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FATHER GREG O'KELLY HUMBLLED BY APPOINTMENT AS AUXILIARY BISHOP

Father Greg O'Kelly today said he was honoured at his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Adelaide by Pope Benedict XVI.

Fr O'Kelly, 64, is currently Headmaster of Saint Ignatius' College. He will become the first Jesuit bishop in Australian history in a year that marks the centenaries of Jesuit founders, St Ignatius Loyola and St Francis Xavier, and 150 years of Jesuit education in South Australia.

After his Episcopal ordination in September, Fr O'Kelly will work closely with Archbishop of Adelaide Philip Wilson.

"I was completely astonished because this is quite out of the ordinary for a Jesuit to be appointed to this position so it took me totally by surprise," Fr O'Kelly said. "It is an honour to be asked to serve the Adelaide people in this way."

Born and raised in Adelaide, Fr O'Kelly entered the Jesuit order in 1959 and was ordained a priest in 1972. He hopes to bring an outlook of hope, faith and meaning, gained in the ministry of teaching, to the wider Archdiocese.

"I think schooling is a ministry of hope. It's faith in the child, that the child is worthwhile; it's faith in the culture, that the culture's worth transmitting, and it's faith in the future, that the future is worth preparing people for," he said.

"I hope that I can work with the priests, Archbishop and families of the diocese to give young people a sense of meaning in their lives, based on values, hope and faith."

Archbishop Wilson, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, welcomed Fr O'Kelly's appointment.

"I am delighted Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Fr Greg O'Kelly," Archbishop Wilson said. "He brings to the Episcopate the fruits of his Jesuit formation and experience. He has also been well prepared for this new role by his diverse experience and leadership in Catholic education throughout Australia. I look forward to working closely with him as we face the challenges in the Archdiocese and our state."

"More than 150 years ago, a group of Jesuits appeared as refugees at the door of the Archbishop's House on West Terrace and offered their services to the diocese. This service has continued for more than a century and is now marked by one of their own becoming an Auxiliary Bishop."

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