

The Text of the Petition

We, the undersigned Australian Catholics, wish to express our support for our bishops who are preparing the Australian Catholic Church for new forms of ministry and leadership. We request the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference to place the following items on the agenda for their plenary meeting in November this year, 2007.

We ask that the Bishops:

1. Acknowledge that there is a major crisis in ministry within the Australian Catholic Church;
2. Acknowledge that there is no doctrinal or theological barrier to the ordination of married men. The Australian Church has already ordained married former Anglican priests;
3. Take practical steps toward ordaining suitably qualified married men;
4. Encourage a wide-ranging discussion of the role of women in ministry and in the authority structures of the Church, including the question of women's ordination;
5. Establish appropriate scriptural, theological and pastoral training programs (campus, distance and online) to prepare suitable women and men for ministry. These candidates should have the recommendation of their parishes and communities, and should participate in mentored pastoral work;
6. Invite priests who have left the ministry to return to active priesthood, subject to negotiation with the local bishop.