



Eparchy of Saints Peter and Paul of Melbourne

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MEDIA RELEASE

15 January 2020

New Eparch Announced for Ukrainian Catholics

Bishop Peter Stasiuk CSsR AM says Ukrainian Catholics in Australia are very much looking forward to welcoming their new shepherd after Pope Francis announced Fr Mykola Bychok CSsR will be the third Eparch of Sts Peter and Paul of Melbourne.

Bishop Stasiuk, who has served as Eparch since 1992, offered his resignation to Pope Francis when he turned 75 in July 2018.

This resignation has now been accepted and coincides with the announcement of Fr Bychok's appointment on 15 January (midday Rome time). Bishop Stasiuk will remain Apostolic Administrator until the new Eparch arrives in Melbourne to take up the new role.

"For over a year now, the people of our Eparchy have known that a new Eparch is coming to the Ukrainian Catholic community in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania," Bishop Stasiuk said.

"They are looking forward with great excitement to the arrival of the third Eparch in our 70-year history as a Church in Australia."

Fr Bychok, who was born and raised in Ternopil in western Ukraine, is – like Bishop Stasiuk – a member of the Redemptorist order. He studied in Ukraine and Poland and was ordained priest in 2005. His priestly ministry has seen him serve in Russia, Ukraine and the United States, where he has spent the past five years.

Bishop Stasiuk said Fr Bychok's youth – he will turn 40 next month – and his interest in ministry to young people will be a great asset to Ukrainian Catholics in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania.

"The fresh enthusiasm of a new, young leader is really something everyone is looking forward to," Bishop Stasiuk said.

"The Ukrainian laity is very actively engaged in the life of our Church. They will welcome him with enthusiasm and look forward to working with him in the life of our Church.

“The hopes and dreams of our faith community are to further engage our young people in our mission as a Church. Our young people often have expressed their desire to know and understand the unique spirituality of our 1000-year-old Kyivan tradition.

“The question remains: how do we live our lives as modern day Christians in a modern day Australia, and at the same time preserving our unique spirituality?”

Fr Bychok, whose episcopal ordination will take place in Ukraine, said while he hasn't been to Australia before, he is trying to learn from fellow priests who have lived in Australia. He will spend his early time in the country meeting the faithful.

“First of all I want to be with Ukrainians in Australia, listen to them and grow together as a community of faith in Christ our Redeemer,” Fr Bychok told the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Bishops Conference President Archbishop Mark Coleridge, on behalf of his brother bishops, thanked Bishop Stasiuk for his “long years of faithful service in Australia, praying that he will enjoy a peaceful retirement”.

Further details about the arrival of Eparch-Elect Bychok will be shared when they are known.

Ends

Official Portrait supplied: **Bishop Elect Fr Mykola Bychok CSsR**

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