



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

New Syro-Malabar Eparch named for Australia, New Zealand

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pope Francis has appointed Fr John Panamthottathil CMI as the second bishop of the Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle, Melbourne, to succeed Bishop Bosco Puthur.

The announcement was published in Rome and Mount St Thomas, Kakkanad, Kerala this evening (Australian time).

Fr Panamthottathil was born in Kerala on May 31, 1966. After completing his schooling, he joined the St Thomas Kozhikode Province of the Congregation of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI).

He made his first profession in 1986 and solemn profession in 1994, and was ordained priest on December 26, 1997. He was elected twice as the Provincial Superior of the CMI Kozhikode Province.

“I take up this appointment with a deep desire to serve the People of God in Australia and Oceania, entrusted to the task with the support of the Syro-Malabar community,” Fr Panamthottathil said.

Fr Panamthottathil’s will be returning to ministry in Australia, where he served for a number of years in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. He was assistant parish priest at St Stephen’s Cathedral, Brisbane, and St Bernadine Church, Regents Park. He also served as parish priest at Our Lady and St Dymphna’s Church, Aspley.

While ministering in the Latin Rite Church, he supported the pastoral needs of the local Syro-Malabar Catholic.

“I remember fondly my time serving in Australia and I very much look forward to returning to minister to the vibrant Syro-Malabar communities across the country and beyond,” Fr Panamthottathil said.

Fr Panamthottathil’s international priestly ministry also included a short period in the Latin Rite Diocese of Nashville, Tennessee.

In 2020, he returned to India and is currently serving as the prior of St Elias Ashram Niravilpuzha, Kerala and parish priest of St Elias Niravilpuzha in the eparchy of Mananthavady Kerala. Fr Panamthottathil also teaches the English language at the Benedictine Ashram Makkiad, Kerala.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB said he looks forward to welcoming Fr Panamthottathil as a fellow member of the Bishops Conference.

“Fr Panamthottathil will return to the Catholic Church in Australia which, especially thanks to the Plenary Council, is growing in its appreciation of the place of the Eastern Catholic Churches, including the Syro-Malabar Church, in Australia and the role they play,” Archbishop Costelloe said.

“On behalf of my brother bishops, I also pay tribute to Bishop Puthur for his significant contributions to the Conference, including through his long-time role of leadership of our ministry to seafarers. May he continue to be blessed in his retirement.”

The Syro-Malabar Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle, Melbourne was established in December 2013 – the second such eparchy outside India.

The Melbourne Eparchy's jurisdiction includes all of Oceania and currently has 13 parishes and 37 missions across Australia and 16 missions in New Zealand.

It is not yet known when Fr Panamthottathil will arrive in Australia.