

Professor Zlatko Skrbiš formally installed as ACU Vice-Chancellor and President

Professor Zlatko Skrbiš was installed as Australian Catholic University's fourth Vice-Chancellor and President at an installation Mass at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney on Friday 26 March.

Most Rev Mark Coleridge, President of ACU Corporation, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and Archbishop of Brisbane, was the principal celebrant, and Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney delivered the homily.

A performance of a Slovenian folk song 'Zarja' ('Dawn') preceded the ceremony. Due to COVID restrictions, members of Professor Skrbiš's family were unable to travel from Slovenia to attend the Mass; they recorded the musical performance as a gift to him.

Professor Skrbis pledged his commitment to leading the university as an ethical, enterprising organisation that would have an impact both within and across the communities in which it inhabits.

"To be successful as a Vice-Chancellor in any university, you have to be good at all of the things you would expect of any Vice-Chancellor: prioritising the needs of our students, ethical leadership, commitment to research, effective administration, and the pursuit of excellence in all of our intellectual endeavours.

"However, to be successful as a Vice-Chancellor at a Catholic university, you need to do all of that and also be very good at leading it in its Catholic endeavours. This is because a Catholic university is, by definition, part of the Church. Whilst having its own governance structures, it is genuinely part of the wider ecclesial mission of the Church in Australia and the world.

"As ACU's new Vice-Chancellor, I fully commit myself to both of these priorities. Inspired by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, I remain committed to continuing ACU's mission, which is centred in the heart of the Church. It is my firm hope that as Australia's preeminent Catholic university, ACU will continue to play a leading role globally in the advancement of Catholic higher education at the service of the Church and the common good."

In his homily, Archbishop Fisher spoke of the opportunity for a new leader to combine tradition and innovation.

"For a faithful Catholic, living within such a tradition, culture and family, is pure opportunity. The deposit of faith and morals opens up new frontiers on what we *could* study, *might* research, *can* teach, *must* witness to. A Catholic university offers more opportunities for study and research, not fewer. That includes areas unfashionable or unprofitable today but that go to the heart of human nature, flourishing and destiny; subjects few other universities dare touch; and particular approaches and insights even to disciplines we explore in common. Above all, we give witness to the faith of the apostles, the truths of faith and the best of art and science, passed on and developed down the ages by the rigorous pursuit of faith and reason.

"Vice-Chancellor, you now straddle two different worlds: the highly innovative world of the contemporary academy and the timeless foundation for the university that is the Church. It is now your task now to integrate and develop them in your own unique way."

The installation is the formal acknowledgement of Professor Skrbis as Vice-Chancellor and President of the university and of a leading Catholic institution. Welcome ceremonies are being held at ACU's campuses in Brisbane, Canberra, Ballarat and Melbourne to celebrate meet and celebrate with representatives of the

university's founding orders, industry partners, government, ambassadors, higher education colleagues, university staff, students, and friends and family.

Professor Skrbis will deliver an inaugural lecture in Melbourne on Thursday 22 April: 'The Purpose of an Australian Catholic University'.

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