



## *Speaking the truth in love*

*Eph 4:15*

Dear People of Blacktown

I write to you to announce the erection of the new Parish of Mary Queen of the Family, Blacktown, which will bring to a formal conclusion the period of consultation and planning regarding the two former parishes of St Patrick and St Michael.

In making this announcement I am aware of the long and gracious history of the Catholic Community in the Blacktown area which began over 160 years ago through the hard work of several colonial families. These together with Archdeacon McEnroe established the community of St Brigid's Church on the Old Western Highway. Stones of this building are held at St Michael's Church to remind us of such a courageous heritage.

As the Catholic Community grew and diversified, many other churches and chapels were also established, the earliest of which was St Patrick's at Blacktown which later moved to Allawah Street, taking with it the historic graves from St Patrick's Church.

The growth of the Catholic Community in the area expanded to include numerous ethnic groups from Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Egypt, the Continent of Africa and elsewhere. Such a thriving multi-racial faith community speaks to the faith of the people and their trust in God's providence in the future.

In response to such "faith in our future", the establishment of the new parish of Mary Queen of the Family, Blacktown, from the previous parishes of St Patrick and St Michael is a sign of hope. It will allow us to bring together and focus the pastoral energies of the whole community. This has been prominent in our thinking throughout the pastoral planning process.

As the Blacktown area continues to grow, it is my hope that this new and focused pastoral zeal - this exchange of gifts - of all the Catholic people in the area will provide a great resource for spreading the Gospel message through the surrounding district.

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Most Reverend Anthony Fisher OP, DD BA LIB BTheol DPhil  
Bishop of Parramatta

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Diocesan Office, Level 2, 12 Victoria Road, Parramatta, NSW 2150  
PO Box 3066 North Parramatta NSW 1750 Australia  
• Tel: (+61 2) 8838 3400 • Fax: (+61 2) 9630 4813 • [bishop@parra.catholic.org.au](mailto:bishop@parra.catholic.org.au)

I recognise that many faithful and generous families past and present have contributed to such great growth. I recognise and acknowledge the hard work of many dedicated priests and religious and I thank God for His many graces through such wonderful and evangelising ministers and families. It is my hope that under the patronage of Mary Queen of the Family, the Catholic Community of the Blacktown area will grow in its mission to bring the message of Christ in all its fullness to every person.

I pray, too, that with Mary Queen of the Family, your new patron, and St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, our diocesan patron, God's love, forgiveness and justice will be mediated to all.

Understanding that change is always difficult, I invite you to pray with me that this new work, begun in the name of the Lord, will continue to flourish and bear much fruit.

Yours sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anthony Fisher OP". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally on the page.

Most Reverend Anthony Fisher OP, DD BA LIB BTheol DPhil  
Bishop of Parramatta

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18/09/14