

Farewell to Bishop Michael Malone



More than 600 people gathered in Sacred Heart Cathedral on Sunday 29th May, to farewell Bishop Michael Malone, ahead of the ordination of Bishop-elect William Wright on 15 June.



While the occasion was called a “Liturgy of Farewell and Separation” and was marked by stirring orchestral music, scripture and well considered tributes, there was also a feeling of camaraderie and good humour, echoing the character of the leader Bishop Michael has chosen to be.

In fact, Bishop Michael admitted that he felt distinctly uncomfortable with the focus fixed so firmly on him, but he took the opportunity to acknowledge the love and support of the People of God in Maitland-Newcastle.



He said that he leaves feeling both sadness and joy, but welcomes the rest and renewal that retirement promises.

After his much vaunted Winnebago-sponsored travels around Australia, he will offer himself as a ‘supply’ priest. Essentially he sees himself as a pastor, and so returning to caring for people without the demands of administration will be very welcome.



Representing the heads of Christian Churches, Bishop Brian Farran spoke of Bishop Michael as a good friend and a courageous leader. He recalled the bond between his predecessor Roger Herft and Bishop Michael which saw the development of the Two Bishops Trust.

Speaking on behalf of the local community,
Lord Mayor of
Newcastle, Councillor John Tate, acknowledged his
admiration for Bishop Michael and said that he had
always felt he “had a bit of devil in him”!



He particularly honoured the contribution of the Two
Bishops Trust after the closure of BHP and the
courage of Bishop Michael at critical times.



Sr Patricia Egan RSJ, former chancellor of the diocese
who worked alongside Bishop Michael, recalled an
imaginative address in which he spoke of the
different roles religious sisters might fill. She also
admitted her relief when Bishop Michael expressed
his wish to continue the implementation of the
Synod’s Pastoral Plan.

The thread running through Sunday’s liturgy was
Bishop Michael’s episcopal motto, Lux et veritas: Light
and truth. While his sixteen years as our
Bishop were acknowledged for the strength of their
commitment, they were seen in the context of his
personal pilgrimage from baptism onwards, and the
larger pilgrimage of all God’s people.



As he prepares to leave the diocese, Bishop Michael
asked to be remembered in our prayers, and assured
us of a place in his.

