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MEDIA RELEASE

Sisters Celebrate Diamond Jubilee - 60 Years of Religious Life

Over 30 Sisters of Saint Joseph from across the Congregation celebrated their Diamond Jubilee in January marking 60 years since their first profession. Twenty-one of the Jubilarians were able to gather and acknowledge the event at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney where they also celebrated with fellow Sisters, family and friends.

Those Sisters who were not able to attend were remembered, particularly the 12 Sisters from this profession group now resting with God.

Congregational Leader, Sister Monica Cavanagh, welcomed the Jubilarians, Sisters and guests to the Diamond Jubilee celebration.

“Sixty years ago these Sisters embarked on a journey... a journey with the divine spark of God’s love which led them into the midst of God’s people,” said Sr Monica.

“These Sisters have lived the spirit and charism entrusted to the Congregation by Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods. They have done it with commitment, generosity and faithfulness. We honour them for indeed God has done great things in them and it fills us with joy.”

Jubilarian, Sister Eileen Lenihan who moved from Ireland to Australia in 1959 to study and become a Sister of Saint Joseph, remembers feeling inspired by the mission and ministries of the Josephites from an early age.

“Like those Sisters, I wanted to do something spectacular and significant with my life,” says Sister Eileen. “I would read about the Sisters of Saint Joseph teaching children in Australia and I thought that is what I would like to do.”

After being professed in 1963, Eileen completed teacher training and was sent to work in schools in Western Australia, then with the Catholic Education Office, the University of Notre Dame Australia where she prepared student teachers for working in Catholic education, and numerous roles in Australia and Ireland.

“Looking back at 60 years – my initial aspiration to come to Australia to teach in rural areas shaped how I perceive life,” says Sr Eileen. “I have a great appreciation of First Nations people, the experience of people being landless, a sense of justice and injustice in our society. My focus now is to protect our planet, and promote ways to reduce our environmental impact. But it all goes back to that desire to reach out to young people in need.”

Chief celebrant, Reverend Kevin Dance cp and brother to Jubilarian Sister Jill Dance, congratulated the Jubilarians on their vowed commitment. The Jubilarians were invited to renew their vows by Sister Monica, and their renewed commitment was met with applause from the Congregation.

Photo captions below:

Captions:

Pic 1: Diamond Jubilarians celebrating 60 years at Mary MacKillop Chapel in North Sydney.



Pic 2: Sister Eileen Lenihan



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