



*We proclaim a crucified Christ*

1Cor1.23

24 May 2022

Dear Parishioners of the Parish of Holy Eucharist and St Mary's Malvern East,

My prayerful greetings to you as we approach the great feast of Pentecost.

As you may be aware, the Vincentian Fathers after 130 years of dedicated service will be leaving the Parish of St Joseph's Malvern on 31 July 2022.

It will come as no surprise to you that the Vincentian community is experiencing and operating under the same constraints that can be seen across areas of the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Over recent decades, as we have experienced the steady decline in active participation in parish life coupled with a reduction in the number of ordained clergy available for parish ministry, changes in parish configuration have been undertaken. Some parishes like East Malvern have been amalgamated, some have been partnered under the care of a single parish priest, and, more recently, multiple parishes have been brought into a larger family or Mission under the care of two or more priests appointed to work together.

*Take the Way of the Gospel* invites us into a journey of listening and learning and walking together to reimagine our present way of doing things in the face of the changing circumstances in which we now live so that:

- The mission of the Gospel is at the heart of our life, worship and outreach;
- Local faith communities are arranged to allow for them to flourish;
- Our faith communities are effectively resourced spiritually, ministerially and materially.

In the spirit of *Take the Way of the Gospel*, I have asked your Parish Priest, Monsignor Stuart Hall to take over the pastoral care of the Malvern Parish from 1 August as Parish Priest of both St Joseph's and Holy Eucharist/St Mary's. It is also my intention to appoint an Assistant Priest to the Malvern East and Malvern parishes to help meet the sacramental and pastoral needs.

I am aware in September 2016 St Mary's (Malvern East) and Holy Eucharist (Chadstone) came together as one faith community. The Archdiocese appreciated the efforts of all involved, in particular the united way in which you demonstrated your commitment to working together to serve the needs of your people.

Whilst this proposal is for a partnership at this stage rather than an amalgamation, you will understand from your own experience that navigating change can be challenging, with loss of the familiar and uncertainty about the future. I acknowledge my request engages you in the

change process once more and I ask for your openness in implementing these new arrangements.

Over the coming weeks, I would encourage the parish priests of the two parishes to work together with the parish councils to determine how these shared arrangements of a single parish priest might best be supported administratively for the most effective pastoral care of your parish community.

I would also encourage you to draw on your experience of what helped in the success of your amalgamation and pitfalls that can be avoided, so the outcome for both parishes is as positive as possible.

I wish you every blessing in the works of your parish and place our ongoing efforts towards parish renewal into the hands of the Lord as we together walk our journey of faith.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter A. Comensoli', with a small cross symbol at the end of the signature.

**Most Rev Peter A Comensoli**  
Archbishop of Melbourne

