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President of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Francis Carroll, congratulates Archbishop-elect George Kocherry, on behalf of his brother bishops, on his elevation to the dignity of Archbishop and his appointment as Apostolic Nuncio in Ghana and Togo.

The Holy Father made the announcement on Saturday, 10 June.

Archbishop-elect George Kocherry, 55, was ordained for the Archdiocese of Changanacherry, India, in 1974 and has a doctorate in Canon Law. He entered the Holy See's diplomatic service in 1978 and has since been posted to South Korea, Costa Rica, Nigeria, Caribbean Islands, Thailand, Switzerland and Australia.

"There are many people who will miss Monsignor George after his eight years of valued service here in Australia," said Archbishop Francis Carroll. "However, he will be returning to India at the end of the month to prepare for his Episcopal Ordination. I understand that he is the first cleric from his Archdiocese to receive this honour so I believe there will be much jubilation and celebration waiting for him when he arrives home."

"After his Episcopal Ordination, Monsignor George will be moving on to another phase in his diplomatic career – we wish him all the very best for the future and pray the Grace of God will remain ever present in his life," said Archbishop Carroll.

Archbishop-elect George Kocherry will be replaced by Monsignor M. Padilla who at present, is counsellor at the Apostolic Nunciature in Tokyo. He will arrive in Canberra on 19 July 2000.