AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

MEDIA STATEMENT **MAY 9, 2025**

Australian bishops welcome Pope Leo XIV

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) has welcomed the election of Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as the Pope, now to be known by the name Leo XIV.

This represents a momentous event in the life of the Catholic Church, the wider community of Christian believers and, in many respects, the whole world.

Conference President, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, said the Catholic Church in Australia offered its heartfelt congratulations.

“The election of Cardinal Robert Prevost as Pope Leo XIV is yet again a sign of the wisdom behind the Italian saying that ‘those who enter the conclave as a pope inevitably emerge from the conclave as a cardinal’,” Archbishop Costelloe said.

“Cardinal Prevost brought to his most recent role as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops an approachability and willingness to listen which were no doubt developed throughout his many years as an Augustinian missionary in Peru.

“He will be warmly welcomed by the Church in Latin America, as Pope Francis was, by the Church in the United States from where he comes, from the English-speaking world as a native English speaker, and from the whole Church as a man of God steeped in the rich spirituality of his Augustinian Religious Order.

“As Pope Leo XIV, our new pope will bring the benefit of his wide experience to the many challenges and opportunities before him.”

Archbishop Costelloe said the new pope would guide the Church with renewed hope and strength.

“The Catholic Church in Australia assures Pope Leo XIV of our prayers, loyalty, and joyful anticipation of his spiritual leadership. May his pontificate be marked by peace, unity, and a deepening of the Gospel message throughout the world,” he said.

“Recent Popes have sought ways to be of service to the wider Christian family and we can expect that Pope Leo XIV will follow this same path. The growing sense of unity and

Media Contact: Paul Osborne • Australian Catholic Bishops Conference • 0407 519 473 • media@catholic.org.au

common purpose, already evident among Christians, can be a powerful countersign to the fragmentation we see in so many societies and communities."

Archbishop Costelloe said Pope Francis had "reminded us that unity does not demand uniformity, but rather openness to the rich diversity of the many cultures and traditions which are part of our Christian heritage".

Pope Leo XIV paid tribute to Pope Francis in his first remarks, which focused on peace.

"Peace be with all of you," he said.

He urged the faithful to "move forward, without fear, united, hand in hand with God and with each other".

Archbishop Costelloe and Vice President Greg Bennet have indicated they will travel to Rome for the installation. representing the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Church in Australia.

Background:

Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, OSA, will be the first Pope from the United States.

The Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, Archbishop-Bishop emeritus of Chiclayo, was born on September 14, 1955, in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

In 1977 he entered the novitiate of the Order of Saint Augustine (OSA) in the province of Our Lady of Good Counsel, in Saint Louis.

In August 1981 he gave his solemn vows. He studied at the Catholic Theological Union of Chicago, receiving a diploma in theology.

At the age of 27 he was sent by the Order to Rome to study canon law at the Pontifical Saint Thomas Aquinas University (Angelicum).

He received priestly ordination on June 19, 1982. He received his licentiate in 1984 and was then sent to work in the mission of Chulucanas, in Piura, Peru (1985-1986).

In 1987 he was awarded a doctorate with the thesis: "The role of the local prior in the Order of Saint Augustine".

In 1999 he was elected provincial prior of the "Mother of Good Counsel" province, Chicago. After two and a half years, the ordinary general Chapter elected him prior general, a ministry again entrusted to him in the 2007 ordinary general Chapter.

In October 2013 he returned to his province (Chicago) to serve as teacher of the professed and provincial vicar, roles he held in November 2014 when Pope Francis appointed him apostolic

administrator of the diocese of Chiclayo, Peru, elevating him to bishop and assigning him the titular diocese of Sufar.

He served as bishop of Chiclayo from November 26, 2015. In March 2018 he became second vice president of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference. Pope Francis appointed him a member of the Congregation for the Clergy in 2019, and member of the Congregation for Bishops in 2020.

On April 15, 2020, the Pope appointed him apostolic administrator of the diocese of Callao.

On January 30, 2023, Pope Francis appointed Cardinal Prevost as prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.