

## Bishop is top citizen

13 March 2009

Bishop Pat Power has been named Canberra Citizen of the Year.

At a ceremony in Canberra, ACT Chief Minister Mr Jon Stanhope paid tribute to the Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn as he named him this year's recipient of the prestigious award. Bishop Power said he would spend the next year doing all he could "to promote Canberra as the heart of the nation".

The award was made in recognition of Bishop Power's "personal efforts and significant contribution to the ACT community", his strong advocacy for all Canberrans, particularly those in need and for "publicly giving voice to many issues of concern to the wider community".

Bishop Power said some of the greatest lessons of his life in Canberra had come from "the battlers in our community – the people of Causeway in my years as a young priest in the 1960s, the residents of the Narrabundah Longstay Caravan Park, the members of the L'Arche community, the refugees who have shown so much tenacity and courage; the people I stand beside in Weston Park, Yarralumla in October most years, mourning the loss of loved ones from illicit drug use.

"In the years to come, I know that one of my most significant memories will be the national apology given by the Prime Minister in February last year to our indigenous people. I took part in the year 2000 walk over the Sydney Harbour Bridge, while many others did likewise here in Canberra. Many of you people, especially the Chief Minister, can be proud of what you have done in giving recognition to and seeking justice for the people who have lived on this land for 40,000 years."

Pat Power is the eldest child of Ken and Olga Power, born in Cooma NSW on 11 February 1942. He grew up in Queanbeyan and did his primary schooling at St Christopher's School, Canberra, was a foundation student in 1954 of St Edmund's College, Canberra and completed his schooling at Chevalier College, Bowral NSW.

He was ordained to the priesthood in Queanbeyan on 17 July 1965 and served in the parishes of Braidwood, Canberra, and Goulburn before being asked by Archbishop Cahill to undertake a doctorate in Canon Law in 1972 at Propaganda Fide College in Rome. On the completion of his studies in mid 1975, Fr Power returned to Australia and for 10 years served as Archbishop's Secretary (to three Archbishops) and director of the Marriage Tribunal. In February 1985, he became parish priest of his home parish of Queanbeyan.

On 18 April 1986, he was ordained bishop, by Archbishop Carroll, in St Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra, becoming the fifth Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn.

The text of his acceptance speech may be found at <http://www.cg.catholic.org.au/about/default.cfm?loadref=66>



