

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Parramatta Street Feast to welcome those struggling on the streets**

Over 200 people are expected to attend the fourth annual Parramatta Street Feast tomorrow, Wednesday 13 November at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta – a call to share a meal with those battling life on the lonely fringe of society.

The event is a response to Pope Francis' World Day of the Poor and the call to build a more inclusive, welcoming and generous society.

Hosted by the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta, PAYCE Foundation, Paynter Dixon and St Merkorious Charity, the event will draw people of all ages and walks of life for a shared meal served by dozens of dedicated volunteers, as well as friendly company and plenty of entertainment.

New partners, more stalls and engaging activities are set to provide opportunities for friendship and community spirit amidst a backdrop of a vibrant live music led by the Sydney Street Choir.

Catholic Bishop of Parramatta, Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, said there is no better way than sharing a meal with the disadvantaged and those on the margins to build a stronger, more inclusive community.

“A mark of a civil society is that of inclusion, that of care and outreach to those who are on the margins. And this is also the constant theme of Pope Francis's pontificate – wherever he goes, that message of love, of care, of common humanity shines through his message, his gestures and his actions,” said Bishop Vincent about the annual Street Feast.

“We want to replicate this theme of Pope Francis of care, love, inclusion and celebration of our common humanity here in this Diocese of Parramatta, Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

“This [Street Feast] is an attempt to create a sense of community and belonging, no matter where we are in our life journey, no matter what situation we find ourselves – it's the bond of our common humanity that binds us all together,” he said.

PAYCE Foundation Director Dominic Sullivan said too many people are struggling to survive on the streets, particularly with rents skyrocketing and the ever-increasing cost of living leading to increased food insecurity.

“The Street Feast is a simple act of humanity to let people know they are not alone. Sadly, more people are facing the prospect of living on the streets,” he said.

“The PAYCE Foundation is dedicated to helping people on the margins live a life of dignity and fulfilment and that's why we are a founding supporter of this event.

“It is amazing what the act of sharing a meal can do, in reminding us of the need for community and social connections,” he said.

This year's event was made possible by the generous support of its supporters including Catholic Care Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society, Thread Together, Fire and Rescue NSW, and students from local Catholic high schools including Parramatta Marist, Catherine McAuley and Cerdon College.

These organisations collectively showed how simple acts of kindness and generosity can build a stronger community in Western Sydney.

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