



Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL
Bishop of Parramatta

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Dear brothers and sisters in our Blue Mountains parishes,

I want to send my greetings to you on the days close to the beginning of the Holy Season of Lent, a time when we are called to undertake a wilderness experience and reflect on what God is calling us to do individually and collectively.

As you are aware, the retirement of Fr Paul Slyney, the Parish Priest of Lawson is approaching, this definitely will be a big change for the Parish of Lawson, but his retirement has also brought into focus the future and sustainability of our three parishes in the Upper Blue Mountains – Blackheath, Lawson and Katoomba.

With this in mind, I have asked our Vicar General Fr Fernando Montano and members of the Mission Enhancement Team, Michael Reid and Alison Ryan, to engage with these communities in order to trying to understand more the reality and uniqueness of your local faith communities.

The purpose of this process is to ensure the ongoing viability of these communities in the Blue Mountains. I know that each community has its own unique identity, history and charism. We are committed to preserving them for the benefit of present and future generations.

This can be achieved through a new way of Pastoral ministry that ensure the ongoing presence of clergy in these communities but in a new and more collaborative way. Through this initiative I look forward to seeing how we can live out our Diocesan Pastoral Plan for a Synodal Church which calls for ongoing renewal, and elevates every person's baptismal call to missionary discipleship, answering Jesus's call to follow Him, renewing in us, the desire to be disciples who work together for the growth and nourishment of our faith communities.

In our Pastoral Plan we are invited to a way of being Church that is respectful of one another's gifts and constantly in awe of the sacredness of God's creation. I know that the Blue Mountains communities in particular, have a special appreciation of God's creation.

I pray that in the weeks ahead, we will participate in this process with the understanding that we are all co-workers in building the Kingdom of God, surrendering fears, and embracing the hope for the future where God's love is known by all in every generation to come.

I thank you for your commitment to follow Christ and enhance your local parish community.

Yours sincerely in Christ

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