



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday 22 February 2018—Feast of the Chair of St Peter the Apostle

MOST REV BRIAN MASCORD ORDAINED AS THE FIFTH BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

“For all things give thanks” (1 Thess 5:18).

In one of the largest Catholic episcopal ordinations in Australian history, a “full-house” of some 4,500 guests, including the Apostolic Nuncio in Australia, His Excellency Most Reverend Adolfo Tito Yllana, witnessed the ordination of Most Rev Brian Mascord as the fifth Bishop of Wollongong at the WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong on Thursday 22 February 2018.

Livestreamed to a national and global audience, the principal consecrator, Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP (Archbishop of Sydney) and co-consecrators, Bishop Peter Ingham (now Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Wollongong) and Bishop William Wright (Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle Diocese), presided over the Mass of Ordination for the new Bishop Mascord.

They were joined by 34 Australian bishops and 113 priests concelebrating the Mass; parishioners and families from all the diocesan parishes; principals, staff and students from more than 40 Diocesan Catholic schools; staff and families from diocesan agencies and affiliated organisations; leaders of other churches and faiths; civic leaders in government and business, along with over 700 of Bishop Brian’s family, friends, parishioners and community members from the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle where he has ministered since being ordained to the priesthood in 1992. In a heartfelt message to his beloved and very proud parents, Ron and Margaret, who were present to share in this experience with him, he thanked them for “being who they are and that God had revealed his faithfulness through the gift of their love for him.”

Bishop Mascord said, “Life can throw up many challenges—ones that can, at times, seem almost insurmountable. When the Apostolic Nuncio rang me at the end of November with the invitation from the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to be the bishop of Wollongong, it all seemed totally insurmountable. But, here I am—overwhelmed, nervous, yet open to what the Lord has in store for me and for all of us. I am very conscious of the incredible trust that Pope Francis now places in me.”

Bishop Mascord said, “I look forward to living and working with you as together we continue to build up the presence of the Kingdom of God in this area of the vineyard.”

The new bishop has adopted the motto, “For all things give thanks,” from 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

In his homily for the ordination, Archbishop Fisher, quoting St Augustine, said, “If as a bishop I feel tossed about in the open sea, as a Christian I find myself in safe harbour. Now Bishop Brian will have the benefit of many safe harbours of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven!”

Archbishop Fisher said, “We look to our Bishop-elect to be a good man and a good Christian before all else, to model for us faith, hope, charity and the other virtues. Happily, on his own account, Brian has been surrounded from childhood by ‘tremendous’ people such as his grandmother and beloved parents who’ve shown him how to recognise and respond to God in everyday life, expressing faith practically in service.”

Archbishop Fisher later said, “Like Francis of Assisi, we are called to rebuild the Church. That will require a teacher’s head, a spouse’s heart, and a shepherd’s soul, as your new vestments tell. But the most important thing you will wear from tonight is the cross of Jesus Christ upon your heart.

“A few weeks before you were named bishop, I met you at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem as you led a pilgrim group in the footsteps of Jesus. You were deeply moved, as I was, to celebrate Mass upon the very slab on which the dead Christ lay and from which he rose for our salvation. Even as your lifelong pilgrimage brings you now to Wollongong, you must in a sense keep your heart fixed on that sepulchre. For in the end, the Church is not built by the faithful, the clergy, even the successors of the apostles. No, it is Christ who builds the Church and his Church, not ours, that is rebuilt day-by-day. In it we join Peter in professing of him: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” (Matthew 16:16)

In acknowledging the retiring Bishop Peter Ingham, Archbishop Fisher said, " Tonight the Chair of Peter becomes the Chair of Brian—in Wollongong at least—and I pay tribute to Bishop Peter Ingham for his faithful service as Bishop here for the past 16 ½ years. A good few in this region have been confirmed by him. Some more love him from his regular presence in parishes, schools and agencies. Others have been taught or led by him. And many have laughed at his ‘Dad jokes’.”

The Diocese of Wollongong takes in the geographical areas of the Illawarra, Macarthur, Shoalhaven and the Southern Highlands and is home to some 200,000 baptised Catholics. It is the first ordination of a bishop in the Diocese of Wollongong for some 22 years (Bishop Peter Ingham was already a bishop when he was installed as the fourth Bishop of Wollongong more than 16 years ago in 2001).

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A link to images for publication will be emailed to you on Friday 23 February 2018.

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