

THE RETIREMENT OF SR PAT AND SR MARGARET

We would like to place on record the valuable contribution to the community made by Sr Pat O'Brien and Sr Margaret Kelly in their positions as the Sisters of Mercy in Apollo Bay. We thank them for their friendly service and the pleasure of their company.

Sr Patricia O'Brien

Sr Pat, as she is known to all in Apollo Bay, was born and raised in the western district of Victoria. She joined the Sisters of Mercy and her early career was as a teacher at various Catholic Schools in the area and as the Principal of St Alipius Parish School at Ballarat East. Sr Pat went on to work as a teacher in western Queensland and northern NSW with Aboriginal communities and became a parish assistant in Darwin NT.



L-R: Sr Margaret Kelly and Sr Pat O'Brien

She arrived in Apollo Bay late 1999 as a Parish Assistant, with duties such as assisting the Parish Priest at Star of the Sea Catholic Church with the preparation for weekly Masses, the introduction of Christianity to schoolchildren and their preparation with their parents for Baptism and Communion. The Star of the Sea Parish covers Lavers Hill, Apollo Bay, Lorne and Aireys Inlet to which she has travelled and made a welcome contribution.

Apart from her professional duties as a Sister of Mercy, Sr Pat has consistently worked as a volunteer in a variety of community organisations in Apollo Bay and the surrounding district. A truly remarkable effort for a person who arrived here in her 70's and is still active in her endeavours in her 80's. She and Sr Margaret ran the Star of the Sea, Holiday House which has provided a holiday for members of the Sisters of Mercy and for many people from Ballarat and other parishes. Sr Pat took an active role in the administration and selection process of people in need of assistance for the low cost accommodation provided by the Lions Village in Apollo Bay. She also assisted in the task of cleaning up the premises when they were vacated.

She was leader and an active member of the St Vincent De Paul Society in Apollo Bay, who help a great number of people with their needs for food, accommodation, clothing and furniture. She visited and comforted the sick and aged at Otway Health Hostel and in homes around Apollo Bay. She also participated in the delivery of Meals on Wheels prepared by Otway Health to those who needed such assistance.

Sr Pat has been prominent in comforting members of bereaved families after the loss of a loved one, again travelling wherever necessary. Her care and comfort has extended to all members of the community not just the parishioners.

She has been tireless in promoting the interests of Aborigines and refugees to all and makes herself available for charity fund raising events and street stalls and acted as a steward at the Apollo Bay Agricultural Show. In her leisure

time she is a keen golfer and member of Apollo Bay Golf Club, a quilter and a member of an Apollo Bay Patchwork Group.

We will miss her smile and the love and care that she has extended to all in the community of Apollo Bay and district. We wish her a long and happy retirement.

Sr Margaret Kelly

Sr Margaret was born and raised on a farm at Watchugga in Victoria's Mallee Region. She came with the ethic for hard work and thrift known to those who grow up in this area and which was evident in her work. Her early life after joining the Sisters of Mercy was spent in teaching in both Primary and Secondary schools in and around the Ballarat and Charlton areas over a period of twenty-five years.

Sr Margaret arrived in Apollo Bay in 1987 to administer and operate the Star of the Sea Convent Holiday House as mentioned earlier with Sr Pat.

Apart from her professional duties Sr Margaret has given unstintingly of her goods, time and skills to the people of Apollo Bay, and to all who have knocked at her door. A testimony to this is that you may ask anyone resident in this area. "Who is Sr Margaret? Where do I find her?" After a glowing description of her charity and compassion you will be directed to her door.

For the twenty-five years in Apollo Bay Sr Margaret has been the listening ear for runaways, the victims of domestic disputes, the helpless, the poor, the disabled, the marginalised, the aged, the sick and the bereaved. She has brought to them peace and serenity with compassion, and practical common sense solutions, and fulfilled their needs where possible in a non-judgmental manner.

She has been a consistent Volunteer for Meals on Wheels at Otway Health, delivering hot meals and offering comfort. She visits and comforts the sick and aged. Sr Margaret was instrumental in introducing Soft Tennis in the late 1990's, a pastime suitable for Senior Citizens and the less robustly competitive in our community now played at the Youth Club twice weekly.

Over the years she has manned countless street stalls, collected for a variety of charities and community needs. The value that the community holds her in was evident by the number of people from all walks of life who attended her 70th birthday celebration a few years ago.

Her contribution to the life of Apollo Bay has been very much appreciated by all and we are pleased that she has decided to stay here in her retirement.

Ted Stuckey – Apollo Bay News