

## Sister Mel Kennedy LCM

Thank you for being present with us today to farewell Sr Mel Kennedy. We especially want to thank the Nazareth Sisters, Elaine and the Hospital wing staff for their wonderful care of Mel over the last 2 and a half years.

Kathleen Anne Kennedy was born in Victoria over 89 years ago; she was one of 3 children, 2 girls and a boy who died as a young child. Kathleen's father died when she was aged 7; they had lived on a farm in the country but after their father's death the 2 girls moved to live with an aunt as it was necessary for their mother to find employment in the city. Kathleen's sister Joan predeceased her by 10 years.

Following her secondary education Kathleen worked as a shorthand typist in an office in Melbourne for 4 years when she left to enter the Little Company of Mary Novitiate in Lewisham Sydney. She received the habit in 1941 and was given the name of Sister Mel. After her Final Profession and completion of general nursing training Mel was transferred with Sister Rosarii Butler to New Zealand in 1947.

Their arrival in NZ was more dramatic than they could have imagined. It had been a rough voyage and the night before the Wanganella was due to berth in Wellington there was a farewell to the captain who had been on the Australia/NZ run for many years. The ship was to enter Wellington harbour in the morning; it in fact was shipwrecked on Barrett's Reef outside the harbour the night before. Passengers were ordered to don life jackets and 'to your station make haste' Mel recalled how she left the ship via a rope ladder and *jumped trustingly into the arms of a sailor* and so onto the safety of a tug boat! clad in her long black habit! 2 Nazareth Sisters, the Apostolic Delegate and several priests were also Wanganella passengers and shared the same memorable experience.

Mel has lived and ministered in NZ for 63 years; she enjoyed visits to her family in Australia from time to time but due to ill health has been unable to visit for some years. She has lived in LCM communities in Christchurch, Wellington, Hawera and Tonga. Always a very prayerful, gentle LCM Mel was a great nurse and never spared herself in here efforts to make sure her patients were comfortable and they loved her. It was a well known fact that if any of us were late going off duty at night Mel would always be coming after us! While in Christchurch Mel did her midwifery training at St Helens Hospital and graduated with honours; she completed a Pastoral Care Course in Sydney and enjoyed a short time relieving in Tonga. Mel enjoyed playing cards, her main hobbies were sewing and knitting and she always gave great attention to detail and completed everything perfectly.

Mel's motto was: "My heart was made for thee my God" and she took her motto seriously. It was obvious throughout Mel's life that God was her focus and this was demonstrated by her fidelity to personal prayer and to the LCM mission of prayer and care for the suffering and dying of the world.

Thank you Mel for your example of faithfulness, for a life well lived in the spirit of Mary and according to our LCM founding charism. Your heart was indeed made for your God.

To Mel's nieces, nephews and step sister in Australia who sadly are unable to be with us today we extend our prayerful sympathy and love.

May Sister Mel now rest in peace.