



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Pope Francis appoints Fr Michael Morrissey, Ninth Bishop of Geraldton

**Media Release
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The Holy Father has today appointed Fr Michael Morrissey, the Vicar General and Chancellor of the Diocese of Geraldton, as the ninth Bishop of Geraldton.

Bishop-Elect Morrissey is the first Bishop of Geraldton who was born, raised, ordained and has ministered in the Diocese.

Archbishop Denis Hart, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference welcomed the appointment, 'On behalf of the Australian bishops, I join priests and people in welcoming Fr Michael Morrissey as Bishop of Geraldton. He has long priestly experience of Geraldton and already has been involved with so many people young and old.'

'Fr Michael is a worthy successor after the twenty-five year term of Bishop Bianchini who has governed the diocese with so much love and care. We wish him many years of Gospel service as the new bishop.'

The Bishop-Elect said his appointment recognises 'all those small communities scattered throughout the diocese, including Yalgoo, my home town where I grew up on a sheep station'. Following in Bishop Justin Bianchini's footsteps is very special, he said after working closely with him for the past 25 years. 'I hope to continue the legacy of Bishop Justin listening to the people and seeing where they would like to go in their faith and life.'

Born in Yalgoo on 9 September 1952, Bishop-Elect Morrissey was educated at Aquinas College, Perth. He continued his studies at St Charles Seminary in Perth and at St Francis Xavier Seminary, Adelaide. He was ordained a priest on 31 January 1981 in St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Geraldton. From 1981 to 1984, he worked as Assistant Priest in the Parishes of Bluff Point and Port Hedland. He served as Administrator in the Parishes of Bluff Point, Port Hedland and South Hedland between 1984 and 1985.

The 64 year old bishop-elect was appointed Parish Priest of Karratha in 1985 until 1992 when he became Administrator of the Cathedral in Geraldton until 2007. He held this role again from April 2014 until today. Bishop-Elect Morrissey was appointed Chancellor of the Diocese in 1994 for nine years and his mission was renewed in 2006 until the present day. In 2007, he was also nominated Vicar General of Geraldton.

He has been a long standing member of the College of Consultors, from 1991 to present, and the Presbyteral Council, 1983-1998, 2003-present, which he chaired between 1994 and 1996 and between 2004 and 2006. Since 1983, he has been Senior Chaplain of the Army Reserve Second Division. In 2015, Bishop-Elect Morrissey was appointed as Parish Priest Representative to the Board of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia.

Spending time in the garden, swimming in the pool, walking and playing golf are amongst his hobbies.

Today, Pope Francis also accepted the resignation of Bishop Justin Bianchini who has been Bishop of Geraldton since March 1992. He has been appointed the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese until the new bishop is ordained on Wednesday, 28 June 2017 in Geraldton.

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