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Sod Turning at St Luke's Marsden Park Marks Start of New Building Project for Australia's Newest Parish

The turning of the first sod for the new parish building at St Luke's Catholic Parish in Marsden Park marks the start of an exciting project for the growing Catholic community in Sydney's northwest.

Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, officiated the ceremony alongside Fr Gayan Thamel, the newly appointed Parish Priest, and former Pastoral Director Deacon Tony Hoban and his wife Annette. Also present were Blacktown City Council Mayor Brad Bunting, St Luke's Catholic College Principal Kelly Bauer, and local community leaders, all highlighting the need for a dedicated parish space.

Bishop Vincent Long described the historic moment for local Catholics in Marsden Park – the second-largest religion in the suburb – as an “auspicious occasion” for the school, parish and community.

“It's not just a school for Catholics, but a school for everyone, much like the church, which exists not only for Catholics but for the good of society and everyone involved,” Bishop Vincent said.

“The church building is not just an added-on feature; it's going to be a focal point of the worshipping community, an anchor community, if you like, that will cement this whole enterprise,” he said.

“This partnership with the civic community is crucial, not just here in this particular locality, but throughout the great city of Blacktown, in order to build a stronger and better city, a stronger and better country.”

St Luke's was officially recognised as a parish of the Diocese of Parramatta in January 2025, having grown rapidly since its establishment in 2018. Today, approximately 900 members are active in the parish.

Stage 1 of the building includes a 200-seat Parish Hall, Parish Office, and amenities. It will be located on the corner of Frontier Ave and Northbourne Drive, with access via a designated driveway.

Fr Gayan Thamel expressed his excitement and gratitude.

“This project marks a new chapter for our community, one that will unite us in worship and fellowship,” Fr Gayan said.



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“It is a joy to witness this beginning, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported us along the way.”

Over \$720K has been raised, with the generous support of local parishioners and a grant from the NSW Government’s Community Building Partnership.

Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, Minister for Western Sydney and Member for Londonderry, The Hon. Prue Car MP, said turning the sod for the new place of worship marked a “significant step forward”, reflecting “years of dedication, faith and hard work”.

“This project will provide a spiritual home for our Catholic community in Marsden Park and create a welcoming space for connection, reflection and celebration,” Ms Car said.

“Congratulations once again and I really look forward to seeing the finished project later this year.”

The Mayor of Blacktown City, Brad Bunting said, “Marsden Park is one of Blacktown City’s fastest-growing communities, and it’s wonderful to see this project come to life for St Luke’s Parish. A dedicated parish space will provide not only a place of worship but also become a meeting place for connection and support for local families.

“Blacktown City Council is proud to work alongside the Diocese of Parramatta, the NSW Government, and the local community to support projects that strengthen our city’s diverse and vibrant communities. I look forward to seeing the positive impact this new parish space will have for generations to come.”

The project is expected to be completed by August 2025.

For more information, visit the St Luke’s Parish website:

<https://stlukemarsdenpark.org.au/buildingproject/>

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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 and churches. The Diocese educates more than 43,000 students across its 82 schools, employs more than 5,000 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](#)