



## WELCOMING THE NEW PRIEST TO JOIN US : FR STEPHEN HILL

Following on from Bishop Anthony's letter to us (on page 5) I would like to extend a warm welcome on behalf of us all to Fr Stephen Hill who will soon join us. However as Fr Stephen's role is a little different I thought it would be helpful to give you a little more background to the 'Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross'.

An 'Ordinariate' is very much like a Diocese, except that unlike a diocese it doesn't have physical borders. For example in many countries there will be a 'Military Ordinariate', whereby the members of the armed forces belong to that 'diocese' regardless of the geographical diocese where their current posting places them, and are ministered to by the bishop and the priests of the Military Ordinariate.

Some years ago Pope Benedict XVI established the possibility of an Ordinariate whereby former members of the Anglican Church who sought to be received into the Catholic Church could retain many of the traditions and liturgical forms of their Anglican heritage while embracing the faith of the Catholic Church. We might be familiar with the 'Maronite Rite' to which many of a Lebanese heritage belong. It is fully part of the Roman Catholic Church but has its own distinct liturgical rites - the belief and theology are the same, the outward form varies. If your neighbour is a Maronite Catholic, they might live next door but they are in an entirely different diocese led by an entirely different bishop! Such is the rich tapestry of the Catholic Church.

The Ordinariate established by Pope Benedict now exists the Australia-Pacific region under the title of the Ordinariate of the Southern Cross. Last year Pope Francis appointed our Bishop Anthony Randazzo as Apostolic Administrator (essentially 'bishop') of the Ordinariate in addition to, and quite distinct from, his role as Bishop of Broken Bay. As in any diocese, the Bishop appoints a priest to be Vicar General to assist him (just as in addition to his role as Parish Priest of Chatswood, Fr David Ranson is Vicar General in Broken Bay).

And this brings us to our welcome to Fr Stephen Hill - who is Vicar General of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross. Following the expiration of Fr Thomas' term as our Assistant Priest, Bishop Anthony proposed to me that Fr Stephen might reside in the presbytery at Killara (which would of course remain entirely and permanently the property of the parish) and carry out his ministry to the people of the Ordinariate by, amongst their things, celebrating Mass in the rite of the Ordinariate in our Killara church each Sunday afternoon.

While he would therefore not technically be an Assistant Priest in our parish (since he belongs not to Broken Bay but to the Ordinariate) Fr Stephen would in fact exercise that role in everything but name. In terms of population the Ordinariate is in fact very small and Fr Stephen would welcome a deep involvement in the life of our parish in addition to his Ordinariate ministry.

I personally felt that this appointment would be a great enrichment to our parish and that Fr Stephen would continue and build on the wonderful ministry of Fr Thomas as Assistant Priest in our combined parish of Lindfield-Killara. Our Parish Pastoral Council and our Parish Finance Committee also expressed strong support for the appointment of Fr Stephen. Bishop Anthony has therefore this weekend formally appointed Fr Stephen as 'Priest-in Residence' in our parish, with responsibility for the Ordinariate community, but on the understanding that Fr Stephen will be fully part of our Mass celebrant roster across the two churches in our parish - and more than that will assist me generally and widely in ministry in our beautiful parish. Indeed Fr Stephen has expressed



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great excitement and enthusiasm for that.

Fr Stephen will take up his appointment on 18th March and so will be with us in time to join us in our Easter celebrations. I know that you will make him warmly welcome. And while the small Ordinariate community will gather at a different time of day to us I hope that we will find many ways to make them welcome as adopted sisters and brothers in our parish.

Just to be clear - Fr Stephen's appointment as Priest-in-Residence is to our *whole*, combined parish of Lindfield-Killara (as of course was Fr Thomas as Assistant Priest) even though his residence will be adjacent to our Killara church.

I hope you will join me in embracing this new dimension in our life as a parish. While we of course will miss Fr Thomas, I'm sure new adventures lie ahead of us as we welcome Fr Stephen's ministry amongst us.

*Fr Colin*



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*We are a welcoming Christian community which embraces all people.  
We support each other to grow in faith and create a loving and compassionate community.  
We aspire to live as Christ's witnesses of God's unconditional love.*