



MEDIA RELEASE

Bishop McKenna's 2025 Pastoral Letter: We are the times

A Call to Participate in Communion for Mission

The Catholic Diocese of Bathurst has today received a new pastoral letter from Bishop Michael McKenna, titled *We are the times: Participating in Communion for Mission*, inviting all of God's people to deeper engagement in the life and mission of the Church.

Drawing inspiration from St Augustine, Bishop McKenna reflects on the challenges and opportunities of our age. Though many describe these times as uncertain, Christians are called to live faithfully — shining as “stars in the world”, echoing St Paul's words to the Philippians (2:14–15).

The pastoral letter traces the journey of renewal within the Diocese, beginning with Christ's words to St Francis of Assisi — “rebuild my house” — which inspired the first Diocesan Assembly more than a decade ago. From there, parish voices began shaping direction through a Pastoral Council and six working groups, which facilitated assemblies from 2015 to 2019. These gatherings focused on participation, communion and mission, particularly among young people, families, Indigenous Catholics, and parish communities.

Despite the pandemic and the demands of the national Plenary Council, signs of growth have continued — especially in evangelisation and formation. Bishop McKenna acknowledges these as seeds of hope and foundations for what comes next.

The pastoral letter outlines the next step: every parish will hold its own assembly in 2026, with 2025 dedicated to preparation, listening, formation and prayer. As part of this pathway, formation will be offered during the weeks of Lent in 2026 for parish assembly teams, equipping them to lead the process well and to foster deeper participation within their parish communities.

To begin this journey, each parish is asked to host a penitential service during Advent 2025, opening hearts to grace and setting a tone of humility and openness to the Holy Spirit. The outcomes of the parish assemblies will help shape the diocesan direction moving toward 2027 and beyond.

The six themes used previously are again offered as guideposts:

- Hearing and Proclaiming the Word of God
- Worshipping God in Prayer and Sacrament
- Building Communities of Love and Service
- Participation of Indigenous Catholics
- Participation of Young People
- Participation of Families

For access to the full pastoral letter, please visit the Diocese of Bathurst website or contact the Office for Mission and Renewal.

<https://bathurst.catholic.org.au/bishop-mckennas-pastoral-letter-2025/>

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