

St Paul's National Seminary to close its doors at the end of 1998.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) have decided to close St Paul's, situated in Kensington, Sydney, as the National Seminary for late vocations at the end of 1998. St Paul's National Seminary was opened in 1968 as a collaborative response of the ACBC and the MSC to the signs of those times regarding older men serving the Church as priests. In the past 29 years over 500 men have come to the Seminary, and 275 priests have been ordained. St Paul's has been involved in adult education of the lay faithful, and more recently has offered a degree programme in theology. In a Statement announcing the Seminary's closure the President of the ACBC, Cardinal Edward Clancy and the Provincial of the MSC, Father Brian Gallagher say: "We have reached a point in time, however, when there is no longer a need for a specialist Seminary to train older men for the priesthood and service in the Church. On the one hand, as was to be expected, the number of aspirants from this age-group has diminished markedly over the years, on the other hand, other Seminaries and Houses of Formation now take students of much more mature years than they did before." Cardinal Clancy and Father Gallagher extend their gratitude "for those many dedicated lay people, religious and priests who generously gave their time and their talents to the life of the Seminary..... This has been done with regret but with trust in the providence of God, and with much satisfaction over what has been achieved at St Paul's".

ST PAUL'S NATIONAL SEMINARY A STATEMENT by Cardinal Edward Clancy, President, Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference Father Brian Gallagher, msc, Provincial Superior, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart St Paul's National Seminary was opened in 1968 as a collaborative response of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to the signs of those times regarding older men serving the Church as priests. In the past 29 years over 500 men have come to the Seminary, and 275 priests have been ordained. St Paul's has been involved in adult education of the lay faithful, and more recently has offered a degree programme in theology. Many Local Churches in Australia and the Pacific have reason to be grateful for the original vision of this Seminary, and for the pastoral care of those formed at St Paul's. We are grateful, too, for those many dedicated lay people, religious and priests who generously gave of their time and their talents to the life of the Seminary. We have reached a point in time, however, when there is no longer a need for a specialist Seminary to train older men for the priesthood and service in the Church. On the one hand, as was to be expected, the number of aspirants from this age-group has diminished markedly over the years, and on the other hand, other Seminaries and Houses of Formation now take students of much more mature years than they did before. Consequently, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart have decided to close St Paul's as the National Seminary for late vocations, at the end of 1998. This has been done with regret, but with trust in the providence of God, and with much satisfaction over what has been achieved at St Paul's. This closure looks to the future. The ACBC and the MSC will remain alert to further possibilities of collaboration in meeting the needs of the Church today and in the years to come.