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Dear Diocesan Family,

A week has passed since the very beautiful Ordination and Installation Mass in St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat. I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of your welcome, and I wanted to express my appreciation for that welcome and for the tireless efforts of so many to ensure the splendid celebration that was ours last Thursday.

From the time of the announcement that I would be the ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Ballarat; it was very clear in my mind that whatever was done for the Ordination and Installation had to be a celebration of this local Church. I am grateful for all the people from around the diocese who undertook the many ministries required at such a Mass. The readers, servers, singers and musicians all expressed the vibrancy of this local Church that has now become my home.

The beauty of the liturgical celebration was enhanced by those who acted as welcomers and ushers, by those who decorated the Cathedral, by those responsible for the livestreaming, by those who coordinated the refreshments afterwards. All these efforts have not gone unnoticed. For the rest of my life, I will be grateful.

How blessed we were that so many could join in the ceremony via live stream. Literally thousands have viewed the Mass on YouTube since last week. There is a real sense of journeying together into the future with all the good wishes and encouragement I have received. For this too, I am extremely grateful.

Every best wish and blessing to you all and again, ***Thank You!*** Please pray for me as I will for you. May we continue to grow together in faith and hope and love.

Sincerely,

Mark Freeman,

Bishop of the Diocese of Ballarat