

Sr Felicitas Galvin

Born in Grenfell, NSW, 30.10.1921, Sister Felicitas (who liked to be called Felice) was baptised Margaret Nancy Galvin. Her parents, John and Annie Galvin had fifteen children, seven girls and eight boys. Margaret was their sixth child.

Margaret was raised on the family farm at Grenfell and was educated at the local Catholic School conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. Two of her siblings joined the Mercy Sisters. After leaving school, Margaret worked for three or four years assisting elderly people in their homes doing messages etc.

Margaret's first contact with the Little Company of Mary was through her aunt, Sr. Joan Galvin, who was well known throughout Sydney for her home nursing and visiting the poor.

In 1941 Margaret Galvin entered the Little Company of Mary and adopted the name Sr Felicitas. She trained in General Nursing at Lewisham Hospital and worked throughout the hospital spending most of her time in the Women's Medical Ward.

Felice also nursed in Wagga Wagga and in the early 1960's took up residence at a property named *Overdale*, which was bequeathed to the Little Company of Mary. No one had lived in the house for several years, so Sister Felicitas together with her another LCM companion spent much time and effort in making the old home spick and span again. When all was ready, it was re-opened as a retreat house. *Overdale* became well known in the region as a place to relax and regain one's inner strength.

In 1992, Felice was transferred to Somerset, Nth. Tasmania, where the LCM Sisters were involved in district nursing. Somerset was Felice's home for fifteen years. It was there she celebrated her Golden and later Diamond Jubilees. Felice's quiet gentle manner and dry wit endeared her to all she met. She had a very special rapport with the people of Nth Tasmania, who presented her with a special plaque on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee.

Earlier in life, Felice enjoyed playing tennis and later gardening particularly growing stocks, snapdragons and carnations. She also liked crocheting and knitting. Felice also told me that housework brought her a sense of fulfilment because 'when you are finished you can see what you have done'. Being a country girl, Felice loved animals. She took special interest in the horses, grazing outside her window at Somerset, but her real focus of attention in the animal world was cats particularly *Felix*, who was treated as one of the family.

Over the last few years, Felice needed to be cared for at home. Gradually as she became frailer she was assessed as requiring full time care. Felice chose to come to Wagga Wagga to enable her large family to visit her more frequently than was possible when she lived in Tasmania. She was admitted to the Mary Potter Nursing Home 3.11.2007. Felice settled in remarkably well. She joined in all the activities offered and even surprised herself at her painting ability. She took delight in visits from her family. Felice endeared herself to all the staff. She died peacefully in the presence of her family and LCM Sisters, 8.8.2010 having lived to the full her motto *Serve the Lord with Gladness*.

Maybe, for such an unassuming woman, Felice would have a wry comment to St Peter that an Archbishop, Bishop, and two priests celebrated her farewell Mass.

Carmel Byrne LCM
on behalf of the Wagga Wagga Community