



We proclaim a crucified Christ

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PASTORAL LETTER

Weekend 7-8 March 2026

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus,

My prayerful greetings to you in the Lord.

In recent years, the Church throughout the world has entered a time of attentive listening, discernment and renewal through what we have come to call a synodal way of being. Many of you have taken part in important moments of consultation and reflection: for the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, for the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, and within our own Archdiocesan journey of renewal, *Take the Way of the Gospel*. Through these experiences you have generously embraced the call to walk more faithfully with Christ and with one another.

From the earliest times of the Church, gatherings of the faithful — which became known as synods (from the Greek *synodos*, meaning “journeying together” or “walking the same path”) — have met to discern important questions in the light of the Word of God and through attentive listening to the Holy Spirit. “Synodality” therefore, describes the way in which this journeying together takes place: the shared participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church.

Such a journey requires patience, humility and trust in the guidance of the Spirit. At its heart is a simple but profound discipline: to listen — to the Gospel, to the lived experience of our communities, and to the Spirit who speaks through God’s faithful people.

Across our Archdiocese there is a rich diversity of gifts and a deep desire for renewal. Many have expressed hopes for stronger communion, renewed missionary purpose, deeper formation, and a Church in which every person knows they belong. These are signs of the Spirit at work among us.

As your Archbishop, I carry these hopes with you. I am deeply grateful for the generosity and faith you have shown in walking this path together.

In light of these reasons, today, Sunday 8 March, I formally convoke a Synod for the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The purpose of this Synod is to help shape our evangelical and missionary priorities for the years ahead. It will be a time for our local Church to listen attentively to the Holy Spirit and to discern how we are called to proclaim the Gospel more faithfully in our time and place.

I invite every parish, community, ministry and Catholic organisation across the Archdiocese to take part in this journey.

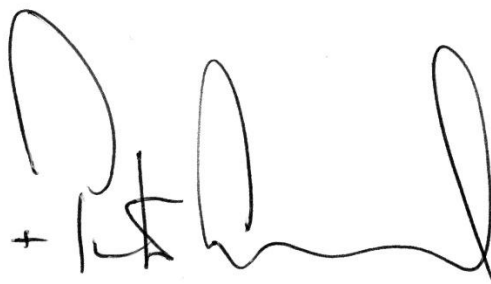
In the months ahead, you will be asked to gather in prayer, to listen to one another, and to reflect together on how the Lord is calling our Church to a renewed faith and fruitfulness.

This synodal journey will focus particularly on three themes I shared with you at the end of last year: **Young Discipleship; Missionary Leadership; and Formation and Participation.** As you reflect on these themes, I encourage you to ask some simple but important questions: *Where is the Holy Spirit leading our Archdiocese at this time? To whom are we being called to accompany in faith more intentionally? How might we reflect the face of Christ more clearly in our local Church?*

As we begin this journey, I entrust our Archdiocese to Mary, Mother of the Church. She pondered the mysteries of God in her heart and remained steadfast among the first disciples. May she guide us to be a Church that listens with faith, loves with generosity, and follows Christ with renewed confidence and hope.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'P' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke ending in a small upward flick.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne

<https://melbournecatholic.org/synod2026>