



DIOCESE of  
PARRAMATTA

# MEDIA RELEASE

25 March 2026

## **Record-breaking number of adults to join the Catholic Church this Easter. Bishop Vincent's Easter Message: banish all violence and take the more difficult path – become peacemakers**

Hundreds of thousands of Catholics across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains will gather across 45 parishes for Holy Week services starting this Sunday, Palm Sunday, marking the beginning of the most significant week in the Christian calendar. A record number of adults – 203 – will be baptised and welcomed into the Catholic faith at Easter Vigil Masses across the Diocese on Easter Saturday.

Easter is a time when Catholics reflect on the sacrifice, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Holy Week commences with Palm Sunday Masses and palm processions to commemorate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem; to sorrowful reenactments of the torture, passion and crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday, and culminates on Easter Sunday as Catholics celebrate Christ's resurrection.

In his Easter address, Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, the Catholic Bishop of Parramatta calls us to banish all violence in our lives and allow the Risen Lord to roll away the rocks of pride, ego and selfishness from our hearts.

As he states "In this Easter season of 2026, we are all living in very troubled, wounded times. With so much conflict, violence and entrenched hatred, we might even be tempted to occasionally lament: *Where is our God?*"

Bishop Vincent implores us to remember the wounds of Christ, ourselves and others.

"One of the most striking elements of our Gospel's Resurrection stories is that Jesus is still wounded in all of them. The crucifixion wounds do not disappear. The resurrected body of Christ remains marked by his earthly suffering, forever. Our Catholic faith, however, refuses to gloss over our own personal wounds - the wounds of our brothers and sisters, and those of our suffering planet, with hollow positive thinking. Instead, our Holy Father Pope Leo urges us to move beyond passivity. Leo challenges us to become peacemakers," says Bishop Vincent.

Several significant events will take place in the 45 Parishes across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains from this Sunday including:

- **Sunday 29 March:** Palm Sunday Masses across the Diocese. Find a local [Mass here](#)
- **Monday 30 March:** [Office of Tenebrae](#) (a service of light and darkness) at 7.30pm at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta.
- **Wednesday 1 April:** [Chrism Mass](#) (blessing of holy oils, priests renew their vows and promises) at 7.30pm at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta.
- **Thursday 2 April:** [Holy Thursday/Last Supper](#) (includes the Washing of the Feet) across all Parishes
- **Friday 3 April:** [Good Friday](#) Stations of the Cross in the morning, and The Passion at 3pm
- **Saturday 4 April:** [Holy Saturday Easter Vigil Mass](#) (an unprecedented number of adults will be baptised into faith in various parishes in the Diocese)
- **Sunday 5 April:** [Easter Sunday Masses](#).

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 2026 Easter Message can be found here:

- [Full video](#)
- [Audio ONLY](#)
- Video with [no overlay](#)
- Text version provided below.

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## Bishop Vincent's Easter Message 2026

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you! In this Easter season of 2026, we are all living in very troubled, wounded times. With so much conflict, violence and entrenched hatred, we might even be tempted to occasionally lament: *Where is our God?*

In such chaotic times it is good to be reminded of a wonderful story about St Teresa of Avila. One day the devil appeared to her, disguised as Jesus. St Teresa wasn't fooled for even a second, dismissing the devil. Before leaving, the devil asked her, "How could you be so sure I wasn't Jesus?" Teresa replied: "You didn't have any wounds – Christ has wounds!"

One of the most striking elements of our Gospel's Resurrection stories is that Jesus is still wounded in all of them. The crucifixion wounds do not disappear. The resurrected body of Christ remains marked by his earthly suffering, forever. It is not until the disciples see the wounds of Christ that they recognise Jesus for who he is.

Our Catholic faith, however, refuses to gloss over our own personal wounds - the wounds of our brothers and sisters, and those of our suffering planet, with hollow positive thinking. Instead, our Holy Father Pope Leo urges us to move beyond passivity. Leo challenges us to become peacemakers!

And we can all become peacemakers in very simple ways. If only we had the eyes of faith we would notice that peacemaking is all around us. To name only a few examples:

- In the quiet, tender care of our nurses and care-givers in our hospitals, especially to the elderly and the dying
- In the patient and professional care of our Catholic teachers who generously serve our young people
- In the quiet heroism of parents as they sacrifice themselves for the good of their children
- In the outreach of our social services like Catholic Care who help the needy
- In the lives of ordinary people who refuse to become resentful and instead choose to forgive and love their enemies.

Yes, the wounds of such peacemakers do not embitter them but become fountains of peace and hope for others.

This Easter let us allow the risen Lord to roll away the rocks of pride, ego and selfishness from our hearts. May we banish all violence from our lives. May the light of the risen Christ that streams from his glorified wounds bring joy, healing and peace to us all.

For "By His wounds we are healed". A blessed Easter to you all.

**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 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](#).