



DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA

MEDIA RELEASE

12 February 2026

Sod Turn at Sacred Heart Parish Westmead marks start of new church after 75 years of service to community

Construction has officially begun on Sacred Heart Parish Westmead's long-awaited new Catholic church at Darcy Road, launching an exciting new chapter for the local community. At the heart of the vibrant Westmead Catholic Community precinct – which includes four schools – the church will bring together liturgy, worship, education and families, while celebrating 75 years of faith, service and connection to the community.

Parishioners, school leaders and community representatives gathered yesterday as Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, led a prayer and blessing alongside Parish Priest Fr Walter Fogarty; followed by a sod turn officially commencing construction of the new Sacred Heart Church.

Bishop Vincent said the celebration recognised the parish's proud history, its 75-year jubilee of service to a diverse and growing community, and the promise of its future.

"This isn't just about the physical building - it's about a way of being Church ... a Church that is more participative, more mission-driven, and more in sync with the suffering world around us."

"Here we have not just a worshipping centre, but also the biggest and the most innovative Catholic learning ecosystem anywhere in Western Sydney."

"This is the Church that we want to be – sharing with the world around us."

The new parish development will include a 400-seat church and expanded parish facilities, providing a welcoming place for worship, gatherings and pastoral care for the growing Westmead community.

Parish Priest Fr Walter Fogarty said many of those attending the ceremony had deep ties to the parish across multiple generations.

"Today, Sacred Heart's diverse community celebrated – parishioners who lived in Westmead before there was a parish gathered with those yet to take their first steps, with multiple generations marking this important moment in our history."

While local Catholic worship in Westmead dates back to 1928, Sacred Heart Parish first celebrated Masses at Westmead Boys' Home before opening its original church on 1 February 1954. Over the decades, the parish has helped establish Catholic education in the area and maintained a long pastoral connection with the Westmead hospital precinct.



DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA

MEDIA RELEASE

The new church project is one component of the wider Westmead Catholic Community development – a major co-located faith and education precinct announced in 2019 and approved by the Independent Planning Commission in 2023.

The broader project includes redevelopment and upgrades across the Westmead Catholic Community Education Campus, including a new six-storey building that will include the new Sacred Heart Primary Westmead and new student learning spaces for Catherine McAuley, expansion of student capacity, a new Ambrose Early Learning Centre and out-of-school-hours care, and improved access and landscaping across the site. Together, the works will support an increased number of students, a significant expansion of local Catholic education and community facilities.

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese leaders, Diocesan representatives, project partners and parishioners attended the ceremony; highlighting the shared vision for an integrated precinct where faith, learning and community life are closely connected.

Catholic Schools Parramatta Diocese CEO Jack de Groot said:

“This project brings faith, learning and community together in a meaningful way. Sacred Heart Parish and our local schools have supported generations of families in Westmead, and the new church strengthens that partnership.

“We’re excited about what this next chapter will mean for our community and thankful for the leadership from Parish Priest Fr Walter Fogarty and our school principals.”

The overall project represents an investment of around \$80 million and is expected to generate around 1000 local construction jobs and over 100 ongoing operational roles, delivering both community and economic benefits to the Westmead area.

City of Parramatta Lord Mayor Martin Zaiter, who attended the event, said the Catholic community makes a vital contribution to life in Westmead and the broader Parramatta LGA, calling it the “bedrock” of Parramatta.

“On behalf of the City of Parramatta, thank you for sharing your vision and for everything you have undertaken to make Parramatta the best place to learn, worship, work and play.”

The church construction is expected to be completed later this year.

For more information, visit the Sacred Heart parish website:

<https://www.sacredheartwestmead.com.au>

****Download photos [here](#).****



DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA

MEDIA RELEASE

For media enquiries, please contact: Belinda Gadd, Communications Manager, Diocese of Parramatta. M: 0456 290 969 | E: belinda.gadd@parracatholic.org

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](#).