



8 September 2023

Establishing a Community of Rogationist Priests in the Diocese

I am delighted to announce that the Rogationist Fathers of the Heart of Jesus have agreed to establish a community of their priests in the Diocese of Sandhurst.

The Rogationists were founded in Italy by St. Hannibal Di Francia in 1897. They are dedicated to nurturing vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and to spreading greater awareness for all vocations in the Church. They are involved in parish ministry, education of youth, and social assistance, especially for children, orphans and the poor.

The St Matthew Province of the Rogationists is based in the Philippines and also has communities in Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, South Korea and Vietnam. They have been present for nearly ten years in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, caring for the Parish of West Footscray, Maidstone and Braybrook, and recently also for the parishes of Melton South and Bacchus Marsh.

In our Diocese, the Rogationists will establish their community at St Mel's Parish, Shepparton South, and will also serve St Malachy's Parish, Nagambie. The community will be led by Fr Rene Ramirez RCJ, who has just concluded an appointment as Parish Priest of West Footscray, Maidstone and Braybrook. Fr Rene will be assisted by Fr Ruel Desamparado RCJ, who is preparing to travel to Australia from the Philippines. Their appointments will come into effect on Saturday 4 November.

I am grateful to Fr Peter Taylor and Fr Tony Hill for generously facilitating this new arrangement by concluding their own ministry in the Parishes of Shepparton South and Nagambie. Fr Peter Taylor will be available for appointment to one of the parish positions that I announced last week, and Fr Tony Hill will continue with his ministry as Parish Priest of St John the Evangelist Parish, Euroa.

As we prepare to welcome the Rogationists to our Diocese, we look forward to being inspired by their dedication to the *Rogate* command of Jesus: "Pray (*Rogate*) therefore to the Lord of the harvest so that he may send out labourers into his harvest" (Mt 9:37-38; Lk. 10:2).

Yours sincerely,

MOST REV. SHANE MACKINLAY
BISHOP OF SANDHURST

