



ARCHDIOCESE
OF BRISBANE

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For immediate release

Archdiocese of Brisbane launches first online parish

The Archdiocese of Brisbane has launched an online parish to engage the thousands of Catholics who practise their faith through a digital format.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge said the innovation was sparked by the continued interest in online Masses even though Covid restrictions have eased to enable churches to welcome back parishioners.

The online parish will be led by Fr Peter Brannelly, who will be a regular on the Archdiocese's social media platforms engaging viewers across southeast Queensland and beyond.

The online parish begins this Sunday when the new liturgical year starts with the Advent season leading into Christmas celebrations.

Many Catholic dioceses and parishes provide a livestream of Masses but the Archdiocese wanted to go a step further and create an online parish that can be a central meeting point in the same way a physical parish brings together its community. The Archdiocese is not aware of any other formal online parish community in other parts of the world.

"We've always thought of a Catholic parish as something that has a geographic base around a church and perhaps a school but the last two years have made us think about life differently," Archbishop Coleridge said.

"Covid-19 has changed many elements of our lives and we know that some of our parishioners began to watch Masses by livestream early last year and that's continued.

"They are still watching and may not be able to make it to a physical parish so we decided that we would come to them by forming a dedicated online parish community with a priest who will engage with them regularly."

Online traffic to the Archdiocese's digital platforms has surged since the pandemic began. Since the start of 2020, there have been more than 760,000 views of videos on the Archdiocese YouTube channel.

Archbishop Coleridge appointed Fr Brannelly as the first online parish priest of Brisbane, providing members of the online parish community with a familiar face they can engage with every week.

"This way, our online parish community members will see a regular face and be able to engage with that priest in something like the way they would if they were attending a physical parish," Archbishop Coleridge said.

Each week, Fr Brannelly will be seen on the Archdiocese's social media platforms introducing the livestream of a Sunday Mass for parishioners. At other times, he will invite prayer intentions, describe the lives of saints on their feast days and feature in other engagement opportunities with parishioners.

Fr Brannelly will add the online ministry to his current role as parish priest of Caloundra.

"I was delighted to assist in this role because we know how online interaction has grown during the pandemic," Fr Brannelly said.

"We have been able to connect with Catholics in ways that we hadn't thought of before Covid came into our lives. The online parish community enables people to feel as though they have a regular connection in their faith as they would if they were coming to a parish.

"We expect we will engage with people who are still going to their physical parish but who may not be able to make it every weekend."

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