

MEDIA RELEASE

Sister Margaret Cleary of the Sisters of Saint Joseph awarded Order of Australia Medal in Queen's Birthday Honours

The Sisters of Saint Joseph are delighted to announce that Sister Margaret Cleary has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2020 For Service to the Catholic Church of Australia.

Sister Margaret has been a part of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph for over 57 years, having joined the Congregation in January 1963 and being professed in 1966. Having initially trained in education and working ministering as a primary school teacher, Sister Margaret has a natural passion for education and pastoral care and collaborating with Staff, Students, Families and Parishioners.

Sister Margaret went on to continue her work in education across a variety of parishes and dioceses in Queensland. She was Principal in Millmerran, Mundingburra – Townsville, Upper Mount Gravatt, Cloncurry, St. Peter's Caboolture.

Following her teaching days, Sister Margaret worked diligently as a Provincial Councillor in Queensland before becoming a Congregational Financial (Bursar) Administrator between 2008 – 2013.

"I am honoured and humbled to receive the Order of Australia Medal," said Sister Margaret.

"In accepting this Award, I acknowledge and am inspired by the many women including our Founders, St. Mary MacKillop, with Fr. Julian Tenison Woods, our Josephite Sisters, those of all Religious Congregations and our indigenous sisters and brothers who have and are walking with and serving the people of the church and broader community through education and pastoral care. We aim to be attentive to the needs of all with whom we engage especially the poor and vulnerable as together in the Gospel of Today, 'face the crises affecting people, other species and Earth itself'.

"I have always wanted to be of service to the wider community and enjoy being able to contribute to the many Ministries' that the Sisters of Saint Joseph are involved in."

"Mary MacKillop has been and is, such a wonderful inspiration of living life to the full, embracing as blessings, the joys, challenges and sorrows in life with extra-ordinary faith and trust in her 'good' God, whose love for all was shown in her love, openness, courage, inclusivity and deep respect for every person regardless of creed, culture or background.

Margaret Cleary rsj was born in The Fortitude Valley in Brisbane, Queensland to James and Margaret and is the eldest of siblings, Maureen, Jim and Kathy.

Amongst her numerous achievements, in 2013, Sister Margaret was elected as the Regional Leader for the CentreWest region (South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory, Timor-Leste and served her six-year term until quite recently on 19 March, 2020. Margaret has served as a Member and Director on many Boards including College Boards in Brisbane and Adelaide; Aged Care Boards in Brisbane and Adelaide; Archdiocesan Development Fund in Brisbane; Mary MacKillop Today (Ethica Accessories) in Sydney, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide Charitable Trust.



Note for Editors

The Sisters of Saint Joseph minister throughout Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Peru, East Timor, Scotland and Brazil. The Congregation was founded in Penola, South Australia in 1866 by Mary MacKillop and English priest Reverend Julian E Tenison Woods. The Sisters of Saint Joseph have Ministries that support prisoner welfare, people living with disability, anti-trafficking and slavery programs, refugees, schools and young people, and indigenous people, amongst other areas.

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