

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

27 April 2024

Diocese mourns the passing of Bishop Peter Ingham at 83 years of age

Peter William Ingham, the fourth bishop of Wollongong, died peacefully in the late evening of 26 April 2024. He was 83 years of age and almost 60 years a priest.

Born in Crows Nest, Sydney, Peter was the only child of George and Marjorie Ingham (nee Hyndes). He was educated at St Leonard's Primary School, Naremburn, and St Pius X College, Chatswood, and studied for the priesthood at St Columba's Seminary, Springwood, and at St Patrick's Seminary, Manly. He was ordained by the late Cardinal Sir Norman Gilroy in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, in 1964. Following various parish appointments in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Peter was appointed private secretary to Cardinal James Freeman, and then as the secretary of the Archdiocese of Sydney. He was nominated as a monsignor by Pope John Paul II in 1986, and in July 1993 he was consecrated auxiliary bishop of Sydney. On 25 July 2001, Peter was installed as the fourth bishop of Wollongong, and with his typically selfless dedication, served the diocese for 16 years, retiring in November 2017.

Bishop Peter's ministry was not confined to the Diocese of Wollongong. He served on several committees of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and in 2006 was elected president of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania. In October 2008, he participated in the 12th Synod of Bishops at the Vatican, and in October the following year was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI a member of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. In 2022, Bishop Peter was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia by the late Queen Elizabeth II for "significant service to the Catholic Church in Australia".

With the mention of the name, Bishop Peter Ingham, words and images immediately spring to mind. Bishop Peter had a prodigious memory for names and faces, and it was a great joy to him to be among people at diocesan or civic gatherings. His warm and welcoming, happy and caring nature were evident in his engagement with each person. He was compassionate and approachable, faith-filled and prayerful—in essence, a servant leader. His greatest joy was to be a disciple of Jesus and a true shepherd of God's people.

In 2016, Bishop Peter was diagnosed with fibrosis of the lungs which restricted his airways and his capacity to exert himself. As his condition deteriorated, he was cared for by a close family friend with the assistance of his doctor and palliative care teams in Sydney. He faced his death with the dignity, graciousness and serenity that had characterised his life—gently surrendering into the arms of our loving God at 83 years of age on 26 April 2024.

Paying tribute to the the impact Bishop Peter had on the Diocese of Wollongong, the current bishop of Wollongong, Bishop Brian Mascord said: "Bishop Peter was a spiritual father of the Illawarra, Macarthur, Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands. We offer him a heartfelt 'well done, good and faithful servant' (Matthew 25:23), and we take comfort in the sure hope that we now have another advocate in the presence of our Lord praying for the needs and salvation of the people of God in the Diocese of Wollongong.

"A man of God—a man for the people. May his noble soul rest in peace."

The details for Bishop Peter Ingham's vigil and funeral Mass at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong, will be announced in the coming days.

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Attached

1. Timeline of the life of Bishop Peter Ingham.
2. Photos cleared for use in media publications can be downloaded at: dow.sh/BPI_images

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