



Richard Shortall

Richard Shortall grew up in a sheep and dairy farming community with one sister and two brothers in the North Island of New Zealand.

Educated in the local state primary school and then by the De La Salle Brothers at Francis Douglas Memorial College, he joined the Jesuits in 1971. After ordination in 1982 he ministered for sixteen years in the North Sydney, Norwood, Hawthorn and Sevenhill–Riverton parishes—as both an assistant priest and parish priest.

Having graduated in 2006 with a Masters in Christian Spirituality from Creighton, USA, he began working as a roving retreat director and spiritual director in the rural diocese of Sandhurst, Victoria. During that time he developed a way of offering parishioners an experience of the Spiritual Exercises over three weeks which took place at home or at work.

After some time this rural retreat work spread to the dioceses of Port Pirie and Maitland-Newcastle, involving many months spent on the road away from his Jesuit community.

During the Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2016, he was commissioned by Pope Francis as one of his Missionaries of Mercy. From the end of February until mid November, he visited thirty communities in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese, focussing particularly on those places where there was no resident priest. He was able to do this with the aid of a motor home which the diocese purchased for this purpose. Archbishop Fisichella, whom Pope Francis appointed to oversee this special ministry during the Jubilee Year, called Richard the Missionary of Mercy on Wheels.