



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Priest, professor Fr Shane Mackinlay named Bishop of Sandhurst

Media Release

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Pope Francis has this evening appointed Fr Shane Mackinlay, currently Master of Catholic Theological College Melbourne and a parish priest in Ballarat, the next Bishop of Sandhurst.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge recalls teaching Fr Mackinlay and said the qualities he observed then have developed in the years since.

“Bishop-elect Mackinlay combines high intelligence with good strategic ability, deep faith with a capacity to engage the culture,” Archbishop Coleridge said.

“All of this will make him a fine Bishop of Sandhurst and a real gain for the Bishops Conference at this important and complex time. I congratulate Fr Shane and look forward to working closely with him in the years ahead.”

Fr Mackinlay was born in Melbourne in 1965, his family moving to Ballarat 10 years later. He attended St Francis Xavier Primary School and St Patrick’s College, where he was dux.

In addition to his study for the priesthood at Corpus Christi College and at Catholic Theological College, he completed a physics degree at Monash University. He was ordained a priest of Ballarat Diocese in 1991 and, after parish ministry, undertook graduate studies in philosophy, completing a master’s and doctorate at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium.

Fr Mackinlay taught philosophy at the Australian Catholic University campus in Ballarat before moving to Catholic Theological College, where he has been Master since 2011. He has held a range of leadership and advisory roles within Ballarat Diocese.

He also served as spokesperson for the Catholic Church during the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations.

Fr Mackinlay said while his role at Catholic Theological College was a demanding one and typically saw the Master relinquish parish ministry, he had been keen to continue that work alongside his teaching and administrative duties.

“I love teaching and also being involved with people in their local parish communities and I very much look forward to continuing those two ministries in a different way in my new role,” Bishop-Elect Mackinlay said.

“I’ve greatly enjoyed being a priest in the Ballarat diocese and I’m very pleased that I can continue my ministry among the people of regional Victoria.”

In announcing Fr Mackinlay’s appointment, Pope Francis also accepted the resignation of Bishop Leslie Tomlinson, who has been a bishop since 2009 and Bishop of Sandhurst since 2012.

Fr Mackinlay said he had observed Bishop Tomlinson’s “generous and diligent service” in Sandhurst over those years and was grateful for the welcome Bishop Tomlinson has extended to him as his successor.

Bishop-Elect Mackinlay’s episcopal ordination is expected to take place in mid-October.