

Media Release

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Catholic Diocese of Lismore joins American university's virtual learning community for faith formation

The Catholic Diocese of Lismore on the far eastern coast of Australia has entered a new partnership with the University of Dayton in Ohio, USA.

The Diocese is joining the University's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) to provide people within the diocese with access to quality online faith formation courses and learning opportunities.

In announcing the partnership, the Most Reverend Gregory Homeming OCD, Bishop of Lismore, said that Lismore was one of several Dioceses within Australia participating in the VLCFF.

"The partnership offers the Diocese an opportunity to join with others to do what we cannot do alone, that is, offer quality catechetical and faith formation courses on-line via a well-established, appropriately accredited organisation," Bishop Homeming said.

"This virtual learning community will enable any parish or person within the Lismore Diocese to pursue areas of interest for their spiritual and faith development," he added.

Mr Gary Reen, Assistant Director, School Evangelisation & Catechetical Services at the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) in Lismore said the CSO and St Agnes' Catholic Parish, Port Macquarie are supporting the Diocese in this venture.

"We see a number of avenues in which the VLCFF will support our 'Work, Teach and Lead' Teacher Accreditation program. We are currently working with the VLCFF team at the University of Dayton to 'customise' some of the courses for our Australian and Diocesan context," Mr Reen said.

Fr Paul Gooley, the Parish Priest of St Agnes' Catholic Parish in Port Macquarie sees this is a wonderful and necessary opportunity for individuals.

"Prior to the COVID pandemic, there was growing interest from people in St Agnes' Parish to learn more about a diverse range of faith related topics so I have been looking for something around adult spiritual formation for our parishioners, volunteers and employees for some time," Fr Gooley said.

"The pandemic has definitely been a catalyst for people to seek new ways of staying connected to their faith and the VLCFF ticks all the boxes to help them do that – it's readily available, convenient, and doesn't require people to travel long distances to participate," he added.

Dayton University's VLCFF has been in operation for over 20 years providing adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere via the internet. In Australia, the Archdioceses of Adelaide and Melbourne and the Dioceses of Rockhampton and Ballarat are among those who already participate in VLCFF.

For more details about the VLCFF please contact Tony Worner who is coordinating the partnership for Lismore Diocese on 0436 941 280 or via email Tony.Worner@stagnesparish.org.au.

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**Virtual
Learning
Community**
For Faith Formation



St AGNES'
PARISH



University of Dayton, Ohio USA



The Most Reverend Gregory Homeming OCD, Bishop of Lismore