



Sisters of Saint Joseph  
*of the Sacred Heart*

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Celebrating 70, 75 and 80 Years of Religious Life

Sisters of Saint Joseph from across Australia, in Ireland and in Aotearoa New Zealand recently celebrated their Tanzanite (80 years), Tourmaline (75 years) and Platinum (70 years) Jubilees of Religious Profession.

Seven Jubilarians from this group of 21 Sisters gathered at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney where they were welcomed by Sisters of Saint Joseph Congregational Leader, Sr Monica Cavanagh, fellow Sisters, family and friends. The Most Reverend Terry Brady presided at the Mass and congratulated the Jubilarians on their vowed commitment.

This amazing group of Sisters shared and reflected on their significant years of service in so many ministries - education, social justice, parish pastoral care, religious leadership, healthcare, chaplaincy, working with rural and regional communities across Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Ireland, Peru and Timor-Leste.

Those Sisters who were not able to attend, and the Sisters from the profession groups now resting with God, were remembered in prayer and story.

“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,” said Sr Monica.

Platinum Jubilarian, Sister Josephine Mitchell, was a 20-year-old from Sydney when she joined the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

“I attended St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School in Belmore so as a family we were deeply connected to the Sisters of Saint Joseph,” says Sr Josephine. “I always had a strong faith and decided at a young age that I could do more with my life as a Josephite.”

After being professed in early 1954, Sr Josephine’s first teaching post was in the small community of Burringbar in the top eastern corner of NSW. After seven years at Burringbar and two at Woodburn, Sr Josephine was invited to attend university and train as secondary school teacher.

“After graduating, I started teaching in a secondary school and taught the young postulants at St Joseph’s in Hunters Hill. I then worked at the teacher training college in North Sydney. The college had grown from the Josephite demonstration school and was now becoming part of the newly formed Catholic College of Education, which then became the Australian Catholic University.

“Following my years lecturing at the Catholic College of Education and spending 12 years in Administration in the Josephite Congregation, I had the great privilege of establishing in 1994 the Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies in Timor-Leste for the development of literacy and teacher education. This work is now carried out by [Mary MacKillop Today](#).”

Sr Josephine continues her support for literacy and health services in Timor-Leste and is a member of the [Josephite Justice Network](#).

“Each step of my journey as a Josephite has been a challenge and a wonderful experience.”

The Jubilarians were invited to renew their vows by Sister Monica, and their renewed commitment was met with applause from the Congregation.



**Caption:** *Jubilarians gather at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney*



**Caption:** *Sr Josephine Mitchell*

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