

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Pope Francis appoints Bishop Robert Byrne as the 14<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle**

The Holy See today announced that Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Robert Byrne as Bishop of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Bishop Byrne succeeds The Right Reverend Séamus Cunningham, who has been Bishop of the Diocese since 2009. Bishop Byrne will be the fourteenth Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.

Bishop Byrne was born in Manchester on 22 September 1956. He was ordained priest in 1985 and Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Birmingham on 13 May, 2014.

Speaking of his appointment, Bishop Byrne said: "I am deeply humbled by the trust Pope Francis has placed in me with this appointment as Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle,

"I would like to thank the people and priests of the Archdiocese of Birmingham where I have served for the past five years and, in particular, Archbishop Bernard for his constant kindness and support.

"I look forward to making my home in the North East, with its rich Christian heritage, and also getting to know and serve the people, deacons, religious and priests of the Diocese. I ask all of you to keep me in your prayers as I pray for you."

Bishop Cunningham said: "I am delighted to welcome Bishop Byrne as my successor at a time of great challenge and hope in this Diocese. The Lord Jesus is leading us along a road of rich discernment for the future of the Church and its mission. I know that the priests, deacons, religious and people of the Diocese will warmly welcome him and assure him of our prayers. May the Lord bless his ministry among us. We commend him to Mary the Mother of God, St Cuthbert and all the saints of our Diocese."

I have therefore been appointed as Apostolic Administrator, by Pope Francis, until Bishop Robert's installation

The Most Reverend Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, said: "I am delighted for the Church in Northumbria and Durham and for Bishop Robert that he has been appointed Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle. Bishop Robert has spent his entire priestly ministry in the Archdiocese as an Oratorian in Birmingham and Oxford and we shall miss him very much.

"Bishop Robert will carry his love and knowledge of Blessed John Henry Newman into his new ministry. Bishop Robert renews the bond of affection and faith between our two dioceses which the late Bishop Kevin Dunn had done so much to encourage. May St Chad and St Cuthbert inspire Bishop Robert as he prepares for his new ministry."

Bishop Robert Byrne's Episcopal Installation will be celebrated in St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle, on Monday 25 March. Full details will be confirmed closer to the date.

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