

The Working Committee thanks you for being involved in this virtual event.

Working Committee Members:

Archbishop Julian Porteous,

Archbishop of Hobart, member of the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry.

Bishop Michael Kennedy,

Bishop of Armidale, member of the Bishops Commission for Life, Family & Public Engagement.

Mr Robert Falzon, cofounder Men Alive.

Ms Clara Geoghegan, Executive Secretary, Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry.

Mr Malcolm Hart, Director, National Centre for Evangelisation, ACBC.

Mr Jude Hennessy, Director, Office of Renewal and Evangelisation, Diocese of Wollongong

Mrs Louise Zavone, Executive Secretary, Bishops Commission for Life, Family & Public Engagement.

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2. NOVENA

(A **novena** (from [Latin](#): novem, "nine") is an ancient tradition of devotional praying in [Christianity](#), consisting of private or public [prayers](#) repeated for nine successive days or weeks. The nine days between the Feast of the Ascension and Pentecost, when the disciples gathered in the upper room and devote themselves to prayer, is often considered to be the first novena.)

Men of Australia and New Zealand, Let us pray from Thursday 6th Feast of the Transfiguration through to including Friday 14th of August, in preparation for our event on the 15th of August on the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. Let us pray earnestly for this Virtual Gathering of Men. Let us ask God to visit with us, work in us and send us out to be Missionary's in our; homes, families and parishes. We pray that we may be carriers of God's contagious love to our; wife, children, brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us pray for an extraordinary visitation during this time together. Let us petition the Virgin Mary to ask her Son Jesus for a special outpouring of grace for the Sons of the Father that gather for this event.

May we "Love the Lord your God with; All your Heart/Mind/Soul and Strength and Love your neighbour as yourself" -- Matt16 /Mark10 /Luke 10 /John 6

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Day 1: Thursday 6th August, 2020. [Transfiguration](#)

Read Scripture (2 mins) - Luke 9:28–36 Transfiguration of Jesus

²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus. ³¹ They spoke about his departure,^[a] which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. ³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³ As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.) ³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." ³⁶ When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

- 1. When you gathered with the brothers on the Mountain, what did the Father say to you? When did you become fully awake?**
- 2. Finding yourself alone with Jesus, what did he say to you? Could you experience the Father saying to you; "You are my son, whom I have chosen".**

Novena prayer for the Gathering of Catholic Men

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

My Jesus we are in the boat with you. It's raining, the storm is raging, we are being buffeted, beaten, thrown and tossed around. We are wet, confused, distressed and frightened. You are doing nothing!! Lord, I want to wake you up, I need to shake you and say help us, all may be lost.

My son/s "Be Not Afraid", I am with you. Why are you so fearful and terrified? I am not asleep, but many of you are asleep. Wake Up!! Your families, church and world need you. I want you and wait for you. Come to me. I love you.

Jesus, Here I am, I come to you with all my heart/mind/soul and strength. I offer myself to you. Take all of me, for your will and work. Amen.

Our Father/ Hail Mary/ Glory Be

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Day 2: Friday 7th August, 2020.

Read Scripture (2 mins)

Gospel: Matthew 16:24-28 *Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it*

"24. Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25. Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. 26. What, then, will anyone gain by winning the whole world and forfeiting his life? Or what can anyone offer in exchange for his life? 27. 'For the Son of man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his behaviour. 28. In truth I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming with his kingdom.'"

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

- 1. Do you want to be a follower of Jesus? What needs to happen for this to occur? What does it mean to give your life away?**
- 2. We will be rewarded according to our behaviour. What needs to change for a full reward? What behaviour needs to change?**

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Day 3: Saturday 8th August 2020. St Mary MacKillop of the Cross

Read Scripture (2 mins)

Gospel: Matthew 6:25-34 *Do not worry about tomorrow: your holy Father knows your needs*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith? So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?" It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.'

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

In 1866 Mary MacKillop founded Australia's first order of nuns, the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, and also established St. Joseph's School in a converted stable in Penola, providing a free education to children from the area. In 1867 MacKillop took vows and became the first mother superior of the sisters. The following year the sisters opened schools in other Australian cities, as well as an orphanage and a refuge for women released from prison.

- 1. I am telling you not to worry. What do you worry about? Really what do you worry about? Jesus says Do not worry.**
- 2. Your heavenly Father knows what you need. Don't be men of little faith. Tell your Father what you need. Trust him, he thinks you are worth much more than you can imagine.**

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Novena prayer for the Gathering of Catholic Men

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Day 4: Sunday 9th August 2020 [Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Read Scripture (2 mins) - Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33 *Jesus walks on the water*

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a headwind. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It is a ghost' they said and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' It was Peter who answered. 'Lord,' he said, 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' 'Come' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'Man, of little faith,' he said 'why did you doubt?' And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.'

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

- 1. Jesus is asking you to get into the boat. Now you know that the storm is coming, will you still get into the boat?**
- 2. Can you make a list of the things you are frightened off? Offer them all to Jesus, he says to you "Courage it is I don't be afraid"**

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Day 5: Monday 10th August 2020

Read Scripture (2 mins)

Gospel: John 12:24-26 *If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it yields a rich harvest*

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.'

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

1. Are you a single grain person? What is the yield of your life? Will there be a rich harvest?
2. Do you want to serve and follow the harvest master? Then tell him! Tell him you are prepared to lose everything, to gain Jesus Everything!

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Day 6: Tuesday 11th August, St Clare of Assisi

Read Scripture (2 mins) - Matthew 18:1-5,10,12-14

Anyone who welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me.

The disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' So he called a little child to him and set the child in front of them. Then he said, 'I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

'Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.

'See that you never despise any of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven.

'Tell me. Suppose a man has a hundred sheep and one of them strays; will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hillside and go in search of the stray? I tell you solemnly, if he finds it, it gives him more joy than do the ninety-nine that did not stray at all. Similarly, it is never the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.'

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

- 1. How does this scripture challenge you to reconsider what greatness actually is?**
- 2. The father will leave the 99 to come looking for you. You are so loved that He is prepared to put everything at risk to find you.**

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Day 7: Wednesday 12th August 2020

Read Scripture (2 mins) - Matthew 18:15-20

If your brother listens to you, you have won back your brother

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between you two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.

'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

- 1. Our national gathering will bring men together like never before – what is it you long to ask of the Father in the name of Jesus?**
- 2. Pray for a brother who you might need to be *won back* for the Kingdom of God and life in Jesus and the Church.**

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Day 8: Thursday 13th August 2020

Read Scripture (2 mins) - Matthew 18:21-19:1 - *'How often must I forgive my brother?'*

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'

'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time" he said "and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me" he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. "You wicked servant," he said "I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'

Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and he left Galilee and came into the part of Judaea which is on the far side of the Jordan.

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

1. Reflect on how indebted you are to the forgiveness and gifts of our God, and in your heart, pray with gratitude and praise.
2. Who is in-debt to you – requiring your forgiveness as God has forgiven you?

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Day 9: Friday 14th 2020 [Maximilian Kolbe](#), Memorial

Read Scripture (2 mins) - Matthew 19:3-12 - *Husband and wife are no longer two, but one body*

Some Pharisees approached Jesus, and to test him they said, 'Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?' He answered, 'Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body? They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.'

They said to him, 'Then why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal should be given in cases of divorce?' 'It was because you were so unteachable' he said 'that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this from the beginning. Now I say this to you: the man who divorces his wife – I am not speaking of fornication – and marries another, is guilty of adultery.'

The disciples said to him, 'If that is how things are between husband and wife, it is not advisable to marry.' But he replied, 'It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted. There are eunuchs born that way from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs made so by men and there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.'

Reflect on Scripture (5 mins)

- 1. On this day when we remember modern Martyr - Maximilian Kolbe, consider the ways you are being asked to die to yourself and join the sufferings of Jesus.**
- 2. Reflect on the mystery of unity that is inherent in marriage and the nature of the church.**

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3. Program

Introduction - 25 Minutes

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 5 mins | Introduction and Welcome | Jude Hennessy |
| 10 mins | Opening Song and Prayer | Tim Kirk/ Disciples of Jesus |
| 10 mins | Official Welcome | Archbishop Coleridge |

MODULE 1 – 50-60 Minutes

| | | |
|------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 5 mins | Introductions | Jude Hennessy |
| 15-20 mins | Where Are All the Men? | Daniel Ang |
| 15-20 mins | Why Gather Men? | Peter Pellicaan |
| 10 mins | Response | Archbishop Porteous/Tomasz Juszcak |
| 5 mins | Prayer & thanks | Jude Hennessy |

MODULE 2 – 50-55 Minutes

| | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 10 mins | Welcome and Intro of Speakers | Jude Hennessy |
| 15-20 mins | What is needed? | Peter Shakhovskoy |
| 10 mins | Music reflection | Tim Kirk/ Disciples of Jesus |
| 10 mins | Response | Bishop Kennedy/John Hanrahan |
| 5 mins | Prayer & thanks | Jude Hennessy |

MODULE 3 – 55-60 Minutes

| | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 10 mins | Song, Prayer + Intro of Speakers | Peter Pellicaan |
| 15-20 mins | A Men's Ministry | Jude Hennessy |
| 15-20 mins | Marked Men of Character | Steve Lawrence |
| 10 mins | Response | Archbishop Comensoli/Annie Carrett |
| 5 mins | Prayer & thanks | Jude Hennessy |

MODULE 4 - 1 hour

| | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 10 mins | Welcome and Intro of Speaker | Jude Hennessy |
| 15-20 mins | What must we do? | Robert Falzon |
| 10 mins | Response | Archbishop Prowse/Tim & Lara Kirk |
| 10 mins | Musical Reflection | Pat Keady |
| 10 mins | Sending | Archbishop Fisher |
| 5 mins | Thank you & Register for 2021 | Jude Hennessy |

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4. Guidelines for Promotion and Hosting

- The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference **Facebook page** has a number of promotional videos from the Bishops and Presenters. Please consider sharing these videos on your social media platforms. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianCatholicBishops/>
- Gatherings that are being held on Saturday 15th August 2020, the **Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, should consider including mass in the program as this is a holy day of obligation.
- Please ensure that any physical gathering follows the State laws regarding **COVID-19 safety**. This includes no shaking of hands, keeping a distance of 1.5metres between participants and the provisions of hand sanitiser. Please keep a record of the contact details for all who attend.
- A list of **Hosting Sites and Hubs** participating in the Virtual Catholic Men's Gathering will be available on the website. Venues, dates, times and contacts will be made available.
- The Working Committee strongly encourages all participants to ensure that they have **registered** for the event. If you are hosting a group please check that participants have registered individually. Registration is available for free at bit.ly/cm2020event. Also please note that we have some women registered for the event and the Modules could also easily be used by married couples.
- There is flexibility in **program delivery**, that is how an individual, couple or group might use the pre-recorded materials and some suggestions include:
 1. Host Sites Whole Day-- A parish/school could host the event for 15-50 people depending on distancing and COVID-19 restrictions. The parish/school hosts the event for the whole day.
 2. Host sites Half Day—A parish/school could host the event for 15-50 people depending on distancing and COVID-19 restrictions. The parish/school hosts the event over two half days.
 3. Host sites 4 weeks/months-- A parish/school/diocese hosts the event for 15-50 people depending on distancing and COVID-19 restrictions. They host the event over four weeks/months.
 4. Individual--- Individuals can access the pre recorded materials on their own and in their own home/with family members.

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- **Questions for small group discussion** have been provided by each speaker on the following pages. Time for discussion of these questions has not been included in the Program, however this can be built in to local programs and agendas.
- The videos for the Introductory Session and the four modules will be available from **Saturday 15th August**. It would be good to check the technology that you will be using to deliver the sessions, computers, projectors, sound and wifi. For those who may need to download the videos please contact Louise Zavone via phone 0468 532 004 or email louise.zavone@catholic.org.au for the Youtube links.
- **Suggested Guideline for a FULL DAY Program A – 15th August 2020**

9:00am – Mass -- Feast of the Assumption

9:55am – Welcome & Introduce the day

10:00am – Play introduction session

10:30am – Play Module 1 video

11:30am – Small group discussion and morning tea

12:00am – Play Module 2 video

1:00 pm – Lunch (possibly in small groups)

2:00pm – Play Module 3 video

3:00pm – Small group discussion and afternoon tea

3:30pm – Play Module 4 video

4:30pm – Discussion with whole group on ‘Brothers, what must we do?’ What’s next?

5:00pm – Thankyou’s and Farewell.

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- **Suggested Guideline for a FULL DAY Program B**

8:30am – Sign in attendees

8:55am – Welcome & introduce the day

9:00am – Play introduction session

9:25am – Quick break for tea/coffee

9:30am – Play Module 1 video

10:30am – Small group discussion and morning tea

11:00am – Play Module 2 video

11:55am – Small group discussion

12:30pm – Lunch

1:30pm – Play Module 3 video

2:30pm – Small group discussion and afternoon tea

3:00pm – Play Module 4 video

4:00pm – Discussion with whole group on 'Brothers, what must we do?'

4:30pm – Mass and Farewell.

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Module 1, Talk 1: Where Are All the Men? *Daniel Ang*

It is a truism that we cannot hope to grow by holding the door closed against reality. A renewed future always begins on the basis of the present and will be shaped by our participation in it.

Alarming then are the trend in men's participation across the Church in Australia. The decline in men's attendance at churches, underrepresentation in many ministries of the Church's life, groups, organisations and activities places in context the urgency of a new evangelisation and outreach. Whether in parish life, health care or education, the relative absence of men from ecclesial life is a striking call to connect what is 'going on' in churches to the wider lives of men in their personal, professional and public life.

This session seeks to provide a starting point for the conversation about the evangelisation of men in the twenty first century.

Questions for Small Groups:

1. What did you find most striking about the present state of men's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia?
2. What might need to change to remain faithful to Jesus' commission to make disciples of our Catholic men and those others who are not engaged or express interest in the Gospel or the life of the Church?

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Module 1, Talk 2: Why Gather Men? *Peter Pellican*

Nehemiah Chapters 1 – 4 detail the Prophet Nehemiah's rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. He hears the bad news, responds, inspects the damage, makes the decision to restore the walls, and gathers and organises men to achieve this vision. This serves as a metaphor for the situation we're in as the Church in Australia.

In Australia, only 38% of parishioners are men. 67% of attendees are not actively involved in Church, and the fastest declining demographic in our Church today is men between 25 and 45. There are now more atheists in Australia than Catholics and men are not typically proud of saying they go to Church, even if they are committed.

- 1. Nehemiah hears the bad news:** "...the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been destroyed by fire." (Nehemiah 1:3)
 - Like Nehemiah, our walls are broken, the gates have been destroyed by the fire of the RC coupled with the demise of Christendom.
- 2. Nehemiah Responds:** "When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven." (Nehemiah 1:4)
 - Do we care like Nehemiah did? Do we weep, mourn, pray and fast for the state of the Church? Do we take responsibility?
- 3. Nehemiah Inspects the Damage:** "So I came to Jerusalem and was there for three days." (Nehemiah 2:11)
 - We have to inspect the damage and be honest about the situations and find the faithful solutions that God is calling us to. The solutions that make us look, sound, and feel less like a political party and more like Jesus.
- 4. Nehemiah Takes Action:** Then they said, "Let us start building!" So they committed themselves to the common good. (Nehemiah 2:18)
 - Will we work re-build the walls of the Catholic Church in Australia?
 - Will we be discouraged if like Nehemiah, we are mocked for our efforts?
- 5. Nehemiah Organised the Men:** (Nehemiah 3:1-32)
 - This is the moment to gather men and give them meaningful and responsible roles in the life of the local Church to rebuild.

Questions for Small Groups:

1. How much do we care about the state of the Church? (Do we weep, pray and fast?)
2. What action are you personally taking (or will take) to "rebuild the walls?"
3. How can you gather local men and work with your local parish priest and community to 'rebuild the wall' in your local area?

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Module 2: What is needed? Peter Shakhovskoy

Those of us who are baby boomers have witnessed Catholic attendance in our lifetime drop from 70% to 10% percent, the sexual abuse scandal in recent years has hit our credibility hard, very few young people make it into parish life, and the Covid crisis has dealt another powerful pause to our existence and relevance.

What is needed to turn around the current crisis in today's society for us as members of the Christian and Catholic Church? And what can each of us contribute? What does Jesus in the Gospels point to as key? And, given that this is not the first time that the Church in society has faced such a storm what do the Saints and history teach us about our response?

Mark 12:28-34 Jesus points to the greatest commandment and silences any other questions.

He calls for an uncompromised and unconditional falling in love with God, wholehearted and all-encompassing of our life and energy. Is this for real? Or do we leave this just to those we call Saints?

How do lay people respond to this call, how do we do it in our "ordinary" lives? Can you and I really do this, what does it look like and what difference will it make?

G.K. Chesterton said in his essay "What's Wrong with the World :-

"The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried."

History teaches us that wherever individuals and groups respond to the greatest commandment personally and generously, transformation and renewal follow powerfully.

In the current situation, what is really on offer from God for me personally, for my family and those I love that would persuade me to sell all and follow in the way Jesus invites? Who am I in this story?

*Nothing is more practical than finding God,
than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way.
What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination, will affect everything.
It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends, what you read,
whom you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.*

Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

Father Pedro Arrupe SJ (1907-1991)

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Questions for Small Groups:

1. What happens inside my head and heart when I hear the first and greatest commandment?
2. Write a list of practical things that you do now that demonstrates your loving God with mind, heart, soul, and strength.
3. What do I really love more than anything else? Write a short list?
4. Can I really learn to love like Mark 12:28-34? How?

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Module 3, Talk 1: Marked Men of Character **Steve Lawrence**

Drawing from compelling anecdotes of his life as a Hawthorn footballer, seasoned world traveller and enthusiastic educator, as well as his adolescent experience in a broken family, Steve humorously and intelligently weaves inspiring stories of heroism and hope that help men to discover their mission and purpose in life, and in doing so to make their mark on this world.

Steve provides a vision that encourages self-belief and a perspective that challenges misguided myths of masculinity, while engaging in the crucial dialogue about overcoming failure. He calls men to be as tender as they are strong in their relationships, and leads them to discover their life purpose through the sincere gift of themselves and by serving others.

Questions for Small Groups

1. What most touched you about Steve's talk? Why do you think that is the case?
2. Steve said "wounded people wound people, yes but also healed people heal people". How can you allow the deep wounds of your life to be transformed and then an avenue of service to others?
3. What is one step you need to take today, to set your life on the path of its truest purpose?

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Module 3, Talk 2: A Men's Ministry Jude Hennessy

This session will detail personal examples of the impact of creating opportunities at local, parish and diocesan levels for men to hear the Gospel afresh from other men, to repent, encounter God powerfully and be embraced, built up and challenged by brothers in an ongoing way. It will address a series of simple but vitally important questions about 'the why' and 'the how' of men's ministry, and consider the fruits that come from investing in such ministry efforts, including:

Why men's ministry is important and transformative?

What are the key elements needed for a fruitful men's ministry?

What are the fruits that come from investing in men's ministry?

The session will present the powerful accounts of men who have had their lives impacted and changed by brothers – of what happens when we create the opportunities for iron to sharpen iron. It will conclude by encouraging participants to consider how doing some simple things to bring men together in a purposeful way – can help us to truly be the body of Christ, sons of 'the father' and a missional Church.

Questions for small groups

1. What struck you from what you heard in this session about the benefit of men's ministry to uniquely enliven men in their relationship with Christ and the Church?
2. Do you have any personal examples of how journeying with other men has impacted your faith and involvement in the mission of the Church?
3. What might you be able to help initiate, support or commit to at a local level in order to bring men together, build up the body of Christ and renew the Church for mission?

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Module 4: What Must We Do? Robert Falzon

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what must we do?" ³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." ACTS 2:37-38

Peters response presents the four elements of our conversion experience: -
Repentance/Baptism/Forgiveness of Sins and Receipt of the Holy Spirit

He is saying: We MUST be converted /We MUST encounter JESUS/We MUST be Spirit filled.

This is not a new question in the scriptures—

Matt 19:16 "a man asked, 'Master, what good deed must I do to possess eternal life?'"

Mark 10:17 "He was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'"

[Luke 10:25](#) "And now a lawyer stood up and, to test him, asked, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'"

John 6:28 "...they said to him, 'What must we do if we are to carry out God's work?'"

Jesus responded by saying—You MUST love the Lord your God with all your; heart, mind, soul and strength and you must love your neighbour as yourself.

We all should be asking this question! We will all get the same response! **BUT HOW to Respond?**

The 4 Essentials—This is what we must do!!

1. Personal Prayer every day including the scriptures: Personal Relationship with Jesus.
2. Fellowship with others —Join a small group of men, share your life.
3. Love those you have been given to love—Family/Wife/Children/Friends.
4. Become a Disciple, Become a Missionary. Find ways to connect and reach those who do not regularly come to church. What is your compelling message? Do Gods Work.

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Questions for Small Groups:

1. What commitments can I make and do? Start a new tomorrow? Write them down!
For example: Prayer/Scriptures/Small Groups? How long, where, and when.....?
2. How can I learn to Love? Those I have been given to love; the way they need to be loved?
Learn to love big and bravely! Give yourself away generously.
3. How can I, a lay man, become a Missionary in the Church of Australia?