



## Shrine to St John Paul II And Installation of Relics

### **Vox Populi - Voice of the People**

26 October 2022

The Diocese of Broken Bay now has Australia's first national Shrine to St John Paul II – but it is a Shrine for all of Australia. More than a thousand people gathered at St Patrick's Church, East Gosford last Saturday to celebrate the inauguration of the Shrine to St John Paul II and the installation of two first-class relics.

Parishioners and people from across the Diocese of Broken Bay and beyond filled the Church to overflowing with Most Rev Anthony Randazzo DD JCL, Bishop of Broken Bay, dedicating the Shrine and installing the relics of the much-loved saint.

During his homily Bishop Randazzo said that the Shrine must first and foremost be a sanctuary of love because love was the very centre of the life of Saint John Paul II.

"It was this love, genuinely lived by a man of great human charisma, which was so attractive to others. So much so, that his life and ministry gave courage to believers across the world, to live the Christian vocation, without fear," Bishop Randazzo said.

The two relics, some blood and strands of hair saved during St John Paul II's 27-year Pontificate, were processed through the Church and installed in a reliquary at the front of the Church. A specially commissioned painting of St John Paul II by a Polish artist was also unveiled on Saturday, along with a 3.5 metre statue of the saint, which stands outside the Church's main entrance.

St Patrick's Parish Priest, Polish-born Fr Greg Skulski SDS approached Bishop Randazzo at the beginning of the year for permission to obtain the first-class relics and establish a Shrine to the former Pope who was canonised in 2014.

"I was very keen and excited to see the project go ahead," Bishop Randazzo said.

"I am confident that the Shrine will become one of the great Pilgrimage places in Australia.

It will be a place for all people, believer and non-believer alike, to seek the truth of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ; the only news which is good for everyone.”

An army of volunteers worked for many months to ensure everything was in readiness for Saturday – 22 October and the feast day of St John Paul II.

“Having the relics here, is great for these people to be more inspired by his life and his teachings,” said Fr Greg.

“St John Paul II is truly a saint of our times, known to everyone. This is the first Shrine dedicated to him in Australia. He is an inspiration to many generations,” he said.

The relics have had a long journey from the Vatican to East Gosford. The strands of hair were taken from St John Paul II while he was Pope, in residence at the Vatican. They were kept by Archbishop Mieczyslaw Mokrzycki, one of the Pope’s private secretaries, in Lviv, Ukraine. From Lviv they were taken to Krakow, Poland by Father Damian Pankowiak SDS, just one week before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Fr Greg acquired the hairs in Krakow and brought them to Gosford.

The blood was collected from St John Paul II during surgery while he was Pope. They were kept by Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, the principal private secretary of the Pope, in Krakow, following the Pontiff’s death and brought to Gosford by Father George Kolodziej SDS, Congregational Leader of the Salvatorians in Australia.

Relics of saints are not worshipped but venerated as a means of asking for the intercession of that saint.

They direct us towards the life and faith of the saint, which directs us towards God. Bishop Randazzo also officially opened and blessed the adjacent Pastoral Centre, which will form part of the pilgrimage site. It will include a display dedicated to St John Paul II, and facilities for speakers and conferences.

“I encourage people throughout the Diocese, and indeed right around the country, to visit the Shrine. Make this Shrine, this sanctuary of love, a place to intercede through St John Paul II for vocations, to the married life, to the consecrated life, to the single life and to the ordained priestly and diaconal life. This will become a great powerhouse to continue the wonderful work that is already happening in this Diocese and in the Church right across Australia.

“I hope and pray that our prayers will radiate from this sanctuary, from this Shrine, for the good of our Church and for the good of the world in which we live.”

The Shrine will be open daily, and the relics will be permanently housed in the reliquary, allowing people to come and pray before them throughout the year. The full Installation Mass can be viewed at <https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/jpii/home>