

Accompanied by the prayers of many Australians and New Zealanders

An interview with Peter Fitzsimons, an Australian who is one of the deacons who received the priestly ordination at a ceremony in the Roman basilica of Saint Eugenio on 22 May 2004.

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Peter's mother, who is 83 years old, lives in Sydney and has a good

reason to get on a plane and travel, for the first time, the 20,000 km between that city and Rome; her son is being ordained a priest. Peter Fitzsimons was born in Sydney in 1963. He studied law at the University of New South Wales and came to know Opus Dei at Warrane College. He worked for a number of years as a lawyer in Australia and New Zealand and was a law lecturer at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. In the year 2000 he moved to Rome to study philosophy and theology at the University of the Holy Cross.

Peter is happy to know that his mother will not make the trip on her own. “She will come with my uncle Vincent, a member of the Oblates of Mary who lives in Melbourne, an aunt and a niece.” Peter’s father died in 1999. “When I was living in Australia and I started going to daily Mass, says Peter, my father used to

tell me that he prayed for me, that I be generous with God. I am certain that his prayers have helped me greatly during all these years. I have a great debt of gratitude with my father and I look forward to praying for him daily at Holy Mass.”

Some 20 people, among them relatives, friends, former students and work colleagues will be with Peter on the day of his ordination. “Not all of them will come from Australia, Peter explains, a friend will come from Japan and another one from Malaysia. An old work colleague from New Zealand will be in Rome, too. A friend of mine from Sri Lanka who I met at university was very keen to come but unfortunately work commitments will not allow him to be here, he is a professor in China. He has sent on his behalf an English family, who was very happy to know about my ordination and decided to make the

trip. I received a letter from them, they told me that they are Protestant and that they have asked at their church that a mention be made in the parish bulletin asking prayers for me.”

Peter has received many emails and letters from people conveying to him their joy for his ordination. “Many people have written saying that they are praying for me. I am also asking our Lord for them. I wrote to the Bishops of the cities where I have lived in Australia and New Zealand and they all affectionately replied telling me that they will keep me in mind in their prayers.”

In this month of May which the Church traditionally dedicates to our Lady, Peter prays with faith to the Mother of God so that “there may be many vocations to the priesthood in Australia and New Zealand, a country to which I owe a lot and

where I lived for 11 years. I look forward to coming back to Australia and helping in the spreading of the Christian faith which brings peace and joy to many souls. I am aware that the most important thing for a priest is to pray, so I am asking Saint Josemaria that he help me love the Holy Mass very much.”

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