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## **REMEMBERING BISHOP MULKEARNS**

On Monday, April 11, members of the Catholic community remembered Bishop Ronald Mulkearns. There was a gathering for his funeral in Ballarat. There were also gatherings for prayer and reflection in other parts of the Ballarat diocese. In all these gatherings, there were very mixed emotions.

We were painfully aware of the criticisms of Bishop Mulkearns for his failings. At the same time, we recalled the good he did. His friends were sad that the good has generally been forgotten. As one of those friends wrote in the Courier on Friday: "He is not famous for the many things he did well; only for the one thing he did badly".

His family remember a devoted brother and uncle. His friends recall a shy man who liked to share quiet times. Over the past few days a number of people have spoken to me of his kindness. And this was not only people from the diocese of Ballarat. I received an email from a priest in Peru who recalled with gratitude the kindness Bishop Mulkearns showed when he visited a local parish there in the 1980s. He wrote: "I only ever met Bishop Ronald once, and that was in the 80s when he came to Lima and visited our parish. Many years back, but I never forgot his kindness to us."

Some recall the contribution Bishop Mulkearns made to fostering social welfare services in our region, services that grew into what is now Centacare. Others recall how he promoted opportunities for people to study at university level.

As people remember Bishop Mulkearns, there will indeed be grounds for bitter lament at the crimes that were committed on his watch. And yet, there will also be grounds for gratitude among those who recall the good that he did.

May he rest in peace.

God bless you all.

Yours in Christ,

Paul Bird CSSR  
Bishop of Ballarat