

Monday 15 July 2024

Diocese of Parramatta to open a new Parish in 2025 due to high demand. St Luke's Catholic Community, Marsden Park to become an official Parish with new Church.

As of 1 January 2025, St Luke's, Marsden Park, will be formally recognised and decreed the newest parish of the Diocese of Parramatta.

The parochial district, which is the first stage of development of a parish, was established by Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, on 22 December 2017, as a response to the exponential growth in Sydney's northwest.

Over the last six years, St Luke's has shown financial stability and growth of its congregation as evidence to formally establish a parish. The community has been using the facilities of St Luke's Catholic College for their Masses but parishioners have longed for a permanent place of worship. To date they have raised over \$500,000 for a new church.

Over the next 12 months, in partnership with the Diocese, the community is hoping to build a new hall on the designated church site that will serve as the initial place of worship before their church is formally erected. With the building of a permanent structure, the opportunity to celebrate Mass more frequently could become a reality.

Deacon Tony Hoban was appointed as Pastoral Director in January 2018 for a three-year term, working alongside his wife Annette and an advisory board of lay volunteers to build relationships, provide pastoral care and support to Catholics in the local community.

The community is fortunate to have dozens of supply priests from across the Diocese over its six years to provide the sacraments for the growing community.

With the transition to a parish, Deacon Tony and Annette will step down from their pastoral duties to spend more time with family and travel around the country.

Bishop Vincent commended Deacon Tony and Annette on their service.

"They have prioritised the care of people and the nurturing of relationships. This is evident in the way people are involved in the social and sacramental life of the community.

"Together, they embody the injunction of Our Lord that Christian ministries be best exercised not in isolation, but in partnership with others. Tony and Annette have pioneered a different model of pastoral care and leadership. As we move into a synodal way of being Church, I hope that deacon-led communities will add to the rich tapestry of Catholic pastoral leadership, said Bishop Vincent.

As of 1 January, Fr Gayan Thamel, the Episcopal Vicar for Migrant Chaplaincies, will be St Luke's first Parish Priest. This follows his appointment as Supervising Priest of the community in early 2024 whilst he was Parish Priest of the Parish of Richmond.



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MEDIA RELEASE

“St Luke’s will welcome Fr Gayan Thamel as its new incoming pastor. I trust that he will build on the work of Tony and Annette and the community can move forward towards greater things ahead,” said Bishop Vincent.

Bishop Vincent’s Note of Appreciation for Deacon Tony and Annette is below.

– ENDS –

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About the Diocese of Parramatta

The Diocese of Parramatta is the Catholic Church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains and is home to over 320,000 Catholics with 47 parishes. The Diocese educates more than 43,000 students across its 80 schools, employs more than 5,500 people and cares for thousands of people in need through its social services arm, Catholic Care.

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv was appointed the fourth Bishop of Parramatta in 2016. He is Australia’s first Asian-born Bishop, and the first Vietnamese-born Bishop to lead a Catholic Diocese outside of Vietnam. You can read more about [him here](#).



Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL
Bishop of Parramatta

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15 July 2024

Dear clergy and people,

I am writing to express my personal gratitude and that of the Diocese of Parramatta to Deacon Tony Hoban and his wife Annette as they conclude their time of service to St Luke's Parochial District.

In January 2018, I appointed Tony as the Pastoral Director of the new and burgeoning Catholic community at Marsden Park. It was probably the first time in Australia that a deacon was entrusted with the role, which for all intents and purposes, was akin to that of the Parish Priest. I did not do so because I did not have enough priests. I appointed the deacon and his wife because I believed they had the gifts required for the particular context in which the people of Marsden Park found themselves. It was critical that they be cared for and enabled to grow in their Catholic identity and mission that was yet to be established in what was a new suburb of Western Sydney.

Tony and Annette have done a stellar job at relationship and community building. They have prioritised the care of people and the nurturing of relationships. This is evident in the way people are involved in the social and sacramental life of the community. Even during the difficult years of the pandemic, they were united in prayers, charity and outreach. They held some of the most dynamic online worship sessions I ever witnessed.

What set the pastoral leadership of Tony and Annette apart was the way they ministered as a couple, each with the gifts unique to them. Together, they embody the injunction of our Lord that Christian ministries be best exercised not in isolation but in partnership with others. I am convinced that this is the sign of the times when Christian ministries are increasingly reimagined and revitalized by way of relational maturity, mutuality, collaboration and partnership. The celibate clergy can complement and indeed learn from these men and women as they seek to embody the ideal of Christian service in how they minister not only to others but also to each other.

Tony and Annette have pioneered a different model of pastoral care and leadership. As we move into a synodal way of being Church, I hope that deacon-led communities will add to the rich tapestry of the Catholic pastoral landscape rather than an aberration. In thanking them, I also thank the priests who have collaborated with them.

Tony is also the Vicar for Deacons in the Diocese of Parramatta. Under his leadership, we have grown our diaconate community into the biggest in Australia. Two years ago, we were also the first in the country to establish a Diaconate Council for the purpose of strengthening the formation, ministry and life of deacons and their wives in the diocese.

Tony and Annette will conclude nearly seven years of service to the people of St Luke's and more years in the Diocese of Parramatta. They deserve a well-earned break and down time with their extended family, particularly their grandchildren. I wish them every blessing as they move to the next phase of their life together.

St Luke's will welcome Fr Gayan Thamel as its new incoming Pastor. I trust that he will build on the work of Tony and Annette, and the community can move forward towards greater things ahead. May the Lord who journeys with us bring our endeavours to fulfilment.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in green ink, reading "+ Vincent Long Van Nguyen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv STL DD
Bishop of Parramatta