Paul Bird

Thoughts on becoming bishop of Ballarat

I'm feeling excited but also rather nervous about taking up the role of bishop of the diocese of Ballarat. The nervousness comes from the fact that this role will involve new responsibilities and I'm not sure how I will go in meeting the challenges involved. At the same time, I'm excited at the prospect of meeting the people of the diocese and doing whatever I can to encourage them in their faith and in their Christian lives.

I did spend four years in Ballarat as a student, from 1968 till 1971, at the Redemptorist seminary in Wendouree. That gave me an introduction to the city of Ballarat and some of the country areas and I look forward to coming to know more in the years ahead as I travel throughout the diocese.

Bishop Peter Connors phoned me straight after hearing of my appointment and gave me a warm welcome. I hope to follow the great lead that Bishop Connors has given in his kindness and compassion.

Over the years I have drawn much inspiration from Christians of many denominations and from people of other faiths, as well as from those who profess no particular faith but give generous service to those in need. I'm sure I will be able to draw continuing inspiration from such people all through the Ballarat diocese.

In the next few weeks I will need to finalise a number of matters in my role as provincial of the Redemptorists and hand over tasks to Fr Pat Corbett as the new provincial. I also hope to spend some time in Ballarat to meet some of the priests and people of the diocese as well as preparing for my ordination as bishop on October 16.