

## **The Future Vision for the Catholic Military Ordinariate in Australia**

Around 60 members of the Australian Military Ordinariate, both Chaplains and members of the laity, gathered in Canberra from 10-14 April to celebrate and explore the context of vocational life within the Australian Defence Force.

The gathering, entitled Assembly 2000 was hosted by The Most Rev Geoffrey Mayne, Bishop of the Military Ordinariate in Australia.

"Assembly 2000 was an important Jubilee Year activity for us because it played an essential collaborative process in defining anew the role and mission of the Ordinariate for the years ahead," said Bishop Mayne.

The main themes emerging from the gathering included: the role and mission of the Military Ordinariate; the Military Diocese as a Catholic community within the life of the Australian Defence Force; Spirituality and the Ordinariate and its effecting mission; ordained and non-ordained ministries with the Military Ordinariate.

"The people gathering at Assembly 2000 were extremely confident in the future demand for the Military Ordinariate," said Bishop Mayne. "The greatest issue facing us is how we are going to meet that demand."

Considerable time was spent in deliberating upon ministry in the future given the inevitable decline in numbers of ordained ministers. Strategies for the placement of non-ordained ministers within the Australian Defence Force - which includes programs for their endorsement, selection and training - were also discussed.

The participants at Assembly 2000 tabled a number of proposals concerning the role of both clergy and laity within the Ordinariate for the Bishop's consideration.

Assembly 2000 also expressed overwhelming appreciation and support to the past and present ministry of Catholic chaplains in Navy, Army and Airforce.

Plans are currently being developed for the formation of an Ordinariate Pastoral Council as a result of this historic gathering.