



We proclaim a crucified Christ

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07 November 2025

To the Parishioners of Malvern, Malvern East and Glen Iris

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is with gratitude and hope that I share with you news of a significant initiative in the life of our Archdiocese.

Three years ago, Fr Michael Gallacher first approached me with a prayerful desire to begin an Oratory of St Philip Neri in Melbourne. After a significant period of discernment, consultation, and preparation, I am now pleased to announce the beginning of an **Oratory Project** here in our Archdiocese, commencing with your family of Parishes.

An Oratory of St Philip Neri is a particular expression of priestly community—secular priests and seminarians living together in a stable household, bound not by religious vows, but by the bond of charity. This way of life is distinct from both diocesan and religious priesthood. It offers a unique witness to fraternity, spiritual depth, and pastoral availability in the service of the local Church.

The development of an Oratory follows three stages: an **Oratory Project**, an **Oratory-in-Formation**, and, God willing, a fully established **Oratory**. With my blessing, and the support of the Procurator-General of the Confederation of the Oratory in Rome, we now begin the first stage.

From 16 November 2025, **Fr Michael Gallacher**, along with **Mr Anthony Wright** and **Mr Patrick Harris**, will begin living as a Melbourne Oratory Project community within the *family of parishes of Malvern, Malvern East, and Glen Iris*. Fr Gallacher remains a Priest of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and Parish Priest of your Parishes. Anthony and Patrick will continue as seminarians of our Archdiocese, though now as part of the Melbourne Oratory Project community. They will

still receive their academic formation at Catholic Theological College, and other elements of formation through Corpus Christi College Regional Seminary as required.

This is a moment of great hope and possibility—not only for these men, but for our wider Church. The Oratory tradition, inspired by the joyful witness of St Philip Neri, has borne much fruit around the world. My prayer is that it will do likewise here in Melbourne, fostering a deeper spiritual life, priestly fraternity, and missionary zeal.

I invite you to keep Fr Michael, Anthony, and Patrick in your prayers as they take this first step. May their community life be rooted in charity, sustained by prayer, and poured out in loving service of God's people.

And may St Philip Neri, the Apostle of Joy, intercede for them and for us all.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter A Comensoli', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Archbishop Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne