


# The Church in Armidale

*Unity in Diversity*

Saints Mary and Joseph Cathedral Parish  
Armidale, NSW







*Dear Friend,*

*Grace and peace to you in this Jubilee Year: Pilgrims of hope.*

## **UNITY IN DIVERSITY**

As the Cathedral Parish of Saints Mary and Joseph, we are blessed with a rich and proud history of faith, worship, and service that has shaped not only our parish family but also the wider life of our community and our Diocese. At the same time, we find ourselves living in a vibrant and changing context, marked by the beautiful diversity of cultures, generations, experiences and expressions of faith that make up our community today. This is both a gift and an invitation—a gift to be cherished and celebrated, and an invitation to walk together as we seek to live out the mission entrusted to us by Christ.

## **A NEW ‘MOMENT’**

Our late Holy Father, Pope Francis, has called the Church to a renewed spirit of *synodality*—that ancient way of being Church which listens deeply, speaks courageously, and discerns prayerfully. Synodality is not merely another structure or program, but an attitude of heart: one that values every voice, honours the Spirit at work in each person, and seeks communion through listening and dialogue. His vision, which is now being carried forward by Pope Leo, is a reminder that we do not walk alone; we walk *together*, guided by the Spirit.

With this in mind, I wish to share with you an exciting new step for our parish. Rather than continuing with the conventional model of a Parish Pastoral Council, I believe the time is right for us to embrace a more inclusive and participatory way of gathering, sharing, and discerning about the life and mission of our parish.



## And so we will begin a process of becoming *a Parish-in-Council* (PiC)

What does this mean? Quite simply, it means inviting the whole parish into council. Instead of a small group speaking on behalf of many, all are encouraged to gather, to listen, to share, and to contribute their wisdom and experience. Parish-in-Council is not about replacing leadership—it is about enriching and strengthening it. It is about recognising that, through baptism, each of us has a part to play in the unfolding mission of our parish. Every voice is valued, every perspective matters, and together we can discover how the Holy Spirit is calling us to grow in faith, service, and love.

*At the heart of PiC lies the art of listening—  
a listening that is deeper than simply hearing words,  
but one that seeks to understand the hopes,  
struggles, and faith of others.*

At the parish level, this kind of attentive listening creates space for every voice to be valued, especially those who may feel overlooked or unheard. It fosters genuine communion, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak through the diversity of experiences within the community. By listening to one another with openness and humility, the parish becomes not just a place where decisions are made, but a living body where discernment, unity, and shared mission can truly flourish.

Our very first Parish-in-Council gathering will be held on **Saturday, 29 November 2025**. This will be a moment of grace for our community: an opportunity to celebrate our unity in diversity, to rediscover the art of listening, and to dream together about how we can continue to live our mission as the Cathedral Parish at the heart of Armidale.





More information will follow in the weeks ahead, but for now I warmly and personally invite *each and every one of you*—individuals, young and old, long standing parishioners and newcomers - to be part of this new chapter. Your presence, your prayer, your story, and your insights are vital. By coming together in this way, we will not only strengthen the bonds of our parish family but also open ourselves more fully to the Spirit who makes all things new.

At this point I would be most grateful if you could express your interest in attending so that planning can progress. At the moment I only require a sense of your willingness to attend and you can express this in the following ways:

- By emailing [armidalepic@armidale.catholic.org.au](mailto:armidalepic@armidale.catholic.org.au) leaving your name/s and email address/es
- By calling the Parish Office on 02-67722218
- By using this link and answering the questions:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C7GV3CH> or scanning the QR code below.

*Let us be bold enough to trust that the Spirit is leading us. Let us be humble enough to listen deeply to one another. And let us be joyful enough to celebrate the richness of the gifts we each bring.*

I entrust this new beginning to the intercession of our patrons, Saints Mary and Joseph, who listened, discerned, and trusted God's call in their own lives. May they guide us as we embark on this journey of communion, participation, and mission.

*With every blessing,*

*Fr Damien Locke*

Fr Damien Locke

Cathedral Administrator

