

“I AM WITH YOU”

Matthew 28:20

JOURNEYING IN HOPE AND PRAYER AS WE AWAIT OUR NEW BISHOP

FOREWORD

Our Lord Jesus Christ promises to be with us always. He is with us whenever we gather in His name. He also fulfils this promise by calling bishops to serve the people of God and continue His mission.

We, as the people of God in the Diocese of Bunbury, are in a unique time in our church life. We are awaiting the appointment of a new Bishop of Bunbury. This is a time of waiting, of preparation, of renewal and of growth. How can we enrich this time of anticipation? We are called to pray, reflect and discern during this time.

The following prayers and reflections in this resource material will help us prepare and await our new bishop. We are encouraged to reflect, pray and prepare whenever we gather as Church - at liturgies, meetings, events and gatherings.

Throughout this booklet are also teachings of the Church regarding the Office of the Bishop for formation and reflection.



“Jesus Christ, the eternal Shepherd, established His holy Church, having sent forth the apostles as He Himself had been sent by the Father; and He willed that their successors, namely the bishops, should be shepherds in His Church even to the consummation of the world.”

Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 18.

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“A bishop, since he is sent by the Father to govern his family, must keep before his eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to lay down his life for his sheep. Being taken from among men, and himself beset with weakness, he is able to have compassion on the ignorant and erring. Let him not refuse to listen to his subjects, whom he cherishes as his true sons and exhorts to cooperate readily with him. As having one day to render an account for their souls, he takes care of them by his prayer, preaching, and all the works of charity, and not only of them but also of those who are not yet of the one flock, who also are commended to him in the Lord. Since, like Paul the Apostle, he is debtor to all men, let him be ready to preach the Gospel to all, and to urge his faithful to apostolic and missionary activity. But the faithful must cling to their bishop, as the Church does to Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father, so that all may be of one mind through unity, and abound to the glory of God.”

WELCOME NOTE FROM THE DELEGATE TO THE APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Sisters and Brothers in
Christ,

As we begin our journey through this Season of Advent, the theme of 'waiting' has become more significant as we eagerly await the announcement of our new bishop. In this period of 'waiting,' we certainly wouldn't like to miss the woods for the trees in our efforts to prepare ourselves worthily for the coming of our Lord.

The day after I have completed trekking the Camino de Santiago in 2008, I found myself queueing up for a free breakfast in front of a prestigious hotel in Santiago de Compostela in Spain, the usual final destination of the nearly 800 kilometres of trekking starting from St. Jean Pied de Port in the foothills of the Pyrenees, France. When I got to the hotel around 6 in the morning, there were already several people waiting at the hotel's entrance door. We all waited for a little over an hour before someone from the hotel came out and started sorting us out. He began counting in Spanish while approaching the people in the queue, "uno, dos tres....nueve, diez" and then stopped. I was hoping to hear the word, 'once' (eleven) but it never came. He was taking only 10 people into the hotel for the free breakfast and I was unfortunately the 11th person.

Though I didn't get the free breakfast I was hoping for, I was glad however that 10 people had free breakfast that day. I could have sulked all day for missing out, but there was something that I was serenely waiting for since I started the Camino de Santiago, something far greater than a 'free breakfast.' After twenty-six days of trekking, I was looking forward to the Pilgrim's Mass at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. I was hoping that they will let me at least concelebrate considering I didn't bring any credentials (a.k.a. celebret). I was so grateful for being welcomed by the Spanish priest who was celebrating the Mass then at 12 noon. Despite not having my celebret, he allowed me to concelebrate and even asked if I could say a petition in the Prayer of the Faithful in English which I gladly said 'yes.'



While our diocese is in sede vacante (a church term which means a diocese is without a bishop), many or some people maybe channelling their energy towards thinking about who our next bishop will be. Some maybe hoping that the vacant cathedra (bishop's chair) will be occupied very soon. While these predispositions may genuinely manifest people's care for our diocese, we shouldn't however let our 'waiting' lead us to miss seeing the woods for the trees. The truth of the matter is, while the cathedra may be vacant at the moment, it is certainly not the only chair around the table. Our 'waiting' can channel our hopes into disappointments most especially when the outcome of our 'waiting' does not quite meet our expectations. Yet, we are free to wait for the coming of the Christ, who certainly sits with us at the Table of the Eucharist without fail. We keep his words to heart when he said: "I am with you always, until the end of time" (Mt. 28,20). The Lord will never disappoint us. He will be present even during this period of waiting when our church prays for the selection of our new bishop. Christ will be the one responsible in sending us the bishop that our diocese needs.

Committing to seeing the woods for the trees only highlights the importance of having a bishop around the table. Through a bishop, we experience the fidelity of Christ to His Church. When we begin to see the woods for the trees, we begin then to appreciate that Christ is equally present to our bishop and to all of us. We experience this most profoundly as we gather as a synodal church in the Eucharist.

We, as a church then, effectively hope that, paraphrasing the words of Pope Francis in his homily delivered on the 17th of October 2021, whoever will be our new bishop will never forget that he too has "been taken from the flock" and not from an elite selection of qualified candidates. Pope Francis was highlighting the imperative for bishops to be 'good shepherds' willing to walk closely with their priests and with the People of God entrusted to their pastoral care.

May you find this document, "I Am with You," a helpful resource material for your prayer and reflection both personally and in your parish community as you gather around the Table of the Eucharist to pray for the church's discernment of our new bishop. We thank Aaron Faure of the Office for Evangelisation for his efforts in putting this document together and in bringing us in communion with each other during this period of hopeful 'waiting.' God bless.

In Our Lord,



Rev Fr Pierangelo dela Cruz Repuyan, PhD
Delegate to the Apostolic Administrator



INTRODUCTORY NOTES FROM THE DIOCESAN EVANGELISATION COORDINATOR

“I AM WITH YOU.”

The title of this document is taken from Jesus’ last words to the disciples before His Ascension. Jesus gives the disciples the great commission and in His next words promises to be with them always.

Jesus also promises us that when two or three are gathered in His name, He will also be there with us.

During this time of waiting, preparation, transition and renewal it is important to remember that Jesus is always with us also. Like the disciples our mission now is one of preparation, of openness and of transition. At the same time, we are being called to be a more synodal church by Pope Francis - a call we have already begun to answer with our own Diocesan Synod and Plenary Council and continue to answer with the Spiritual Conversations.

I hope this document helps us all as we journey towards the renewal prompted by Holy Spirit. This renewal will be realised through whoever will be the new Bishop of Bunbury. Let us pray and journey together during this time and always be cognizant of the presence of Christ in our midst who says to us always “I am with you.”



Aaron Faure
Diocesan Evangelisation Coordinator
Office for Evangelisation



WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

On the 30th of June 2023, Pope Francis accepted the resignation of the Most Reverend Gerard J. Holohan, DD, Bishop Emeritus of Bunbury. Bishop Emeritus Holohan had served faithfully as Diocesan Bishop for over 22 years being appointed by Pope St. John Paul II in 2001. We keep Bishop Emeritus Holohan in our prayers at this time. We now await and prepare for the appointment of a new Bishop of Bunbury.



This time is traditionally known as *sede vacante* which translates as the “the see is vacant”. It identifies that there is no Bishop of Bunbury at this time. The Diocese of Bunbury is in a time of transition and waiting as the Holy Spirit guides the Church and calls forth a new Bishop. It is also a time of preparation and renewal for all of us. Therefore, it is important that we gather as community and in our communities to pray together.

The process of the appointment of a new bishop has several stages. It is a time for discernment and consultation on the needs of the Diocese. Those tasked with discerning who should be the new Bishop of Bunbury also need support and prayers. The appointment of the new bishop is made by the Holy Father Pope Francis.

The Most Reverend Timothy Costelloe, SDB, DD, Archbishop of Perth, has been appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Bunbury. Archbishop Costelloe is tasked with overseeing the administration and daily running of the Diocese until a new bishop is appointed. We keep Archbishop Costelloe in our prayers also at this time. To assist the Apostolic Administrator in the governance and pastoral care of the diocese, Fr. Pierreangelo dela Cruz Repuyan, PhD, has been appointed as Delegate to the Apostolic Administrator.

“For it is the duty of all bishops to promote and to safeguard the unity of faith and the discipline common to the whole Church, to instruct the faithful to love for the whole mystical body of Christ, especially for its poor and sorrowing members and for those who are suffering persecution for justice's sake, and finally to promote every activity that is of interest to the whole Church, especially that the faith may take increase and the light of full truth appear to all men.”

Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, no. 23.

PRAYERS FOR OUTSIDE OF THE LITURGY

The following prayers are for use outside of liturgical celebrations such as meetings, gatherings, retreats and more. They can be prayed at anytime or be adapted to specific needs where appropriate.

Shepherding God,

You reveal your way of unfailing love in the image of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost, shows compassion, knows and is known by the sheep and lays down his life for them.

We, your people of the Bunbury Diocese, are without a bishop to shepherd us.

We ask that your Holy Spirit who moves through this great south land, inspire the choice of our new bishop, empower his 'yes' and open our hearts in hospitality and love.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help: Pray for us.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop: Pray for us.

St Patrick: Pray for us.

"The bishops should present Christian doctrine in a manner adapted to the needs of the times, that is to say, in a manner that will respond to the difficulties and questions by which people are especially burdened and troubled. They should also guard that doctrine, teaching the faithful to defend and propagate it. In propounding this doctrine they should manifest the maternal solicitude of the Church toward all men whether they be believers or not. With a special affection they should attend upon the poor and the lower classes to whom the Lord sent them to preach the Gospel."

PRAYERS FOR OUTSIDE OF THE LITURGY

The following prayers are for use outside of liturgical celebrations such as meetings, gatherings, retreats and more. They can be prayed at anytime or be adapted to specific needs where appropriate.

Lord God,

We pray for the Diocese of Bunbury as we await and prepare for the appointment of a new bishop. Send your Spirit on our Church and open our hearts and minds to your Will.

We ask that your Spirit guides those who are discerning the needs of our Church and selecting the pastor needed to respond to them. Give them wisdom, understanding and counsel.

We pray that your Spirit anoints our new bishop so that he can work towards renewal in the Church, unite our people, and lead us faithfully in love, truth and goodness. We pray you give him a shepherd's heart and fill him with fortitude, wisdom and mercy.

We pray in thanksgiving for Bishop Emeritus Gerard Holohan and his service to us as Bishop of Bunbury. We pray also for Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, our Apostolic Administrator, during this time.

During this time of change and transition, we ask you Lord God to guide us, the people of the Diocese of Bunbury, and sustain and animate us with your Spirit. Help us to be open to your spirit and the leadership of our new bishop.

Saint Mary of the Cross Mackillop: Pray for Us.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL FOR LITURGY

These prayers can be used for liturgical celebrations during the Prayers of the Faithful. You can use all or some of these prayers or create your own prayers.

For those who will select our new bishop...May they be open to the Holy Spirit as they faithfully discern.

L: We pray to the Lord. R: Lord Hear Us.

For the one called to be the next Bishop for the Diocese of Bunbury ... May he be empowered to answer the call, and be given the gifts and grace needed for the leadership and care of our Diocese.

L: We pray to the Lord. R: Lord Hear Us.

For all the people of the Diocese of Bunbury ... that at this time we may be open to the Holy Spirit. .

L: We pray to the Lord. R: Lord Hear Us.

For the Clergy and Religious of the diocese ... that they may continue to serve faithfully the people of God as entrusted to their pastoral care.

L: We pray to the Lord. R: Lord Hear Us.

For the Most Reverend Gerard Holohan, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Bunbury, that he may enjoy rest and retirement after his service and leadership.

L: We pray to the Lord. R: Lord Hear Us.

For Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, our Apostolic Administrator ... May he have the strength to oversee and lead the Diocese, along with his other responsibilities, in this time of transition and waiting.

L: We pray to the Lord. R: Lord Hear our Prayer.

"In exercising their office of father and pastor, bishops should stand in the midst of their people as those who serve. Let them be good shepherds who know their sheep and whose sheep know them. Let them be true fathers who excel in the spirit of love and solicitude for all and to whose divinely conferred authority all gratefully submit themselves. Let them so gather and mold the whole family of their flock that everyone, conscious of his own duties, may live and work in the communion of love."

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS AND SYNODALITY

Pope Francis has called on the whole church to become more synodal.

Synodality means “walking together.” We

have experienced synodality from our own Diocesan Synod in 2019, the Plenary Council in 2022 and the current Synod of Bishops in 2023. A key practice of synods is the Spiritual Conversations.


Spiritual Conversations is the practice of actively, openly and humbly speaking, listening and sharing with others. It is through Spiritual Conversations that we can listen to and discern with each other what the Holy Spirit is trying to say to us.

HOW TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/en/EN_Step_6_Spiritual-Conversation.pdf

- **Listen actively and attentively**
- **Listen to others without judgment**
- **Pay attention not only to the words, but also to the tone and feelings of the one who is speaking**
- **Avoid the temptation of using the time to prepare what you will say instead of listening**
- **Speak intentionally**
- **Express your experiences, thoughts, and feelings as clearly as you can**
- **Listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak**
- **Monitor possible tendencies to be self-centred when speaking**

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS AND SYNODALITY



Key to this process is a sense of prayer, reflection and discernment. There should be as little interruption as possible and groups should flow easily from one step to another as much as possible. It is important that no one is interrupted or responded to immediately, however, participants are welcome to take notes and refer to them in the later steps.

On the next page you will see a diagram outlining steps for a spiritual conversation. On the pages following there are multiple Scripture Passages and some reflection questions. You can use one of these at a time for prayer, reflection and spiritual conversations.

“Let bishops, therefore, make every effort to have the faithful actively support and promote works of evangelization and the apostolate. Let them strive, moreover, to see to it that suitable sacred ministers as well as auxiliaries, both religious and lay, be prepared for the missions and other areas suffering from a lack of clergy.”

Second Vatican Council, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, No. 6.

STEP 1 – GATHERING

- Bring everyone together.
- Ensure everyone introduces themselves (if they do not already know each other) for 1 or two minutes.
- As a group and as individuals prepare to enter the Spiritual Conversation.

STEP 2 – REFLECTION

- Begin with the reflection piece. This may be Scripture, spiritual writing, reflection questions, music – anything that can serve as a catalyst for reflection and conversation.
- Run through the piece once. Pause for a short silence.
- Run through the piece again.

STEP 3 – SILENT PRAYER & REFLECTION

- Pause in silence for individual prayer and reflection.
- This is a time for group members to collect their thoughts and try to discern what the Holy Spirit may be saying to them.
- A minimum of 3 minutes should be given to this.

STEP 4 – SHARING

- Everyone shares using this starting sentence, “In my reflection today.....”
- Everyone should be given a chance to speak without any interruption. No responses should be made to what anyone says at this time.
- No one should speak more than 3 minutes and a timer should be used to ensure everyone has equal time.
- Once everyone has spoken the group should pause for prayer and reflection.

STEP 5 – LISTENING

- Everyone shares what they heard in the voice of the group. What struck me as I listened to the others? What did I hear and feel? What was the Spirit saying through this group?
- Each person should begin saying, “In the group I heard ... and it left me feeling...”
- They should not just restate or continue their points from the previous step.
- Everyone should be given a chance to speak without any interruption. No responses should be made to what anyone says at this time.
- No one should speak more than 2 minutes and a timer should be used to ensure everyone has equal time.
- Once everyone has spoken the group should pause for prayer and reflection.

STEP 6 – FREE FLOW CONVERSATIONS

- It is now time for free-flowing conversation. There is no speaking order or time limits.
- It is a time to clarify, ask questions and respond. If possible there may a way to gain some consensus or identify areas of tensions.
- Try to summarise the discussion if possible.
- Once the conversation has finished conclude with a prayer.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

All Scripture taken from:

New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition, copyright © 1989, 1993 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

"In order to be able to look more closely to the welfare of the faithful according to the condition of each one, bishops should strive to become duly acquainted with their needs in the social circumstances in which they live. Therefore, they ought to employ suitable methods, especially social research. They should manifest their concern for everyone, no matter what their age, condition, or nationality, be they natives, strangers, or foreigners. In exercising this pastoral care they should preserve for their faithful the share proper to them in Church affairs; they should also respect their duty and right of actively collaborating in the building up of the Mystical Body of Christ -

Second Vatican Council, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, No. 16.



Matthew 28:16 – 20 The Commissioning of the Disciples

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

John 16:13 – 20 – Peter's Declaration about Jesus

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.



Harvest is Great, the Labourers Few

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."



John 21:15 – 19 – Jesus and Peter

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."



John 13:1 – 20 – Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Each of these reflection questions are designed to help us on the journey towards the announcement of our new Bishop of Bunbury. Spend some time praying and reflecting on each question. You may like to come back to these questions as we progress on this journey together.

Question 1

What can we do to open our ourselves and our community to the renewal and guidance of the Holy Spirit during this time?

Question 2

How can we prepare for a new Bishop of Bunbury?

Question 3

What would the new Bishop of Bunbury need from us, the people of the diocese, to carry out His mission?



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Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 18.



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Matthew 28:20

