

Bishop Joseph Oudeman ordained at St Stephens Cathedral

Father Joseph Oudeman OFMCap was ordained as an Auxiliary Bishop to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane at St Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane, last night.

Over 30 bishops and archbishops from around Australia were in attendance for the ordination of Father Oudeman, a Capuchin Friar, who previously served as Dean of Ethnic Chaplains in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

In a cathedral packed with many well-wishers, including people from the Wynnum parish and the various ethnic communities Fr Oudeman had worked with previously, the ordination liturgy took approximately two hours.

During the homily Archbishop Bathersby noted that in choosing Bishop Oudeman, the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, had shown a great insight into the changing multicultural make-up of the Australian population.

Born in the famous medieval town of Breda, the Netherlands in 1942, Bishop Oudeman and his family immigrated to Australia in 1956. He completed his final year of education at St Patrick's College, Ballarat before entering the Capuchin seminary outside Sydney in 1957. He was ordained in 1966 and holds educational degrees from the Gregorian University in Rome, and the University of Queensland.

Bishop Oudeman described the honour of his appointment as a surprise, but one of great proportions for the small Australian Province of Capuchins. Worldwide the order numbers 11,000.

In a speech at the close of the ordination ceremony, Bishop Oudeman said it had been "a day of many memories", and he reflected on the kind words of encouragement he had received from other bishops as well as the special joy he drew from the presence of people who had shaped his life.

He noted that the "first blessing in life was family", in which the Lord had been very bountiful to him.

A second blessing was his religious order, and he extolled the sense of brotherhood he had found among the Capuchins for over 40 years.

The new bishop's Coat of Arms incorporates images of his native Holland and of St Francis, as well as his chosen motto "Pax et Bonum".

It is traditionally a Franciscan greeting offered at the beginning of a personal encounter. It invokes the peace of spirit that will enable the person to discover the presence and the goodness of God in their lives.

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