

5 May 2023

Cardinal John Dew retires as Catholic Archbishop of Wellington

Cardinal John Dew, the Catholic Archbishop of Wellington since 2005, has retired on reaching his 75th birthday.

Pope Francis has accepted Cardinal John's formal resignation as Archbishop of Wellington and made the announcement at Noon in Rome on 5 May – 10pm in New Zealand – coinciding with Cardinal John's birthday.

Coadjutor Archbishop Paul Martin SM succeeds Cardinal John as Archbishop of Wellington.

Cardinal John remains as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Palmerston North and continues with his various Vatican roles, including membership of the College of Cardinals, able to take part in papal elections until aged 80.

The Catholic Church's 1983 Code of Canon Law states that archdiocesan and diocesan bishops (including cardinals) are required to submit their resignation to the pope on reaching the age of 75 years.

Coincidentally, Cardinal John and Archbishop Paul share birthdays – both were born on 5 May.

Archbishop Paul says Cardinal John has served Wellington and the Church with distinction and he will be missed.

"We wish Cardinal John well in his retirement, which I am sure will be an active one," said Archbishop Paul. "He has guided the Archdiocese of Wellington through many challenges and major changes, always with a very pastoral approach. He has also had many demanding national roles in the Church, and we will miss him".

Archbishop Paul was the Bishop of Christchurch from December 2017 until 1 January 2021 when he was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Wellington, an appointment that meant he would succeed Cardinal John on the latter's retirement.

Cardinal John was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Wellington in May 1995, then as Coadjutor Archbishop in May 2004. He succeeded Cardinal Thomas Williams as Archbishop of Wellington in March 2005. Pope Francis appointed him as a Cardinal in February 2015.

John Atcherley Dew was born in Waipawa in Central Hawke's Bay on 5 May 1948. He attended St Joseph's Primary School in Waipukurau and St Joseph's College in Masterton. He prepared for the priesthood at Holy Name Seminary in Christchurch

and Holy Cross Seminary, Mosgiel, and was ordained in May 1976. Before being appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Wellington, he served for five years in youth ministry, for four years as Director of First-Year Formation at Holy Cross Seminary, and ministered in parishes of the Archdiocese of Wellington and in the Cook Islands. Among his national and regional roles, he has been President and Secretary of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, and served for four years as President of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania. He has also been the Bishop of the Military Ordinariate for New Zealand since he became Archbishop of Wellington.

Cardinal John continues with his Holy See appointments to the Congregation for Evangelisation of Peoples, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, and membership of the College of Cardinals.

Cardinal John thanked the priests and people of Wellington for their support during his years as Archbishop.

"I have always enjoyed and felt most at home in the parishes and schools of the Archdiocese, among the many committed people who are part of the Church in the Archdiocese," he said. "I look forward to being able to do this on a more informal basis in the future.

"I am sure Archbishop Paul will receive the same support as I have had. As I said when he was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop, I am confident that he will lead the Archdiocese into the future with energy and vision."

Archbishop Paul Martin will be formally installed as Archbishop of Wellington on Saturday 17 June at St Teresa's Pro-Cathedral.

ENDS