

## **CELEBRATING THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF BEV AND GAIL**

It is with great JOY that we have gathered to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our Sisters - Beverley and Gail. Fifty years ago – on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1969 – together with Sr. Veronica Lum from Fiji – they made their First Profession in the Congregation of Mary. How fitting that we are celebrating with them on Pentecost Sunday – the great Feast of the Holy Spirit. In the words of Marist historian, Fr. Jean Coste: “If we want a unifying principle of our Marist spirit, we could find it only in fidelity to the Holy Spirit....It is the Spirit, acting within the Church and the Society, who sees to it that the Marists of today learn how to walk in the footsteps of Mary and of their founder.” Without a doubt, Bev and Gail have lived in fidelity to the Holy Spirit throughout these past 50 years, walking faithfully in the footsteps of Mary and our founders with courage, tenacity, simplicity, humility and loving commitment.

*Called by Gracious Choice* to follow Christ as Mary did, Bev and Gail have each responded to the promptings of the Spirit from their earliest days. In doing so, their Marist journeys have led them down different paths.

Bev was called upon to use her gifts and talents firstly in the field of Primary education, teaching here at Villa Maria (Hunters Hill), in Bennettswood (Melbourne) and in Gladstone (Queensland) - - - - while Gail began her Marist ministry in Secondary Schools, teaching at Cerdon College (Merrylands) and Marist Sisters' College, Woolwich.

In the mid-80's both our Jubilarians embarked upon new ministries, each in a different area of Formation – Gail beginning her term as Directress of Novices, and Bev entering the field of Catechetics and Pastoral work. While Gail's focus was on Formation for Religious Life, Bev prepared children for Sacraments of Initiation and taught them life skills in the Girl Guide movement.

Bev's Parish and Pastoral ministry found her engaging across wide areas of Queensland (Gladstone, Mudgeeraba, Surfers Paradise, St. George), parts of Melbourne, including Torquay and Laverton, and also Merrylands in western Sydney. Bev's skills, generosity of spirit and readiness to embrace fresh ideas in Church teaching and practice have born fruit in her apostolate. Her fortitude, steadfastness and wholehearted commitment have always been in evidence and have enabled her to face inevitable challenges with courage and determination.

In response to God's Spirit, Gail was called upon to take up further Leadership roles in our Congregation – as Provincial and then Superior General – later as Sector Leader and Sector Bursar. As we know, these roles necessitated much travel for Gail and required her to spend a number of years in Rome. During this time, Gail's ability to listen, her wisdom, insight, and deep prayerfulness came to be appreciated across the whole of our Congregation. Her capacity to articulate with clarity and depth, the heart of our Marist charism and spirituality remains an invaluable gift for us, her Sisters – and for the wider Marist family. It was not surprising that, upon her return to Australia, Gail embarked upon the ministry of Spiritual Direction, and she continues to companion others today as they seek to follow God's ways.

Over the years Gail and Bev have both embraced opportunities for study and enrichment. As women of kindness and compassion, they have offered support and spiritual care to people in need, especially those suffering distress and isolation – Bev particularly in rural situations and aged care environments; Gail through outreach to the marginalized, including women in Prison, and Refugees/Asylum Seekers.

While living full and active lives, Gail and Bev also love to relax, unwind and have fun. Spending time with family and friends is a priority for each of them and we are delighted that family members can be with them both today to celebrate their Golden Jubilee. Gail's family will appreciate, as do we, how much Gail enjoys sipping a strong cup of tea, or savoring a glass of good red wine, while catching up on the latest news or the results of the Cricket, Tennis or Rugby League, in which she has particular interest through the Tipping Competition. It will be no surprise to Bev's family that we are all aware how much energy she spends when her AFL team – Hawthorn – are in action. Bev simply can't sit still! She is a very active, vocal supporter and all her other interests and accomplishments, such as baking, quilting and craft work, simply have to wait if Hawthorn is on the field.

Gail and Bev – you have lived, loved, suffered and celebrated life over these past 50 years. You have enriched us, challenged us, and journeyed with us in times of joy and sorrow. The gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit remain very evident in your lives and we thank God with you and for you. May you continue to live with the generosity, goodness, kindness and love that has characterized each step of your Marist journey over these past 50 years. Congratulations Gail and Bev!

Julie Brand SM – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019