



We proclaim a crucified Christ

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14 December 2025
3rd Sunday of Advent

Announcement: Melbourne Archdiocesan Synod

Dear friends in Christ, the faithful of Melbourne,

On this Third Sunday of Advent, in the days following the *Australian Catholic Youth Festival*, and as we ready our hearts for the coming of the Lord at Christmas, I write to share with you an important moment in the life of our local Church in Melbourne.

This Jubilee Year of Hope has been a time of great grace for us. Throughout the year, I have been meeting with clergy and lay leaders, listening to them, and discerning with them as to how the Archdiocese of Melbourne might respond to the call to hold an Archdiocesan Synod.

From this time of prayer, grace and reflection, I now wish to share that I have initiated preparations for a Synod to be held in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in 2026. I have asked Bishop Rene Ramirez RCJ to assist me in leading this process, drawing on the *Pathways for the Implementation Phase of the Synod 2025–2028*, endorsed by Pope Leo XIV. I have also appointed Ms Cathy Jenkins as Synod Program Lead.

Over recent years, the whole Church has been invited into a renewed way of walking together. This way—*synodality*—is rooted in our baptism and asks each of us, whether lay, religious, or ordained, to listen deeply to the Holy Spirit and to one another. This is to be “the ordinary way in which the Church seeks to live and work in our time.” (International Theological Commission)

Here in Australia, this journey has been unfolding for many years. The Fifth Plenary Council (2021–2022) arose from a nationwide effort of prayerful listening and discernment. We then contributed to the global Synod (2021–2024), which invited us to reflect on how we live communion, foster participation, and carry out Christ’s mission in the Church.

I am grateful for the many people across the Archdiocese who took part in these consultations. You have offered insights filled with faith in Christ, love for the Church, and hope for our future. The fruits of *Take the Way of the Gospel*, the development of parish formation through the *Bethany Way*, and the vibrant witness of young people at the recent *Australian Catholic Youth Festival* likewise continue to shape our discernment.

Three themes will be taken up in the Synod process:

- **Young Discipleship**
- **Missionary Leadership**
- **Formation and Participation**

These three themes have not arisen in isolation. They have emerged consistently and clearly through all the listening, discernment, and consultation undertaken in recent years across the Archdiocese, including the Plenary Council process, the global Synod, and our local pastoral initiatives. Together, they will now form the foundational focus of our Archdiocesan Synod. They are vital to the missionary endeavours of the people of God in Melbourne because they speak directly to how faith is awakened, how leadership is exercised in service, and how every baptised person is formed and enabled to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church. When these three are alive and flourishing, they bring life, vitality, and vibrancy to the heart of the Gospel as it is lived and proclaimed in our parishes, families, schools, and communities throughout our world.

The first step in our journey toward the Synod will be the establishment of a Synod Commission. Following prayerful discernment and consultation—including with the Council of Priests—I will invite the Commission to help us explore the three foundational themes and prepare us for the journey ahead.

More information about the Archdiocesan Synod process will be shared with you in early 2026. For now, I simply ask for your prayers and your openness to journey together as the Church in Melbourne—across our parishes, apostolates, works and communities.

May this Advent season renew within us a spirit of hope and a desire to welcome the Lord who comes to dwell among us.

With every grace and blessing,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter A Comensoli', written in a cursive style.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne