



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

MEDIA ALERT

Date: 24 July 2026

Installation of Bishop René RCJ as the ninth Bishop of Sandhurst

11.00 a.m. Thursday 30 July 2026 Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst celebrates a significant milestone in its 150-year history, when Bishop Designate René Ramirez RCJ is installed as the ninth Bishop of Sandhurst at Sacred Heart Cathedral on 30 July 2026 at 11.00 a.m. Over 1300 people, including 28 Bishops and 60 priests, dignitaries and members of the Bendigo Interfaith Council are expected to attend.

Bishop René Ramirez RCJ is the first bishop of Filipino origin in Australia; his appointment as the Bishop of Sandhurst reflects the changing face of the Catholic Australian Catholic congregation today.

Media Opportunities:

Vespers:

Wednesday, 29 July at 6.00 p.m. at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo

Vespers are a traditional prayer service that takes place at dusk, marking the close of the day and the start of a new liturgical day. It features traditional choral chanting, a candlelit liturgy and the ceremonial use of incense. 40 Bishops and priests will be in attendance as well as lay people.

Installation Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral

Thursday, 30 July 11.00 a.m.

The numinous and historic Sacred Heart Cathedral will come alive with the splendour, colour and transcendent sacred music of a solemn Mass to canonically install Bishop René Ramirez RCJ as the ninth Bishop of Sandhurst.

A smoking ceremony will take place outside the Cathedral. Clergy will assemble on the Wattle Street stairs of the Cathedral. Bishop René RCJ will knock on the door of the Cathedral three times with a processional cross, and the doors will open, officially welcoming the new bishop to the Diocese of Sandhurst. Clergy will then process into the Cathedral to start the Mass, which is expected to take approximately 1.5 hours. After the Mass, all Clergy will assemble on the Wattle Street stairs of the Cathedral for a photograph.

Luncheon at St Kilian's Hall, Bendigo

After the Mass, there will be a luncheon for all to welcome and celebrate the official installation of the ninth Bishop.

**Interview:**

Bishop René RCJ will be available for interviews on request.

If you are interested in covering any of these events, please let Katrina know so that we can provide further information and prepare media packs and passes for your arrival.

Further information for media can be found here: <https://sandhurst.catholic.org.au/mediapack>

Media Contact:

Katrina Strong
Communications Coordinator
Catholic Diocese Of Sandhurst

M: 0419 015 696

E: Katrina.strong@sandhurst.catholic.org.au