

10 March 2010

Main Committee CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Bishop Kevin Manning

Mr BRADBURY» (Lindsay) (9:51 AM) — I rise to take note of the retirement of Bishop Kevin Manning and the installation of Anthony Fisher OP as the third bishop of the Diocese of Parramatta. Kevin Manning served as bishop of the diocese for the past 13 years. As one of seven children growing up in Coolah, his devotion to the Catholic faith and his calling to the priesthood manifested themselves early in his life. Bishop Manning left school at the age of 14 to work and help support his family, and it was these early experiences of hardship and the desire to share what little one had with those who had nothing that informed Bishop Manning's deep sense of social justice. Having entered the priesthood and trained at St Columba's at Springwood, Bishop Manning was selected to complete his training in Rome and was ordained there in 1961. As Bishop of Parramatta, he helped to shepherd the diocese to an era of continued growth at a time when religious worship nationally has trended downward.

In my own community, I was pleased to recently attend the blessing of a new church at Glenmore Park, Padre Pio, one of the last official ceremonies Bishop Manning presided over in his role. He also made clear statements about the moral trajectories of public policies like Work Choices, which he famously characterised as 'an inherent affront to human dignity', and he sought to outstretch a hand of friendship to other faiths, particularly the Muslim community, saying, 'All people have a single origin; we are all children of God.' He also oversaw the construction and dedication of the new St Patrick's Cathedral in Parramatta after the old cathedral was gutted by fire in 1996, and it stands as a testament to the strength of the diocese during his tenure and hopefully for decades to come. I would like to thank Bishop Manning for his decades of tireless dedication to his flock, and I wish him well as he retires to Glenbrook.

Bishop Anthony Fisher OP was installed as the third Bishop of Parramatta, and I had the honour of attending his installation mass last week at St Patrick's Cathedral. Bishop Fisher comes to the role with a wide range of life experience. A former lawyer with Clayton Utz and dux of St Ignatius Riverview, Bishop Fisher answered his calling after backpacking around Europe and through the Holy Land in 1984. He joined the Dominicans and was later ordained in 1991. An author and academic, Bishop Fisher completed a doctorate of philosophy at Oxford University and lectured at the Australian Catholic University. As well as serving as a parish priest, Bishop Fisher has taken on important roles in the church's activities, coordinating the World Youth Day celebrations in Sydney in 2008. Just as famous, I am told, for his cooking as for his scholarship, Bishop Fisher is the youngest bishop in Australia and will preside over one of the youngest, largest and fastest growing dioceses in the country. I know that all Catholics in the diocese welcome Bishop Fisher to his new leadership role, and we look forward to the important contribution he will no doubt make over the coming years.