



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Bishop Mark Edwards appointed to Wagga Wagga

Media Release

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Pope Francis has this evening appointed Bishop Mark Edwards OMI the sixth Bishop of Wagga Wagga.

Bishop Edwards, who will turn 61 next month, was born in Indonesia and grew up in Adelaide, Darwin and Melbourne's southeast, attending St Leonard's Primary School and Mazenod College. Mazenod was founded by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the order he would eventually join.

He was ordained to the priesthood in 1986 and has held leadership positions within the Australian Province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne on November 7, 2014 and ordained bishop the following month.

Bishop Edwards' priestly ministry has largely centred on secondary school and seminary education, including serving as rector of Iona College in Brisbane and as aspirants' master and novice master at St Mary's Seminary in Mulgrave.

In addition to his priestly formation and theological training, Bishop Edwards completed a science degree at Monash University, where he also obtained a doctorate in philosophy.

In a letter to the faithful of Wagga Wagga, Bishop Edwards described his appointment "as a call from God to be with you and journey with you as disciple, brother and bishop".

"Together, as a community of missionary disciples, we will worship, love and evangelise," he said.

"I am aware that I have much to learn, particularly about parish life and the joys and challenges of being a Catholic in Wagga Wagga. Keen to listen to your stories and those of the Diocese, I come humbly, with deep interest and love.

"Please pray for me that I may offer the service that the Diocese needs. I will pray for you."

Bishop Edwards paid tribute to Bishop Gerard Hanna for his more than 14 years of leadership in the Diocese before retirement due to ill health in 2016. He also thanked Archbishop Christopher Prowse of Canberra and Goulburn, who has served as apostolic administrator of Wagga Wagga for almost four years – and will continue to do so until Bishop Edwards' installation.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said it is "a joy to welcome the appointment, especially after such a long wait".

He said Bishop Edwards' background in ministry will stand him in good stead, saying he has "both a feel for the local Church and a missionary awareness".

"Like many of his Oblate confreres, Bishop Mark brings to the episcopal ministry a combination of simplicity and sophistication, and that will equip him well for all that awaits him in Wagga," Archbishop Coleridge said.

"I join with the bishops of Australia in pledging our prayers as he prepares to take office and our fraternal support in the years ahead."

A date for Bishop Edwards' installation is not yet known.