



International Eucharistic Congress 2028

The Australian Church is setting out on the journey toward the International Eucharistic Congress, Sydney 2028 (Eucharist28), a great time of renewal and transformation centred on encountering the Eucharistic Lord.

In preparation, Australian Catholics will enter a Year of Prayer from 1 March 2026, focused on rediscovering Our Lord's love in the Blessed Sacrament.

The theme, This is My Body, Given for You, calls us to deeper faith, generosity and mission.

Background and Context

The International Eucharistic Congress is one of the most significant gatherings in the life of the Catholic Church, tracing its history to Lille in 1881. Traditionally convened every four to five years, it brings together bishops, theologians, clergy, religious, and laity from around the world to deepen devotion to the Eucharist and to reflect on the social and spiritual mission of the Church.

Australia hosted two previous international Congresses, Sydney (1928) and Melbourne (1973), and two national Congresses, Melbourne (1934) and Sydney (1953) – each leaving distinct legacies. The 1928 Congress emphasised Catholic identity in a newly federated nation; the 1973 event reflected the post-conciliar Church's focus on renewal and participation.

The 2028 Congress thus arrives at a pivotal moment: a century after the first in Australia, and within a context of rapid secularisation, institutional scrutiny, and shifting demographics. The participants identified three contextual realities that underpin the 2028 Congress:

- **Societal Secularisation:** Australia's religious landscape has changed profoundly. Census data shows the "no religion" category surpassing 40% nationally, reflecting a steady decline in regular Mass attendance compared with previous generations. But many people are still searching for meaning, purpose and the transcendent. Participants viewed this not with despair but as a call to mission – an invitation to bear witness through renewed Eucharistic life.
- **A Post-Plenary and Synodal Moment:** The Church is still processing the fruits of the Plenary Council. Many participants expressed both pride and fatigue. They saw the Congress as a continuation of the synodal journey, where listening now gives way to visible renewal. Pope Leo XIV's emerging emphasis on unity, missionary discipleship, and engagement with the modern world provides the theological backdrop, while local pastoral plans and the priorities of the Catholic Church in Australia align closely with the vision of the Congress.
- **Cultural and Generational Fragmentation:** Australia's social fabric is marked by competing values, digital isolation, and widening generational gaps in faith and belonging. Participants observed that many Australians search for meaning and community in places outside the Church, often unaware of the beauty and depth of the Catholic tradition. Rather than seeing this as decline, participants viewed it as missional opportunity – a call to re-engage hearts through authenticity, beauty, and Eucharistic encounter, rebuilding trust and belonging across generations.

Learn more about the way ahead at eucharist28.org.

8 February 2026
**Fifth Sunday in Ordinary
Time**

Entrance Antiphon

O come, let us worship God and bow low before the God who made us, for he is the Lord our God.

First Reading from the prophet Isaiah 58:7-10

Responsorial Psalm

Response: A light rises in the darkness for the upright.
Ps 111:4-9. R. v.4

Second Reading from the first letter to the Corinthians 2:1-5

Gospel Acclamation Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; the man who follows me will have the light of life. **Alleluia!**

Holy Gospel according to Matthew 5:13-16

Communion Antiphon

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders for the children of men, for he satisfies the thirsty soul, and the hungry he fills with good things.



Next Week

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary
Time Year A

First: Sirach 15:15-20

Resp Ps 118:1-2. 4-5. 17-18.
33-34. R. v.1

Second: 1 Corinthians 2:6-10
Gospel: Matthew 5:17-37

Mass and Devotions

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil: 6pm

Sunday: 9.30am & 5pm

Samoan Mass: 1st Sunday at 12 noon

Maori Mass: 1st Sunday of each month at 2pm

Filipino Mass: 3rd Sunday of each month at 11.15am

Children's Mass: 5th Sunday of the month at 9.30am

Weekday Mass

9am each day except Thursday;

Thursday at 7.30pm

Healing Mass on the 1st Saturday of each month at 9am.

Reconciliation

every Saturday at 11am

Devotions & Prayer groups

Adoration with the Rosary:

Saturday at 9.30am

Alliance of the 2 hearts Mass

& devotion: 1st Friday of each month at 7.30pm

Divine Mercy Devotion: 3rd Sunday of each month at 3pm

Faith Circles: every Monday at 2pm & 7pm via zoom

Holy Family Fellowship:

every 4th Saturday at 7pm.

Book Club: meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 10am.

Friendship Group: is on the 1st Tuesday of the Month

Bible Study & Reflection

Group: meets Monday at 10am.

Children's Ministry

Gathering will meet on the 4th Sunday from 3– 5 pm

Ascent Youth Ministry:

meets on the 2nd & 4th Friday from 6.30pm.

Parish Notices

Important dates this year

- Ash Wednesday will be on 18 February 2026
- Easter Sunday is on 5 April 2026
- Our Annual Parish Fiesta is on Sunday 19 July 2026

Upcoming triple ordination to the diaconate for our diocese!

Bishop Brian Mascord warmly invites you to attend the upcoming ordination to the permanent diaconate of Stuart Lake (Varroville), John Mortimer (Albion Park) and Ryan Suares (Rosemeadow) at 10:00am, Saturday 28 February 2026 at St John Vianney Co-Cathedral (1 Cabbage Tree Lane, Fairy Meadow) All are warmly invited to share in this joyful celebration, praying for and supporting these three men and their families as they are ordained to serve our diocesan community.

RSVP by 20 February at rsvp.dow.org.au. Parking will be available at the Fraternity Club (11 Bourke Street, Fairy Meadow).

Our Parish is arranging a bus and carpooling to the Ordination.

Please complete the sign up sheet after Mass or online as soon as possible. You will need to be here at the parish at 8am on the day and travel to Fairy Meadow. The bus will return in the afternoon.

As Stuart, John and Ryan enter these final days of preparation, we keep them close in prayer, trusting in the Holy Spirit's guidance as they draw near to their ordination.

Prayer for the ordinandii

Heavenly Father,

we give you thanks for the gift of vocation and for the call you have placed on the lives of Stuart, John and Ryan.

As they prepare to be ordained to the diaconate, fill them with courage and trust in your presence.

Strengthen them to serve with humility, fidelity and love, after the example of your Son, who came not to be served but to serve.

Through the intercession of St Stephen, the first deacon and martyr of the Church, may they be faithful ministers of your Word, generous servants of your altar, and compassionate witnesses of charity in the world.

Keep them steadfast in prayer, gentle in service, and courageous in faith, that in all things they may glorify you and build up your Church.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Car and Bike Show on Saturday 14 March from 8am Car & bike enthusiasts will be meeting here to showcase their vehicles. A special day has been organised and will include demonstrations and prizes will be awarded. There will be live entertainment and a family atmosphere. Refreshments will be available to purchase.

This is a fundraising event for the parish and I encourage you to come along and bring your family & friends to be a part of the fun.

Our fundraising team are also reaching out for some assistance on the day.

We need some traffic wardens and assistance with setting up and cleaning up. It will be an opportunity for our ministries to reach out beyond the parish.

Also there will be an opportunity for your ministry to set up a stall for something such as facepainting or religious sales. We need some helpers for cooking a BBQ and having a cake stall. Please call Patricia for further information on 0409307246.

The next Fundraising team meeting is on Wednesday 11 February at 7.30pm

Our Pastoral Care Team visit people who cannot attend Mass any longer due to ill health and age. If you know anyone who would like to have a home visit and Holy Communion please call the parish office and submit the persons contact information.

The Pastoral Care Team will meet on Tuesday 10 and 17 February at 2pm.

The Liturgy Committee is meeting on Tuesday 10 February at 7.30pm. All those involved in Liturgical ministries are encouraged to attend.

Readers Retreat will be held on Monday 16 February at 7.30pm. Fr Gerard will give a talk on the readings proclaimed at the Easter Vigil Mass for the Ministers of the Word in our parish on 16 February 2026 at 7:30 pm. All are invited to attend as Fr. Gerard's talk will help our whole parish community appreciate the beauty of the liturgy, especially the Easter Vigil.

Friday Faith & Supper on Friday 20 February from 6pm. The evening will commence with refreshments, followed by Stations of The Cross at 7pm in the Church. Then Fr Sam will lead us on a Lenten Journey with time for discussion.

Ascent Youth Group: "Ever felt like you were alone in your faith? Have questions about God & life?"

Come along to ASCENT Youth, returning on Friday 13 Feb at 6:30pm in the Parish Hall! All young people aged 12–17 are invited to a fun and faith-filled evening with games, food, friendship and opportunities to grow together and explore life's big questions. Bring a friend and help us kick off 2026! Contact Caroline for more info: 0481 469 262"

Catechist Level 1 Course: The Level 1 course is essential for all new volunteers to the catechist ministry and is also helpful as a refresher for experienced SRE Catechists. On the first day of the course, Safeguarding and Classroom Management training will occur, which must be revisited by SRE Catechists every three years to remain active in the ministry. The course will run from 9.30am till 1:30pm in Rosemeadow on Fridays: 6, 13, 20, 27 February and 6 March.

To register for the 5-week Level 1 course: dow.sh/ccd_one. Alternatively, register for the Safeguarding and Classroom Management update only: dow.sh/ccd_sg

Join Our Mission – Diocesan Director Opportunity Caritas Australia is seeking a passionate person for a paid casual role as Diocesan Director for Diocese of Wollongong. This position averages 3.75 hours per week across the year, with extra hours during our Project Compassion appeal (February–May). In partnership with the Diocese of Wollongong, you'll help end poverty, promote justice, and uphold dignity by sharing Caritas Australia's mission through education, fundraising, advocacy, and building strong relationships with Catholic schools, parishes, and the wider Catholic community. If you're committed to social and ecological justice, we'd love to hear from you! Apply at <https://caritasau.bamboohr.com/careers/178?source=aWQ9MTk=>

Prayer intentions

For the sick and homebound:

Pat Cullen, Mary Ponnappalam, Myka Mangos, Kevin Cloran, Karen Browne, Reg Gardner, Sr Heather Burke, Barry Atkins, Carol & Gabriel Gonzales, Amelia Jimenez, Susan Mella, Sean Finnerty, Rose Levoune, Doris Wahhib, John Kajdrys, Pat Stewart, Allan Marquinez, Richard Scolyer, Angela Pavlovic,

May they experience the saving power of the risen Lord amidst their pain & affliction.

For our recently departed

Shirley Wrightman

Anniversaries that occur

at this time Hilda Young, Mark Thompson

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may perpetual light shine upon them.

Our Rosters

15 February 2025	Saturday 6pm	Sunday 9.30am	Sunday 5pm
Welcomers	Tracey & Richard	Chris , Margaret & Gabriel	Beatrix & Michael
Altar Servers	Ryan, Amana , Elijah & Eliana	Vu	Stuart & Nathan
Readers	Bevina & Mark	Martin H & Tess Valesini	Niya & Effie
Refreshments	Emmarie & Berna	Varroville Gospel Choir Community	Margaret , Geoff & Danni
Altar Linen	Maria	CLOTW: Sarah & Josephine	
Flowers	Asinate & Mago	Church Vacuuming	Parish Office
Counters	George & Digna	Church Foyer	Parish Office



Contact Us

Parish Priest:
Fr. Shane Kelleher OCD

Parish Associate:
Sr "Jill" Girlie Sudario, CM

Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday: 9.30am-12.30pm
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Email: varroville@dow.org.au
Website: varroville.dow.org.au

We acknowledge and respect the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we stand, the elders, past and present and all the Dharawal people. May we too be good stewards of this land.

Holy Gospel according Matthew 5: 13-16

You are the light of the world.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.'

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord



Gospel Reflection by Greg Sunter

Today, when we describe a person as being the 'salt of the earth' it's generally meant in a way that says the person is hard working, straight talking and pretty down to earth. It's usually meant as a compliment but sometimes can come across as a bit condescending when used inappropriately. When Jesus tells the disciples that they are salt of the earth and the light of the world he is really saying 'You are to be the salt of the earth; you are to be the light of the world.' It is more of a directive than an affirmation of them.

Today's first reading from Isaiah helps to shed light on Jesus' meaning in the gospel passage: 'Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and turn not from your own kin. Then will your light shine like the dawn.' It sounds a lot like the message from the last judgment in Matthew 25 when the king says 'whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' It's a message of justice and right relationship not only with God but with one another also.

To be salt of the earth and light of the world means to be the one who puts their hand up and steps forward to speak for, work for and act for those who are the least in this world. To have the potential and resources to be a force for good in the world and not act on it is to be like salt that's used for salting the streets or a lamp that's under a tub.

Today's gospel passage is one that is quite commonly quoted and relatively well known. When it is taken in isolation, it's very easy to forget that these words immediately follow the Beatitudes that we heard in last week's gospel. The imperative for justice in the images of salt and light of the world becomes even clearer when we remember that these words follow the blessings on those who are poor; who mourn; who are merciful and fight for justice. Jesus has blessed all these who are least in the world and then charges the disciples to be salt and light for them.

The salt and light of the world passage is often used to affirm and encourage, but when Jesus tells his disciples – and us – to be salt and light of the world it is not so that they can draw attention and glory to themselves. The whole purpose of being salt and light is to lead others into right relationship with one another and with God. Whilst the translation we have clearly states that disciples are to be salt and light of the world, it is just as clear that the intention is that they/we be salt and light *for* the world.

Gandhi, the great leader of the Indian independence movement, is credited with saying, 'You must be the change you want to see in the world.' He sought a life free from tyranny and violence and so led a movement of non-violent resistance. It's tempting to think that he may have been influenced by some of the teachings of Jesus because so much of his approach reflected Jesus' call for justice. The charge to be the light of the world that shines in the sight of all and sets an example for all is echoed succinctly in Gandhi's words.