

Serving Faithfully

Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services
Published by the Diocesan Curia. Editor: Brigadier Alan Hodges AM, KCSG (Ret'd)

SPECIAL EDITION JUNE 2021



Retirement Bishop Max Davis AM, DD

There was national rejoicing on 15 August 1945 when news arrived that Japan formally surrendered to the allies. For Catholics, the day had special extra significance – it was the feast day of the Patroness of Australia, Mary Help of Christians (now also the Patroness of the Military Ordinariate). The front page of the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* of 16 August showed a section of the crowd gathered in Flinders St Townsville.

That day was also auspicious for the Davis family as their first child, Max Leroy, was born.

The proud father, Warrant Officer Pilot Frederick Davis RAAF, was still serving as a bomber pilot and had been stationed in Townsville for much of the war with deployments into areas of operation to undertake missions in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The equally proud mother, Marion (née Murray) came to Australia as a child with her family from Northern Ireland, settled in Cairns and became a nurse at Park Haven Hospital in Townsville. When demobilization eventually occurred, some months after cessation of hostilities, the Davis family settled in Perth, WA. Early on they were blessed with twins but, sadly, they did not survive.

Early years

During primary school years Max lived at Wembley Downs on Perth's northern beaches on a four-acre block with some horses, a cow, and some show-quality bantams and pure-breed Scotch Collies, which were frequently placed in shows. His mother continued nursing and his father resumed his trade as a boilermaker/welder until a wartime back injury resulted in his being classified as Total and Permanently Disabled.

For the first three years of primary school, Max attended the local parish school, Our Lady of Victories, staffed by Presentation Sisters. He completed primary school at Mary's Mount School in the suburb of Kalamunda as a boarder. This school was run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition, an order of French origins, which arrived in Fremantle in 1855. They subsequently established primary and secondary schools in Perth and rural WA, an aged-care home, and a hospital in Fremantle. In the seventies the nuns commenced withdrawing from schools and devoted efforts in such directions as educating adults in the faith, catechetical programmes for children attending government schools and providing counselling to the poor. In recalling his impressions of these times, Bishop Max said that, 'I have only pleasant memories of the Sisters. The way they communicated that they really cared about each one of us is a lasting impression.'



Teenage years

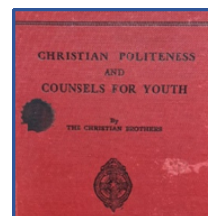
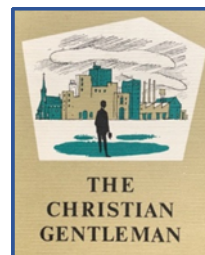
During Max's high school years, the family moved to Bassendean, north-east of Perth near the Swan River. He was at Christian Brothers' colleges at Leederville and Highgate during which he developed an interest in language, reading and science and obtained sound skills in technical drawing, although he had an enduring aversion to mathematics. As a teenager, he found sport rather more appealing than academic pursuits. It was during this period too that he developed an interest in the lives and examples of the Saints.

He recalls that, 'The Christian Brothers

were impressive in a very positive way. They showed us what a difference a strong spiritual life makes in all aspects of our interface with the world. I remember that standard handouts from the Christian Brothers were two little booklets, "The Christian Gentleman" and "Christian Politeness and Counsels for Youth". These were very inspirational in connecting good and proper Christian values with ordinary everyday experiences.'

In looking back at his teenage years, Bishop Max said, 'Summer was spent swimming, bush walking, horse riding and running, while winter sport was mainly football (the real stuff!). I used to like tinkering around with my father in things mechanical too and, as his health declined, I was able to do some of the heavy lifting for him. Then there were the opportunities to engage in other social activities, like the Saturday Night dances which were a feature of the day, and going to the movies once a month where I was able to mix with others, especially the girls that I had come to know on the daily public transport to and from school.' Bishop Max also remembers being attracted by thoughts of becoming a priest, but these were fairly quickly dismissed on three grounds: '1. They talk in a funny language (Latin). 2. They wear strange clothes. 3. They can't get married.' Nevertheless, he continued to be moved by the ceremonies in the Church, especially in St. Mary's Cathedral where the family went to Solemn High Mass at least once a month.

The Davis parents instilled a strong religious faith in their son. They would pray the rosary each evening and attend Mass each Sunday. Grace at meals was standard and special efforts were made to celebrate the major religious festivals. His father would not leave the house without his rosary in his



pocket and was habitual is raising his hat whenever he passed a church. Although the family was not foreign to financial hardship, and did struggle at times, there was never any sense of despair. The strong religious foundation was most important, and their faith strengthened them to have the confidence that, if they did their best, God would always make sure they had what was necessary.

Honesty and treating others with dignity were very strong principles of life. They were generous towards those in need and would often share what they had, while at the same time being most reluctant to accept help from others.

In the workforce

Following completion of high school Max worked for Pellegrini's religious goods company in Perth, first in the storeroom and then in sales in the shopfront. After about six months he went to the RAAF Recruiting Office where the medical examination revealed that he had an eye problem that would prevent him from flying duties. With hopes dashed, he then went next door to the RAN Recruiting Office. When it was confirmed that he could go to sea, the formalities were completed. In 1959, at age 16, Max signed up for nine years as a recruit for the electrical branch.

For the next 12 months at HMAS CERBERUS he attended Recruit School and Navy's Electrical School. A highlight was playing for Navy in the Victorian Inter-Service Aussie Rules competition. From there he was posted to the Sydney-based destroyer HMAS QUIBERON, which joined the Far East Strategic Reserve for deployment during Indonesian Confrontation. Action stations were activated on a number of occasions when being shadowed by an Indonesian submarine and in support of an opposed landing of some British forces in Sarawak. He recalled, 'As the landing forces were leaving HMS ALBION we were close enough on QUIBERON for me to see the chaplain on the carrier's Quarter Deck. I was so impressed to realise that he was giving them general absolution. When we returned to Garden Island, some of the survivors of the HMAS VOYAGER were posted to our ship and we did our very best for them to help them to "settle" down. We didn't know anything about PTSD in those days.'

Call to priesthood

During that Far East deployment, Leading Seaman Electrical Mechanic Max could not shake the persistent temptation to consider priesthood. So, after taking some advice from two Royal Navy Chaplains, he resolved to 'give it a go and see'. (He commented that, 'I'm still giving it a go!') In May 1964 he was surprised, as was his commanding officer, to be released from his nine-year Navy enlistment after five years service.

During school holidays, he often went to a relative's farm in the WA wheatbelt. The local parish

priest, a monk from New Norcia, influenced Max to offer himself to the Abbot at New Norcia to undertake the equivalent of a first year of Seminary studies and also to be introduced to the spiritual and prayer life of the monks.

Further training for the priesthood was undertaken for two years at St Columba's Seminary at Springwood and then at St Patrick's Manly. He recalled that Professor Walsh at St Columba's said, 'I know that philosophy can be difficult, but it is the coat hanger on which you hang the coat of theology so it keeps its shape.' Max describes the following five years of life at Manly as very monastic, 'We were required to wear a soutane at all times, even when gardening (with a 'grot' soutane), although on Thursdays we were allowed to walk back streets to Manly shops, BUT not to the Corso or the beach.'

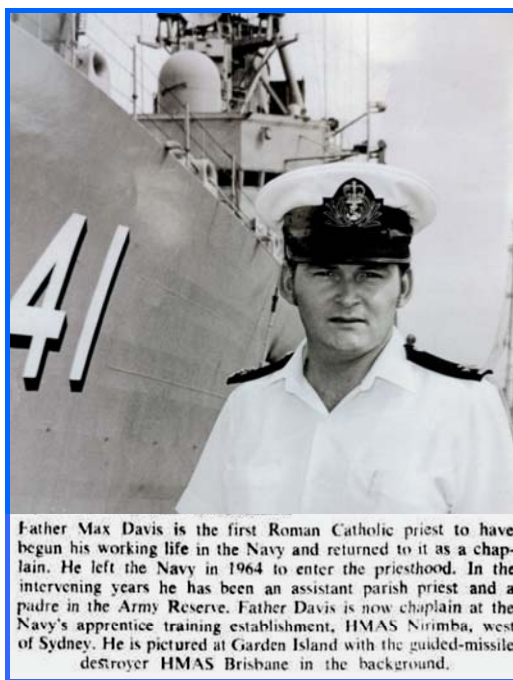
Ordination followed on 31 October 1971 at New Norcia by Bishop Quinn, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Perth with students from both St. Benedict's College and from St Gertrude's College (a girls' boarding college) combining for a Folk Mass. One of the older monks described it as, 'Sacrilegious twangings in an antiseptic sanctuary.' His mother was proudly able to see her son ordained, but not his father who died in December 1966.

The ordination was a 'big show' for New Norcia and the local garage, general store and pub did a roaring trade. Among the many attending was Father Harry Brennan (then full-time Army Chaplain in Perth) who had already drawn up papers for Fr Max to enlist in the Citizen Military Forces!

Following ordination, Fr Max assisted at St Benedict's College at New Norcia while being appointed as an Assistant Priest to Moora about one-hour drive away. He said, 'Of all the many wonderful things the PP Fr O'Brien taught me about Parish Life, his expertise in marriage preparation was singularly lasting. He also encouraged me to be involved in the social life of the Parish, such as the local football and basketball competitions.' Fr Max was also posted to 28th Battalion Royal Western Australia Regiment as a CMF chaplain. After two years he became Assistant Priest at Northam, and then Parish Administrator when the PP had a stroke.



Bishop Peter Quinn with Fr Max Davis following ordination in 1971



Father Max Davis is the first Roman Catholic priest to have begun his working life in the Navy and returned to it as a chaplain. He left the Navy in 1964 to enter the priesthood. In the intervening years he has been an assistant parish priest and a padre in the Army Reserve. Father Davis is now chaplain at the Navy's apprentice training establishment, HMAS Nirimba, west of Sydney. He is pictured at Garden Island with the guided-missile destroyer HMAS Brisbane in the background.

Canberra Times 20 January 1976, p8

Navy Chaplain

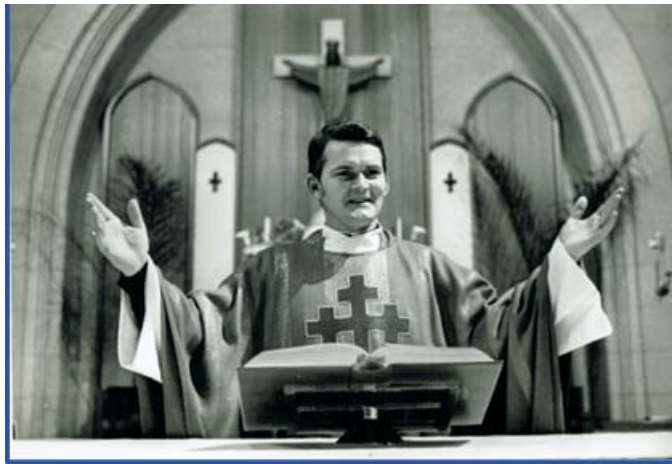
After 18 months at Northam Fr Max had a phone call from Archbishop Goody of Perth to 'tell' him that he was to be a full-time Navy chaplain with a posting at HMAS NIRIMBA in Sydney and responsible also for HMASs PENQUIN, PLATYPUS and WATERHEN, and HMAS MELBOURNE during her period in dry dock. So began 1976, a vast change from Parish life in rural WA. A posting followed to HMAS CERBERUS in Victoria for two years and then to sea with a posting to HMAS Melbourne (aircraft carrier and Flagship) and as



A young Chaplain Max at HMAS NIRIMBA in 1975

Chaplain Max found new challenges during these next four years, 'The particular issues of serving at sea: remoteness, compassionate situations, critical incidents and injuries. There were many transfers between units and celebrating Masses in all sorts of places and times. There were physically challenging and demanding fleet deployments to New Zealand and RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific Exercise), but satisfaction in being "fought over" by different ships wanting me on board!'

Then for the next four years he was back to WA until 1984 with recruit trainees at



Chaplain Max celebrating Mass in Our Lady Star of the Sea Memorial Chapel at HMAS CERBERUS in 1977

HMAS LEEUWIN and responsibilities also for HMAS STIRLING at Garden Island south of Perth, Harold E Holt Naval Communications Station at Exmouth, the Clearance Diving Team posted to SASR, and subsequently wider responsibility for SASR at the request of Army.

He next received a prestigious posting to the US Navy's Advanced Chaplains Course at Newport Rhode Island in 1984. He found that the experience was, 'An extraordinary immersion into a

significantly different culture – socially, in civil society, and in military environment. I learnt a great deal about programming and planning, professional leadership and accountability, and about the civil/military interface – much of it directly relevant to the situation in Australia. Of particular use was reinforcing the concept of the US approach of an ecumenical chaplaincy working as a combined effort.'

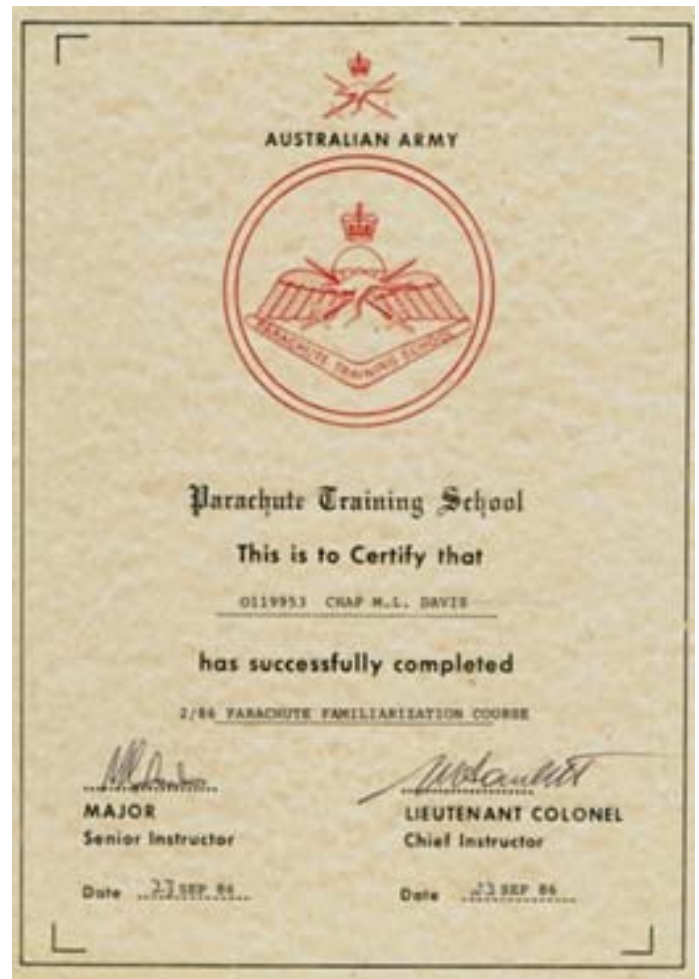
Further postings gave Fr Max wider experiences at HMAS ALBATROSS (including the Army Parachute School) in NSW with responsibility also for HMAS CRESWELL, the nearby Naval College. This was a time when he found the benefit particularly of simply 'being there'.



Chaplain Max being presented with a Commendation by (then) Commodore David Martin, at the time Captain of HMAS MELBOURNE (aircraft carrier and Flagship) and FLAG COMMODORE in 1980.



Fr Max with his mother during leave in USA after completing the Advanced Chaplains Course at USN Naval Chaplains School in 1985



He said also, 'There was a great opportunity to share my reflections and experiences with the Midshipmen so as to encourage them and affirm them in their vocation. Again, the loving support and special privilege of being involved with families is a treasured memory.'

In July 1987 Fr Max joined HMAS JERVIS BAY and went back to sea – on a ship where Midshipmen and Direct Entry Officers undertook their sea training. He also undertook collateral duties like coaching trainees in their navigation and as ship's Ceremonial Officer. He used his previous experience as an electrical mechanic to assist in maintaining two navigation radars. He recalls, 'The embrace and support of those on board is a lasting and happy memory.'

In 1989 he was returned to HMAS ALBATROSS, on promotion, in the appointment of Senior Chaplain. Sadly, this year Mrs Davis died. At the beginning of 1993 he attended the six-month course at the Joint Services Staff College in Canberra. While at Katherine NT on a course national study tour he had a phone call from Bishop Mayne, the Military Ordinary, advising him that he was a Prelate of Honour of His Holiness with the title of Monsignor. Breakfast that day could have been considered a celebration. Fr Max said, 'The CO of RAAF Base Tindal, which was still under construction, arranged a "white table" silver service style breakfast in the bush. I remember thinking "only the RAAF" could provide such an event in the middle of the Australian bush as if it was normal routine. It was well done and a pleasant experience.'

Director General Chaplaincy-Navy

This Staff College course prepared Mgr Davis well for the challenges of a promotion appointment to Director General Chaplaincy-Navy. He said, 'Being part of the team in the Naval Personnel Division was both challenging and fulfilling. Having to manage the outcomes of the Defence Reform Programme and development of Navy's Quality Management process was exciting, and not a little intimidating at times. Here I had to rely heavily on some very senior Sirs and it was always a great consolation to know that they were there to support me.'

After five years as Director General, Principal Catholic Chaplain-Navy Davis completed full-time duty in 1998. In the Australia Day Honours List that year he was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia 'For exceptional service to the Royal Australian Navy, particularly as the Director General Chaplaincy-Navy'. Although he was to be offered an extension in his appointment, he knew that, 'Five years is more than enough. I felt that it would be good to have new blood, new initiatives and new ideas.'

In a part-time role he continued as Principal Catholic Navy Chaplain until the end of 2000. With fewer responsibilities, he said Mass regularly in Canberra at Marist College and CBC St. Edmunds, took on a religious education teaching role and also assisted at St Christopher's Cathedral in Canberra.

Military Ordinary

During this time Bishop Mayne was ill and the Vicar General invited Fr Max to assist in work with the Chancery. In 2003 he received a call from the Apostolic Nuncio advising that the Holy Father had appointed him to be the next Military Ordinary. Bishop Max was consecrated bishop in St. Christopher's Cathedral on 22 August 2003 by Bishop Mayne and in the presence of Bishop Morgan, former Military Ordinary from 1969 to 1984. Bishop Mayne died three weeks later.



Bishop Mayne is about to lay hands on his successor.



Former Military Bishop Morgan lays hands on new Military Bishop Davis at his ordination. In the background is Bishop Peter Quinn about to lay hands on Bishop Davis. He ordained Bishop Davis to the Diaconate and the Priesthood.

During Bishop Mayne's tenure there had been much discussion and policy development to introduce the position of Permanent Deacons as chaplains as a means of alleviating the declining number of priests. Deacons were initially placed in Army as there was scope to provide supervision of a deacon by a local Chaplain Priest. Deacons are now present in all three Services. Where there is no accessible Chaplain Priest to provide moderation, arrangements are made for this with the local diocese.

Bishop Max explained, 'The Deacon's ministry of service embraces a concentration on the individual needs – pastorally caring and making sure their daily needs are being attended to (spiritually, socially and physically). The role of the priest is more community-centred, teaching and sanctification. The Deacon brings the individual into the community through instruction and Baptism and Marriage. The priest brings the community together through Eucharist, reconciliation, healing and the explanation of doctrine.'

Bishop Max has been instrumental in the introduction of uniformed Lay Pastoral Associates who, he says, 'Although they are not ordained, they serve a vital function in "walking alongside" and encouraging the faithful from the basis of the cardinal virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.' He added that there needs to be a very careful discernment that they are both willing and able to be identified as Catholic and to be well-prepared and strong in their capacity for faithful observance of the Church's practice, values, and doctrines. They undertake the same academic and pastoral formation as other Catholic deacons. Bishop Max remains hopeful that introducing Lay Pastoral Associates into chaplaincy will also lead to Catholic female chaplains. He said, 'I believe that the involvement of women in Sacred Scripture and in the life of the Church down through the centuries is a testimony to God's desire and intention that, unfortunately, we have not yet been able to restore, but we must keep on trying.' At present there are 5 full-time Deacons (1 Navy, 3 Army, 1 Air Force), 3 Reserve Deacons (1 Navy, 2 Army) and 3 full-time Lay Pastoral Associates, of whom two were former Service members.

In reflecting on ecumenical developments over the years, Bishop Max recalled, 'From my earliest days as a priest I have been blessed to have been involved with clergy of other religious faith groups and communities. I have learnt a great deal from them and been inspired by them. This is a huge change in the mind-set that I grew up with when we were not even allowed to enter a church of another denomination, or indeed allowed to interact with kids of similar age because they were not Catholic. Most of my postings as a chaplain involved close working relationships with non-Catholic chaplains and these were wonderful and fulfilling relationships. I found the close ecumenical interaction was very enlightening and rewarding.'

During the Bishop's membership of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services he experienced a spirit of cooperation and mutual support based on upholding the right to believe and practice. There were very few occasions when support could not be unqualified and there were many times when both success and failure were shared. He finds it interesting that, in his recent membership of the Bishops Commission for Ecumenism, Christian Unity and Inter-Faith Relations, much of his Service experience equipped him with the ability to contribute positively.

Challenges

In considering the challenges facing the Catholic Military Ordinariate, Bishop Max said, 'It is unlike other dioceses in Australia. It has a very mobile flock and lacks the roots of long-resident parish families. The recruitment of chaplains is a constant challenge, but one that is essential to ensure that the faithful can live out their Christian vocation and that our faith has relevance to the relative youth of serving members and families.' He added, 'The Second Vatican Council recognised that Military Ordinariates had a contribution to the life of the church and that those serving in Defence Forces have a particular vocation, ministry and mission.' He said also, 'Within the Catholic Defence Force there are people with experience, expertise, knowledge and commitment who could be brought together, along with senior chaplains, to help research the needs for people living in the vocation of military service as peacemakers and peace maintainers. I would be most willing to assist in the future to a theologically-based educational and research organisation contributing to the development of policy. The COVID-19 experience has shown us that we can effectively exchange information and views virtually.'

Reflecting on retiring from the position of Military Ordinary, and becoming Bishop Emeritus, he says that, 'I will always be wedded to this community. My role is to continue in prayerful support – most earnestly. While I seriously doubt that my successor will have the need I will, of course, be willing to assist him in any way he might ask. This is not a 'back seat' position – more like someone in the trailer!'



Bishop Max being congratulated by Jesse (fondly known as Assistant Bishop) after graduating from first training class Canberra 2017 (she was a good teacher!)

Jesse and Bishop Max have successfully completed advanced training and are now constant, compatible companions.

In the August 2019 issue of *Serving Faithfully*, Bishop Max reported on his recent visit to Rome: 'At the end of June I carried you all in my heart and soul to the "ad Limina Apostolorum" visit to Rome. Going back centuries, those entrusted (the bishops) with the care of a particular community of the faithful have been required to go to the Successor of Peter to render an account of their ministry and to describe the circumstances of that Church. This is not really so much a visit as a pilgrimage – a spiritual journey – that has some elements that have been traditionally essential. These include celebrating Mass at the tombs of the Apostles Peter (at the Vatican) and Paul (at 'St Paul's Outside the Wall') which is what the Latin title 'ad Limina Apostolorum' means. Part of the same tradition is to celebrate Mass also at the major shrine to our Lady (St. Mary Major) and in the Cathedral of Rome (St. John Lateran).

'In former years the bishop went individually, but in recent times the bishops of a region go together. It is also the case that, some six months before the visit is scheduled, a 'quinquennial (five-year) report' is written by each bishop.

'This is a very comprehensive report that is divided into twenty-two sections. Each of the sections is also sent to the relevant office (called a dicastery) at the same time. This forms the basis of any discussions that must take place while the bishop is in Rome, both at the dicastery concerned and at the audience. The Holy Father is briefed by each office before the audience and it was very clear that the Pope was well across, very interested and very pastorally focussed on the situation of the Church in Australia ... the very first event on the first day was Mass at the Tomb of St. Peter in the crypt of the Vatican Basilica. I was given the honour of being one of the three to actually stand at the altar at the Concelebration and to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. My relief at placing the prayers, petitions and hopes of the faithful of this diocese at the Tomb of St. Peter was almost palpable – I felt that the pilgrimage had really begun ... The next event on that first day was the audience with the Holy Father ... I was able to give the Holy Father your greetings and an assurance of your prayers and ask him to accept our fidelity and a small gift. I also asked Pope Francis to pray for us and to give us his blessing, which he enthusiastically agreed to do.'



Australian bishops meeting with the Holy Father during the June 2019 'ad Limina Apostolorum' visit. Bishop Max is nearest the right edge.



First 'Ad Limina' with Pope St John Paul II in 2004.



Bishop Max with Pope Francis during 'Ad Limina' in 2019.



Pope Benedict XVI arrival in Australia for World Youth Day in 2008. Because he landed at RAAF Base Richmond, Bishop Max welcomed him to Australia.

In view of this very significant time for the Military Ordinariate with Bishop Max's retirement and the way ahead in preparing for a new Bishop, your financial donations will certainly assist us. Thank you for your continuing support. If you would like to make an online donation please use the following details for a transfer to the Armed Services Catholic Diocese Revenue fund:
BSB: 062786
Account Number 000018622
Bank CDF Canberra
Alternatively, please call the Secretariat on 02 6248 0511
All donations are tax deductible.

Accolades

The enormous contributions Bishop Max has made and the high regard in which he has been held over many years are evident from military records:

- ♦ August 1998 **Deputy Chief of Navy:** 'Principal Chaplain Davis has made a very significant and valuable contribution to the Navy during his five years as DGCHAP-N. Under his stewardship the Branch has moved with the times and adapted very well to the significant changes that have taken place within Defence over that period. More importantly, he has taken a very holistic approach to the duties as a Branch Head within Navy Headquarters and has always been very willing to contribute in whatever way he could to the Navy's outcomes: he has not been constrained by the bounds of his laid down responsibilities or duty statement.'
- ♦ August 1998 **Chief of Navy:** 'I have valued his advice both within his primary field, as well as on wider issues, where his contribution has been particularly sagacious, perceptive and sensitive.'
- ♦ August 1998 **Chief of Defence Force:** 'You have worked hard and inspired many people throughout your service. Sometimes the challenges have been difficult, but you always rose to the occasion. Leadership has been a keynote. Having come in contact with many people over your many years of service, in times of joy and in times of sorrow, you should take great pride in the knowledge that you have assisted so many people through your dedication, resolve and maintaining a great sense of humour.'
- ♦ March 1999 **Chief of Navy:** 'Over five years as DGCHAP-N you provided outstanding leadership to the Navy's Chaplains, gave the Chaplains' Branch direction for the future and significantly enhanced links with other Chaplaincy services in other Navies.'

Extracts from other documents:

- ♦ 'While at NIRIMBA, Chaplain Davis took private flying lessons and completed his first solo flight. We have already felt this Chaplain's loss to the establishment, and it is because he carried out all his commitments in such a satisfactory manner that I render this special report on him.'
- ♦ 'He possesses a keen intellect that is complemented by excellent staff skills. He is extremely well spoken and relates exceptionally well to the ship's company. His involvement with the ALBATROSS Australian Rules Team is an important feature of SCHA Davis' ministry.'
- ♦ 'As a friend and counsellor he is both admired by officers and sailors alike. When assisting me with sailor's personal problems his advice was invariably reliable and helpful; and offered in such a way that it supplemented rather than replaced the divisional process.'
- ♦ 'His achievements while in the USA have brought great credit upon himself and he has been a most worthy representative of his country abroad.'
- ♦ 'PCHAP Davis has experienced great success in generating enthusiasm and a sense of purpose among junior Chaplains while gaining the support and allegiance of more senior officers. I assess his overall performance as "Superior".'
- ♦ 'I have been most impressed by PCHAP Davis's immense loyalty, patience, tolerance, understanding and care which, together with his fine leadership and broad professional and naval experience, have enabled him to deal most effectively with both everyday issues and several very sensitive situations.'
- ♦ 'He is a thinker with an ability to operate beyond immediate concerns and to translate opportunities into useful initiatives. Through his personal efforts he has been able to acquire wider experience, which has been employed very effectively to the benefit of the Division and the Navy at large.'

Farewell Message from Bishop Max

For all of us there comes a time when we must, in response to God's Will, be able to step aside from what we have become used to. Over many years I have been privileged to receive the generous friendship, inspiring welcome, and wholehearted support from the family of the Catholic community of the Australian Military Services. Among the many blessings received has been the enthusiastic collaboration of the Chaplains in the mission of ministry to this community. For the most part too – at least until recent years - there has been great encouragement and enthusiastic support from the very senior leadership of the Australian Defence Force. Embedded in my soul are the many very close connections that have come from my experience of serving members and their families in times of important moments in their journeys – times of rejoicing, gladness and sorrow. It is a great treasure to have been invited in to their lives. These sentiments will sustain me forever and always illicit a profound sense of gratitude – how truly blessed I have been.

Nothing can give me greater delight and comfort to know that the Holy Spirit has again blessed this family of faith with a new Chief Shepherd – even though temporary until a new bishop is identified – in Archbishop Prowse. He brings new enthusiasm, great skill, profound knowledge and a deep holiness that is a tremendous gift. So as I do experience a certain human sense of sadness, it is overcome as I rejoice for and with the special family that contributes so many gifts to the whole Church. Without question I am sure that our Blessed Mother Mary, Help of Christians will continue to sustain us with her prayers and support our entreaties enthusiastically. In our prayers of petition for the gift of a new bishop let us also add a plea for an abundance of blessings upon him and his ministry.

Each day I will continue to pray for many blessings as heavenly reward for all the tremendous dedication of those who have supported me in my time as your bishop. The Chaplains – priests, deacons and pastoral associates – are already special gifts to the whole community. Their example of life and commitment to the pastoral care of the flock – serving members and the families - are so impressive and deeply appreciated. The many who have generously given themselves to the mission of administration – the secretaries, accountants, book keepers, members of the Diocesan Finance Council, formators of chaplain aspirants, assistants in chapel communities – are all deeply appreciated and to be admired. The faithful – all who serve and their families – give a remarkable spiritual depth to the ministry of service, each in their own way, as they respond to their vocation to be, as the Second Vatican Council identified, 'special ministers of peace and reconciliation'. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve with them in the Lord's Vineyard.

I have been blessed. I am so profoundly grateful to each and every one who has allowed me to serve them. I beg forgiveness of those who I might have offended or hurt in any way – it was never my intention. I pray that the Good Lord will bless you all, fill your souls with His Presence, and sustain you in all your undertakings now and in the future. With greatest confidence I petition the assistance of Mary, Help of Christians that she may gain for you from her Divine Son all the graces you may ever need.



Bishop Max Davis AM, DD

Born 16 August 1945 in Townsville

- 1950 Primary schooling: Our Lady of Victories School Wembley, Perth and Mary's Mount School, Kalamunda, Perth
- 1955 Secondary schooling: Christian Brothers Colleges at Leederville and Highgate, Perth
- 1961 Work at Pellegrini's in Hay St Perth
- 1961 Navy Recruit School and Navy Electrical School HMAS CERBERUS, Crib Point, Victoria
- 1961 HMAS QUIBERON – Far East Strategic Reserve – EME (Electrical Mechanic Electronics); promoted to EM2 (WE) (also description change to 'weapons electronics')
- 1964 'Free Discharge' from Navy and then to Benedictine Abbey New Norcia, WA — start seminary studies
- 1965 St Columba's Seminary, Springwood, NSW
- 1967 St Patrick's Seminary, Manly, NSW
- 1968 Parish attachments – Sacred Heart Darlinghurst, St Mary's Manly in Sydney, NSW
- 1969 Pastoral Placement St Benedict's College, New Norcia, WA.
- 1970 Ordained Deacon for Abbey Nullius New Norcia in St. Mary's Cathedral Perth.
- 1971 Ordained Priest at New Norcia.
Staff at St Benedict's College New Norcia (Monday – Friday) and weekend supply at St John the Baptist Parish Moora; Commissioned CMF Chaplain, 28 Battalion, Royal Western Australia Regiment
- 1972 Assistant Priest St John the Baptist, Moora, WA
- 1973 Assistant Priest, and subsequently Parish Administrator, St Joseph's Parish, Northam, WA
- 1975 Full-time service Navy chaplain, HMAS NIRIMBA, Sydney
- 1976 HMAS CERBERUS, Victoria
- 1979 HMAS MELBOURNE (flagship) and for Fleet-deployments to South East Asia, New Zealand and the Pacific
- 1980 HMAS LEEUWIN, and for HMAS STIRLING, WA and Catholic Chaplain Special Air Service Regiment
- 1984 US Navy's Advanced Chaplains Course at Newport Rhode Island, USA
- 1985 HMAS ALBATROSS (including Army Parachute Training School and HMAS CRESWELL), NSW
- 1987 HMAS JERVIS BAY at sea
- 1989 HMAS ALBATROSS (and for HMAS CRESWELL and PTS), NSW; appointed Senior Chaplain
- 1993 Joint Service Staff College, Canberra
Appointed Prelate of Honour with title of Monsignor
Director General Chaplaincy-Navy, Navy Office Canberra
- 1998 Completion of full-time duty, but continued as Principal Chaplain-Navy.
Appointed Member of the Order of Australia
- 1999 Provided assistance at St Christopher's Cathedral, Marist College and Christian Brothers College St Edmunds, Canberra
- 2003 Consecrated Bishop as Military Ordinary
- 2021 24 May, on the feast day of Mary Help of Christians, Patroness of the Military Ordinariate, Bishop Max retired as Military Ordinary and is now Bishop Emeritus

Serving Faithfully

is a newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Military Services.

It is published quarterly by the Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia.

The Diocese comprises members of the Australian Defence Force and their families, wherever they may be serving.

Its people are scattered widely across Australia and overseas.

Serving Faithfully aims to be a means of sharing events and experiences from across the whole Diocese.

Articles are welcome to be submitted for publication to

The Chancery, Catholic Military Ordinariate of Australia

PO Box 63, CAMPBELL, ACT 2612

Telephone: (02) 6248 0511

Email: sec@cmoa.org.au Website: www.military.catholic.org.au

Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Catholic Ordinariate of the Australian Military Services