

Archbishop Bathersby celebrates 25th Episcopal Anniversary

The Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, Most Rev John Bathersby, has marked the 25th Anniversary of his Episcopal ordination.

A Thanksgiving Mass was held in a full Cathedral of St Stephen on March 24 to celebrate the occasion, with attending dignitaries including the Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley; the Deputy Premier, Mr Paul Lucas, and the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Mr Campbell Newman.

The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto, and around 27 brother Bishops and colleagues from around Australia and New Zealand were also present, along with parishioners and students from Catholic schools.

Archbishop Bathersby was ordained Bishop of Cairns in March 1986, an appointment that allowed him to concelebrate Mass with John Paul II at QEII stadium for what was the Pontiff's first ever Australian papal visit. He became Archbishop of Brisbane in December 1991.

A special papal blessing from Pope Benedict XVI, in honour of the milestone, was recently received by the Archbishop.

This being his 75th year (his birthday is in July), the Archbishop must notify the Holy See he has reached the required retirement age.

In due course the Pope will appoint a successor.

The president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Philip Wilson, preached the homily at the Thanksgiving Mass.

In a message especially penned for this weekend's The Catholic Leader, Archbishop Wilson paid tribute to Archbishop Bathersby as both a friend and mentor.

"Archbishop Bathersby has made a very distinguished contribution to the life of the Catholic Church in Australia through his work as a priest of the Diocese of Toowoomba, his further involvement with the regional seminary in Brisbane and his ministries as Bishop of Cairns and Archbishop of Brisbane," Archbishop Wilson said.

"The Archbishop has also made a major contribution to the life of the universal Church by the work that he has done in the area of ecumenism as a result of his appointments by the Holy See to the Anglican dialogues.

"I also take this opportunity to acknowledge my personal esteem for the Archbishop as a friend and as an Episcopal mentor," he said.