

# Eulogy for Sr Rose Shields sm

Delivered at Rose's Funeral by her niece Christine  
26<sup>th</sup> October 2015

I'm Christine - a niece of Rose and daughter of her eldest sister, Mary.

Here also is Tony Shields. Tony is a son of Joseph, Rose's eldest brother. And Auntie Terry, Rose's sister in law. And Terry's son Greg and his family. And my brother, Jim, courtesy the overnight train from Wagga. Others who are more far flung have said how sorry they are not to be here.

I can't really believe it is Rose's funeral day today but I am glad to remember the good times we had with Rose and how much of a family person she really was.

Rose was born on 9 March 1929, the youngest of six children of Catherine (nee Cannon) and Peter Shields. Peter and Catherine both grew up in Glenfin, Donegal, Ireland. They first met on board ship in 1919 while emigrating here. Their shipboard romance began when Catherine caught influenza and Peter cared for her. They married and settled in Cabarita, not far from Mortlake Gasworks where Peter worked.

Their local parish was St Mary's at Concord.

The family held a strong Catholic faith.

During the Depression, Peter lost his job at the Gasworks where he was also active as a union rep. This put pressure on the family, especially during the wartime years.

The oldest 3 siblings, Joe (Tony's father), Mary (my mother) and Peter all married and had families while the youngest 3 entered: John became a Christian Brother, Rose became a Marist nun and Tess became a Sister of the Good Shepherd. A well-balanced family.

Rose is the last sibling. Many nieces and nephews and grandnieces and nephews survive her. Two sisters-in-law will remember Rose fondly – Terry, who married Peter, and Miriam, Joe's wife.

Terry told me recently, when Rose was thinking about becoming a nun, she chose the Marists because 'they wore Our Lady's blue'. And, from what Sr Carmel says now, Rose is still today wearing 'Our Lady's blue'.

Rose was a very calm person. She would be ready to join in the family fun but also seemed happy to sit quietly with a contented smile on her lips.

We all have many good memories of Rose.

Of childhood visits to Merrylands to visit Rose, in those days, in full habit. Our first thought was to ride the white lions on the convent steps. We shared cakes in a shady tea house or picnic'd under the trees.

Of Christmas at Uncle Peter's at Thornleigh. Rose loved the tennis and cricket on telly. At table tennis on the back verandah, Rose was very quick on her feet. As her short veil (no full regalia any more) flipped and swung in the afternoon breeze, she was nicknamed 'the flying nun'. When the euchre games commenced, Rose was known to 'table' the winning trump with an energy that made everything shake.

When my sister, Mary, married in NZ, Rose was working over there and was included as an honoured wedding guest. The reception house had a sprung dance floor and everyone was up dancing. Even Rose could not say 'no', she got so many offers to dance.

My husband, Michael, would drive Rose back to Woolwich after Sunday lunch at our flat. Rose delighted in sitting in the front seat and navigating for Michael. She was quite au fait with Sydney's streets and the quickest routes.

Family in Wagga remember Rose, the 'quick' bowler, striking fear into young hearts on the backyard cricket pitch.

My brother, Jim, and his wife in Wagga Wagga hosted Rose on several occasions. Ann Maree says she considered it a privilege. Rose was very popular with her young grand-nephews, Hamish and Rory, as she was good at washing up **and** drying up, as well as at cricket.

In March 2000, Rose was at Tony's home in Croydon for Joe's 80th. All the surviving siblings and partners were there (including my father Jim & and by then step mother Terry). There was much discussion and many cakes and sandwiches demolished.

A young Rose, at 19, was a beautiful bridesmaid at Joe's wedding to Miriam at St Francis Xavier's at Arncliffe. Photos show a young woman with a direct gaze, a soft smile and a beautiful head of hair. Rose also nearly stole the show as my mother's bridesmaid.

Rose loved visiting family and friends, often by public transport. She would visit Joe and Miriam at their Cronulla nursing home. Taking well over 2 hours each way and a long walk from Cronulla station. Rose was always welcome.

Rose was a welcoming host herself. Joanne, her Queenslander niece and Tony's sister, paid regular visits to the Mudgeeraba community house to enjoy a delicious lunch and a visit to their small chapel.

I still have several early letters from Rose always asking for family news. She showed intense interest in what everyone was doing with their studies, marriages and offspring. She particularly asked about Brian and Wayne, who were later additions to our family in Wagga.

My brother Peter, from Cairns, visited Rose at St Anne's over the last year or so. My sister, Cathie, in Wagga also had a particularly soft spot for Rose. Rose was always

And my youngest sister, also a Rose, who lives in Canberra, remembers Auntie Rose for 'Just her peaceful, calm and loving manner and her lovely warm smile'.

Rose's sister, Tess, passed away in Melbourne this year in the care of the Good Shepherd Sisters. Carmel was sure Rose understood and felt very sad when she brought Rose the news.

Rose's family is proud of her work and her success while wearing our Lady's blue.

We are grateful that her Marist family (and St Anne's) have appreciated Rose and have loved her and looked after her so well for so long.

May God welcome her as she so deserves.

Vale Rose.