



St Cecilia's Catholic Church
37 Hillside Parade
GLEN IRIS VIC 3146



St. Michael's Catholic Parish
268 High Street,
Ashburton VIC 3147

PARTNERING PARISHES – NEXT STEPS

Friday 9th October 2026

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St Cecilia's and St Michael's,

Fr Kevin McGovern's term as the Parish Priest of St Cecilia's concludes on Wednesday, 25th November. After that, the Vicar General has advised that one priest will be caring for both parishes.

We now have to decide together on a new schedule of weekend Masses in both parishes beginning Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th November – the first Sunday of Advent this year.

Change in our lives is seldom easy, and we are very aware that changing our Mass schedules will present challenges. **For many of you, your regular Sunday Mass time is at the heart of your experience of community and sense of belonging.** Communities are formed over many years and extend to friendships, pastoral care and fellowship with one another in Christ. Changing the Mass time or the Church where a Mass is offered disrupts these long-held rhythms and relationships.

At present St Michael's has a 6 pm Vigil Mass on Saturdays, and St Cecilia's has a 5:30 pm evening Mass on Sundays. **With these evening Masses, no change is needed.**

On Sunday mornings, St Michael's currently has Masses at 9 am and 10:30 am, while St Cecilia's currently has a Mass at 10 am. **This is where change will be necessary.**

The Partnership Team – which includes both Fr Kevin and Fr Darien – has discussed at length what to do. We have concluded that **we can only have a total of two Masses in both parishes on Sunday mornings.** To allow the priest time to meet and speak with people between Masses and travel between churches, we have also concluded that there needs to be two hours between these two Masses.

We can see two options:

- **OPTION ONE: 9 am Mass at St Cecilia's, and 11 am Mass at St Michael's**
- **OPTION TWO: 8:30 am Mass at St Cecilia's, and 10:30 am Mass at St Michael's**

Both these options will present many of us with the challenge of change. And even though such change may make sense, it takes time to let go of the past, adapt to a new reality and see the opportunity offered to better live out the mission of the Church in our own lives and neighbourhoods.

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Both options mean that the current 9 am Mass at St Michael's will be discontinued. Those who currently attend this Mass will have to decide whether their priority is Mass at this time, or Mass at St Michael's. If your priority is Mass at this time, you might begin to come to the early morning Mass at St Cecilia's. On the other hand, if your priority is Mass at St Michael's, you might begin to come to the 6 pm Saturday Vigil Mass or the Sunday Mass later in the morning.

Both options also mean that the Sunday morning Mass at St Cecilia's would move either to 8:30 am or 9 am. If that time is too early for you, you might begin to come to the Mass at St Michael's later in the morning, or the Mass at 5:30 pm at St Cecilia's. One of these options leaves the time of the 10:30 am Sunday Mass at St Michael's unchanged. The other option moves it to 11 am.

Neither of these options is perfect. Even so, we do have to decide together on one of them.

We appreciate that you will need some time to reflect and think about these options. Please consider not only what might be best for you, but also what might be best for both of our parishes. **You may have further ideas that have not occurred to us, and we do wish to hear from you.** Members of the partnership team will be available after Masses this weekend and next weekend to listen to your comments, views and suggestions.

We also invite your written feedback to: ashburton@cam.org.au

By the end of October, we aim to have a sense of which option has the most support across both our parishes, in order to plan for the seasons of Advent and Christmas. We will review our Mass Schedule again in the new year.

Please pray for one another and for our parishes as we discern this important decision.

Fr Kevin, Fr Darien and the Parish Partnership Team

**“In a divided and troubled world, the Holy Spirit teaches us
to walk together in unity.”**

– Pope Leo XIV, Vigil of Pentecost, 2025