



**Sisters of Charity**  
of Australia

# Keep in Touch

KIT  
MAGAZINE

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Left to right: The Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher OP, Srs Jacinta Fong rsc, Sesarina Bau rsc and Anthea Groves rsc.

## Inside this month

In this March 2018 edition of Keep in Touch, there is much to celebrate, and two selfless lives to commemorate. First, there are the Papal honours for three Sisters, Anthea Groves, Sesarina Bau, and Jacinta Fong.

Sr Josephine Cannell marked her 100th birthday in February; Sr Amanda Nguyen renewed her vows in January while in that same month, Sr Elizabeth Wall celebrated the Golden Jubilee of her Profession.

And in this edition, we remember two of our wonderful nursing Sisters, Marie Haren and Nola Riley, whose lives were dedicated to the Sisters of Charity's fourth charism, serving the poor.

## So much to celebrate

There is nothing like a walk on the beach for time to think, so during her break in February, Congregational Leader Sr Clare Nolan reflected on the achievements not only of the Congregation collectively but also of every individual who is, or has been, a part of it.

Some of those contributions are very great, and publicly identifiable and celebrated, but many of them are small and sometimes barely noticed by the wider world. And yet it is the sum of all those achievements – great and small – which are today, and will always be, the legacy of the Sisters of Charity.

Every young woman imbued with confidence and hope, every small boy encouraged to greater effort, every patient made to feel special and the hand extended in friendship to those whom others cast aside – these are

the hallmarks of a ministry multiplied by myriad God moments, when we meet a need we did not even know existed, and change a life forever.

And we take it all for granted. As women of Mary Aikenhead, as consecrated women religious committed to the poor, that is what is what we do. That is who we are.

So, in this edition of KIT, perhaps it is appropriate that there is so much to celebrate, so much to remind us of our very many blessings.

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# So much to celebrate

From page 1

The conferring of Papal Honours on Sr Anthea Groves, Sr Jacinta Fong, and Sr Sesarina Bau for their selfless, indefatigable ministry at St Vincent's Health Australia across decades acknowledges and celebrates their own extraordinary work but also reminds us of the hundreds of others who have contributed to the healing ministry of Christ over generations and for whom we are equally thankful.

Likewise, in celebrating Sr Amanda Nguyen's renewal of vows, we give thanks to God for the commitment of thousands of women Religious who have professed their faith and their commitment before her.

We rejoice with Sr Josephine Cannell as she reaches a milestone many of us will never see. She remains an inspiration – a woman of God supporting and sustaining others through her gentle presence and happy to share the celebration of her 100th birthday.

So much to celebrate in just a few stories. If only we could tell of all the prayerful support, all the individual encouragement, all the advocacy, all the inspirational conversations offered every day throughout our lives and ministries.

If only we could tell the story of every individual and rejoice in each one. But we can, and I do, give thanks every day for the seen and the unseen ministries, the told and the untold stories, for the grace and gift of every Sister of Charity, and for the example and encouragement of Mary Aikenhead.

– Clare rsc

## Papal Honours for three Sisters of Charity



On a crisp early Autumn day, seven Sydney-siders were recognised for their contributions to the life of the Church and the community with Papal honours.

Dr Bernadette and Terence Tobin QC were made a Dame and Knight Grand Cross of St Gregory the Great. Dr Elsie Heiss was made a Dame Commander of the same Order. John Munce, chairman of Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club, was made a Knight of the Order of St Sylvester.

Congratulations to them all for all the marvellous work they have done for decades!

But the eyes of the Sisters of Charity of Australia were on the final three Papal honourees – Srs Sesarina Bau rsc, Jacinta Fong rsc, and Anthea Groves rsc.

The Sisters were each awarded the decoration of honour, the Holy Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice.

(The medal, pictured above, was established by Leo XIII on July 17, 1888, to commemorate his golden priestly jubilee and was originally bestowed on those men and women who had aided and promoted the jubilee, and by other means assisted in making the jubilee and the Vatican Exposition successful.



The Sisters of Charity and Ros Packer (centre)





It is currently conferred for distinguished service to the Church by lay people and clergy. It is the highest medal that can be awarded to the laity by the Pope).

The Sisters, who shared the day with their Sisters, friends, family, and other community members, were remembered by their referees:

- Sr Sesarina, who has ministered for 12 years in the Intensive Care Unit of St Vincent's in Darlinghurst, was remembered as a quiet and discreet support to families and staff, "noticed if she were absent."
- Sr Jacinta, who wears the habit as she ministers in the Emergency Department at St Vincent's, was "familiar as a little vision in a white habit, moving gently through the department."

**Top left to right:** The Holy Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, Srs Sesarina Bau rsc, Anthea Groves rsc, and Jacinta Fong rsc **Above:** Sr Clare Nolan rsc and Dr Elsie Heiss

- Sr Anthea, who completed her 52-year plus ministry at St Vincent's, where she was patient liaison officer, as a devoted daughter of Mary Aikenhead, focussed on the charism of the founder.

Sr Jacinta and Sr Sesarina were typically brief in their remarks, but Sr Anthea, in response, made the observation that ministries were not carried out in the prospect of honours:

.....  
*"You feel you are doing something you love and you are committed to that. It's a way of life."*  
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# Papal Honours for three Sisters of Charity

From page 3



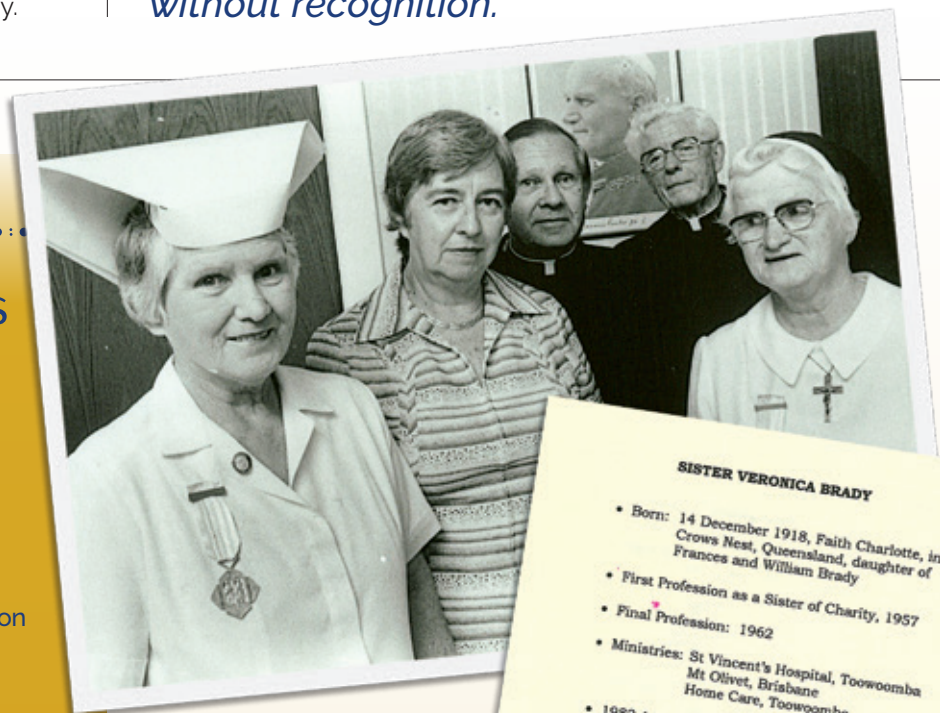
Left to right: Sr Margaret Beirne and Archbishop Anthony Fisher; the Archbishop pins Sr Anthea; Sr Jacinta and her family

Speaking after the service, Congregation Leader, Sr Clare Nolan, thanked the Pope and the Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher OP, for the honours awarded to the Sisters of Charity, and the wonderful ceremony conducted by the Archdiocese of Sydney.

*"This was such a beautiful morning, an occasion of grace, for all the honourees," said Sr Clare. "And I know Mother Mary would be proud of her daughters in faith today, those who have been honoured, and those who minister without recognition."*

## Other Sisters honoured

Sr Veronica Brady (right) and her identical twin, Phyllis Brady (left), were awarded the Holy Cross in 1982, while Mother Marion Corless also received the award in 2003.



**SISTER VERONICA BRADY**

- Born: 14 December 1918, Faith Charlotte, in Crows Nest, Queensland, daughter of Frances and William Brady
- First Profession as a Sister of Charity, 1957
- Final Profession: 1962
- Ministries: St Vincent's Hospital, Toowoomba  
Mt Olivet, Brisbane  
Home Care, Toowoomba
- 1982 Awarded the Papal Honour for services to the Church community
- 1989 Awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship, Rotary Club, Toowoomba
- Passed away on 26 November 2000.

Motto: *"Whatever you do to the least of these, you do unto Me."*

Celebrants: *Father John Mahoney*

# Sr Amanda Nguyen

## Renewal of Vows



Back row: Srs Cate O'Brien, Virginia Mahony, Pam Grime, Suzette Clark, Clare Nolan, Amanda Nguyen, Colleen Jackson, Mary Gabriel Clarke, Anna Parlevliet, and Regina Millard.  
Front row: Srs Helen Malone, Patricia Walker, Josephine Cannell, Margaret Mary O'Rourke, and Deirdre Hickey



Sr Clare blesses Sr Amanda

Congregational Leader, Sr Clare Nolan, welcomed a group of 15 Sisters of Charity gathered in Mononia Chapel, to join with Amanda Nguyen in renewing her Vows for two years.

Clare reminded us that our own formators wanted only one thing for us – to be and become the Sisters of Charity Mary Aikenhead would be proud to call her daughters, Urged on by the love of Christ to be women of prayer, living an apostolic life in the spirit of St Ignatius. It is a life that just flows.

It was a very simple and meaningful ritual and the joy was felt by all. Added to the joy, it was Amanda's father's 80th Birthday.

Amanda chose the theme of Matthew 6: 26-34 – "Trust in Divine Providence" and there was a shared reflection on the Gospel reading which was enriching.

Sr Josephine Cannell lit the Gospel candle at the Gospel acclamation. After Amanda renewed her Vows, she proclaimed to the community:

"It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal 2:20.

After the final hymn, Amanda spoke to the Sisters and began with "I bowed my head to the ground to thank Jesus for inviting me to continue this journey. It is a happy day and grace-filled day for me ... thank you for the gift of you and your presence today, and for all your love and support along the way."

A beautiful morning tea followed thanks to the hospitality of the Mononia community and staff.

by Sr Regina Millard rsc  
Co-Ordinator Temporary Professed Sisters

*"It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

Gal 2:20.



# Sr Josephine Cannell at 100

Saturday, February 24, saw the first of several celebrations for Sr Josephine on the occasion of her 100th birthday.

Many Sisters, friends and colleagues of Sr Josephine gathered at 2pm in the Brenan Hall of St Vincent's Hospital Fitzroy for the Eucharistic celebration and afternoon tea.

The main celebrant was Fr Zaher Mhanna, chaplain for the public and private hospitals. He was assisted by Fr Mal Crawford and Fr Peter Carrucan.

At the conclusion of Mass, the priests invited Sr Josephine to join them for the final blessing. Fr Zaher held Sr Jo's hand in his own and they did the blessing together, with Fr Mal extending his hand above them both.

Afternoon tea followed. After Sr Jo cut the birthday cake, Sr Margaret

Beirne gave the toast: "Centenarians tend to focus on what they still have and can do, rather than what they no longer have nor are able to do."

Josephine responded, offering her deep gratitude to all those who had contributed to the occasion.

There was no rest after the Melbourne celebrations – Sr Jo was off to Tasmania for more celebrations the following weekend.

The 8.30 Mass at Taroona on Sunday, March 3 afforded a special opportunity for the parish family to mark a wonderful occasion, joined also by family and friends.

The Mass was concelebrated by Emeritus Archbishop Adrian Doyle and Fr Brian Nichols, and their warm words on the life of service witnessed of Sr Jo were well-received.



The congregation was joined by a number of Sisters of Charity, women who have shared Josephine's life journey.

Coming at the end of a week of celebrations in both Melbourne and Hobart, all who were present felt privileged to be associated with this gentle, committed, and humble woman.



Left to right: Archbishop Adrian Doyle, Sr Clare Nolan, Sr Deirdre Hickey, Sr Anne Turner, Sr Cathy Meese, Fr Brian Nichols, Sr Josephine (front).





## Another record in Sr Jo's sights?

*Now the oldest Sister of Charity of Australia, Sr Josephine is also the second longest-serving Sister of Charity. As of 26 February 2018, she has been admitted for 83 years 10 months and 20 days. From her profession date, the period is 81 years 1 month and 1 day.*



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- 1: Sr Josephine cuts the cake
- 2: The cake
- 3: Sr Josephine and Sr Cate O'Brien
- 4: Congrats from the Queen
- 5: Congrats from PM Malcolm Turnbull
- 6: Sr Jo greets Sr Elizabeth Dodds
- 7: The Mass in Brenan Hall, Fitzroy
- 8: Sr Jo and the Mass concelebrants



# Sr Elizabeth Wall

## Golden Jubilee

*"In Thee I trust".*

January 25 was a great day of celebration for the Golden Jubilee of Elizabeth Wall, beginning with a Eucharistic Celebration in the chapel of St Vincent's Care Services, Auburn.



Sr Elizabeth Wall

As Liz was the youngest of a family of eight, there were many family members who gathered for the celebration, along with Sisters of Charity and staff, also residents and staff of St Vincent's Care Services.

As the chaplain, Fr Isaac Koi, accompanied by Fr John Gibson and Fr Ray Farrell processed in, we all sang: "We are called to act with justice; we are called to love tenderly..."

Congregational Leader Clare Nolan's words of welcome included Liz as a Sister of Love and the uniqueness of her gifts which she has brought to her ministries.

Love and faithfulness, as well as Liz's motto continued to be the theme at the morning tea as family and sisters told stories of Liz: her call to religious life quite a while after her sister, Jane Frances entered the Sisters of Charity, and always being available for nieces and nephews amidst her work in ministry. So many spoke of her self-effacement, gentleness, generosity, and welcoming acceptance of people.

Liz entered the Sisters of Charity as a trained nurse and worked in the health ministry for many years in general nursing at St Vincent's, Darlinghurst, St Vincent's, Launceston, and St Joseph's, Auburn. It was here that Liz was Leader of the community and became a Hospital Administrator, followed by a time as Director of Nursing at St Vincent's Private Hospital, Darlinghurst.

Next came another time of leadership in the community while nursing at Caritas Christi, Kew.

After a year of renewal at Baulkham Hills in 1993, Liz developed in Liverpool a new service in Outreach, supporting mothers with newborn babies which turned into a parent support program for parents and pre-schoolers in the area. It was in this program that for six years, I worked with Liz, along with a small team of mainly volunteers

Health issues have brought Liz back to Auburn where she was part of the hospital community from 1975 to 1983. She is now a valued resident of St Vincent's Care Services

Dear Liz, "May your gentle spirit continue to be a loving presence in this your Golden Jubilee Year and beyond."

by Margaret Guy rsc

**Top right:** Sr Elizabeth and her sister.

**Middle right:** St Vincent's Hospital Convent Community. *Back row:* Sr Marie Haren first from left, Sr Elizabeth Wall fourth from left.

**Bottom left:** Two Sisters at the General Chapter held at Caritas Christi Conference Centre, Wahroonga, 27/10/1996.  
*Left to right:* Sr Elizabeth Wall and Sr Patricia O'Loughlin.

**Bottom right:** Sr Elizabeth and Sr Clare.







# We remember

## Sr Marie Haren rsc

(2 March 1930 - 29 December 2017)



### Words of Remembrance

Congregational Leader Sr Clare Nolan spoke at Sr Marie's requiem Mass at St Joseph's, Edgecliff, on January 4:

It is a privilege to speak of Marie – a Sister of Charity for 62 years – on behalf of the Congregation she loved so much. When I think of Marie, I remember our first years in ministry at St Vincent's Darlinghurst. Sisters, including Marie, were being developed in health care roles that enabled leadership in our health services. These sisters held a ministry all day, and at the same time fitted in a heavy program of study at University or College of Nursing being educated in Bachelor of Health Administration and Nursing Administration Programs.

The Congregation was aware of what lay before us and showed great wisdom and the ability to make the changes required. People like Marie led us where we needed to go. She was a true leader.

Marie's day began with prayer; first and foremost, she was a woman of prayer and gifted her life to God as a woman religious living out her commitment through the healing ministry of Christ. After prayer, Marie engaged herself in the various places of ministry to make herself aware of what the issues were for the public hospital, private hospital, and hospice.

This was to ensure first hand that Catholic health care and those who embodied it were faithful to the Gospel imperative and our call to comfort the broken-hearted, to heal the sick, and to serve the poor who are with us always.

The health care ministry continues God's healing presence in the world. Marie was committed to this. The patient was the focus of her ministry and teaching and research was central to all aspects of care. As young nursing Sisters of Charity trying to find our way in health care, to work with Marie was indeed great formation for us.

On my return to St Vincent's as Director of Nursing, Marie was the Sister Administrator at St Vincent's. There were so many challenges for Boards to face in reading the signs of the times. Marie and Sr Bernice, working together with Government, established the Victor Chang heart transplant unit.

At the time when the HIV Aids epidemic saw so many people suffering, displaced and rejected, St Vincent's welcomed the opportunity to care for them and Sacred Heart Hospice became known affectionately by those suffering with HIV Aids as "their hospice."

Nurse training moved into Colleges of Advanced Education which changed the face of Nurse Education and impacted St Vincent's School of Nursing. In the early days, Marie with other Sister Administrators began developing a philosophy of Health Care for the Sisters of Charity.

The Garvan Institute supported the principles of Sisters of Charity Health Care and stated it must be included in all Board education and deliberations. Marie showed great leadership in these areas.

## Sr Joan Jurd rsc

(19 August 1915 - 15 February 2018)

A Sister of Charity of Australia for 85 years, Sr Joan died at 102 years of age in February. Words of remembrance for Sr Joan – written by her niece, Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc – and a look at her inspiring life will be included in the June edition of *Keep In Touch*.





Left to right: Dr G V Hall, Deputy Chairman of the SVHS Board, Sr Marie Haren, Administrator, Sir Tristan Antico, Chairman of the Board and Sr Marion Corless, ca 1977-ca1980;

## Sr Nola Riley rsc

(26 August 1927 - 16 January 2018)



### Words of Remembrance

Sr Nola died at the Mater Private in Brisbane on January 16, 2018, and was buried from Giovanni Chapel at St Vincent's Private Hospital, Brisbane, on January 19. Congregational Leader, Sister Clare Nolan, spoke during the Mass.

On February 2, 1952, Nola Patricia Riley – aged 25 from Austinville NSW – presented herself at the Novitiate, Potts Point to begin her journey of becoming a Sister of Charity. On August 5, 1954 Nola was professed and has celebrated 63yrs a Sister of Charity.

Nola came to us having graduated as a Registered Nurse and little did she know how being a nurse would prepare her for a life dedicated to the Healing Ministry of Christ.

In June, 1991 Nola was presented with an honour reserved for special Australians – Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her contribution to Health Care. Nola spent her years in administrative ministry in St Vincent's Darlinghurst, St Vincent's Melbourne, St Vincent's Toowoomba, St Joseph's Auburn NSW, St Vincent's Robina Qld, and finally almost 40yrs right here on this campus and I surely would call this 'sacred ground' because Nola's presence made it so.

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Then-Congregational Leader Mary Maguire challenged us to look at doing things differently. Marie accepted the invitation to become a Congregational representative, embracing performance management and mission effectiveness. She worked with groups to do this. Marie was relieved of her Sister Administrator role in favour of working with the Congregation in establishing new models of leadership ensuring the mission continued.

Eight years ago, Marie suffered a stroke. She faced her lot with courage and determination. Marie's life began to change and she found herself living a contemplative way of being where prayer, and beauty in all its forms became her companion – gardens, flowers, music, art, poetry, walking in God's creation.

Marie was loved and supported by her dear and faithful friend Rose, where life was shared. Rose has prepared our Liturgy this afternoon and it is a liturgy of celebration of life.

During those eight years after her stroke, Marie and Rose were supported by their Community. They prayed the Prayer of the Church daily as well as the Rosary.

Her life shifted from the wonderful contemplative in action to the quiet contemplative receiving requests for prayer. Marie would often say to me "I don't know how I can ever thank Rose enough for her care." Over the past few months Marie would be heard to cry out "Jesus, Mary and Joseph help me." Her final cry to me on December 22 was when I said my goodbye to her.

A big part of her unending circle of love was reserved for Marie's family and some of them who are with us today, Eileen, Linda, John, Janelle, Matthew, Trish, Kingsley, Sebastian, Spencer, Peter, Suzie and Merilyn.

The words of St Paul she chose as her motto on her Profession Day got her up in the morning – I can do all things in him who strengthens me.

Well done, Marie! You fully lived your life for the kingdom of God and we thank you. Go in peace now to the kingdom prepared for you and remember our promise to you that we will love and care for Rose.

In the words of St John of the Cross, "In the evening of our lives, we will be judged on love."

# We remember

## Sr Nola Riley

From page 11

Nola pioneered thoracic medicine along with heart surgery at St Vincent's Darlinghurst. Nola was the first person in charge of Cameron Wing – a huge undertaking that she was equal to.

She pioneered aged care and hospice care, making sure the charisma of Mary Aikenhead was kept alive in this very precious ministry which she loved.

Nola was a mentor, always in positions of leadership in health care and in our Congregation. Her leadership was trusted.

She took her place at aged care forums and other functions to keep well informed and allowed opportunity to keep the mission central in the public arena. Truly a dedicated woman and faithful daughter of Mary Aikenhead.

Because of who she was, Nola nurtured many of our young Sisters and stressed how important it was to put patient and family first and encouraged us to find the time in the evening to go back to the Ward and see if patient and family were settled.



Preparing for the rodeo for St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba (ca 1967).  
Left to right: Sr Martin, Bob Smith, Tom Shearer, Sr Conrad Direen, Sr Kevin (Nola Riley) and Kevin Harland. N.B. Photograph was purchased from the State Library of Queensland (date unknown). Copyright held by the State Library of Queensland.

She had a quiet presence around the wards and she pretty much knew all that was happening – who required a visit, or a prayer or some extra medical input. She was a prayerful woman, whose life with God shone out.

Nola lived out these last years in gratitude to so many – her family, her Congregation. The staff and volunteers on this Campus.

And her Sisters of Charity family, especially those resident here in Queensland and who have been with Nola many, many years. We know she loved us, supported us, and showed interest in us. She was showing us all the time how to be daughters of Mary Aikenhead and how to love.

We have celebrated Nola and her life through this Mass of Thanksgiving. The personal motto Nola chose on her Profession day was:

"For Jesus, in Mary, by Mary, and with Mary."

We can surely see she was the Woman she imitated – Mary the Mother of God. It was Mary who took her to Jesus, who showed her Jesus.

A gentle woman, a quiet light, a morning star, so strong and bright ... Thank you, Nola, for all you have been to us and will continue to be to us. You have left your footprints and we will follow on behind you in your spirit of love and gentleness.



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