



DIOCESE of  
PARRAMATTA

# MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 25 March 2024

## **Hundreds of thousands of Western Sydney Catholics to attend Easter services this week.**

### **Bishop Vincent's Easter Message: "Easter gives us the meaning, strength and power to transform the world in which we live."**

Hundreds of thousands of Catholics across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains are expected to attend the many special Easter services this week, called Holy Week, which culminates in Easter Sunday.

Holy Week commenced with Palm Sunday held yesterday celebrating Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Tonight, Monday 25 March at St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta the next service will be the "Tenebrae" – an ancient liturgy meaning "darkness" or "shadows" with scripture, psalm chanting and music. During the liturgy, the Church progresses into darkness, only to be startled by a loud noise symbolising the earthquake at the death of Jesus.

There will be over 60 Masses and services across the Diocese for each of the events:

- Holy Thursday evening which commemorates the Last Supper and reenactment of Jesus washing the feet of disciples
- Good Friday services at 3pm that include the Passion of the Cross
- Easter Vigil on Saturday evening where adults will be baptised into the faith
- Easter Sunday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Easter is the pivotal time of the Catholic calendar, where Catholics and Christians focus on the sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and his Resurrection. As Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta says, "Easter is not merely about our own salvation and the afterlife bliss. Easter is God conquering the forces of evil and darkness. Easter is God reconciling the estranged creation."

"It means that we become a place where the poor and the forgotten can be brought into a new unity; a Church that advocates life at all costs and promotes peaceful life in a war-torn and violent world; a Church that models justice in an age of greed, consumerism and power; a Church centred on the risen Christ, empowering a consciousness of the whole," he said in his Easter message.

To see all the Holy Week Mass Times across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, please visit: [parracatholic.org/find-a-mass](http://parracatholic.org/find-a-mass)

Bishop Vincent's 2024 Easter Message can be found here:

- [Easter Message](#)
- [Easter Message, no overlay](#)
- [Audio Easter Message](#)
- Text version provided below.

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#### **Media inquiries:**

Anita Sulentic, Head of Communications and Engagement at the Diocese of Parramatta.

**M:** 0499 948 533 **E:** [anita.sulentic@parracatholic.org](mailto:anita.sulentic@parracatholic.org)



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## **Bishop Vincent's Easter Message 2024**

Dear sisters and brothers,

Once again, we are entering the most sacred, grace-filled and transformative time in the Church's liturgy. The long and sombre Holy Week ceremonies that culminates in the celebration of Easter is a powerful re-enactment of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. Everything we believe and hold dear is grounded in this paschal mystery.

Easter gives us the meaning, strength and power to transform the world in which we live. Easter provides us with the horizons of hope within which we strive for the full realisation of the reign of God.

At the heart of the Easter message is the summons to a new future against the background of entrenched hopelessness. As with Mary and the disciples, who were emboldened to move from the shadows of crucifixion into the light of the resurrection, the Church today must be a pioneer leading humanity to new dawn of greater justice, equality and fraternity.

We cannot be an inward-looking institution but a missionary and prophetic community of disciples. The God who raised Jesus from the dead leads us beyond our limited horizons to a new future of life to the full. This life to the full is not static or a closed system but ever expanding and evolving.

In fact, the essence of Christian hope is contained in the abundant life that Jesus brought about through his death and resurrection. The whole point of the Risen Christ is our human capacity to become a new type of person who can do new things for a new heaven and a new earth.

Hence, we must release ourselves from religious individualism and confront the general religious experience, which is cosmic and evolutionary, and involve ourselves in the divine mandate of the flourishing of the whole of life. Without bringing these understandings into a new religious story that animates our lives and focuses our energies in a new direction, we will have diminished our mission.

Easter is not merely about our own salvation and the afterlife bliss. Easter is God conquering the forces of evil and darkness. Easter is God reconciling the estranged creation. We are called to partner with God in bringing the victory of the cosmic Christ to fulfillment. Easter therefore obliges us to work for both personal and cosmic transformation.

"Cosmic transformation" means working for the community of life of which we are a part. It means working for the whole of creation that God created, sustains and destines for flourishing.

It means that we become a place where the poor and the forgotten can be brought into a new unity; a Church that advocates life at all costs and promotes peaceful life in a war-torn and violent world; a Church that models justice in an age of greed, consumerism and power; a Church centred on the risen Christ, empowering a consciousness of the whole.

In the words of Pope Francis, let's pray in Easter 2024 that the risen Jesus of Nazareth:

*"May open us to the newness that transforms, to the beautiful surprises of God. May he help us to feel his presence as the one who is alive and at work in our midst. And may he teach us each day, dear brothers and sisters, not to look among the dead for the Living One."*

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

**Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv  
Bishop of Parramatta**



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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. 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](#).