



## PENTECOST LETTER 2026

### Bishop Greg Bennet

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Dear friends in Christ

*Lord, send out your spirit and renew the face of the earth! (Ps 103)*

We have come to the end of our Easter season with the celebration of Pentecost Sunday. As Henri Nouwen reflects:

*Without Pentecost, the Christ-event - the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - remains imprisoned in history as something to remember, think about and reflect on. The spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christs (Christians) here and now.*

A reminder to all that Pentecost is a living story – a story about transformation, courage and inspiration for mission.

In the Gospel (Jn 20:19-23) we return to the earliest days after the death of Jesus. The disciples are gathered behind a closed door: we can imagine their fear and grief - they had experienced extraordinary things! They had accompanied Jesus in his ministry, been witnesses to his death and his resurrection – yet they were still unsure of what came next. They were embattled. And into this environment Jesus appears. Into their uncertainty they are shown that their waiting was not empty; it prepared the way for transformation.

That feeling of waiting can feel familiar for many of us. There are times in our lives when we feel suspended between what has been and what is yet to come - uncertain, searching, waiting. Pentecost speaks directly into these moments. It assures us that even in uncertainty, Christ is present, and the Spirit is at work in our midst. It is this certainty that enables us to be people of hope even in these uncertain times. Pentecost people are called to be witnesses of peace, to be ‘on the way’ together as a synodal people and to build communion.

Since his election in May 2025, Pope Leo has consistently called for the Church to be a witness to peace, describing the proclamation of peace as a lived reality:

*Peace is more than a goal: it is a presence and a journey. Even when it is endangered within us and around us, like a small flame threatened by a storm, we must protect it ... Peace is a principle that guides and defines our choices .... Just as on the evening of Easter Jesus entered the place where his disciples were gathered in fear and discouragement, so too the peace of the risen Christ continues to pass through doors and barriers ... This gift enables us to remember goodness, to recognize it as victorious, to choose it again, and to do so together.*  
(Message for World Day of Peace, 2026)

This call to peace resonates deeply with the synodal journey of the Church. It invites us not only to reflect, but to choose together - to listen, discern, and act in ways that build communion and hope within our communities.

The story of Pentecost further shapes our understanding of how we are called to be a synodal Church. The breath of the Spirit brings not only consolation – it brings with it a clear gospel imperative. The disciples are not only comforted – they are commissioned. They receive the Holy Spirit and are sent forth to proclaim the joy and newness of the Gospel with boldness in every time and place.

And so, it is with us. Over these past months in our place here in Sale, our parishes have been working faithfully to bring to life the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. We have been engaged in a time of prayerful preparation and careful thought about how we can bring the Diocesan vision to life:

*Led by the Holy Spirit, the People of the Diocese of Sale are committed to walking together to nurture a Christ-centred, synodal and mission-driven future.*

Thank you for entering into this important work to develop our local Parish Pastoral Plans. This Gospel work involves both personal conversion and the renewal of our parish communities to be more Christ-centred, synodal and missionary.

I am reminded that the work of the Spirit takes time. It is, as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin so beautifully describes, part of the “*slow work of God.*” Discernment requires patience, courage, and trust. It invites us into deeper listening - listening to one another and, most importantly, to the movement of the Spirit among us.

Pentecost also reminds us that the Spirit brings unity, not by erasing differences, but by enabling understanding. In the Acts of the Apostles (2:1-11), people from many nations hear the disciples speaking in their own languages, and yet they understood each other. At a time when differences could divide, the Spirit creates communion. This remains our call today: to listen deeply, to honour each voice, and to journey together toward what God is asking of us. These moments become a powerful way of understanding difference as something to be welcomed and pondered until we can all come together to find the way.

The Christian presence is often quiet and unseen, it transforms from within. We are not called to dominate or impose, but, because of our encounter with Jesus, to shape the world through love, patience, and faithful witness. We are called to be leaven of the Gospel, leaven of hope, and leaven of peace.

Throughout our Diocese, we see so many examples of those who encounter Christ and are transformed by him. Most recently, on the Feast of the Ascension, we celebrated the Mystagogia Mass at St Joseph's Warragul for those recently baptised and initiated into the life of faith at the Easter Vigil. Among the many who gathered, three shared their personal testimonies of encountering the Lord. Each in their own way had heard the invitation of Jesus to come to him. They had heard him to speak to them through the power of the scripture and the witness of his followers. They had been drawn into the gift of love who meets us where we are, not expecting perfection, but humble openness to an encounter which transforms everything.

This, then, is the great commission of Pentecost: to go forth as people transformed by the Spirit, inspired by our encounter with Jesus, bringing His presence into the world - gently, persistently, and joyfully.

As we celebrate this feast, may we open our hearts anew to the gift of the Holy Spirit. May we trust in the slow and faithful work of God among us. And may we embrace our call to be leaven in the world—signs of peace, hope, and love in our communities and beyond.

Lord, send out your Spirit and may we renew the face of our earth!

+Greg Bennet  
Bishop of Sale