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PARRAMATTA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Vatican endorsement for Parramatta's new Religious Education Curriculum

A letter from the Dicastery for Evangelisation to Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta has commended the long-awaited new Religious Education curriculum for primary and secondary schools in the Diocese, titled *Encountering Jesus*.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelisation wrote to Bishop Vincent earlier this year commending the efforts of all involved in creating this valuable faith tool.

"I am pleased to commend the efforts of the diocesan bodies in providing teachers with a valuable tool for their service in schools. I especially would like to note how the new volume, which is inspired by the Directory for Catechists, presents an integral understanding of the experience of faith," he said.

"By appropriately organising the formative content around the triptych "Head, heart, hands," students are offered the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith in its various dimensions, thereby facilitating their personal believing response.

"Furthermore, the continuous referral to families and parish communities ensures continuity to the educational action that takes place in schools," he said.

Encountering Jesus was released by Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese (CSPD) and Bishop Vincent in August 2024. Archbishop Fisichella's letter was received in January 2025, and the rollout to all CSPD schools commenced in Term 1 2025. Schools have the opportunity to phase the rollout through 2025, and all schools will be using the new curriculum in all year groups from K-10 from the start of 2026.

The news was warmly received by Bishop Vincent.

"To receive this commendation and endorsement from one of the highest authorities in the Vatican is very encouraging, especially as it was received during this Jubilee Year of Hope," he said.

"The development of the new RE Curriculum has been a challenging journey. But from the outset, I always had faith and confidence in the integrity and competency of those responded to the call of 'going out into the deep'. I am proud of the many people involved in this process who have remained steadfast in producing a contemporary, theologically and pedagogically engaging document for our young people today, while constantly listening and taking on board feedback and refining the document. This truly is the Parramatta Way," he said.

"My hope is that the hundreds of thousands of young people in the Diocese of Parramatta will find ways to encounter Jesus, whether that be through our schools, Special Religious Education, daycares, parishes or youth groups. In a time of increasing spiritual alienation, they may find themselves adrift without a trusted guide and companion. With this new RE Curriculum, we hope to accompany them and help them encounter Christ and discover the riches of His Gospel.

"I pray that *Encountering Jesus* awakens in all young people the desire to make meaning for themselves. May they grow in their sense of human dignity and worth, their appreciation of life, their capacity to question, their ability to give and receive love, and their knowledge of how to live wisely," he said.



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The curriculum was developed by Religious Education leaders in the Diocese of Parramatta and endorsed by leading Catholic theologians, Catholic Scripture scholars, and experts in Catholic religious education.

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese CEO Jack De Groot said *Encountering Jesus* invites all students to consider how the teachings of Jesus Christ can apply to their lives.

“This high-quality, theologically sound Catholic Religious Education Curriculum has been endorsed by a range of expert theologians, scripture scholars and Catholic religious education experts,” he said.

“We continue to work closely with theologians and scripture scholars from the Catholic Institute of Sydney and the University of Notre Dame Australia to provide professional learning and formation resources of the highest quality for our teachers.

“My prayer for CSPD is that our new Religious Education Curriculum lives up to its name and enable all of our students to encounter Jesus Christ and, through this encounter, find inspiration, meaning, purpose and peace,” he said.

To read the full letter from Archbishop Fisichella, [please go here](#).

For a copy of *Encountering Jesus*, please visit the [Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese](#) website.

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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](#).