



DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA

MEDIA RELEASE

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***The Witness*: Blacktown Catholics set to bring a local twist to global Christian musical**

Mary Queen of the Family Parish in Blacktown will bring the story of Jesus to life in mid-2026 with a local production of the internationally acclaimed contemporary Christian musical, *The Witness*.

Told through the eyes of Peter – faithful follower of Jesus, builder of the Catholic Church, and first Pope – the musical combines powerful music, striking visuals, and dynamic storytelling to explore timeless themes of redemption, friendship and transformation.

Audiences will follow Peter's journey through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, experiencing his doubt, denial, and eventual devotion. The story reaches far beyond religion, capturing the heartbeat of humanity, the struggles of shame and guilt, and the freedom found in forgiveness.

Blacktown is one of the largest and most vibrant Catholic communities in the Diocese, with over 10,000 local Catholics from countries including Australia, the Philippines, Malta, India, Lebanon, Croatia, and the former Yugoslavia, and nearly half speaking languages other than English.

Parish Priest Fr Wim Hoekstra said the parish is ideally placed to bring this story to life.

"Blacktown is such a vibrant and diverse community, with people from many different backgrounds and cultures. We hope this production reflects that energy and brings everyone together to celebrate this story," Fr Wim said.

"Our parish shares the story and message of Jesus in a non-traditional way – not through preaching or teaching, but through words and song."

"*The Witness* not only tells the story of Jesus' life, but does so through the eyes of Peter, taking audiences through the highs and lows of this remarkable moment in history."

Minette Mendens, production lead and parishioner, said the musical is more than just a performance but a way for the whole community to celebrate both faith and culture.

"It's the first time we've performed the musical since Bombay in 1983. We heard life-changing stories from that season, and it's been wonderful to see people from all backgrounds come together again – this time in Sydney's western suburbs – to bring this story to life.

Originally performed internationally to critical acclaim, *The Witness* explores universal themes that resonate with anyone interested in theatre, music, or the human story – not just those of the Christian faith – and is suitable for all ages.

The parish's former Assistant Priest Fr Andrew Rooney supported the initiative, keen to set a precedent for local parishes and beyond by using innovative ways to engage and inspire as part of the Church's mission.

“We want to show that the Church can connect with people in creative, meaningful ways. *The Witness* is a perfect example of how music, theatre, and storytelling can bring the Gospel to life for everyone,” Fr Rooney said.

About the Musical

Written by Christian couple Carol and Jimmy Owens, creators of twelve internationally performed stage productions, *The Witness* tells the story of Jesus through Peter’s eyes, bringing audiences on an emotional journey with 20 powerful songs. Staged across Europe, North America, and Asia, it has been praised by both faith-based and general audiences for its modern music, compelling storytelling, and striking visuals.

Audiences and critics have highlighted the musical’s emotional depth and universal themes, making it a captivating, accessible for all ages, and an inspiring experience for anyone drawn to theatre, music, history, or human stories.

The parish will hold a Commissioning Mass and Welcome gathering at St Patrick’s Catholic Church, Blacktown on Saturday 29 September, 9am-midday; marking the start of preparations. Expressions of interest are open for a variety of volunteer roles, including singers, dancers, choreographers, and production crew.

For more information visit bethewitness.com.au

To get involved, email: info@bethewitness.com.au

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For media enquiries, photo opportunities or interviews, contact:

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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 45 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](#).