



**Diocese of Sandhurst**

## **EASTER MESSAGE 2026**

from

**Very Rev. Dr Brian Boyle**

My name is Fr Brian Boyle, I'm the Administrator of the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst and the Administrator of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Bendigo.

I'm standing here outside one of the iconic churches in our Diocese, St Martin's of Tours, in Muskerry. As you can see behind me, this is a beautiful old building, first built in 1876. So, this year, approaching 150 years of Catholic Liturgies and Masses celebrated in this Church.

This Church also holds great significance for me personally, as my great-great-grandfather, Edmond Kennedy, was one of the twelve Irish Catholic settlers in this region who served as a guarantor for the mortgage to fund the building of this church.

As a young boy in the 1960s, I used to come up to Barnadown and Muskerry to visit my grandparents. John Francis Kennedy, my grandfather, was one of the sons of Edmond Kennedy, and I remember oftentimes attending Mass in this Church here at Muskerry with him.

About a kilometre from here, as we face north, is also the place where my ashes will be placed after my death, with a marker indicating my associations with my own family, and with the Kennedy family so many years ago when they first came here.

This Church is, apparently, in the middle of nowhere, and there's quite an interesting story about that. Originally, the railway line was going to pass very close to this Church, so that's why it was built here. But then the Victorian Government changed its plans and moved the railway line about 10km north of here to Goornong. So, the Church is literally in the middle of nowhere,

It was named St Martin's after the first Bishop of Sandhurst, Martin Crane, and I suspect it was a way of trying to ingratiate themselves to him.

We are now inside the Church of St Martin's of Muskerry, and this is the very place where my grandfather used to sit for Mass, and I remember as a boy in the 1960s sitting here with my with him at Mass. It makes me appreciate how my, grandfather and his grandparents before him passed down their faith through the generations. I wonder what Edmund Kennedy would have thought about one of his great-great-grandsons being a priest and celebrating Mass here, at St Martin's, the church he helped build.

Thinking about this, especially at Easter, I reflect on Mary Magdalene, who was probably the person Jesus was closest to, a friend. She was at the Cross when he was crucified, and she was the first person to see Jesus after his resurrection. She rushed to share what she had seen with the apostles, spreading the Good News. And so, she became the apostle to the apostles.



And so, friends, my message, invitation, challenge to each of you this Easter 2026, is to ask yourself the same question that, perhaps, my ancestors asked themselves, and Mary Magdalene asked herself, “ How can I be an evangeliser, a bearer of Good News, an Apostle, sent by the risen Christ to those with whom I live and work now?”

I wish you every blessing of this Easter Season and all the peace of the risen Christ, for us, for our families and our world.