



Catholic Diocese of Bathurst

18th June 2015

Media Release

150 Years of the Catholic Diocese of Bathurst

The Catholic Diocese of Bathurst will begin celebrations for the 150th Anniversary of its establishment this weekend.

It will be marked by a number of events with special guests attending. Parishes across the Diocese will also be celebrating the anniversary in various ways.

One of the special guests will be the Most Reverend Adolfo Tito Yllana, the Apostolic Nuncio (Pope's representative) in Australia, who will read a message to the people of the Diocese of Bathurst from Pope Francis.

Bishop Michael McKenna said it is significant that the Diocese turns 150 in the same year in which the settlement of Bathurst turns 200. Civic dignitaries participating in the celebrations include Bathurst's Mayor, Gary Rush, as well as Federal and State members The Hon. John Cobb and The Hon. Paul Toole.

Discussing the importance of this historical milestone, Bishop McKenna said, "Whenever we have a significant anniversary it is a good time to look back and take stock of where we are now, before moving on to the future. Priests, bishops and religious leaders are vital in building up the church, but it relies in the end on what all the people have done,"

"There are magnificent examples of lay people doing magnificent things in the Diocese – thousands who don't make the headlines but have lived out their faith and passed that on to their children", he said. "It's important we don't waste this moment and look at how we are doing today and where the Lord is leading us."

Celebrations will begin on Friday 19th June with an Ecumenical Service in the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. John from 7pm. Bishop McKenna said, "We will begin with an Ecumenical Service because the whole history of the Catholic Church and any other Christian church has been a history of living together and, at times, working together."

The occasional preacher will be The Reverend Dr Mike Semmler, President of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

At noon on Saturday 20th June, the actual anniversary, parishes across the Diocese will ring bells to announce the Angelus, a traditional Catholic prayer proclaiming the Annunciation of Christ becoming man. In Bathurst, the city will suspend the usual Carillon and the Anglican Cathedral bells will toll the Angelus, as the bell tower of St. Michael and St. John is undergoing restoration.

There will be free historical tours of the Cathedral at 11am and 2pm, and an historical exhibition in the Chancery Office from 10.30am until 2.30pm.

The day will conclude with a family bush dance at St Philomena's School Hall starting at 6.30pm. A free event to which everyone is welcome.

On Sunday Mass will be celebrated in the Cathedral at 10am. The principal celebrant will be the Apostolic Nuncio. Former Dean of the Cathedral, Bishop Patrick O'Regan will be the occasional preacher.

Mass will be followed by brunch in the Cathedral School hall where the Cathedral Restoration Appeal Art Union No2 will be drawn.

Solemn Vespers and Benediction will take place in the Cathedral at 7pm to bring the weekend to a close.

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