



9 August 2017

ARCHBISHOP ANTHONY FISHER OP STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF JOHN RICHARD 'JOHNO' JOHNSON

It was with great sadness that today we learned of the death of John Richard 'Johno' Johnson at the age of 87.

Johno was a remarkable man who had a profound influence on all those he encountered.

Inspired by the great loves of his life: the Catholic Church, the Australian Labor Party, his beloved wife Pauline and their family and, finally, his love for Australia, he made an outstanding contribution both to public life and the Church.

Johno was deeply inspired by his Catholic faith. He was and remains an exemplar of what a Catholic lay man or woman should seek to be: someone who brings the inspiration of their faith and the values which flow from it to bear for the common good of their community, especially in the public square.

He was an extraordinary witness to our society of a deeply good, human and compassionate Catholic man, who worked and spoke up tirelessly for those who had no voice – even when this was not popular. No more so than the work he did with the Pro-Life movement.

He will be sorely missed, especially among the staff of the Polding Centre where he was a regular and popular visitor for many years.

The Archdiocese especially appreciates his contribution as Chairman of The Catholic Weekly for so many years and the way in which he spearheaded its return to profitability. Johno was a tireless fundraiser for various Catholic charities over the years. His presence selling raffle tickets to support the latest cause was legendary.

His papal knighthood, bestowed upon him by order of Pope Francis and which I was fortunate enough to be able to present to him on 10 September 2015, was richly deserved.

In my last visit to Johno only a few days ago we prayed together. I was powerfully conscious that despite his weakness his faith sustained him in his final days.

Others have remarked that there are too few people like Johno in public life today. As I reflect on the life of this extraordinary Australian I can only agree.

On behalf of the Archdiocese of Sydney and the many Catholics whose lives were touched by Johno, I extend to Pauline, their four children and their grandchildren my condolences and prayers for the repose of his soul and for his intentions as well.

Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP
ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY