



Sisters of Saint Joseph
of the Sacred Heart

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MEDIA RELEASE

Sisters Celebrate Golden and Diamond Jubilees

Twenty-four Sisters of Saint Joseph from across the Congregation have celebrated their Golden and Diamond Jubilees marking 50 years and 60 years since their first profession. They were able to gather and acknowledge the event at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney where they celebrated with other Sisters, family and friends.

Congregational Leader, Sister Monica Cavanagh, welcomed the Jubilarians, Sisters and guests to the Golden and Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The Jubilarians were invited to renew their vows by Sister Monica, and their renewed commitment was met with applause from the Congregation.

“Fifty and 60 years ago these Sisters embarked on a journey,” says Sr Monica. “Like St Joseph our patron, they took risks, travelling to unfamiliar places of mission, sometimes to unknown borders to serve the most vulnerable in our world. They have remained ever faithful to the Gospel call in the Josephite way.

“Their commitment to mission entrusted to us as Josephites has taken them across the highways and byways of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and at times beyond, to serve the needs of God’s people. Between them they have educated thousands of children, extended hands of welcome in various pastoral settings, worked alongside our Indigenous brothers and sisters, worked as advocates for justice and served in leadership roles in the Congregation.

“Many have lived in rural parishes and communities where their presence and acts of kindness have been a source of relieving suffering and bringing hope where they have offered a word of hope, a listening heart, a compassionate presence. They have been the hands and feet of God’s love in this world. We congratulate them – we express our appreciation for them – our Golden and Diamond Jubilarians.”

Diamond Jubilarian, Sister Lyndall Brown rsj, feels an overwhelming sense of gratitude for her 60-year journey.

“I have been so blessed,” says Sister Lyndall. “I have had many opportunities for personal nourishment throughout my Josephite life which has enabled me to walk alongside others on their life journey. Underpinning my life has been the quest for the Sacred and a desire to empower others to live their life more fully and freely.”

Sister Lyndall began her Josephite journey as a teacher and principal of schools across Aotearoa New Zealand, which she loved, but like many Sisters in her profession group her ministry has changed and evolved over time.

“Almost 30 years ago, I was given the opportunity to study at the Institute of Spiritual Leadership in Chicago which offered a training in Spiritual Accompaniment with the emphasis on the interface of spirituality and psychology. This opened for me a rich experience of walking with others in retreat work and accompaniment and offering workshops on many aspects of personal development.

“My passion for spirituality has deepened my life considerably and more recently has been influenced by an appreciation of the Universe Story, the theology and challenge of *Laudato Si’* and poetry. These days I offer online reflection days on many of these topics and am often surprised how these opportunities are appreciated especially by those in the wisdom years. I feel gifted in my Josephite life.”

Golden Jubilarian Sister Marion Gambin rsj was inspired to live a religious life by the Josephite Sisters who visited her secondary school in the early 1970s.

“The ‘motor mission’ Sisters came to my school where they taught scripture and that’s when I first connected with the Sisters,” says Sister Marion. “In my senior school years we used to go away on retreats and weekends for young people – it was on one of those retreats that I made the decision to become a Josephite.

“I was inspired by the Sisters because of their outward looking focus in living a religious life. It was all about being with the people and in a way that was very earthy, walking with people in need, and living the Gospel with the people – hands on. That is what attracted me to think that this could be my life – and in such a joyful way.”

Sister Marion also began her Josephite journey in education, teaching and working as a principal at regional and Sydney schools for 25 years. Roles in Congregational leadership followed which saw Sister Marion travelling across Australia and visiting Josephite communities globally.

“This was an amazing time because it broadened my perspective of the Congregation, seeing how the Josephite charism was being lived in different countries and contexts.”

In 2020 Sister Marion joined the facilitation team for the Australian Plenary Council and in 2022 became a member of the Mission Formation team for [Catholic Mission](#) based in Sydney. One day a week she volunteers at the [House of Welcome](#) in Granville working with a team of volunteers who assist refugees with gaining employment and is a member of the [Josephite Justice Network](#).

“I’m just so grateful for all the opportunities I have received in 50 years. I never would have dreamt when I started that I would have the kind of experiences I have had. It’s about the people... people I’ve lived with in community and those I have worked with alongside and hopefully making some difference out there in the world.”

Those Sisters who were not able to attend the Jubilees were remembered, particularly the 14 Sisters from the Diamond Jubilee profession group now resting with God.

Captions

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



Pic 2: Golden Jubilarians celebrating 50 years at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney.



Pic 3: Sister Marion Gambin rsj (left) and Sister Lyndall Brown rsj



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