

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC

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digest

‘Come, let us witness
publicly to the hope that
brings healing and life.’

—Archbishop Peter A Comensoli, Corpus Christi procession 2026



Archbishop Peter A Comensoli holding up the monstrance during Melbourne's 2026 Corpus Christi Procession. (Photo by Michael Wong for Melbourne Catholic.)

Joy fills the hearts of thousands at Corpus Christi procession

More than 5,000 Catholics have gathered in Melbourne for the Corpus Christi procession, the annual public witness to faith that marks the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Worshippers thronged the city streets in prayer, song and adoration, as the Eucharist was carried from St Patrick's Cathedral to Federation Square as a sign of Christ's presence among his people.

Inside St Patrick's Cathedral, the celebration began with exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The liturgy featured hymns including St Thomas Aquinas' *'O Salutaris Hostia'* and *'Pange Lingua Gloriosi'*. The great Catholic thinker and poet was commissioned by Pope Urban IV in the 13th century to write the liturgy for the feast day, and St Thomas Aquinas is credited with providing the language of devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

Come, let us witness publicly to the hope that brings healing and life.

ARCHBISHOP PETER A COMENSOLI

In his homily, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli reflected on the Eucharist as the heart of Christian belief and the source of mission.

'At this moment, we pause before the great mystery at the centre of our faith, the gift of the Blessed Eucharist,' he said. 'Here, the Body and Blood of Christ, his flesh, is given to us for the life of the world'.

He said the procession was a way to carry Christ into places marked by struggle and need. 'We carry the Blessed Eucharist through the streets, because Christ desires to enter every heart and every place, especially those marked by anxiety, suffering and the wounds that we carry,' he said. He also urged the faithful to see the procession as a public act of hope: 'Come, let us witness publicly to the hope that brings healing and life.'

That public witness to faith in the city began as a bagpiper led the crowd down MacArthur Street to the tune of 'Amazing Grace'. This year's procession travelled down Collins Street and into Swanston Street, passing several iconic landmarks including the Melbourne Town Hall and Flinders Street Station before entering Federation Square.

The eucharistic procession was headed by the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre and the Knights and Dames of the Order of Malta, while the monstrance carrying the Blessed Sacrament was lifted by Archbishop Comensoli, Auxiliary Bishops Martin Ashe and Thinh Nguyen, Mgr Stuart Hall and Fr Joshua McDermid.

The procession made several stops for prayer and singing, as is customary. The sight of thousands of people processing along the tram tracks turned heads all the way down Collins Street. Pedestrians who showed an interest were offered cards carrying the message,

'You are not alone. God walks with you', alongside a QR code inviting further engagement with the faith—in keeping with the public and invitational expression of Catholic belief that coloured the procession.

We didn't have such a thing to go freely on the streets of Iraq to practise our religion.

STAVRO, A PARISHIONER FROM OUR LADY GUARDIAN OF PLANTS CHALDEAN CATHOLIC PARISH

The freedom to worship in public was a theme remarked upon throughout the day. For Melad, Stavro and Lio, young men from Iraq, this was particularly important. The three are parishioners at Our Lady Guardian of Plants Chaldean Catholic Parish in Campbellfield, and said they were glad to be able to practise their faith openly in Australia after leaving a country where that was not possible. 'We're really happy to be here at the Corpus Christi procession because [in Iraq] we didn't have such a thing to go freely on the streets of Iraq to practise our religion,' said Stavro, speaking on behalf of the group.

Rose, from St Peter Chanel Parish in Deer Park and originally from Uganda, said the procession gave her joy and strengthened her sense of Christian community. 'I just feel there's nothing more than God. And when they see people like this doing things like this, living their work, at least they have hope. There's something greater [than ourselves],' she said.

Mark, a parishioner at St Dominic's Parish in Camberwell, was attending his first Corpus Christi procession, accompanied by his well-trained black German shepherd Brooklyn. He said the procession was an important sign of Christian life in Melbourne. 'I think it'll be a good witness to Christ. It's good to see that Christianity is well and alive in Melbourne,' he said.

'Every opportunity we get to witness our faith, we should take it.'

How lucky we are to be able to publicly celebrate our faith, said Fr Nathan Rawlins, assistant priest of St Patrick's Cathedral, in a video message shown on a large screen as the procession arrived at Federation Square. The message was as much addressed to curious onlookers as to the faithful. Fr Rawlins explained that while large crowds often signified a protest, today's event was one of joy in faith.

'We've gathered here for this celebration, and it's here that we will join together in prayer, in song and in silence,' he said. 'This celebration is so important, not just because of what we will see, but who we will sing together with—each other.'

The formal proceedings ended with the entrance and enthronement of the Blessed Sacrament, prayers and Benediction. As the Blessed Sacrament was reposed and returned to the Cathedral, the crowd joined the choir in singing 'How Great Thou Art' as they soaked up the joy of the celebration of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. ✠



“It’s good to see that Christianity is well and alive in Melbourne.”

MARK, A PARISHIONER FROM ST DOMINIC’S PARISH IN CAMBERWELL



All photos by Melbourne Catholic.





Pope Leo's first encyclical, *Magnifica humanitas*, focuses on the rise of artificial intelligence. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)

‘Putting people first’: Australian Catholics respond to *Magnifica humanitas*

Pope Leo XIV’s first encyclical, released on 25 May and titled *Magnifica humanitas* (‘Magnificent Humanity’), has been welcomed by Australian Catholic leaders and scholars.

Addressed to all humanity, the document reflects on what it means to protect and preserve human dignity in the age of artificial intelligence.

‘The magnificent humanity created by God stands today before a decisive choice: to erect a new Tower of Babel or to build the holy city, where God and humanity dwell together,’ the encyclical begins. It sets out the contrast between a world founded on power and self-sufficiency and a path of shared responsibility and communion. ‘Every human person is planned and willed by God to enter into communion with him, with others and with creation,’ the document reads.

Every generation, it argues, is entrusted with the task of shaping its own time, yet every age faces the risk of building an inhuman and more unjust world. ‘When human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanisation, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human. We must lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us, the splendour of which no machine can ever replace,’ the Pope writes.

In response to the encyclical’s publication, Archbishop of Melbourne Peter Comensoli, who chairs the Australian Bishops Commission for Life, Family and Public Engagement, says artificial intelligence is driving a new industrial

‘Putting people first ought to be our response to the project of artificial intelligence

ARCHBISHOP PETER A COMENSOLI

revolution and it is important to address how this will challenge human dignity, work, family and the environment.

‘The Pope’s message will be important for helping all people to grapple with this complex and life-changing area,’ Archbishop Comensoli says. ‘Putting people first ought to be our response to the project of artificial intelligence.

‘A good first step in doing this will be to read *Magnifica humanitas* and consider its practical application across our parishes, schools,



Pope Leo XIV signs the encyclical. (Photo by OSV News/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media)

hospitals, welfare agencies, workplaces and the general community.’

Archbishop Comensoli notes that ‘Pope Leo neither rejects technology nor fears progress. Instead, he invites us to ask a deeper question: what kind of humanity are we becoming? *Magnifica humanitas* is ultimately a call to ensure that innovation strengthens, rather than weakens, our relationships with one another and with God.’

When many people feel anxious about the pace of technological change, the Pope offers ‘a vision centred on the common good,’ Archbishop Comensoli says. ‘He challenges us to build a society in the digital age where human creativity, work, compassion and solidarity are valued, encouraged and protected.’

‘Artificial intelligence is exactly as its name implies—artificial. It may change how we live and work, but it must never cause us to lose sight of what it means to be human.

ARCHBISHOP PETER A COMENSOLI

The Archbishop hopes the document ‘will encourage important conversations across families, schools, workplaces and communities about how we use artificial intelligence responsibly. Pope Leo is calling all of us to place truth and human flourishing at the centre of technological development.’

It is important to remember, he says, that artificial intelligence is ‘exactly as its name implies—artificial. It may change how we live and work, but it must never cause us to lose sight of what it means to be human.

‘The challenge before us is not simply technological but deeply human and spiritual. Pope Leo invites us to shape this era with courage, responsibility and hope.’

Pope Leo rejects an essentialist understanding of Catholic Social Teaching that reduces it to a set of principles.

DR SANDIE CORNISH, A SENIOR LECTURER IN THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT ACU

Dr Sandie Cornish, a senior lecturer in the School of Theology at the Australian Catholic University (ACU) and a specialist in the field of Catholic Social Teaching, believes Pope Leo’s first encyclical provides important insights into how he understands Catholic social thought and its connection with synodality. She says that beyond addressing ethical concerns related to AI, the encyclical ‘adds to teaching on social teaching itself’.

Pope Leo ‘rejects an essentialist understanding of Catholic Social Teaching that reduces it to a set of principles, saying that social doctrine is not “a handbook of principles and norms to be applied, but a process of shared discernment” (\$27), she observes.



Dr Sandie Cornish, a senior lecturer in the School of Theology at ACU. (Photo courtesy of ACU.)

‘This calls us to go beyond listing principles in documents and “applying” them to situations as though Catholic Social Teaching were simply a cognitive exercise,’ she says, pointing out that ‘the teachings have a theological as well as anthropological base, which is spelt out in Chapter 2.’

Seen this way, ‘principles, norms and criteria for judgment, and the whole lived history of the Church’s social justice tradition, are guides for prayerful communal discernment of situations and issues.’

Most significantly, Dr Cornish says, Pope Leo ‘affirms that “social doctrine is not merely a message addressed to society; it is also an examination of conscience for the Church” (§86)’ and must guide the internal life of the Church itself (§§ 86–89).

Subsidiarity must be ‘the guiding principle for governance and pastoral life’.

DR SANDIE CORNISH, A SENIOR LECTURER IN THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT ACU

Dr Cornish is also struck by the way the encyclical connects the Church’s witness to social teaching principles with the process of becoming a more synodal Church. She notes particularly Pope Leo’s declarations that ‘in the Church, the common good “takes the form of a synodal approach for mission at the service of the Kingdom of God” (§86)’ and that subsidiarity—the idea that decisions should always be made at the most local or immediate level—‘must be “the guiding principle for governance and pastoral life” (§87)’.

Here, she says, Pope Leo ‘is taking a very particular stand. Early documents of the Synod on Synodality process engaged the principle of subsidiarity in this way, and continental documents from the Global South called for greater subsidiarity in the Church’, while the synod’s Final Document ‘did not mention subsidiarity, preferring the vaguer term “differentiated co-responsibility”.’

Overall, in *Magnifica humanitas*, she says, living justice in the Church ‘means purifying ecclesial relationships and structures from distortions that give rise to inequality, lack of transparency and abuse of power (§89)’.

Associate Prof Joel Hodge, head of the School of Theology at ACU, also welcomes Pope Leo’s first encyclical, saying it offers, ‘first and foremost, something the world desperately needs: “wisdom regarding the human person and life in society”’.

We create many great *things* but we don’t really know *who* we are and what we are meant for.

ASSOCIATE PROF JOEL HODGE, HEAD OF THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT ACU

In a culture ‘saturated with knowledge and communication’, he says, true wisdom and understanding are often lacking. ‘This is particularly the case at the level of our identities and societies: we create many great *things* but we don’t really know *who* we are and what we are meant for.

‘We need to critically and carefully examine the values and visions of humanity that undergird any technological innovation’

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In *Magnifica humanitas*, Pope Leo ‘reminds us that visions of the human are embedded in all our activities, most especially when we create and innovate’, Dr Hodge says. New technologies like AI reflect ‘the visions, values and biases of those who create them. While such technology offers much for our benefit, Leo argues that it is not neutral. We need to critically and carefully examine the values and visions of humanity that undergird any technological innovation’, unless we want technology to become ‘the domain of the knowledgeable and powerful to advance their own interests’.

Dr Hodge says the encyclical supports the idea that technology can be harnessed for the common good, pointing to Pope Leo’s detailed account of the ways Catholic social thought



Associate Prof Joel Hodge, head of the School of Theology at ACU. (Photo courtesy of ACU.)

can inform the use of AI. ‘Fundamentally, though, [Pope Leo] warns that humanity stands at important crossroads: will it build a new Tower of Babel—seeking power, wealth and control for itself—or a new Jerusalem that cooperatively seeks the common good with respect for human dignity?’

Pope Leo recognises that the idolatrous ‘Tower of Babel’ path ‘ultimately leads to competition, division and destruction based on a false understanding of humanity’, Dr Hodge says. It confuses technical intelligence with ‘the fullness of human intelligence, which encompasses reason, empathy, affectivity and responsibility: “So-called artificial intelligences do not undergo experiences, do not possess a body, do not feel joy or pain, do not mature through relationships and do not know from within what love, work, friendship or responsibility mean,” Pope Leo writes. “Nor do they have a moral conscience, since they do not judge good and evil, grasp the ultimate meaning of situations, or bear responsibility for consequences ... they lack the affective, relational and spiritual perspective through which human beings grow in wisdom” (MH §99).’

We must recover a wisdom of the human as fundamentally relational and responsible. Instead of seeking to surpass the ‘limits’ of our humanity, we can actually discover our true self in vulnerable, generous, loving relationships.

ASSOCIATE PROF JOEL HODGE, HEAD OF THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT ACU

Dr Hodge is also struck by Pope Leo’s call for humanity to ‘disarm’ AI, so that instead of being driven by competition and monopolisation, we create technologies that are accessible to all and respectful of human dignity. ‘For this, we must recover a wisdom of the human as fundamentally relational and responsible,’ Dr Hodge says. ‘Instead of seeking to surpass the “limits” of our humanity, we can actually discover our true self in vulnerable, generous, loving relationships.’

Pope Leo’s call for a renewal of politics—one ‘that is able to take responsibility for AI’s development and proper use’—is fundamental to this vision, Dr Hodge says. ‘A responsible political community can ensure AI is guided by a universal morality informed by the common good, rather than by the interests and biases of an exclusive elite.

‘With the support of the Church, Pope Leo outlines how communities today can safeguard human persons for the adventure of love and grace that is at the heart of living and that ultimately points towards the infinite, unconditional love of God.’



A special Mass was celebrated at St Augustine's Church in the city on 24 May to mark its transition from an independent parish to a church in the Parish of St Patrick's Cathedral.

'United and strengthened together': St Augustine's begins new chapter in the heart of Melbourne

On Sunday 24 May, parishioners gathered at St Augustine's Church in Bourke Street for a Mass opening a new chapter in one of Melbourne's oldest Catholic communities.

The occasion marked St Augustine's official transition from an independent parish to a church in the Parish of St Patrick's Cathedral, another milestone in the much-loved church's long history.

In his homily, parish priest Mgr Stuart Hall reflected on the transition within the spirit of Pentecost, inviting parishioners to see the day not only as a change in structure but as part of the Church's ongoing call to communion and mission.

'Fear gives way to courage; isolation becomes communion; and the Church is born anew,' he said. 'This is more than a structural change. It is a new chapter in the life of God's people.'

He invited parishioners from both St Augustine's and St Patrick's communities to name what they would carry into this next chapter: 'histories of faith, traditions of prayer, acts of service, and deep love for the Church'.

'None of these are lost,' he said. 'Rather, they are united and strengthened together.'

**Fear gives way to courage;
isolation becomes communion;
and the Church is born anew.**

MGR STUART HALL

A church shaped by the city

Fr Nathan Rawlins, an assistant priest at St Patrick's Cathedral and a regular assisting priest at St Augustine's, said the church's role in the city goes back to its earliest days. Founded in 1853, St Augustine's began as a small wooden church built to serve early Melbourne's growing Catholic community.

'St Augustine's was originally a chapel of ease,' he said, noting that it was established for Catholics on the western side of the city who were too far from St Francis and the Cathedral.

St Augustine's later became closely associated with Melbourne's seafaring community, a history still marked by the anchor and plaque in the church garden. Today, that care for seafarers has moved nearby at Stella Maris in West Melbourne, which provides pastoral and practical support to those arriving in port from around the world.

The same city location continues to shape the congregation today. St Augustine's draws city workers, tourists, students, locals and Catholics from further afield, including those who come for Melbourne's last Sunday Mass.

'The 8pm Mass is still your last chance,' Fr Nathan said. 'It gathers quite a wide variety of people.'

In recent years, the relationship with St Patrick's has also become part of day-to-day parish life, with Cathedral priests regularly supporting the St Augustine's community.

'It doesn't mean any real front-of-house changes for them,' Fr Nathan said. 'It's just formalising it.'

While any transition brings its share of uncertainty, parishioners spoke with confidence that St Augustine's defining characteristics—its community spirit, culture of welcome and deep roots in the life of the city—will continue.

A place of peace

After Mass, parishioners gathered for a catered lunch in the parish hall, sharing memories of the people and communities who have shaped the church across generations.

For parishioner and volunteer April, St Augustine's has long been a place of peace



Parishioners from the St Augustine's and St Patrick's communities gathered for the Mass to mark a new chapter in the much-loved church's history.



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‘It was the spirituality, the peacefulness, being able to come to the heart of the city and find a place where you can find God among everything else in your life.’

APRIL, PARISHIONER AND VOLUNTEER

in the heart of the city. She first came to the church with her mother and, since retiring, has dedicated herself to volunteering there.

‘I think it was the spirituality, the peacefulness,’ April said. ‘Being able to come to the heart of the city and find a place where you can find God among everything else in your life.’

Through her work in the parish office, April often hears from people whose connection to St Augustine’s goes back generations.

‘They’ve all got a history, and each one has a story,’ she said. ‘Whether it’s been an anniversary, or their parents got married here, or someone got baptised here, you listen to their story.’

For April, those stories are part of what makes the parish feel so personal.

‘St Augustine’s is like home to all of us,’ she said.

Another parishioner, Joeke, began coming to

‘I visited St Augustine’s and I fell in love. I wouldn’t move anywhere else.’

JOEKE, PARISHIONER

St Augustine’s after returning to Melbourne from overseas. Having visited other churches, she found herself drawn to Bourke Street.

‘I visited St Augustine’s and I fell in love,’ she said. ‘I wouldn’t move anywhere else. I’ve been to every church, but I still like here.’



April and Joeke.



Roman and Patricia.

A welcoming spirit

Fr Nathan said the parish has been shaped at different times by a diverse range of communities, including Spanish, Indonesian and Ukrainian groups.

‘Percy made it his job to welcome everyone who came, especially people who were new.’

ROMAN, PARISHIONER

‘Throughout the history of the parish, it has been a welcoming church in the city,’ Fr Nathan said.

For Roman and Patricia, that spirit has been an important part of their own story at St Augustine’s.

Roman began coming to the parish after marrying Patricia, who had found a home there as part of the Singaporean community. He said one long-serving parishioner, Percy, made a particular impact by personally greeting visitors.

‘Percy made it his job to welcome everyone who came, especially people who were new,’ he said. ‘He would say hello, then hand the person over to someone who could help them.’

Roman recalled one student who had come to the church and was introduced to Patricia after Percy noticed him.

‘He had come here and was somehow drawn to the church,’ Roman said. ‘That man ended up becoming Catholic. Patricia and I are his godparents.’

Greg, who has been coming to St Augustine’s for seven or eight years, said the same bond keeps people coming back.

‘When we had Fr Victor, he kept telling us: communion in the church, yes, but after that, communion with the community,’ Greg said. ‘That’s what keeps us here.’

As a church in the city, St Augustine’s also receives people struggling with mental illness or addiction. Mgr Hall said some arrive experiencing homelessness or distress, often looking for quiet, warmth or safety.

‘You treat most of them calmly and respectfully, and they respond,’ he said. ‘Most of the time, their lives have been hard. Sometimes it’s just about reaching out and being nice.’

A new chapter

For a church first founded to make Catholic life more accessible in the city, the move into the Cathedral Parish is less a departure from its history than a continuation of it.

‘It certainly won’t change the community, the passion that we have. We now belong to a bigger group.’

APRIL, PARISHIONER AND VOLUNTEER

For April, joining the St Patrick’s community brings St Augustine’s into a wider parish family without taking away what people love about it.

‘It certainly won’t change the community, the passion that we have,’ she said. ‘We now belong to a bigger group.’

She said the parish had been through changes before, including changes of priests, and had remained close.

‘The community spirit, you can’t change that,’ she said. ‘It’s the people.’



Above: After Mass, parishioners gathered for lunch and fellowship in the parish hall. Below: Assistant priest Fr Nathan Rawlins blesses the rosary of a parishioner. All photos by Sam Rebbechi.



Pope John Paul II surrounded by Grade 4 children at St Leo the Great Primary School in Altona North, 28 November 1986. (Photo supplied.)

The day a pope came to Altona North

In 1986, Pope John Paul II came to Melbourne. What he did here was special, possibly unique: among a papal Mass and ecumenical services that attracted many tens of thousands, he visited the suburban parish of St Leo the Great in Altona North and its little school. There, the leader of the Catholic Church sat down with a class of 9- and 10-year-olds, cross-legged in front of him, and answered their eager questions.

The parish is marking the 40th anniversary of the occasion in a magnificent way, with a monthly novena to St John Paul II, and a special Mass with Archbishop Peter A Comensoli on 28 November, the date of the Pope's visit. Priests with a connection to the parish or the papal visit, along with two bishops, are celebrating one monthly Mass each.

The parish priest, Fr Jude Johnson, only arrived there six months ago but immediately understood how momentous the papal visit had been, and how important it was to mark it, as much for future generations as for those who were there.

'That visit of John Paul II, it was in the heart of the people, you know? They were so happy for the Pope to come and visit this humble parish,' Fr Jude says. 'So I thought that by celebrating that 40th anniversary, they're going [to be]

He came as a pope;
now he's a saint.

FR JUDE JOHNSON, ST LEO THE GREAT
PARISH PRIEST

excited once again to remember his legacy. He came as a pope; now he's a saint—so, very special.'

Fr Kevin Dillon was chosen as the Victorian director of the Pope's Australia-wide tour and says the idea for a parish and school visit came during talks with his own parish at that time, Mitcham, whose members were his 'sounding board'.

'If you'd had a camera on me, there would've been a little lightbulb going on. I said, "The Pope can't visit every parish, but if he visits one, television can take him into every parish and every school. By visiting one, he's paying honour to every parish and every school, which is the foundation of the Catholic Church in this country."

Fr Kevin expanded on that idea during his homily at the third Novena to Pope St John Paul II on 28 April. 'The Pope's coming to all of us, but he needs to meet the few of us—a class of 35 or so and a parish with a couple of hundred people where he can actually see their faces and look at them in a way that's quite different than what he would experience in St Peter's Square every Sunday. It was very, very important for him to understand the flock of which he was the shepherd.'

Altona North was chosen because of its proximity to the Cathedral presbytery, where Pope John Paul II was staying, and to other events the pontiff needed to attend.



Pope John Paul II greeting St Leo the Great parish priest Fr Peter O'Rourke. Archbishop Frank Little can be seen behind them. (Photo supplied.)

'We also had—very importantly—to find a sensible and cooperative parish priest', says Fr Kevin. 'And the parish priest, Fr Peter O'Rourke, was a classmate of mine, so I knew Rourke, as we called him, would be great.' Coincidentally, Fr Kevin also knew and approved of Fr Michael Kalka, the then assistant priest at St Leo the Great. 'All the dots joined together, and it fell into place extremely well.'

'There was a Friday night phone call,' recalls Fr Michael, who has an absolute treasure trove of memorabilia from the time. Pointing to a parish bulletin dated 20 April 1986, he says that was the first public announcement. Alongside it is a handwritten note: 'The priests were told Friday March 21st.'

It was very, very important for him to understand the flock of which he was the shepherd.

FR KEVIN DILLON, VICTORIAN DIRECTOR OF
POPE JOHN PAUL II'S AUSTRALIA-WIDE TOUR



Former school principal Margaret Fogarty and Graham O'Rourke, the brother of the late Fr Peter, St Leo the Great's parish priest in 1986.

'The Friday night phone call,' he says. 'Now that's the sort of stuff that nobody remembers unless you write it down.'

'The night that we announced it, I was on the Saturday night Mass, and Peter [Fr Peter O'Rourke] was going to make the announcement to the people at the end of Mass. I thought he'd never get to the point, but he realised more than I did that once he made that announcement, it was all over red rover, because people started crying; people rushed home to make phone calls.'

Margaret Fogarty was the principal of St Leo the Great Primary in 1986 and clearly remembers the afternoon Fr Peter O'Rourke invited her to the presbytery after school.

'After some teasing, he told me it was requested that could the Pope visit the school ... and he was keen to know if I felt I could manage that. "What will I wear?" I said—you know, a typical kind of woman thing,' she says, laughing. 'But after that it was all relaxed.'

Relaxed is an understatement, given the preparations that needed to be made, but Ms Fogarty says she was reassured by the news that the Pope would visit a Grade 4 class. Fr Kevin Dillon had felt that age group was old enough to understand the significance of the visit and young enough not to be overawed. The Grade 4 teacher that year was Marianne Massarany. 'I just knew she would do a great job,' Ms Fogarty says.

Ms Massarany says it was a big surprise to hear her class had been chosen to host the Pope, but agreed it was the right choice. 'I speak five languages, and I could translate to him if he didn't understand the kids' questions,' she says. St Leo the Great Primary School was very multicultural—the flags of 34 countries were waving at the front of the school on the day of the Pope's visit— and many of the students were just starting to learn English, so having a teacher who could translate if necessary was an important part of the planning.

The teacher also knew her 'super-intelligent' class would be up to the task. 'They always gave me the naughty kids,' Ms Massarany says, fondly. 'I was a bit worried about what they would do. But I tell you what: you feed

the kids some good information ... and what I did was basically tell them who this man was, about his history, how he was a fighter in the underground, how he loved soccer, and they absorbed everything.'

On the big day, everyone arrived early at the parish precinct, which had been locked down overnight after a thorough security check, bomb squad and all. 'I had the safest night's sleep of my life after the bomb search,' Fr Michael Kalka jokes.

Pope John Paul II was guided to what was then the parish church, a simple, low-ceilinged structure 'built literally by the hands of the parishioners in the early 1960s,' Fr Jude says. The parish priest shows Melbourne Catholic the door through which the Pope made his entrance: 'There were so many people here. There was someone with a wheelchair. He diverted himself to give the Rosary, give the blessing.'

They were proud that they had been the ones chosen to represent Australian kids.

MARIANNE MASSARANY, GRADE 4 TEACHER AT ST LEO THE GREAT PRIMARY IN 1986

The church was built to fit around 250 people, but there were twice that number packed in on 28 November 1986—the maximum Victoria Police would allow.

Fr Michael remembers the parish singing 'Our God reigns'. 'We were told that's what the Pope wanted,' he says. 'On the recording [the video taken on the day], he actually sings along. You can hear him singing into the microphone. We had to write the prayer [and] send it to Rome for approval. And we got the request that's the song he wanted, so we learnt it.'

From the church, Pope John Paul II walked the short distance to the primary school, where Margaret Fogarty was waiting to show him into the classroom. 'I had some whiteboards on wheels, which the kids had decorated,' she says. 'And once the Pope, the Archbishop [Frank Little] and Peter O'Rourke came in, we pulled those across. The rest of the retinue was sent into the room opposite, where there was a television. I wanted to keep it just the kids, the teacher and the Pope.'

The children's questions were categorically not to be vetted, the principal had decided, despite a little trepidation. But she was filled with admiration at how Pope John Paul answered them. One boy asked what it had been like to visit a Muslim country—Pakistan, where he had stopped en route to Australia. Ms Fogarty recalls: 'He said, "You know, the Muslims are children of God, just as we are, and God loves them just as he loves us." He was making a very big statement there, in a simple way, to children.'

'The questions that the kids asked amazed me,' Ms Massarany says. 'One kid asked him where he was shot. So he pointed to his stomach, and the kids said, "Can I see it?" He said, "No, you can't, because I have to take my clothes off." So he was able to joke with them and laugh with them.'

'Another beautiful boy asked him, "The Vatican is so big—do you ever get lost going from place to place?" and he was able to say how, although it's big, every room was filled with Christ.'

As the Pope finished answering questions, the children milled around him excitedly. 'One kid patted him on the shoulder and said, "Good on you, Pope,"' Ms Fogarty says. 'That was his greatness. It wasn't his power as pope. This person with such a role in the Church and the world could just allow that to happen in a very peaceful kind of a way. He impressed me greatly as the human being that he was, and how he was with the kids.'

Forty years later, Fr Kevin Dillon says the visit can still be seen as a 'seal of approval' for the simple life of the parish. In his homily at St Leo the Great Church, he described the Pope's time with them as a 'making holy of the ordinary things that we do'. Just as Jesus lived an ordinary life in Nazareth for 30 years, this visit 'sanctified' the daily life of an Australian parish, he said.

Speaking outside the church, Fr Dillon summed up the visit as 'an injection of great hope for people. It gave a tick to all those suburban, outback, country parishes that come together around the Eucharist and form a community in themselves because of what they share in common in their faith.'

And somewhere out there is a group of people entering their fifth decade who will not have forgotten that day in 1986. As Marianne Massarany says, the Pope had made them feel special. 'And they were proud of it. They were proud that they had been the ones chosen to represent Australian kids.'



Margaret Fogarty's copy of a photo of Pope John Paul II with her (right) and teacher Marianne Massarany.



A snapshot of Pope John Paul II walking through the school grounds at the end of his visit.

St Leo the Great Parish is holding a novena on the 28th day of every month to St John Paul II to commemorate his visit. Scan the QR code to find out more.



Bishop Terry Curtin in the forecourt of St Patrick's Cathedral. (Photo by Michael Wong for Melbourne Catholic.)

Bishop Terry Curtin on retirement and encountering ‘quiet holiness’

When he was ordained a bishop at 69 years old—a relatively late age for such an appointment—Bishop Terence “Terry” Curtin thought, ‘Well, this will be a short run, because at 75 you retire. I had hoped quietly though that maybe I might get 10 years in. In fact, I got to 79 [years], so my prayer was answered!’

Not long after being appointed an auxiliary bishop of Melbourne, Bishop Curtin attended a formation course for new bishops in Rome and remembers a jovial meeting with Pope Francis. ‘I said to him, “I’m the oldest of the new bishops here—I’m 70.” And he looked at me and said, “A bishop at this age? This pope must be crazy!”’

There was another newly appointed bishop present at the same gathering: one Bishop Robert Prevost—now known as Pope Leo XIV. Bishop Curtin’s cousin David, who was at the time provincial of the Augustinians in Australia and South-East Asia, encouraged his cousin to look up ‘Bob Prevost’, saying, ‘He’s a very good man.’

‘David said to me that he’d been invited to Peru for his episcopal ordination but he had to reply, “Sorry, I’ve got a better offer in Australia.” And that was my ordination in Melbourne!’

A decade later—and a few years past the age of retirement—Bishop Curtin encountered Bishop Prevost (by this time a cardinal) while on pilgrimage to Rome. ‘By then he was in charge of the Dicastery for Bishops, so I said, “Look, I’m 79 and I’m still an auxiliary bishop in Melbourne.” And he said, “I thank you for your service,” which wasn’t quite what I was looking for!’ says Bishop Curtin, laughing.

While he officially retired in January 2025, it wasn’t quite the smooth transition that he’d hoped for, as six weeks later, he was diagnosed with cancer in his right lung.

‘So that changed things,’ he says. ‘I mean, it’s under control. I’m in good hands medically, and I’m in God’s hands ultimately, and that’s okay.’

The thanksgiving Mass for Bishop Curtin finally took place on Saturday 16 May 2026 at St Patrick’s Cathedral, with friends, family, colleagues, students and previous parishioners filling the Cathedral to offer their gratitude for the bishop’s many years of service across academia, diocesan ministry and parish life.

‘I’m in good hands medically, and I’m in God’s hands ultimately, and that’s okay.’

BISHOP TERRY CURTIN

Before his episcopal ordination, Bishop Curtin had already served as a beloved parish priest and academic at Australian Catholic University and as master of Catholic Theological College. Following his episcopal ordination in 2014, he served as Bishop for the Northern Region of the Archdiocese and as Episcopal Vicar for Evangelisation and Mission, while also leading the Bishops’ Commission for Doctrine and Morals.

‘I was the last president of the Melbourne College of Divinity before it became the University of Divinity,’ he explains. ‘And what was really wonderful about that was people of Christian faith from different denominations all enormously supportive of each other.’

Bishop Curtin also chaired the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and served as conventual chaplain *ad honorem*

to the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of Malta.

He recently returned from a pilgrimage with other members of the order to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in France, an experience he describes as ‘deeply moving’ for a number of reasons.

It wasn’t his first visit to Lourdes, but this time he entered into the baths, which, for more than 150 years, have been the site of miraculous medical recoveries for countless devotees. ‘The town was full of people in their Order of Malta uniforms, and it was so impressive,’ recalls Bishop Curtin.

‘You had the sick in these little carriages that they take you around in, and I was listed as one of those, so it did save me walking, which I was appreciative of,’ he says. He was aided by a group of local volunteers who assist with the bathing of the sick, and when they discovered his identity, they jokingly asked the bishop for payment.

‘A fellow said to me, “Normally this is free for everyone, but in your case there is a charge. You owe us a blessing!”’

So, clothes still wet but huddled in prayer, Bishop Curtin prayed a blessing over the group. ‘I found it deeply moving, because we were there in our common humanity, but in our deep, deep reliance on God,’ he says.

‘The water is not magic. It’s about faith. We enter that water in that sense of faith, and they invite you to pray. The whole thing was really a wonderful expression of faith.’

The pilgrimage group included people from Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and South Korea. One pilgrim made a profound impression: a 35-year-old man named Larry, who was accompanied by his mother, sister and carer. ‘Larry has a form of motor neurone disease which is aggressive,’ says Bishop Curtin. ‘It’s now taken away his facial expressions, his voice and the use of his limbs.’

On the final night of their pilgrimage, Larry, through a device on his phone, shared a message with his fellow pilgrims:

Larry’s message

My dear friends, thank you. Thank you for your kindness, your smiles, your warm greetings on this year’s pilgrimage, this path of grace. You have touched my heart in ways I will carry with me always. You see, in my condition, I find it difficult to move my face, my body, but here among you I am smiling, not just with my face, but with my whole heart.

I’m living with ALS. I feel my body weakening, muscle by muscle, breath by breath. There is a strange grief in watching your future disappear while you are still fully alive inside it. I grieve the life I planned, the milestones, the travels I love, growing old, but what breaks me most is watching my mother watch me deteriorate. I’m the one who is dying, ... she’s the one who will have to live with it. When I was first diagnosed, I didn’t pray thankfully. I said,

Why? How could you? I felt betrayed, angry. There were long stretches when God felt silent, when prayers seemed to go nowhere. Only gradually have I learnt that silence doesn't mean absence. Sometimes he's silent because he's holding me too close for words.

My faith doesn't erase the suffering, it reshapes it. I've had to learn how to hold both in the same breath, praying for healing whilst surrendering to mystery. Sometimes faith isn't having answers, it's staying. Yes, I'm still afraid of suffocating, of becoming a burden, of my faith failing at the end, but more than that, I'm afraid of wasting whatever time I have left, of not loving enough, of not pointing people towards hope whilst I still can. When you look at my eyes, I hope you see this. I'm still here, still fighting, still held. I have surprised even myself that I could find joy in a wheelchair, that I could laugh in hospital beds, that my faith could grow stronger as my body grew weaker.

I didn't know I had this much fight in me or this much grace available to me. I call it a broken hallelujah, praising God when nothing makes sense. It's saying I trust you through tears. It's praising him for showing up in the ICU, for friends who become family, for my mother's love, for Scripture coming alive in ways it never had before, for peace that doesn't make sense, for every breath, even the laboured ones, or hope that refuses to die, even when my body would ... for all of you, your smiles, your gentle taps on the shoulder, your presence on this sacred journey. I am grieving, and I am whole.

Suffering does not get the final word. Love does. I'm still here. Thank you for seeing me. Thank you for walking this path of grace with me. May the Blessed Mother hold all of you in her heart as she has held me in mine.

Bishop Curtin describes Larry's experience as the epitome of the whole pilgrimage. 'It's what the Order of Malta is about in its care for the sick and the celebration of faith, and for the sanctification of its members. All of that was there.' The bishop tears up as he says, 'When you meet ... quiet holiness ... it is absolutely stunning. And that's what I met.'

My thought is to live in, with and through it, and to take it for the grace that it is.

BISHOP TERRY CURTIN

Reflecting on his own experience of living with illness, Bishop Curtin sees it as a grace-filled time. 'I am deeply grateful for the medical care that I'm getting. I've had [cancer] for a year now, and I've been able to do things like go over to France [on pilgrimage]. My thought is to live in, with and through it, and to take it for the grace that it is.'

Of course, a priest never really 'retires' in the business sense of the word but is instead given the gift of more time, something Bishop Curtin welcomes.

'I recently did a funeral for Fergus Ryan, who was in the Order of Malta and the Holy Sepulchre, and he wrote a reflection on his days of living with his illness. He spoke of being given time for things that he didn't have before ... time for prayer, a time for quietness, a time to reflect, all those sorts of things, and I guess in the process, trying to make a bit of sense of your life and what it's been ... what the outstanding things are that keep you going.

'So I hope to enter it more in that way,' says Bishop Curtin.

Retirement brings retrospection, and the bishop fondly recalls the day his father dropped him off at the seminary in Werribee, some 60 years ago now.

Bishop Curtin's father had been state manager of the Commonwealth Development Bank and was being moved back to the company's headquarters in Sydney. His father asked him if he'd consider moving to the seminary in Sydney. 'And I said, I just feel I'm meant to work in Melbourne, and he accepted that. So, in effect, I left home at 18.'

Years later, in the early days of his priesthood, he introduced his father to then Archbishop Francis Little. 'Archbishop Little said to my father, "Well Mr Curtin, you must be so proud of your son."

'And my father's reply, which I've never forgotten, was: "No. I feel very humble."

Bishop Curtin's humility, joy and ability to meet people where they are have been hallmarks of his priestly ministry and time as auxiliary bishop of Melbourne.

Speaking at Bishop Curtin's celebratory luncheon, Archbishop Patrick O'Regan of Adelaide described his longtime friend and colleague as 'a sower' of God's kingdom.

He is, in the deepest sense, a shepherd-bishop: one who does not drive the flock from behind, but leads it from within.

BISHOP TERRY CURTIN

'For more than 50 years, Terry has been a sower. Not the spectacular, headline-making kind, though his achievements are remarkable enough, but the kind who rises early, goes out day after day into the ordinary fields of the Church and casts the seed of the Word with tireless generosity, trusting that God will bring the harvest in God's own time,' he said.

He is, in the deepest sense, a shepherd-bishop: one who does not drive the flock from behind, but leads it from within.

Noting that the sower in the parable does not choose only the most promising ground but sows everywhere, Archbishop O'Regan said that in all Bishop Curtin's years in academic life, he 'never retreated from parish life into the

comfortable seclusion of the academy. While lecturing to graduate students on sacramental theology and the hermeneutics of Scripture, he was also resident priest at St Therese of Lisieux's Essendon, at St Mary Magdalene's Jordanville, at St Joan of Arc's Brighton. He heard confessions, anointed the sick, buried the dead, and sat with families in their grief and their joy. When the opportunity came in 2006, he became parish priest of St Bridget's Greythorn and served that community with love and fidelity for eight years.'

While 'the intellectual life of the Church is sometimes tempted to float free of the concrete ground of parish life,' Archbishop O'Regan said, for Bishop Curtin, 'the lecture hall and the sanctuary, the seminar room and the confessional were always parts of the one field. He knew that theology done at any distance from the community gathered around the altar risks losing its soul.

He went out, he sowed, he held nothing back.

BISHOP TERRY CURTIN

'Whether he is speaking to a conference of bishops or sitting with a grieving family in a northern suburb of Melbourne, he brings the same unhurried attention, the same genuine warmth, the same willingness to be fully present. He is, in the deepest sense, a shepherd-bishop: one who does not drive the flock from behind, but leads it from within.'

Archbishop O'Regan described Bishop Curtin as 'a man of deep interior quiet' whose 'learning never intimidates; it invites.

'We cannot audit what has grown from 50 years of sowing,' he said. 'The harvest belongs to God. But the sower goes home with a particular kind of satisfaction that has nothing to do with results and everything to do with fidelity: he went out, he sowed, he held nothing back.'



Bishop Curtin's thanksgiving Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral. (Photos by Michael Wong for Melbourne Catholic.)

Kelly and Moses Muldoon

Kelly Muldoon is a final-year law student and mother of five. The surprise baptism of her oldest son Moses Muldoon, a naval officer, inspired her to join the Catholic Church, which she did at the Easter Vigil. Kelly describes Moses as a 'dark horse', saying she had no idea he was investigating Catholicism until the day he asked her to come to a church in Melbourne's western suburbs.

Kelly

I didn't know what was going on, so I turned up and he's getting baptised. He's funny like that. It's like when he joined the navy—he suddenly asked us to turn up at a place, and there he was swearing allegiance to Australia. He doesn't say anything about his plans; he just does it. He's always out there doing stuff.

I was really shocked [when he got baptised]. I've never taken them to church or anything like that, because I always had this ... wish that I had been given the opportunity to decide for myself.

I had been brought up in a very religious household, and I had issues, even from when I was really young. There was a real focus on reputation and what things look like. I remember saying to my mum, 'But isn't what really matters the truth?'

Our relationship has changed since we've both become Catholic, and for the better.

KELLY

Then Dave got baptised. Dave is his dad—we had Nellie and Moses. Now they've [Dave and his wife Laura] got four other kids, and I've got three other kids, and they're all about the same kind of ages, so we have holidays and Christmas together. It's like a big family.

So we go to see Dave get baptised, and I say to Moses, 'Maybe I'll become a Catholic.' And he goes, 'We'd weed you out.' It's reverse psychology, like that Seinfeld scene when Elaine's going to Tuscany with the Maestro and he doesn't want Jerry to come.

And so when Moses said the Catholics would weed me out, I said, 'Are you trying to keep me out of Tuscany?' But it's a Church, right? I feel like they should be going, 'Come in, we welcome anybody.' Isn't that what they do? So I contact the Catholic Church. I go online and investigate becoming a Catholic. I was interested.

Moses was definitely goading me, definitely being sarcastic, because that's how we interact. But he was just the best boy, I mean this.

I'll tell you this story—I'm so proud of him. There was this nightmare time where my ex-husband [not Dave] was being violent, and he was throwing me around the room. Moses called the police; so did I. He told Moses I stole his money. And I remember Moses looking at him and just saying, 'Don't you know, there's no excuse for hitting a woman?' He was a kid, a teenager. If I was to name one thing that I'm most proud of him for—and he's done many things, like Mountain Climbing for Youth and so on—it's that.

Being Catholic suits Moses. And [since I started investigating], I've learnt so much. What really struck me was how I recognised the Bible is written the way you would write a legal brief. It's written like a document to prove something. There'll be a prophecy, and then it comes to pass.

And then Jesus—there's Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and they're all telling the same story, but slightly differently, as you would if you're a witness. That's exactly what you would expect, because it's their perspective, and they notice different things. It's how things would be if you were really a witness on the stand.

Our relationship has changed since we've both become Catholic, and for the better. Now we discuss the Bible and its meaning. We're both less angry about political and systemic issues. More at peace, I suppose.

Moses came for Christmas, and when I went into his room, his bed was made. All of his clothes were neatly folded—he used to be the worst mess. We still argue; we have big discussions that are more theological now. He will tell me I'm wrong a lot ... and then later I've realised I was wrong. In the past, I always thought I was right.



Naval officer Moses Muldoon and his mother, Kelly Muldoon. (Photo courtesy of Kelly Muldoon.)

Moses

My first memory of Mum is when I was a little child, maybe two or three. I was so young that I couldn't reach the door handle of my bedroom. And one night I couldn't sleep, and I was crying at the door because I wanted to sleep with Mum and Dad. And after what felt like forever, Mum came out of the bedroom, rubbing her eyes. I remember not really caring that I'd woken her, but instead just happy as I could be that she came and I got to be with her and Dad.

My Mum and I are both very level-headed, and we don't worry all that much. When something doesn't go according to plan, we sort of just accept it and carry on. We also think in similar ways. We share a lack of concern for what others think, for the most part, in regards to our ability to talk to people, or express ourselves to others in public.

I realised that I needed to do what she says and get baptised, go to church and get to heaven.

MOSES

Mum is very forthright, and candid about a lot of things. She's open and honest, and lets you know what she thinks. I'm a lot more reserved, until I get to know you. Mum can be very 'shoot from the hip' as well, whereas I think I'm a bit more measured and in control of my emotions. Mum has a tonne of passion. I share that same passion and enthusiasm, but I think I keep it under wraps a bit better.

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Why I became a Catholic is a very long story honestly, but to boil it down, it was because, for whatever reason (I'd say God's grace now), I asked, 'Why do I exist? Why does anything exist? What happens when you die? Why do we die?'

I wanted to take life more seriously. God wanted more from me.

MOSES

When I was six years old, my big sister Nellie woke me up in the night while we were on holiday in New Zealand, crying about the fact that she was afraid of dying. I had no idea what brought this on, but it led me to think about it also. And I was filled with existential dread.

Fast forward to being an adult, and I was introduced to the idea that maybe the Bible and Christianity weren't as crazy as 'regular' society would have you believe. After investigating, listening to a tonne of apologetics and reading, I learnt about philosophy. This was spurred by CS Lewis and his book *Miracles*.

In it, he poses philosophical questions that I realised I had been asking in my heart but was unable to articulate.

From there, reasonable arguments for the existence of God led me to believe that he was real. And from there, it followed that the Catholic Church was the Church she said she was, and so I realised that I needed to do what she says and get baptised, go to church and get to heaven.

All credit goes to the Holy Spirit [for Mum getting baptised], but I do think he worked through me, to use me as an example or as something to help my mum see the truth. I honestly never thought it would happen, and I was very sad about it, but that's a sin against the Holy Spirit, not trusting in his ability to work wonders. I mean he got me. Why couldn't he get my mum?

Mum instilled in me gratitude, which is the key to happiness. I admire that in Mum a lot, because relative to a lot of people, she has a lot to be bitter about. But she taught me that it's the opposite, that in fact she has so much to be grateful for.

The Spirit of God was working through her for a long time I reckon. And she didn't do it in some

melodramatic or serious milestone way. She just lived it, and expressed it with passion, and I believed her, and agreed with her.

I'm a Maritime Warfare Officer (the title is changing to Surface Warfare Officer) in the Royal Australian Navy. We fulfill the role of Officer of the Watch on naval warships. I'm currently in the final stage of my training, soon to be posted to a ship and hopefully deployed to sea.

I joined up a month after being baptised because I wanted to take life more seriously. God wanted more from me, and I needed to pursue something difficult, challenging and worthy of my family's admiration. I also wanted to be an inspiration to my little brothers and sisters, to show them that they can do things if they simply decide to do them.

My mum's bombastic character makes me laugh. She's very cognisant, I think, of what she says and why she says it. She has a good ability of humorously changing her mind on a whim because in reality she didn't actually mean the thing she just shouted to the whole room about. I also find it funny that Mum really isn't much of a hugger, but I don't care and I hug her a lot anyway because I love her. ☺

Catholics encouraged to identify themselves in the Census

Australia will hold its national Census on 11 August 2026, and Catholics across the Archdiocese of Melbourne are encouraged to participate fully, identifying their religious affiliation.

This nationwide count is a crucial opportunity for the Catholic community to be recognised and for its needs to be understood.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducts the Census of Population and Housing every five years, counting every person and household in Australia. Census night provides what the ABS says is 'the most comprehensive snapshot of the country [that] tells the story of how we are changing. Census data tells us about the economic, social and cultural make-up of the country.'

'The Census marks an important occasion in our national life and ensures we can effectively respond to the needs of our growing population in all its diversity,' Archbishop of Melbourne Peter A Comensoli said. 'In a time when some would seek to diminish the importance of faith, it is important for

the Catholic community to stand up and be counted.

'I encourage all Catholics to mark the "Catholic" box and ensure that the needs of our community can continue to be met and supported.'

A question about religious affiliation has been included in every census since its inception in Australia in 1911. Along with country of birth and language spoken at home, it is an important part of a person's identity and an indicator of Australia's cultural diversity. It is optional but has always had a high response rate—93 per cent in 2021. More than five million people, or 20 per cent of the Australian population, described themselves as Catholic in the last census.

The data collected through the Census is vital for both government and Church planning decisions. National Centre for Pastoral Research director Trudy Dantis said data from the religion question is crucial to helping Catholic parishes, schools, dioceses and organisations understand their communities and plan for ministry and mission.

'Census data tells us a great deal about the demographics of self-identifying Catholics in particular regions, and for this reason, it is invaluable to pastoral planning,' Dr Dantis said. 'It is also an important aspect of planning for our Catholic organisations, since many Australians seek assistance from these institutions in times of personal crisis, and for services such as schools, health care facilities and welfare.'

The results also inform government decisions about funding and the allocations of resources for health, education, infrastructure and social services.

Taking the census is easy. Unlike in ancient times, when Mary and Joseph were required to travel long distances by donkey to be counted in Bethlehem, census collectors come to us. By participating and accurately identifying as Catholic, we contribute to a clearer picture of the Catholic presence in Australia, helping to ensure that the Church can continue to serve its members and the wider community effectively. ☺

24 What is the person's religion?

- Answering this question is **OPTIONAL**.
- Use 'Other (specify)' to provide a religion or a level of detail not included in the list.
- For example: MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX, LUTHERAN, SALVATION ARMY, JUDAISM, SIKHISM, TAOISM.
- Mark one box, like this: ☒

- ☐ No religion
- ☒ Catholic
- ☐ Anglican (Church of England)
- ☐ Islam
- ☐ Hinduism
- ☐ Uniting Church
- ☐ Buddhism
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Question 24 in the Census will ask about a person's religion.

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(JOHN 16:33)



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Archbishop's Diary JULY 2026

- 5 Mass, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday, St Patrick's Cathedral
- 6 Vespers and dinner (ACCC National Conference)
- 7 Clergy dinner
- 8 Curia meeting
- 12 Mass, Marriage and Family Sunday, St Patrick's Cathedral
- 15 Executive Leadership Team meeting
- 16 Blessing and opening, Our Lady of the Way Church, Wallan (MACSEYE)
- 17-19 Episcopal visitation
- 22 MACS RE Symposium
- 22 Dinner, Archbishop's Campaign
- 23 Light into the City Advisory Board meeting
- 25 Melbourne Synod workshops
- 26 Mass, Myanmar Catholic Community, Werribee
- 28 CAM staff celebration
- 29 Diocesan Finance Council meeting
- 30 Mass, Installation, Bishop Rene Ramirez RCJ, Diocese of Sandhurst
- 31 Event with the Vietnamese Community

*These dates may be subject to change.
For enquiries, please contact the Office of the Archbishop: archbishop@cam.org.au.*

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Courage!

Do not be afraid.

MATTHEW 14:27

The Archbishop's Campaign supports the mission of the Church in our community through the works of the Priest Retirement Foundation, the Corpus Christi College Building Fund, CatholicCare Victoria Chaplaincy Program, Melbourne Overseas Mission, John Pierce Centre, the University of Divinity for the Catholic Theological College and grants to Catholic agencies and community service organisations.

'Courage! ... do not be afraid.' (Matthew 14:27)

In these words, Jesus invites us to move forward with confidence, knowing that He walks with us. By supporting this campaign, you help sustain ministries that accompany those in need, strengthen our parish communities, and bring Christ's love to others. Thank you for answering this call with courage and generosity.



Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE



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