



**Sisters of Charity**  
of Australia

# Keep in Touch

KIT  
MAGAZINE

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## Inside this month

Welcome to the March 2020 edition of *Keep in Touch*, where the mood is one of celebration.

This year, we see the 20th anniversary of the Sisters of Charity Foundation and the establishment of your *Keep in Touch* quarterly magazine.

On our website (<https://www.sistersofcharity.org.au/>), you will find Sr Josephine Cannell, reflecting on her 102nd birthday, on her life as a Sister of Charity.

In this edition, we celebrate jubilees of five of our Sisters, and remember the life and ministry of two of our Sisters.

We also have a look at another of the organisations developed by the Sisters of Charity, the VASCAs.



## A busy beginning to 2020

This coming year is a momentous one in the history of the Sisters of Charity of Australia.

In just a few months, many of our Sisters will gather for the 28th General Chapter, when under the guidance of the Holy Spirit it will seek to promote at all levels the renewal and development of the Congregation.

The past six years have contributed to this renewal and development through ongoing reflection, dialogue, and discernment. The Chapter this year will pray, discern and discuss together and arrive at a Chapter Mandate for the coming six years.

So it will be a busy year, and it has already started. We celebrated the Jubilees of five of our Sisters with Masses and Liturgies. Sr Mark Lehmann and Sr St Jude Doyle celebrated 70 years of religious life; Sr Enid Doherty and Sr Annette O'Connor marked their diamond jubilees for 60 years; and Sr Seasarina Bau celebrated 50 years as a Sister of Charity.

The Congregation has again been saddened by the deaths of two of our Sisters – Mary Cooke and Margaret Nabbs. Mary marked her 90th birthday not long before her death; Margaret died as she had requested, with the Hail Mary being quietly prayed, over classical music softly played. Words of remembrance for both our Sisters are included in this edition of *Keep In Touch*.

In February, the Sisters of Charity Foundation marked 20 years since its inauguration. During that time, it has distributed more than \$8 million to more than 850 projects across Australia which otherwise receive little or no funding.

The Sisters are so proud that the historic ministries they have been involved with since their arrival in Sydney in 1838 – assisting people living with disabilities, at-risk youth, Indigenous Australians, refugees, the homeless, the poor and disadvantaged, prison-affected families – are being continued.

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# A busy beginning to 2020

From page 1

We also celebrate the 20th anniversary of this magazine, *Keep In Touch*, with all the issues of KIT now digitised and on the Sisters of Charity website (<https://www.sistersofcharity.org.au/>).

In this latest edition of *KIT*, we look at a particular part of our history called VASCA, the Volunteer Associates of the Sisters of Charity of Australia. The VASCAs were an initiative of Sr Mark, who had

seen the life of the Theresians (see the story in December 2019) winding down, but the needs for services increasing.

She established VASCA, which was intended to show young women who were discerning a vocation what the ministries of the Sisters entailed. However, post-Vatican II the numbers of women joining Religious Orders numbers declined sharply. VASCA in turn became part

of the Sisters of Charity Outreach at St Vincent's Clinic, now renamed Open Support.

And finally, in this edition you will find an article by the Sisters of Charity Heritage Centre Manager, Rachel Mensforth, about plans for the Centre this year – and three of the objects in the exhibition space which resonate with her particularly.

Clare Nolan rsc  
Congregational Leader

## Nearly a year on from its opening, the Heritage Centre manager takes stock

Since taking up my role in the Heritage Centre in April 2019, I am often asked what my job entails. Or, the other question asked with regularity pertains to the Heritage Centre itself: “What is the Sisters of Charity Heritage Centre?”



Centre Manager, Rachel Mensforth (right), and Centre Visitor Concierge, Kerry Sheehy.

In both cases, the answer is ever evolving. Today, I would answer that my job is to ensure that the centre reflects the Sister's history and legacy, their pioneering spirit, contemporary mission and charism. Some days, I spend my time focussing on processes and procedures, bedding down operations and thinking about day-to-day functions. On other days, I am contemplating how our future planning encompasses and retains the overall vision of the centre as a place of story, hospitality and reflection.

We have welcomed an array of visitors since our opening on June 6 last year. Many ex-students from Sisters of Charity schools have called in to reminisce and share memories. I was enthralled to hear of one that included the 1964 Sydney tour of the Beatles. When the girls attempted to fib their way through their tardy arrival at school, they were subsequently advised by the Sisters that they had been spotted on the television waving at the band on Macleay Street!

The Sisters are not forgotten for advocating safe injecting rooms,

or their work with AIDS patients. One visitor remarked that the Sisters are true female pioneers and that the Heritage Centre represents the collective power of women. Every visit, every story, forms the narrative and identity of the centre.

This begins at the door, with the triptych *Journey of Spirit Coming Together* by artists Lisa Buxton and Julieanne Manson. It speaks of Aboriginal peoples' culture, of faith and the relationship between the Sisters, the land and its traditional custodians.

Throughout August and September 2019, we welcomed year 7 Religious Education students from St Vincent's College. More than 100 students experienced the exhibition and examined the centre's artwork under the supervision of their teachers and Sr Anne Taylor. In September, we welcomed Bethlehem College for their staff Spirituality Day, accompanied in their activities by Sr Margaret Beirne. That same month, we also hosted a visit from St Vincent's Health Mission Leaders, as well as several visiting Sisters and the 2019 Twilight Gathering.

October, November and December were eventful, providing occasions to host events for the Sisters of Charity Foundation and deliver tours for Open Support, Mission Leaders and Pastoral Care staff from affiliated health and education organisations. At the beginning of December, we welcomed our Engagement, Learning and Program Developer, Allison O'Sullivan. Throughout 2020 Allison will initiate our curriculum – linked student learning programs, create adult tours, and work with our volunteer Sisters in training and developing their roles. We are blessed to have a dedicated group of Sisters working with the centre.

This is the Heritage Centre – or a snapshot at least. It is a burgeoning space imbued with history and message, continuing a legacy that began with five pioneering Sisters in 1838. I am inspired daily and greatly humbled to be part of its unfolding narrative.

**During the next 12 months the Heritage Centre will:**

- Roll out curriculum-linked tours for school students
- Introduce a Volunteer roster and training for exhibition guides
- Create a visitor handout
- Continue to reach out to diverse audiences and communities

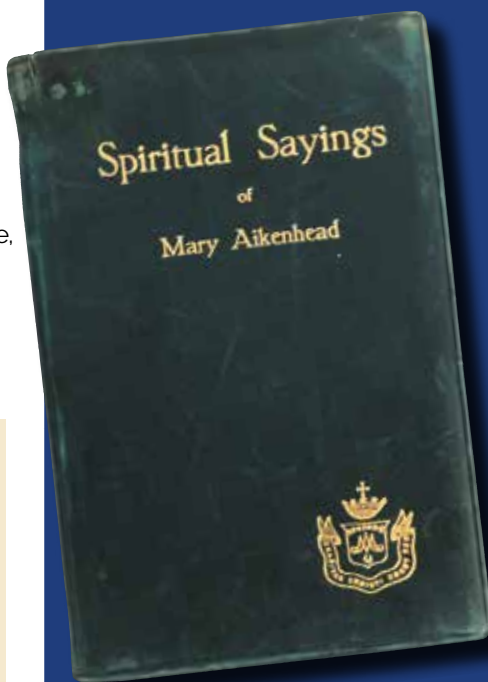
## Some of the Heritage treasures

As a Curator, it's often difficult to discuss favourite objects. In a museum context, objects embody unique stories and so each item resonates with a narrative and significance of its own. Here are some of the quiet achievers.

A fundraising booklet, *A Brief History of the Pious Congregation called the Sisters of Charity*, created in August 1853. It demonstrates the efforts of the early Sisters, of their determination and vision.

A second telling object is in an exhibit pertaining to the life and spiritual guidance of Mother Mary Aikenhead.

*Spiritual Sayings of Mary Aikenhead* contains the wisdom and reflections of the Foundress, reflecting her vision and laying bare her capacity with the written word, both inspiring and simple.



The third object is a booklet containing the address delivered by Fr Paul Cullen, C.M. at the opening of new classrooms at Bethlehem Ladies College, August 30, 1916.

Founded in modest surroundings in 1881, the College established a reputation for excellence.

Sydney publication *The Freeman's Journal* reported the following, December 24, 1908:

"The programme submitted by the students of Bethlehem College, Ashfield, at the annual distribution of prizes, which was held in the College School-hall on Dec. 15, evinced careful training by the Sisters of Charity. Their artistic abilities were in conformity with the success which the students attained in the Public examinations' (Trove)."

The booklet highlights the work of the Sisters in education, particularly in establishing exceptional institutions of learning that withstand the rigours of time.



# VASCA: Responding to the needs of the times

Sr Mark Lehmann, vocations director of the Sisters of Charity between 1971 and 1979, noted the Vatican II effect on new vocations.

In 2007, she wrote:

*'It was just after Vatican II and Religious Orders were more interested in updating rather than encouraging new vocations.'*

Sr Mark also noted the work of the Theresians (see *KIT* December 2019), a lay group founded by the Sisters of Charity in 1917 and who were, at that stage, dying out. The Theresians finally disbanded in 1998.

The Theresians had, however, been known for both their loyalty and zeal. These were the qualities Sr Mark wanted for a new lay group of the Sisters of Charity.

In 1997, Sr Mark was given permission by Mother Marion Corless to begin the new group – the Volunteer Associates of the Sisters of Charity of Australia (VASCA).

The aim was to include members of all ages, faith affiliations, and socio-economic groups to further the ministry of the Sisters of Charity, whose charism and fourth vow is service of the poor.

Members were drawn from the local community where VASCA was established – at the old St Marys Commercial College in Sydney's Paddington – and from among other friends, supporters, and ex-students of the Sisters.

The ministries included outreach to the aged, lonely, disabled, and bereaved, and demonstrated the charism of the Sisters to women who might, in fact, be discerning a vocation.

It was registered as a charity in 1980, expanded to St Ambrose Parish in Sydney's west, and there were plans to set up in Melbourne.

However, by 1996, VASCA in Sydney's east became integral to the new service, Outreach, which was established at St Vincent's Private Hospital in Sydney's Darlinghurst. Outreach has now been rebranded Open Support.



**Top:** Sr Mark Lehmann with a man from VASCA assisting an elderly woman in Paddington NSW, 1990s

**Above:** Sr Margaret Mary Moore and Sr Mark Lehmann (partially hidden), assisting a client in Paddington NSW, 1990s



Sr M Baptist Whyte with her VASCA sewing group at Paddington, enjoying their Christmas party, 1985





# VASCA newsletter

Vol. 1/79

"The Love of Christ  
impels us"

ST MARY'S  
49 GORDON ST, PADDINGTON

TELEPHONE NUMBERS 357-6239  
357-4275 (after hours)

Dear Vasca Members,

As our association grows I am aware of many members who are unable to attend monthly meetings but are still most anxious to hear Vasca news. To overcome this we are sending out our first Newsletter and we hope it will be a means of keeping members in touch with the new Vasca Centre at Paddington, as well as with one another.

At the end of 1978 when it became evident that new headquarters would have to be planned for Vasca, our activities, of necessity, were curtailed for a few months while we set up new offices in the building previously used by St Mary's Business College. The choice of location has proved very suitable and the administrative headquarters of Vasca now comprise 3 offices, including one for a secretary, several meeting rooms, a well-equipped duplicating room and a room with facilities for refreshments.

The first floor is being used by Epheta Centre, headquarters for Catholic Junior Deaf of the Archdiocese, under the direction of Sister Helen Gaffey, R.S.C.

Looking forward to seeing you at the new Centre,

President

## DEVELOPMENT

Some of the younger members are planning their first Junior Vasca project -- a picnic at Yaronga Park on Saturday, 28th April. The young people are assisting Sister Helen Gaffey in her work with the junior deaf. These handicapped children find themselves cut off from friends of their own age, so a special effort is needed to integrate them with other young people. We wish our young members well (and a fine day for the picnic).

## FUNCTIONS

An enjoyable theatre party to the Genesian Theatre to see 'Hobson's Choice' took place on 8th April. As it is not always possible to give members individual notice of functions, we hope to use the Newsletters as a means of publicising our functions; profits from our fund-raising ventures are for the benefit of the poor we serve.

Saturday, April 21

'Candlelight' display and sale of decorative candles at Paddington Vasca Centre at 2 p.m.

Sunday, April 29

Concert for Aged at St Vincent's Convent, Potts Point at 2 p.m. by the Bel Cahto Trio.

Sunday, May 6

Ferry trip - Lane Cove River.

"Whatever you do to the least of  
mine, you do unto Me."

### VASCA PRAYER

(Traditional Prayer of the Sisters of Charity)

O adorable Saviour, we firmly believe that you are present in the persons of the poor and that in serving them we have the happiness of serving you. You have promised to be mindful on the last day of what we have done in your name to the least of yours. Increase our faith in your consoling promise that our charity may become more ardent and more pure and make us more pleasing to you. AMEN.

We  
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A728.

SISTERS OF CHARITY  
VASCA CENTRE  
49 GORDON STREET  
PADDINGTON 2021  
Telephone :  
357 6239

## VASCA

(VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATES OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA)

Director : Sister Mark, R.S.C.

VASCA members visit those who are aged, lonely, bereaved or otherwise in need of personal or community support. Visits may be on a regular or occasional basis and can involve one or more members. The volunteers may be needed only to talk to the person in need, but services provided include transport, shopping, attending to banking and correspondence, cutting lawns, taking the person concerned for a walk or lunch in the park, attending to personal hygiene (hair washing, nail and hair trimming) or washing the dog.

Several members are engaged in a telephone service on a weekly basis to chat to the house-bound and lonely.

Bus trips and picnics are arranged. Concerts and house parties take place at Vasca headquarters, or elsewhere. At these outings and functions, refreshments are provided.

Particulars of Government, hospital, council and subsidiary services are regularly collated and made available to those who have needs in health, housing or social service areas.

A regular event is taking up to 50 aged, handicapped or house-bound people to the Christmas Concert at the Opera House, including the provision of transport and afternoon tea.



To share your gifts  
with the  
"NEEDY"

- visit the lonely
- Pray for the sick
- Teach migrants
- Write a letter
- Help with reading
- Visit the Hospice
- Talk to patients
- Help with meals
- Take for a walk
- Do massages
- Telephone a "shut in"
- Be a catechist
- Speak of God
- Post letters
- Tell a story
- Offer Transport
- Sing a song
- Take Shopping
- Mend clothes
- Share an afternoon
- Do a manicure
- Visit the disabled
- Do a hair set
- Take for a drive
- Play an instrument
- Visit homes
- SMILE and spread  
THE GOOD NEWS

V.A.S.C.A.  
invites  
YOU

Clockwise from top left:  
VASCA Newsletter, 1979  
Sr Mark outlines the VASCA ministry  
VASCA bookmark, ca 1990s  
VASCA prayer card



# A Golden celebration

## Sr Sesarina Bau

Motto: *'Through the Cross to light'*



Sr Sesarina Bau, Caritas Christi Novitiate, Wahroonga, NSW, 1969

You began your ministry at St Joseph's Hospital Auburn, in 1972 and I was also there at that time. We have been on the journey together since then as Sisters of Charity and as friends.

One of the highlights of our friendship was going to Fiji for a final visit home with you in 2018.

There I experienced first-hand the deep connection you have with your home and with your people. What a privilege that was for me.

You were dedicated to being a nurse and you were a mentor to many nurses who worked on the wards, in accident and

emergency, intensive care and in the community both in Australia and overseas. You are loved and treasured wherever you go.

You are retired now but still 'on mission' and you continue to bring yourself to any situation.



**Above:** Sr Sesarina Bau graduating with a Diploma in Nursing. (L-R) Sr Clare Nolan, Sr Carol Pedersen, Sr Sesarina Bau, Sr Mary Cooke, Sr Claire Nolan and Sr Annette O'Connor, NSW College of Nursing, 13 September 1983

**Above:** Sr Sesarina Bau and Sr Clare Nolan with three nurses, St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn, ca 1971  
Sr Sesarina Bau and Sr Clare Nolan, St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn, ca 1971



You recently received a Papal decoration of honour the Holy Cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*. It is 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. It was such a beautiful morning, an occasion of grace, and I was proud of you.

**Sr Clare Nolan**  
Congregational Leader

**Above:** (L-R) Sr Robyn Wheeler, (a former Sister) Ann, Sr Sesarina Bau, Sr Benigna O'Donovan, Sr Leo Jones and Sr Maria Carmel Cullen, St Vincent's Hospital Convent, Darlinghurst, NSW, 1970  
Sr Sesarina Bau, Sr Clare Nolan and Fr Francisco Basnayake OFM, the celebrant, St Joseph's, Edgecliff





# Celebrating our Diamond Jubilarians

Sr Annette O'Connor

Motto: *'Give me souls, all else take away'*



Sr Annette O'Connor, ca 1976

After a number of years teaching, you resumed your nurse training at St Vincent's Sydney and eventually graduated from there.

Nursing became your life and you had a great love as a Sister of Charity for the healing ministry of Christ.

You went the extra mile for people who were frail, drug addicted, in poor circumstances or marginalised in any way.

I have known you to sit with dying patients no matter who they were or for how long their journey home took.

You always looked for those on the margins. Your time in Emergency at St Vincent's Darlington uncovered the poorest of the poor.

You gave to those who could not repay you and you served the poor without seeking anything in return.

As Pope Francis said recently "Standing with the poor, serving the poor, we see things as Jesus does; we see what remains and what passes away."

And "the poor person who begs for my love leads me straight to God. The poor facilitate our access to heaven."

As Mary Aikenhead said: "Great good can be done for others and for God's glory by those who are themselves suffering."

Sr Clare Nolan  
Congregational Leader



**Clockwise from above:**  
(Second from left) Sr Annette O'Connor at Niagara Falls, during a research trip on detoxification and addiction services and programs in Ontario, Canada, 1980  
Sr Annette O'Connor during a research trip on detoxification and addiction services and programs in Ontario, Canada, 1980



# Sr Enid Doherty

Motto: 'FIAT -YES'



Sr Enid Doherty before her Jubilee Mass, January, 2020

**Education was Sr Enid's primary call to loving service in both teaching children and providing leadership and mentoring just by being who she is.**

As a role model to many, this quality combined with quiet and gentle ways, Sr Enid has touched many people along the way.

She always looks to the needs of others. What a privilege it was to see her in action at the Sisters of Charity Outreach.

A deep listener to those in need or distressed, she has a special love for struggling migrants and has helped so many to feel more at home in Australia.

As a Community leader, Sr Enid gently brought Sisters together and always wanted the best for her community living and leading others.

Sr Enid, a deeply spiritual and prayerful woman, brings out the best in others. During her time as Congregational Secretary, she endeared herself to all in the offices at Bondi Junction.

**Sr Clare Nolan**  
Congregational Leader



**Above:** Sr Enid Doherty (Principal), Sacred Heart Primary School, Cabramatta, NSW, 1980

Sr Enid with Sr Clare and Fr Tony Doherty, after her Jubilee Mass, January, 2020



**Above, from left:** Enid Doherty (third row, first on left) and community of Sisters from St Mary's Convent, Katoomba, NSW, ca 1970

(L-R) Sr Mary Maguire, Sr Marina Ward, Sr Enid Doherty and Sr Marie Bourke, former principals of Sacred Heart Primary School, Cabramatta, NSW, 15 June 1985



# Platinum Jubilee

## Sr Mark Lehmann

Motto: 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit'



Sr Mark Lehmann, 1996

Only seven years after your profession you accepted an invitation to work with Sisters in St Therese's Novitiate in Fiji.

There, you were greatly loved and appreciated for all you gave.

On your return you went back to teaching at Potts Point and it was not long before you were asked to take on the role of Vocation Director as well as the Formation of our Sisters who were newly Professed.

Not an easy ministry but you gave it your best, you were qualified to do the ministry.

In 1979 you took up the formation of VASCA – the Volunteers Association of the Sisters of Charity. All you wanted was to spread the Good News of the Gospel.



**Clockwise from above:**

Sr Mark Lehmann, Cawaci, Fiji, ca 1963  
Sr Mark Lehmann and Sr Baptist Whyte working on their car "Vince", Cawaci, Fiji, ca 1961

(L-R) Mother Mary St Agnes Skewes with the first community of Sisters for the Fiji Mission, Sr Mark Lehmann, Sr Florence Bailey and Sr Peter Fennessy, St Vincent's Convent, Potts Point, NSW, 1957  
Sr Florence Bailey and Sr Mark Lehmann with a large group of Sisters of Our Lady of Nazareth (novices and postulants) on the steps of the RSC Convent Maryhill, Cawaci, Fiji, ca 1958







You are an inspiration on this.  
Your 70th Jubilee and I thank you  
for all you are to the Congregation.

Sr Clare Nolan  
Congregational Leader



**From left:** The Jubilee Mass in celebration  
of St Mark Lehmann's Platinum Jubilee  
Sr Mark's Jubilee Cake

(L-R) Sr Margaret Fitzgerald, Sr Sesarina  
Bau, Sr Eileen Kean and Sr Mark Lehmann  
at the General Chapter, Caritas Christi  
Conference Centre, Wahroonga, NSW, 1996

## Sr St Jude Doyle

*Motto: 'Amo te Deus meus - I love you my god'*



Sr St Jude Doyle

In the years between your  
profession 1950 and 1982, you  
gave your life to education. You  
were a true leader as principal of  
primary schools during that time.

Then Jude the dreamer and  
gatherer of people came out when  
you were asked to organise such  
things as the Sisters of Charity

Sesquicentenary. Perhaps the  
biggest invitation to you was  
to become the first Director  
of Sisters of Charity Outreach



(L-R) Sr Deirdre Hickey, Sr Myrna Lynch, Sr St Jude Doyle, Sr Virginia Wilkinson and  
Sr Maureen Heffernan at a combined sports event, St Aloysius, Kingston Beach, TAS, 1968

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# Platinum Jubilee

From page 11

## Sr Jude Doyle

**Motto:** *'Amo te Deus meus – I love you my god'*

and you grabbed it with both hands and ran with it and built it into the wonderful place of ministry it has been for so many.

It was a great response to the challenge Sr Mary Maguire held out to respond to the needs of women and families primarily,

but it soon grew to meet the needs of many people.

You are an educator to the core, and you used this gift to include as many lay people as possible in setting up Outreach. You have been a woman of great vision.

The song that describes your way of doing things would have to be I did it my way. But always with you motivation was to do it all for the love of God and his people.

**Sr Clare Nolan**  
Congregational Leader



**Clockwise from top left:**

Sr St Jude Doyle (Principal) with two teachers at St Mary's Primary School, Liverpool, NSW, ca 1978-1981

Sr Denise Hannebery and Sr St Jude Doyle at the Mid Chapter Gathering, Parramatta Female Factory, Parramatta, NSW, 2005

Sr St Jude Doyle standing beside a large Outreach Poster, Congregational Archives, Potts Point, NSW, 15 August 2012

Sr Myrna Lynch and Sr St Jude Doyle, ca 1986

Sr St Jude (centre front) and her family at her Jubilee Mass

Sr St Jude Doyle in her garden, 2018



# Words of remembrance

## Sr Mary Cooke rsc

(August 26, 1929 – October 19, 2019)

The funeral Mass for Sr Mary was held on October 31, at the Sacred Heart Chapel, Rookwood.

Her personal motto:

“O God I love Thee.”



Sr Mary Cooke

On behalf of the Sisters of Charity, I welcome all who have come to say farewell to our Sister, Mary Cooke.

Mary only recently turned 90 with as little fanfare as she lived her life. She quietly lived her personal motto ‘O God I love Thee’ and last Saturday, October 19, Mary went home peacefully to the God she loved.

Mary was professed as a Sister of Charity in January 1951 and was the only child of George and Mary both deceased.

In 2011, she made her home at Stella Maris Aged Care Facility Cronulla.



**Above:** Sr Mary Cooke (fourth row, third from left) with the community at St Vincent’s Hospital Convent Sydney, NSW, 1984

**Left:** Sr Mary Cooke cheering students on at a sports carnival, Mt St Michael’s College Ashgrove, QLD, ca 1970



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# Words of remembrance

Sr Mary Cooke rsc

From page 13

We welcome Bishop James Foley who will celebrate this Mass of Thanksgiving this afternoon. Bishop David Cremin is an apology. Both James and David were special to Mary.

Mary's Mass booklet is sure testament to who Mary was and Mary prepared her own booklet with assistance from Sr Gaye Reynolds. The beautiful, traditional hymns she has chosen reflect a life of faith,

prayer, and adoration of the God she loved. How well we could sing those loved hymns of the past.

As we enter into this Eucharist of Thanksgiving for the life of Mary, I am reminded of the words spoken on her 90th Birthday:

**"You lifted me out of the womb, singing me the song of my life. You took me by the hand and became my teacher." (Psalm 22)**

This afternoon with immense gratitude to God we place Mary's hand in the Hand of the God she lived her life for and say 'yes' to her life and "Yes" to her life now with God in the eternal circle of love in heaven.

**Clockwise from right:**

Sr Mary Cooke (front row, third from left) with Sisters and staff at Mt St Michael's College, Ashgrove, QLD, ca 1973

Sr Mary Cooke (sixth from left) with the community at Mt St Michael's Convent, Ashgrove, QLD, ca 1961

Sr Mary Cooke (Back row, first from left) with a group of Sisters at St Vincent's Hospital, Toowoomba, 1963  
(Copyright held by the State Library of Queensland)





# Sr Margaret Nabbs rsc

(February 17, 1935 – January 23, 2020)

**The funeral Mass for Sr Margaret was held on February 5 at St Monica's Church, Moonee Ponds.**

Her personal motto:

**"I am the handmaiden of the Lord."**



Sr Margaret Nabbs

**Marg was a real homemaker. She had a rare gift of making a Community a home wherever she lived.**

I first met Marg while I was on a teaching block at Concord. Marg was the superior of the Convent. This was my first experience of community outside the Novitiate.

I remember I was like a sponge soaking up the experiences of the day to day life of the sisters who were engaged in ministry.

Marg's love and care for each sister was evident. She loved

entertaining and was a very good cook who had a recipe for everything as well as having a great collection of cookbooks.

It was only a few years later in my first appointment at Liverpool that Marg came to join the community and staff of St Mary's Primary School.

In those few years of living and working with Marg I caught some of the free spirit that was so much a part of her life and for that I will always be truly grateful.



Marg's whole life has been one of thinking of others, reaching out to the poor and lonely. Nothing was any trouble to her. She was a person who was full of faith and shared that so well with many people who grew to love her greatly.

Marg had a real love for the natural world around her and had a great repertoire of plants, insects, animal, trees and bird names. Taking time to learn the names was a real exercise in Marg's love for nature.

When I was at Kingston in Tasmania Marg rang and asked me if she could come to stay with me for a month as she needed the time just

to rest and recharge her batteries! Of course, I said, I would be delighted.

I had a garden for vegies and one for flowers. A friend was planting his broad beans and I asked if I could have about a dozen seeds. He was very generous and gave me half an ice cream container full of seeds. Before Marg arrived I had planted my 10 seeds and left the rest on the bottom step and forgot all about them.

After a week or so I encouraged her to do some gardening. Unbeknown to me Marg found the broad bean seeds which by this time were sitting in water and shooting.

A few weeks after Marg returned home, I was hanging clothes on the line and noticed some plants in my

Above: (L-R) Sr Pauline Staunton, Sr Margaret Nabbs and Sr Jean Montgomery, St Joseph's School, Hobart, TAS, 1964

Sr Pauline Staunton and Sr Margaret Nabbs, St Joseph's School, Hobart, TAS, 1964

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# Words of remembrance

Sr Margaret Nabbs rsc

From page 15

flower bed and thought they must have come up from the previous year.

To my amazement, they were all in a row and, on a closer look, I recognised them as broad bean plants. That year, thanks to Marg, I kept the neighbours and staff at school in broad beans for quite some time. Marg, you had a big, open and welcoming heart making

the most of each opportunity that came your way and many here today would have so many stories to tell.

Margaret didn't show too many signs of slowing down in the last eight years; she achieved so much more, her involvement in the parish here at St Monica's, keeping up with her friends, celebrating her Diamond Jubilee as a Sister of Charity and

turning 80, moving into Aged Care at St Catherine's while continuing living each moment to the fullest.

Marg, we know you loved each one of us and we are forever grateful having you as a part of our life.

May you rest in peace, Marg!

Sr Cate O'Brien



Clockwise from left (L-R):  
Sr Margaret Nabbs,  
Sr M Theodora and  
Sr Francis Xavier Purcell  
in the CLC Convent Garden,  
Eltham, VIC, 1989

Sr Adrian Walsh and  
Sr Margaret Nabbs,  
St Vincent's Hospital Convent,  
Toowoomba, QLD, October 1975

Back row - Sr Judith Peart,  
Sr Margaret Nabbs, Sr Joan Stapleton,  
Sr Leonore Murphy. Front row - Sr Francis  
Xavier Purcell, Sr Etienne McMahon,  
Sr Margaret Dwyer. CLC Convent,  
Eltham, VIC, 1991

Sr Margaret Nabbs, Sr Catherine Meese,  
Sr Regina Jones and Sr Joan McKenna  
at the General Chapter, Caritas Christi  
Conference Centre, Wahroonga, NSW,  
October 1996

Sr Margaret Nabbs and Sr Francis Xavier  
Purcell, CLC Convent, Eltham, VIC, 1989



**Sisters of Charity**  
of Australia

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