

Wednesday 22 July 2020

Bishop Mark Edwards OMI installed as sixth Bishop of Wagga Wagga

The Most Reverend Mark Edwards OMI was received as the sixth Bishop of Wagga Wagga during a Liturgical Reception and Solemn Mass at St Michael's Cathedral, Wagga Wagga on Wednesday 22 July 2020.

The Liturgical Reception was held on the Feast day of St Mary Magdalene with limited numbers in attendance due to current COVID19 restrictions. The solemn Mass was concelebrated with the archbishops and bishops who were able to travel, priests of the diocese of Wagga Wagga and of other religious congregations.

Arriving at the Cathedral, Bishop Edwards was greeted by a traditional Wiradjuri smoking ceremony and was then welcomed by the Metropolitan Archbishop, the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher who presented him to the Apostolic Administrator the Most Reverend Christopher Prowse and his Delegate Reverend Father Kevin O'Reilly.

Following a Welcome to Country by Wiradjuri Elder, Aunty Kath Withers, Archbishop Fisher welcomed the intimate congregation declaring "Good things come to those who wait. Clearly Pope Francis thinks Bishop Mark Edwards is a very good thing and so you've waited nearly four years for him as well as a COVID19 lockdown to make this, not only one of the most welcome installation ceremonies but also one of the strangest in the history of the Church in Australia."

The Apostolic Nuncio to Australia, His Excellency Most Reverend Adolfo Tito C. Yllana, read out the Apostolic Letter appointing the Most Reverend Mark Edwards OMI Bishop of Wagga Wagga, first in Latin, then in English.

Amongst those able to attend the Mass were a number of Civic Dignitaries including Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Riverina, Michael McCormack, Member for Wagga Wagga, Dr Joe McGirr PM, Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Greg Conkey OAM, and representatives of other churches, agencies and community groups.

A virtual choir of students from Catholic schools across the diocese performed "Insieme (Together)" via video as representatives of the clergy, religious and laity of the diocese and its agencies, civic and religious leaders, welcomed the Bishop to his new role as shepherd of the people of Wagga Wagga.

Bishop Edwards thanked the diocese for their patience over the years without a bishop and praised the efforts of Archbishop Prowse in overseeing the diocese.

"I'm grateful to the people and clergy of the diocese who have made me so welcome and who have prayed for a bishop of the diocese," he said.

"To be bishop of this diocese is a call from God through the church."

After Communion, the Bishop thanked his family, friends, brother priests and all those who weren't able to attend today's ceremony.

The Bishop's Coat of Arms features the motto 'Learn who you are in the eyes of God' in both English and Wiradjuri. This is an appeal from St Eugene de Mazenod, founder of the Oblates to experience that we are beloved children of God and that He delights in us.