



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Most Reverend René Ramirez RCJ

Ninth Bishop of Sandhurst

Biography



- Born: Gapan, Nueva Ecija, The Philippines
- Religious order: Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus (RCJ)
- Ordained a priest: 1998
- Ordained a bishop: 1 February 2025 (Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne)
- Appointed ninth Bishop of Sandhurst by Pope Leo XIV: 11 April 2026
- First Filipino-born Catholic Bishop in Australia
- Previous roles: Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne; Parish Priest of Shepparton South and Nagambie, supervising priest at Rushworth; Provincial Superior of the Rogationists in the Philippines; member of the Rogationists' General Council in Rome
- Areas of ministry: Catholic education, youth formation, pastoral leadership and missionary outreach.

Bishop René Ramirez RCJ is the ninth Bishop of Sandhurst and the first Filipino-born bishop to lead the Diocese, bringing more than three decades of pastoral, educational and missionary experience to central and northern Victoria.

A member of the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus (RCJ), Bishop René RCJ has served the Church in the Philippines and Australia, with a particular focus on formation, education, youth ministry and the care of communities.

Born in Gapan, Nueva Ecija, The Philippines, Bishop René RCJ joined the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus in 1985. After thirteen years of seminary formation, he was ordained a priest in 1998. His first assignment as a priest was as the Vocation Director for his congregation in the Philippines.

From 1999 to early 2003, Bishop René RCJ served as Administrator, Treasurer and Vice Rector of Rogationist College in Cavite City while completing a Master of Educational Management at De La Salle University in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

In 2003, he moved to Rome to complete Licentiate studies in spirituality and earn a Diploma in Social Communications from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

In 2006, he returned to the Philippines and was appointed Director of Social Communications and Spiritual Director at Rogationist Seminary College in Parañaque (Metro Manila), where he also taught.

From 2009 to 2015, he served as the Superior of St Hannibal Rogate Centre, which included the Communications Office, the Provincial House and the House for Rogationist Late Vocation Seminarians.

Bishop René RCJ moved to Australia in 2015 to serve the Holy Family Parish in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, overseeing the communities of West Footscray, Maidstone and Braybrook. He played a crucial role in the amalgamation of the partnered parishes of Maidstone and Braybrook in 2018 and was actively involved in parish renewal through Ron Huntley Leadership Coaching.

In November 2023, Bishop René RCJ was assigned by his congregation to establish a new presence in the Diocese of Sandhurst as the Parish Priest of St Mel's Parish in Shepparton South and St Malachy's Parish in Nagambie. In January 2024, he was tasked by the Bishop of Sandhurst to be the Supervising Priest (Canon 517 §2) in Rushworth, which includes four Mass centres.

In February 2025, he was ordained a bishop and served as an Auxiliary Bishop (Northern Region) of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, becoming the first Filipino-born priest to become a Catholic bishop in Australia.

In April 2026, Pope Leo XIV appointed Bishop René RCJ the ninth bishop of Sandhurst.

His Installation Mass will be celebrated at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo on Thursday, 30 July at 11.00 a.m.

Note:

A Bishop's title is Most Reverend (or Most Rev.)

Bishop René Ramirez RCJ prefers to be known as Bishop René RCJ. He would like the post-nominals indicating his Religious Order to be used after his name. (Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus = RCJ)

See Media Release on the Rogationist for more information.



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