



Catholic Diocese of Parramatta

## Launch of Diocesan Pastoral Plan *Faith in Our Future*

A Pastoral Plan for the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta was launched on the weekend of 22-23 February 2014. *Faith in Our Future* is the culmination of two years of conversation and discernment about the future of the Diocese, which takes in much of Western Sydney.

*Faith in Our Future* contains announcements about future directions for the Diocese for 2014-2018, provides a vision for the growth and sharing of faith, and offers practical resources and ideas for parishes, migrant communities and each member of the Diocese to translate that hope into action.

In a pastoral message to the faithful of the Diocese, the Bishop of Parramatta, Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP, said *Faith in Our Future* had two basic goals for the next five years: "to grow in faith and to share our faith".

"When Jesus was asked to name the greatest commandment of all, the big reason for existing, He replied, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and mind ... and your neighbour as yourself'," the Bishop said.

"To grow in our faith is to grow in love of God. To share our faith is to love our neighbour and invite him or her into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, Lord of the Universe.

"To grow and to share our faith we will focus on five areas of greatest need and potential: our families, youth, ethnicity, vocations, and evangelisation. Each of these areas offers opportunities to foster new and mature disciples for our 21<sup>st</sup> Century mission."

On the new *Faith in Our Future* website is a video of the Bishop's pastoral message, a copy of the plan and a summary for download, information about the Diocese of Parramatta, resources for parishes, pastoral initiatives and new structures for mission. Visit: [www.faithinourfuture.org.au](http://www.faithinourfuture.org.au)

Bishop Anthony said the plan contains almost 100 suggestions for renewal. "Actions that will inspire parish pastoral councils, ministry groups, sacramental teams and welcomers are included," he said.

"Parishes are also invited to collaborate more often, and to share their wisdom and expertise. By working more closely, we can live our mission in a united way, minimise duplication and make the most of the resources we have."

In the 2011 national census, the Diocese had 332,000 Catholics out of a general population of about 1.1 million. Almost one in three of those living in the Diocese are Catholic – far more than the national average of 25.3%.

The Diocese is youthful by Australian standards. Almost one-third of Parramatta Catholics are under 19 years old. The median age is 35.1, compared to the national average of 38. In the 2011 Mass Count, the Diocese had a Mass attendance rate of 15.2%.

For more information visit: [www.faithinourfuture.org.au](http://www.faithinourfuture.org.au)

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