



We proclaim a crucified Christ

1Cor1.23

20 May 2023

Christ's faithful of Bayside Catholic Mission, East Brighton Parish, Cheltenham & Highett Parishes, and Mentone-Parkdale Parish

Dear friends,

For some two years now, the Bayside Catholic Mission (BCM) – comprising the Parishes of Gardenvale, Brighton, Hampton, Sandringham, Ricketts Point, and more recently Hampton East – has been on a journey of discernment and reflection towards its future missionary life. This journey has also touched, to varying degrees, the parishes surrounding BCM – Brighton East, Cheltenham & Highett and Mentone-Parkdale. Together, these form the local faith communities comprising the broader Bayside area. All your communities are part of the broader missionary journey of our Archdiocese towards building more viable, vibrant and vital faith communities, which we know as Take the Way of the Gospel.

Last Tuesday evening Fr Joe Caddy, Vicar General of the Archdiocese, Bishop Tony Ireland, Auxiliary Bishop for the Southern Region, and I met with the Pastors of this Bayside area (Frs Cartwright, Ford, Fox, Mathieson, and Ranson) to reflect together on how best to provide for the care of God's people in your area. It was a most cordial and productive night. There was a great willingness among all the priests to be open to the future, and to consider the best way of utilising the resources available. I thank them most sincerely for this generosity of heart, and their care for attending to the communities they lead.

From this gathering, there was agreement in principle that the circumstances were right to consider a re-configuring of the parishes comprising the Bayside area into three groupings: north, central and south. I hasten to say that no decisions have been made in this regard, but it is time to recognise the need to move on this soon, and to now invite your direct and considered engagement in discerning the optimal future arrangements.

I will now ask your Pastors to open-up local conversations with you and your neighbouring communities to hear your thoughts on the future, and I will consult with the leadership of the Archdiocese as we seek to walk together.

Once a decision is reached on the shape of the parish groupings, it will then be the responsibility of each new parish-grouping to work towards the best model of governance, the need for places

of worship within each group, and set forth a pastoral plan for achieving this. I will also be speaking individually with each of the priests to discern the future with them.

I thank all the leaders – clergy and laity – within the wider Bayside area for their willingness to be part of this conversation.

Please keep each other in your prayers, as I will do, that we might work together to build up the Body of Christ in the wider Bayside area of Melbourne.

May the Holy Spirit accompany us always, and be the loving presence that guides our way with strength and wisdom.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'P' followed by a smaller 'A' and a long, flowing horizontal line that ends in a small loop.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne