



**Rt. Rev Ralph Heskett CSsR**

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**Strictly embargoed until after 11am on Friday 20 March**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

20 March 2026

With a heavy heart but with trust in Divine Providence, I write to you today to announce that in accordance with the prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law, Canon 402 § 2), I recently submitted my resignation from the office of Bishop of Hallam to Pope Leo XIV.

This decision was prompted by a sense of my declining health, which I judged was beginning to impede my ability to exercise fully the pastoral responsibilities entrusted to me. I can now inform you that the Holy Father has accepted my resignation and that he offered me and you all his blessing and prayers at this time.

For almost twelve years it has been my immense privilege and joy to serve as your shepherd. Your unwavering support, prayers, and collaboration have sustained me, reminding me daily of the words of Christ: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11). I am deeply grateful to the Lord for each of you - my brother priests who have shared the burdens of the flock; the deacons, religious, and consecrated persons whose witness inspires us all; and you, the lay faithful, whose holiness in ordinary life builds up the Body of Christ.

This moment of transition calls us to deeper faith and hope. Resignation does not mark the end of my love for this diocese or my commitment to pray for you unceasingly. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, when a bishop offers his resignation for serious reasons, provision is made for his suitable support while ensuring the Church's mission continues without interruption. Accordingly, Pope Leo has Appointed Bishop Marcus Stock, the Bishop of Leeds, as Apostolic Administrator.

Let us entrust this time of change to the intercession of the Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, our diocesan patron and embrace the challenges it may bring with the same spirit of openness and joy that has characterized our diocese.

As I prepare to step aside, I carry with me the memory of your kindness and the assurance of your prayers. May the Lord bless you abundantly and keep you always in His love.

In communion with the Holy Father and united in the one flock of Christ,

Yours sincerely in Christ, the Redeemer,

+ *Ralph*