



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Fr Chris de Souza named general secretary of Bishops Conference

MEDIA RELEASE

May 25, 2023

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has appointed Fr Chris de Souza, currently serving as one of two vicars general in the Diocese of Parramatta, as its new general secretary.

Born in Sri Lanka, Fr de Souza moved to Sydney at a young age. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1983 for the Archdiocese of Sydney, and has ministered in the Diocese of Parramatta since it was erected in 1986.

In addition to many parish appointments over the past four decades, Fr de Souza has also served as episcopal vicar for formation, episcopal vicar for education, director of prison chaplains, director of deacons and students, and vice rector of the diocesan seminary.

He has served as vicar general since 2012.

Bishop Conference president Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB said the bishops were fortunate to have several strong candidates for general secretary.

“We know that it is not easy for a bishop to offer one of his senior priests for a role outside the diocese, but many bishops recognised the pivotal role the Conference’s general secretary plays in the life of the Church in Australia,” Archbishop Costelloe said.

“Fr Chris has served with distinction in the Diocese of Parramatta across a number of roles, meaning he knows well the working of dioceses, parishes and other Church ministries.

“We very much look forward to welcoming Fr Chris to his new role at the general secretariat in Canberra, supporting the bishops in the various aspects of the Conference’s life and work.”

Parramatta Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv said Fr de Souza “is an excellent choice” for the Bishops Conference.

“While he will be sorely missed here in the Diocese of Parramatta, I am confident that he will contribute to the mission of the Church in Australia in his new role at the Bishops Conference,” Bishop Long said.

Fr de Souza, who will start with the Bishops Conference in early August, said he was “honoured” to take up this new ministry.

“This role is somewhat daunting, but I am invigorated by the culture and legacy that Fr Stephen Hackett and all the staff of the Bishops Conference have created,” he said.

“I am looking forward to this new challenge and would like to thank Bishop Vincent Long for his support and pastoral care as I take this next step, and all previous bishops of the Diocese of Parramatta.

“I will miss working with all my colleagues, clergy and friends in the Diocese of Parramatta, but look forward to my visits back home.”

The search for a new general secretary followed the election of Fr Hackett as the provincial superior of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in April. He has served as general secretary since 2016.