

## **Sr. Kathleen Daly SM**

### **Eulogy delivered by Sr Julie Brand on behalf of the Marist Sisters**

Kathleen was always focussed on the goal ahead. She was purposeful and knew her own mind. And so it was that last Friday (27<sup>th</sup> January) she walked into the Office at St. Joseph's and said she wished to go to Hospital, asking when the paramedics would arrive to take her. This surprised us all, as Kathleen did not relish Hospital visits. Only minutes after being placed in the Ambulance, Kathleen began to slip away. Less than twenty four hours later, she had surrendered quietly and peacefully to our God, whom she had loved and served so faithfully throughout her life.

Kathleen was born in Sydney on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1926. She was the third of five children born to Michael and Kathleen Daly – Gerald and Nola being the eldest, and Marie and Monica the youngest. After the death of her parents, Kathleen and her siblings went to live with her aunt, uncle and five cousins. The bonds they formed as a large family unit remained very strong and Kathleen would always delight in family gatherings and celebrations. Kathleen attended St. Thomas's Primary School, Lewisham, and Bethlehem College, Ashfield, before undertaking a Commercial course at St. Patrick's Business College. She then worked as a stenographer in a Government Department in Macquarie Street, Sydney. Kathleen was actively involved in Parish life and when she was 19 years old she thought of becoming a Religious Sister. It was while in the Confessional at St. Patrick's, Church Hill, that a Marist Priest encouraged her, saying "What are you waiting for?" He suggested that she meet the Marist Sisters at Merrylands. Kathleen said later, "I knew the day I went to Merrylands to ask to join the Marist Sisters, even though I had never known or met a Marist Sister, that I was led there by Divine Providence for Mary's intention".

Kathleen was 20 when she entered the Marist Sisters. Having received the name, Sr. Gonzaga, she celebrated her First Profession on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1949 and began her ministry as a Primary School Teacher in Woolwich, Bowral and Merrylands. It wasn't until 1955 that Kathleen had the opportunity to attend Teachers' College at Mount Street, North Sydney. Following her training programme she continued her ministry to young children in Primary Schools, not only in Sydney, but also in Victoria, Queensland and New Zealand. The Sisters who worked with Kathleen over these years recall that she was an excellent teacher, who was tireless in her preparation. She was also a great support to younger Sisters, encouraging and mentoring them especially as they began teaching Religious Education. She was generous with her time and accompanied them with keen interest.

Kathleen was ready to embrace the Work of Mary wherever God led her. She was the founding Principal of St. Scholastica's, Bennettswood, and she was among the first group of Marist Sisters to establish community in Gladstone, Queensland, in 1971. While later living in New Zealand, Kathleen was appointed to Moerewa where our Sisters undertook a motor mission in the Bay of Islands and South Hokianga. They would travel long distances visiting families and organising Religion classes for the children, providing pastoral care for the sick and elderly, and assisting parishes with liturgy.

In 1982 Kathleen returned to Merrylands where she spent the next seventeen years in CCD ministry (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine). Though this ministry of teaching Religious Education to children in State Schools was very challenging, Kathleen's energy, enthusiasm and total dedication was outstanding. Some of the Catechists who worked with Kathleen recall that she finished every lesson the same way with the words: "Remember always children, God is your best friend".

Kathleen's relationship with God sustained her. She was a prayerful woman who would often be found in the Chapel, spending quiet time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. She accepted the suffering of major illness and increasing frailty with patience and strong faith. Kathleen was always interested in other people, enquiring about Sisters' families and those whom she knew were sick or in special need. For many years, while residing at St. Joseph's, Kathleen would go regularly across to St. Anne's to visit those in care. Kathleen never forgot a Sister's Birthday/Feastday. She would send a hand-written card to each one, enclosing a little prayer or blessing. Jubilarians were always remembered and messages sent to those overseas. Kathleen had a deep love for the Congregation and remained interested in all the happenings. Kathleen was a most generous person, always wanting to share what she had with others. When she came to Marian House on Sundays, she would often bring some chips or biscuits that she had won at Bingo. Sharing these with her Sisters gave her great delight. Kathleen enjoyed participating in various activities at St. Joseph's and was always happy to join in sing-a-longs and to make her special request, "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen". Kathleen was constant in her expressions of gratitude. The smallest gesture was acknowledged by a phone call or a note. To all who cared for her - particularly Chris, our Care-co-Ordinator, the Sisters and Staff of St. Joseph's, Dr. Kong and the Specialists who attended her - Kathleen expressed warm and loving gratitude. So many times her words were "Thank you, thank you, thank you very much".

On this day, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, the Church throughout the world acknowledges the gift of Consecrated Life. It is fitting that we are gathered together today giving thanks for the gift that Kathleen's consecrated life has been for us. With her focus clearly on Christ, she lived the Gospel in Mary's way, humbly acknowledging - in her words - "What a marvellous thing it is 'by a gracious choice' to have been chosen to be Marist".

We thank you, Kathleen, for your loving faithfulness and the inspiration you have been to us. May you rest in peace.