

## **CathNews Pre-Event (Thursday 16 April 2026)**

### **HEADING: Perth Catholic community to gain its first Filipino Bishop tonight**

Perth will tonight have its first Bishop from South-East Asia with the Episcopal Ordination of Applecross Parish Priest Fr Nelson Po.

Bishop-elect Po's ordination to the Order of Bishop is also the the first Episcopal Ordination in Perth since February 2002.

Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB will be the principal consecrator, with Perth Auxiliary Bishop Don Sproxton and new Sandhurst Diocese Bishop Rene Ramirez RCJ as co-consecrators.

More than 1100 people are expected to be present for the occasion, including family members of Fr Nelson from the Philippines, as well as bishops, dignitaries, parishioners and friends from across the Archdiocese and Australia.

A former industrial and management engineer, Fr Nelson was born in the village of Cantuhaon, Palompon, Leyte, Philippines, as the third child of Norma Abordo and Lope Po's six children.

Following several years working in his chosen profession, he entered the Blessed Sacrament Congregation where he completed a master's degree in theology, with a major in pastoral ministry, at the Maryhill School of Theology, Manila.

In reflecting on the phone call he received from the Apostolic Nuncio, advising him of the Holy Father's appointment, Fr Nelson said it was a big surprise.

"It was overwhelming and surreal because I have never dreamed of becoming a bishop," Fr Nelson said.

"I went straight to the chapel and became very emotional. I felt so inadequate and unworthy, but I know that God's strength will carry me through," he said.

After arriving in Perth in 2003, Bishop-elect Po was ordained to the priesthood on 9 December June 2005 by now Archbishop Emeritus Barry Hickey.

Bishop-elect Nelson has served as Chaplain at Royal Perth Hospital and in the parishes of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Cloverdale and most recently at Applecross Parish.

In reflecting on Fr Nelson's commitment to, and engagement with the Church's Synodal journey at the Archdiocesan and universal levels, Perth Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB highlighted Fr Nelson's recent contributions to the Archdiocese of Perth's Plenary Council Reference Group (2019-2021); the Perth Diocesan Assembly Reference Group (2023-2024); and his participation in the Jubilee for Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies in Rome (October 2025).

Bishop-elect Nelson will serve as Auxiliary Bishop in Perth alongside Bishop Don Sproxton.

The Episcopal Ordination livestream will commence with an interview with Bishop-elect Po from 6.30pm via <https://www.youtube.com/perthcatholic>