

The New Bishop of Darwin

The Episcopal Ordination of Father Charles Gauci, as the new Bishop of Darwin, will take place on Wednesday, September 26, at 7 pm at St Mary's Cathedral, Darwin.

Father Charles has asked Bishop Eugene Hurley to be Principal Consecrator, with Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ (Apostolic Administrator of Adelaide and Bishop of Port Pirie) and Bishop Donald Sproxton, (Auxiliary for the Perth Archdiocese) as co-consecrators. The Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, will preside.

Father Charles Gauci, up till now administrator of St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Adelaide, was appointed to be the next Bishop of Darwin just two weeks ago, on June 27, by Pope Francis.

Father Charles was born into a faith-filled family in Malta and arrived in Australia as a 13-year-old. He was ordained for the Adelaide archdiocese in 1977 and has served in parishes across the archdiocese. He has also held a number of archdiocesan leadership roles, including that of chairmanship of the Council of Priests.

Father Charles says he was introduced to the life of the Diocese of Darwin and the faith of the its community when he was invited to lead a retreat for the priests of the Diocese about three years ago, adding "I'm full of admiration for the work that the priests in the diocese carry out, often in very isolated areas where there are none of the comforts and conveniences of suburban life."

He has just concluded a short visit to the Diocese to meet some of its key people and to discuss the future with Bishop Eugene Hurley, who has served in Darwin for the past 11 years.

He described Bishop Eugene as a great man. "I'm humbled to succeed him. He will help me understand the Diocese, its communities and ministries. With that knowledge and by discerning what God is asking of me, I will seek to fulfil the task now entrusted to me," he said, adding: "I look forward to continuing to learn from all the people of God as their fellow traveller."

In announcing Bishop-elect Gauci's appointment, Pope Francis accepted Bishop Hurley's resignation, appointing him to serve as Apostolic Administrator of the diocese until Bishop-elect Gauci's ordination.

Bishop Hurley has gone on record as saying: "I believe Pope Francis has made an excellent choice in appointing Bishop-elect Charles Gauci. Father Charles has visited Darwin in the past and is known to many of our priests. He is looking forward to his new role. From speaking with Father Charles, I know that one of his priorities will be to listen to and walk with our Aboriginal sisters and brothers.

My time as the Bishop of Darwin has been a great blessing for me. I have shared the joys and sorrows, the hopes and despairs of the remarkable people of this diocese and indeed of the wider community. I will be forever grateful for the love and support I have received. I trust that Bishop-elect Charles will receive the same affection and support as he begins a new phase of his life as Bishop of Darwin."

Father Malcolm P Fyfe msc
Chancellor, Diocese of Darwin.
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