



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

7 March 2024

To the parishes and school communities of:

- St James Gardenvale, St Joan of Arc Brighton and St Finbar's Brighton East;
- St Mary's Hampton, Immaculate Heart of Mary Hampton East and Sacred Heart Sandringham;
- St Agnes Highett and Our Lady of the Assumption Cheltenham.

Re: Your Invitation to Participate in the Parish Amalgamation and Renewal Process

Further to Archbishop Peter's message to you in early February, I have been working with your parish priests and the archdiocesan staff to design a community engagement process to facilitate the parish amalgamations.

We are fortunate this process is beginning during Lent, as this is the time in our Church year when we are invited to deepen our awareness of how God is prompting us to take the next step in our walk of faith. Attuning our ears to God's voice within us will be essential as we embark on this momentous change to the parishes that have nourished and supported our faith journey. Each of us will have wisdom to share as we work together to create new parish communities wherein everyone is welcomed and belong.

The community engagement process comprises three phases:

1. In the period between now and Easter, we encourage each one of you to do two things:
 - Meet the people in your parish and the other parish(es) that will be part of your new community. This may be as simple as introducing yourself to someone you don't know before or after Mass, attending Mass at a different time or in another Church in your cluster, or participating in a group activity with people you don't know or wouldn't normally talk to.
 - Find some time to be still and listen for God's voice within you. Creating a new shared identity will ask everyone to draw on all of their senses and ways of knowing. For many of us, the busyness of our normal daily lives leaves little room for the time and patience discernment requires. Please note you will find some meditation resources on your parish website if you don't have a current practice.

Celebrating the Easter Triduum as one community will mark the end of this phase.

Very Reverend Joseph Caddy AM – Vicar General

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The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and human dignity of children, young people and adults.

2. In the period between Easter and Pentecost, you will be invited to participate in workshops to help you discern your identity as a new parish. As your new purpose, values and behaviours become clear, you will be in a position to consider a name for your parish that is consistent with the Naming Policy and brings with it the charism needed to animate your community.

The shortlist of names will be submitted to Archbishop Peter by Pentecost. Preparation and posting of the formal Decree of Amalgamation will occur following Archbishop Peter's naming decision.

3. Pentecost marks the beginning of the third – community renewal – phase.

Embracing the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, this phase starts with forming a leadership team for each of the new parishes to translate your identity into a vision and concrete pastoral and financial plans.

Forming people for mission, and finding new and innovative ways for parishes to collaborate with each other, with our schools and with the ministries of care and service across the greater Bayside area will also be at the heart of our renewal.

Information about the dates and times of the activities for your parish in each of these phases will be communicated by your parish priest.

If you have any general suggestions or feedback on the community engagement process as it unfolds, please feel free to communicate with me using the mission@cam.org.au email address. We will need to keep learning and building our capacity in change management as we strive to *Take the Way of the Gospel* in response to the challenges of today's world.

With every blessing,

Yours sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Caddy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr Joe Caddy AM
VICAR GENERAL

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