



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### Pope Francis appoints new Bishop of Port Pirie

Media Release

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Pope Francis has this evening appointed Fr Karol Kulczycki SDS, the former head of the Salvatorians in Australia, as the new bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie in regional South Australia.

Fr Kulczycki was born in Poland in 1966, ordained to the priesthood in Trzebinia in 1994 and is currently based in Poland. He spent 21 years serving the Church in Western Australia, including in parish ministry, as vocations director and as a college chaplain.

In February 2018, while still serving in Australia, Fr Kulczycki was elected vice-provincial of the Polish province of the Society of the Divine Saviour – widely known as the Salvatorians. Two-and-a-half years on, Pope Francis has appointed him Bishop of Port Pirie.

“Just a few weeks ago I had an interview for our Salvatorian newsletter and was asked how and where I see myself in 10 or 20 years. I replied that I would be where God sent me. I did not expect that God would act so quickly in my life,” Fr Kulczycki said.

“God is working in mysterious ways in my life. Firstly, calling me unexpectedly to religious and priestly life; secondly, directing my heart to serve him in Australia and now serving him and his people in Port Pirie Diocese.”

Fr Kulczycki will become the 12th Bishop of Port Pirie – including the bishops who led what was from 1887 until 1951 the Diocese of Port Augusta.

He succeeds Bishop Greg O’Kelly SJ, who has been Bishop of Port Pirie since 2009. Bishop O’Kelly also served as apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Adelaide for almost two years.

“The Diocese welcomes Bishop-Elect Karol with open arms,” Bishop O’Kelly said.

“We note his pastoral experience in country ministries, especially in Geraldton. Our people and clergy are loyal and committed, and all look forward to receiving Bishop-Elect Karol as our new chief pastor.”

Port Pirie Diocese, stretching from Uluru to Port Lincoln and from the West Australian border to the River Murray, is one of Australia’s largest dioceses. It is three times larger than Poland, by area.

“Serving in different ministries and places in Western Australia gave me a bit of understanding of the beauty and vastness of the Australian land. I love the Australian Outback. Of course, it will take a bit of time for me to know the land, people, parishes, schools and other ministries,” Fr Kulczycki said.

“Trusting God, I ask for his blessing upon all people of the Port Pirie Diocese. I would humbly ask priests, religious and laity to pray for me and for each other, as I am praying for you.”

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said Fr Kulczycki clearly made a strong impression in his time in Australia.

“The bishops look forward to getting to know Bishop-Elect Karol and working with him at this time with all its complexities and challenges, especially in a vast rural diocese like Port Pirie,” he said.

“He will clearly bring to the task all the gifts and experiences that have led to this appointment.”

It is not yet known when Fr Kulczycki will arrive in Australia, nor when he will be ordained bishop.