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## **Three New Parishes**

Our Ballarat diocese now has three new parishes – formed by joining groups of neighbouring parishes that have already been working together and sharing a parish priest. The new parishes are Saint Mary MacKillop Parish, Western Border; Holy Family Parish, Northeast Mallee; and Mary Glowrey Parish, East Wimmera.

The Western Border parish covers Casterton, Coleraine, Edenhope, Hamilton and Harrow. The Northeast Mallee parish covers Swan Hill, Sea Lake and the northern part of Quambatook parish. The East Wimmera parish covers Birchip, Charlton, Donald, St Arnaud, Wycheproof and the southern part of Quambatook parish.

The formation of these new parishes is the fruit of several years of consultation, including the Looking Forward gatherings that have been held since 2014. The detailed proposals for the new parishes developed through discussions among priests and parishioners over the past few months and were endorsed by the Council of Priests at their meeting on June 19. I confirmed the formation of the new parishes on July 1.

These new arrangements will make it easier for the local communities to share the tasks involved in pastoral care and parish administration and will give the priests more time for pastoral and sacramental ministry.

The priests who have been caring for these regions will continue to do so. I have appointed Fr Patrick Mugavin as Parish Priest of the Western Border parish, with Fr John Corrigan as Assistant Priest. Fr Matthew Thomas is Parish Priest of the Northeast Mallee parish. Fr Eugene McKinnon is Parish Priest of the East Wimmera parish, with Fr Peter Jose as Assistant Priest.

I thank all the parishioners, parish staff and priests who have been involved in the consultation and planning. I pray that the formation of these new parishes will bring new blessings for our local communities. May we continue our journey of faith with confidence in Christ who has promised to be with us always.

Paul Bird CSsR

Bishop of Ballarat

July 2, 2018