

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## AUSTRALIA'S BISHOPS TO MEET POPE FRANCIS

Australia's Catholic Bishops will travel to the Vatican in June to meet with Pope Francis to report on the work of their dioceses from around the country.

Bishops conferences from across the world typically make the *Ad Limina Apostolorum* visit to the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul every five years.

However, the Australian Catholic Bishops have not had the opportunity to undertake this pilgrimage since 2011. The Ad Limina visit was rescheduled following the change of Pope in 2013 and all Ad Liminas were cancelled during the Year of Mercy in 2015-2016. This will be the first such visit by the Australian bishops in eight years.

The bishops will hold discussions with various Roman dicasteries as well as meet with the Holy Father and discuss with him the Church more broadly.

Last year each diocese had to provide comprehensive reports to Rome in advance of the visit.

The Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP said this would be the first opportunity for many of the Australian bishops to meet Pope Francis.

"It is a unique opportunity for bishops to report on every aspect of their dioceses and to meet with representatives from the different Vatican departments," Archbishop Fisher said. "Insights bishops gain from the visit will then be applied to their work at the diocesan level."

While in Italy, the bishops will also spend time together in prayer and retreat to help them prepare for the Plenary Council 2020. The plenary will be the first such gathering for the Catholic Church in Australia in more than 80 years and is aimed at engaging the wider community in important discussions around the future of the Church.

ENDS

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