



JOY AND HOPE

Pilgrim, Priest and Bishop

PAT POWER

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When Pat power retired as Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn in 2012, there was an outpouring of tributes to him and his time as Archbishop. A moving selection of these can be found on the archdiocesan website. Confrere Archbishop Frank Carroll said he was 'a man of conviction and courage who has publicly espoused many a cause, particularly when injustice, disadvantage and discrimination were at stake. From this not only Catholic people but many in the wider community have found someone to speak for them and have drawn hope and strength from his support.'

The Anglican Bishop of Canberra, George Browning, said:

Undoubtedly the hallmark that makes Pat Power stand out from the rest of us has been his fearless championing of the poor and needy, the

powerless, and those without a voice. I am sure there have been very many occasions when secular leadership as well as those in senior positions in his church have found him a 'troublesome priest'. On the other hand I am sure there are many outside the church who have had to rethink their agnosticism or even atheism when they have encountered the transforming love of this man who attributes it all to the grace of God in Jesus.

Pat Power spoke on many occasions and in many forums on the issues and themes that these two colleagues have mentioned. This book is a collection of such pieces. They come from homilies, occasional addresses, newspaper opinion pieces, letters and personal reflections. They cover a wide range of topics, and always with an openness and humble respect.

When he was appointed bishop in 1986, he says, 'many of the people closest to me told me not to turn away from being my real self. That advice in some ways was easy enough to adopt because I was in my home diocese, and, surrounded by family and good friends, there were plenty of people to remind me of my humble origins if I became too big for my boots.'

Pat Power sees himself as part of the pilgrim church, 'a people on the move, with a sense of adventure, supporting and encouraging one another, sometimes getting a bit lost or bloodied, sometimes questioning the path they have taken, but ultimately believing that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.'

The journey of this book shows the missionary heart of Pat Power. He did not retreat into his own security or opt for rigidity or defensiveness, but got his feet soiled in the mud of the street by walking as a pilgrim with his sisters and brothers, hand in hand in the journey of life. He gave them a voice that was filled with hope, and shared their tears and joys as he walked and celebrated with them. (Bishop William Morris, from the Foreword)

The author

Pat Power was born in Cooma, NSW, in 1942, grew up in Queanbeyan, and was educated at St Christopher's School and St Edmund's College in Canberra and Chevalier College, Bowral. After leaving school, he trained for the priesthood and was ordained in Queanbeyan in 1965. He did a doctorate in canon law in Rome in 1972, and returned to Canberra to serve as archbishop's secretary (to three archbishops) and director of the marriage tribunal. In 1985, he became parish priest of his home parish of Queanbeyan. In 1986, he was consecrated bishop by Archbishop Francis Carroll in St Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra.

Much of his ministry has been in the field of ecumenical and inter-faith relations. At the 1998 Oceania Synod of Bishops in Rome, he spoke on marginalised people in society and in the church. He has been a strong advocate for the East Timorese and the Palestinians, for Aboriginal people, for racial respect, for the unemployed and in opposition to abortion and assisted suicide. In 2000, he chaired a major enquiry into poverty in the Australian Capital Territory. In December 2006 he was inaugurated into the ACT Honour Walk for being a voice for the disadvantaged in the community, and in 2009 was named Canberra Citizen of the Year. His early resignation, at age 70, as auxiliary bishop of Canberra and Goulburn was effective from 7 June 2012.

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