



09 May 2025

To the People of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, I warmly welcome the news that the Church has a new chief shepherd. Cardinal Robert Prevost has been elected and chosen the name Pope Leo XIV.

Pope Leo XIV has a rich background in pastoral care and missionary work. As an Augustinian and former missionary in Peru, he has lived a life shaped by service and deep listening. His election is also historic, as he's the first American Pope, offering a new sense of connection to the Church across the world.

The election of a new Pope is always a moment of great significance and hope for Catholics and people of good will around the world. We give thanks to God for guiding the Church through this time of transition, and we place our trust in the Holy Spirit, who has once again surprised us through the conclave's decision.

While we will come to know more about Pope Leo XIV in the days and weeks ahead, we already look forward with confidence to his leadership and the ways in which he will be witness to the Gospel in today's world.

I ask our Diocese to pray for Pope Leo XIV. We pray that he may be given wisdom, courage, and grace as he undertakes the immense responsibility of leading the universal Church.

May this new chapter be a time of continued renewal for the Church and inspire each of us to follow Christ with fresh faith, hope and purpose.

Yours in Christ

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle