

MEDIA RELEASE

13th October 2023

The Diocese of Parramatta holds its first-ever Synod Assembly this weekend.

The Diocese of Parramatta today kicked off its 2023 Diocesan Synod, a three-day gathering of over 280 delegates from across Western Sydney, the Blue Mountains and beyond to listen, discuss and pray about the future of the local catholic church under the theme "Behold I am doing a new thing" (Isaiah 43:19).

Since the Synod was convoked by Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta in April 2023, over 5,000 people have been involved in listening and discerning sessions and over 1,000 submissions from individuals and groups were received. This was the largest listening and consultation exercise ever undertaken by the Diocese of Parramatta, and included reaching out to youth groups, multicultural groups, the marginalised, those who no longer attend church and many others.

The Diocesan Synod is an invitation to all to journey or walk together and to reflect the true nature of the Church as People of God. It is a time for the diocese to listen to the Spirit and discern the way forward, reflecting on its past, looking to the future, and making plans for growth and development.

Members will discuss the six themes raised from the listening consultations and vote on a range of resolutions under each theme. The outcomes of the Diocesan Synod will lead to a new Pastoral Plan for the Diocese. Several observers from other catholic dioceses, faith communities and groups will attend to verify the proceedings, as well as several 'periti' - theological experts.

In his opening address, Bishop Vincent Long spoke of the importance of the synod for the future of the diocese and for the wider Church.

"We are conscious that this synod is not just about those who are here."

About the Diocese of Parramatta

The Diocese of Parramatta is the Catholic Church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains and is home to over 320,000 Catholics with 47 parishes and churches. The Diocese educates more than 43,000 students across its 80 schools, employs more than 5,500 people and cares for thousands of people in need through its social services arm, Catholic Care.

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv was appointed the fourth Bishop of Parramatta in 2016. He is Australia's first Asian-born Bishop, and the first Vietnamese-born Bishop to lead a Catholic Diocese outside of Vietnam. You can read more about [him here](#).



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“We are joined in the communion of prayers, love, and solidarity by the whole church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, as we are the first Diocese [in Australia] to hold a diocesan synod, many are looking to Parramatta to see how we leverage the energy and output of both the national and the universal synodal processes.”

Bishop Long also spoke of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the synod process.

“We are richer and better not only because we are all like-minded, but more often than not, because we are prepared to learn and enrich ourselves with the contributions from those are different to us.”

Bishop Long concluded his remarks by speaking about the significance of the synod taking place at the same time as the Universal Synod on Synodality in Rome.

“By divine providence, our diocesan synod coincides with the one in Rome.”

“It gives us an extra wind on our sails as we move forward. It also emboldens us to take courageous steps in going to the margins and be the effective vehicle of the Gospel for the poor, the forgotten, the least and the last.

“I ask you all to pray for the success of the synod and for all of us to respond generously to the call to be the better Church moving forward.”

The Synod Assembly commences on Friday 13 October with a public Mass in St Patrick’s Cathedral at 7pm, and will be held in CommBank stadium all weekend, concluding with the Closing Mass on Sunday 15 October.

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