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Born in Sydney in 1948 Monsignor Rayner was educated by the Sisters of St. Joseph, The Marist Brothers and finally the Christian Brothers at St Mary’s Cathedral Sydney where he was School Captain, Cadet Under Officer and awarded the Lionel Tobin Prize for most outstanding cadet.

Upon entering the seminary he studied Philosophy for 3 years, Theology for 4 years, received a Bacheloreate in theology and was ordained a priest in 1973.

Appointed to Eastwood for 3 years, Brighton-Le Sands for 7 years, he then joined the Royal Australian Navy as a chaplain in 1983 after 18 months in the Reserves.

With the introduction of the Critical Incident Stress Management program in Navy in 1990 he was part of the original team and through 1991-92 he was on stand-by to fly to the Iraq War should Australia suffer any casualties. In October 1992 he sailed to that conflict in HMAS Canberra receiving the Active Service Medal. (Kuwait)

In 1996 he received the Medal of the Order of Australia for exceptional service to Navy.

Following a course in Newport, Rhode Island, he was promoted to Principal Chaplain-Navy as one-star equivalent.

In June 2001 Pope John Paul 11 honoured him as a Prelate of Honour to His Holiness with the title of Monsignor.

Onboard HMAS Kanimbla in October 2001 he sailed to the war against terrorism and received the Afghanistan medal and again the Active Service medal (with clasp). After leaving full-time service in Navy after 20 years he continued to serve as the Catholic Principal Chaplain until December 2011, completing 30 years with Defence.

In April 2003 Archbishop Pell recalled him to the Archdiocese of Sydney appointing him Vicar General, Chancellor, and Moderator of the Curia. This appointment concluded in May 2005 and, after sabbatical studies in the United States, Monsignor was appointed to his current position as Parish Priest of GyMEA in December 2005. Monsignor Rayner has a strong commitment to social justice and especially assisting refugees overseas and also alleviating poverty in the Pacific. On 3 March this year, GyMEA Parish will send the 115th 20 foot container to Fiji in an ecumenical effort which is proving so successful.

Recently in the NSW Parliament Monsignor was mentioned in HANSARD

Mr BARRY COLLIER (Miranda) [1.19pm] I ask the House to acknowledge the work and service of Monsignor Brian Rayner, OAM, parish priest of St Catherine Laboure, GyMEA, since 2005. Sunday 20 October marked the fortieth anniversary of Monsignor Rayner’s ordination to the priesthood. My wife, Jeanette, and I were among the hundreds attending the two special celebratory Masses held over that weekend. As Parish Priest, Monsignor Rayner’s pastoral care, compassion and support for those in need are second to none. Under his outstanding leadership, the parish has sent 106 shipping containers full of tinned food, clothing, furniture, toys, books and tools to the poor of Fiji.

Monsignor Rayner previously served as Principal Chaplain and Episcopal Vicar with the Royal Australian Navy. During his 20 years as chaplain, the Monsignor saw service in Iraq and Afghanistan, receiving his Medal of the Order of Australia for meritorious service to the Royal Australian Navy. He takes great interest in the shire and we are truly blessed to have him as our parish priest. I know my parliamentary colleagues will join me in thanking Monsignor Rayner on the anniversary of his ordination for his service to his parish, to our community, to our nation and beyond.

Brian Rayner

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