



A Pastoral Invitation to **PRAY FOR PEACE**

St Francis Xavier Cathedral, St John Vianney Co-Cathedral, St Brigid's Church & Mater Dolorosa Church

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In these recent days our hearts have been deeply troubled by the escalating violence and the growing humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Middle East. The tragic loss of life, the suffering of innocent people, and the fear experienced by families and communities weigh heavily upon us all.

During this sacred season of Lent, the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, has urged the faithful throughout the world to pray earnestly for peace and to "fast from words and acts of hatred and conflict," rediscovering the peace that Christ offers to the world.

In communion with the universal Church, and in response to the appeal of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, I invite the faithful and all people of goodwill to gather in prayer for peace.

A **Mass for Peace** will be celebrated at:

**St Francis Xavier Cathedral,
Wollongong
Wednesday, 11 March 2026
12:10pm**



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In a recent statement, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, expressed the deep alarm of the bishops at the violence now engulfing the region. The destabilisation of an already fragile part of the world, and the immense suffering of ordinary people, remind us that peace remains one of the greatest and most urgent needs of our time.

As Pope Leo XIV warned this week, we stand "faced with the possibility of a tragedy of enormous proportions." The Holy Father has appealed to all parties to assume the moral responsibility to halt the spiral of violence before it becomes an irreparable abyss. Violence only multiplies suffering; war is never the answer and is always a defeat for humanity.

In our prayer we remember especially the innocent:

those who have lost their lives, the injured and traumatised, families separated or displaced, and communities living in constant fear. We also pray for Australians currently in the region, including those serving in peacekeeping and humanitarian roles, and for their families who wait anxiously at home.

Let us also pray for leaders across the world, that their decisions may always be guided by respect for human dignity, the pursuit of the common good, and a sincere commitment to justice and peace.

I warmly invite you to join us in this Mass for Peace as we entrust the suffering of the world to the mercy of God and ask the Lord to soften hearts, enlighten minds, and guide nations along the path of reconciliation.

May the Prince of Peace bring healing to all who suffer and hope to those who despair.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."
(Matthew 5:9)

Yours sincerely in Christ,

With my prayers and pastoral care,

FR BERNARD L GORDON vs
PARISH PRIEST &
DEAN OF THE CATHEDRAL

6 March 2026

