



Bishop Stuart R Hall
Address on the Occasion of his Episcopal Ordination, 29th August 2026, St Patrick's
Cathedral East Melbourne, Victoria

As I give thanks to Almighty God for the grace of this day, my thoughts turn first to those through whom He first called me to faith.

I remember with gratitude my beloved parents, Pam and Don. They introduced me to the faith and, by their daily example, nurtured that faith throughout my life. To my family, my sisters, and brothers-in-law, my nieces and nephews, and all my extended family, thank you. Your love, your prayers and constant support have been among God's greatest gifts in my life.

Although my priestly ministry has often taken me far from home, I have always been grateful to know that I have sisters and by extension their families whose love has remained constant. I thank God for each one of you.

I also remember the priests who formed me by their example of priestly holiness: Fr Les Troy, my school chaplain at De La Salle Malvern, whom I first met as a Grade 4 student in 1973, and former parish priests at St Peter's, Clayton, especially Monsignor Kevin Toomey and Monsignor Frank Lyons. Their witness helped shape the priest—and now the bishop—I strive to be.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who has made today's episcopal ordination such a beautiful celebration of faith.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Archbishop Peter Comensoli. Thank you for your pastoral leadership, and the support you have provided. I am deeply grateful.

I also wish to express my profound gratitude to **Archbishop Christopher Prowse**, who has served as **Apostolic Administrator** of the Military Ordinariate over these past five years. Archbishop Christopher, you accepted this responsibility in a time of uncertainty and guided the Ordinariate with wisdom, stability and genuine pastoral care. Thank you for your generous leadership and for the strong foundation you now hand on.

I also wish to acknowledge my predecessor, **Bishop Max Davis**. He loved this Ordinariate deeply and served it with great generosity. The burdens he carried in later years took a significant toll on his health and curtailed the ministry he longed to continue. Today we thank him for his faithful service, honour his perseverance, and assure him of our prayers.

To my brother bishops, to the clergy and religious, to the Cathedral staff, the Cathedral master of Ceremonies, sacristans and servers, the musicians and Cathedral choir, and many behind the scene volunteers, and to all who have travelled from near and far—thank you.

Your generosity, your prayers and your friendship are a living sign of the unity of Christ's Church.



THE MISSION

Many of you will have noticed in today's booklet my episcopal motto: ***Pax Christi mihi est dux—The peace of Christ is my leader.*** It is more than a motto. It is **both my prayer and my mission.**

The Latin word ***dux*** means much more than simply “leader”. It describes one who commands, who goes before, who sets the standard and inspires others to follow. That is how I understand my relationship with Christ.

He is not simply someone I admire. He is my Commander. His Cross is the standard beneath which I gladly serve, and His voice is the one I seek to obey.

The peace Christ gives is not merely the absence of conflict. It is the peace that steadies the heart, gives courage in uncertainty, strengthens us in hardship, teaches us to forgive, and enables us to remain faithful whatever lies before us. It is beneath that standard that I have been called to serve as Bishop of the Military Ordinariate.

My mission is simple: to bring the peace of Christ to every corner of the Ordinariate and to make it known to every member of our military community—from recruit to the recent veteran.

Those are the marching orders the Church has entrusted to me.

Before ascending to the Father, Our Lord commanded His Apostles to “make disciples of all nations.” Today, the **Vicar of Christ, our Holy Father Pope Leo**, sends this successor of the Apostles with that very same mission: to proclaim Christ, His truth and His lasting peace to the men and women of the Australian Defence Force and to all entrusted to the care of the Military Ordinariate. I express my filial gratitude to the Holy Father for the confidence he has placed in me. I assure him of my faithful obedience and of my prayers for his Petrine ministry.

DEFENCE FORCE

As Australians, we are rightly proud of our Defence Force. We admire the courage of those who stand ready to confront evil, defend what is good, true and just, and protect our nation and our allies.

But we also know that such service always comes at a cost. The sacrifice is borne not only by those who wear the uniform, but also by their spouses, their children, their families and all those who wait faithfully at home. To every military family present today, thank you. The **Church sees your sacrifices, values your fidelity and walks with you in hope.**

As I begin this ministry, I also wish to acknowledge with gratitude our chaplains - priests, deacons, religious and pastoral associates. Wherever duty calls our service men and women, these ministers quietly accompany them with prayer, the sacraments and the compassionate presence of Christ. Much of their work is unseen, but it is deeply valued, and today I thank them for their faithful service.



Conscious of my own unworthiness, I rely entirely upon the grace of Almighty God and upon your prayers.

I am especially grateful to my brother bishops throughout Australia, whose generosity in releasing priests to serve as chaplains makes this ministry possible. With humility, but also with confidence in God's grace, I pledge myself wholeheartedly to this mission for as long as He asks it of me.

CONCLUSION

Together, let us follow Christ, our *Dux*, so that every person entrusted to the Military Ordinariate may encounter in His Church the **truth that sets us free, the hope that endures, and the peace that never fails.**

Finally, I entrust this ministry, and all those entrusted to my pastoral care, to the loving protection of **Our Lady Help of Christians, Patroness of the Military Ordinariate of Australia.**

May she guide and protect all who serve our nation, watch over their families, and lead each of us ever more closely to her Son. May she teach us to remain faithful beneath the Cross, steadfast in times of trial, and always ready to become instruments of Christ's peace. And may we always remain under the command of Christ, our *Dux*—our Commander, our Standard, and our Peace.

Our Lady Help of Christians, pray for us.

St Martin of Tours, pray for us.

St Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle and pray for us.

Amen