

Sr Margaret Sculley ibvm, highly respected Mary's Mount Community Leader and adored affiliate of Loreto College Ballarat, ended her term as Community Leader in Ballarat at the end of last year. Sr Marg has moved to Melbourne to take up her next appointment.

In an interview conducted by Loreto students, Caitlin Hetherington and Madolyn Canny, Sr Marg speaks candidly about her life and the special place that Ballarat holds in her heart.

Sr Marg, have you lived in Ballarat your entire life?

"I was born in Buninyong and moved to Redan when I was six years old. In 1958 I went to Sydney to enter the convent and came back to Ballarat in 1989. My work has taken me many places... "

Margaret Sculley was educated at St Aloysius Primary School, Redan and attended Commercial College before working for three years in the office at David Pratt and Sons, Ballarat. Margaret followed her heart in 1958 to become a young Loreto novice at Normanhurst, Sydney and has

since taught Home Economics, English and Religion at Mary's Mount, Loreto Normanhurst, Loreto Kirribilli, Loreto Claremont, Loreto Nedlands, Loreto Thornlie, Blackburn, Loreto Coorparoo and Loreto Toorak.

Sr Marg was Principal of All Saint's Primary School in Portland, Victoria between 1981 and 1988 and was Principal of St Aloysius' Primary School, Redan from 1989 to 1995.

What drew you to becoming a Loreto Sister? How old were you?

"Lots of things..... I grew up in a family home where prayer and faith were lived out every day. Faith filled our house, prayer and God were part of the fabric of our home. Both my parents were Catholic... we had strong Catholic faith on both sides of the family...we had a family Rosary every night, if someone visited, they simply joined us."

"I was taught by the Loreto Sisters at school and was part of a Catholic social group for the three years I worked in the office ...that group really increased my faith. I wanted to "enter" when I was just sixteen years of age...however, my parents advised that I should wait until I was twenty-one. This was good advice!"

Sr Marg recites a lovely story about the day she left for Sydney with her friend Cynthia Wright. On Monday, 10 February 1958 the pair excitedly arrived at the Ballarat Railway Station and enjoyed a celebratory morning tea with the many



With Great Freedom

Sr Margaret Sculley (ibvm)

"I will do this with great freedom, or I won't do it at all"
- Mary Ward

friends and family who had gathered to wave them off. They stood in the door of the train and posed for a photograph as they waved goodbye....Fifty years later, same time and same day, Sr Marg and her dear friend Sr Cynthia stood in the door of the train for a photograph and enjoyed a delightful morning tea once again...this time with all the Loreto Ballarat Sisters.

Before leaving for Sydney, at twenty years of age, Margaret Sculley was torn between a career of Faith in nursing or teaching. She was actually on her way to visit the Mother Superior at St John of God Hospital about nursing when she hopped off her bike and stopped to see Mother Lucy at Loreto College. Mother Lucy warmly invited Margaret in and gave her some of her favourite red cordial and raspberry jam biscuits, whilst listening intently to her turmoil. It was Mother Lucy who finally said to her, "Well if you are going to be a nun, you are going to do it here with us!

For Sr Marg, it was never too much about a choice of nursing or teaching...it was about giving a life of service to God. When professed, the Provincial of the time selected which area you would teach and Sr Marg was chosen to teach Home Economics, Religion and English. Her first appointment was to Loreto Claremont in Perth, where she was in charge of seventy boarders.



Can you share the joys and the challenges in your life as a Loreto Sister?

"The joys are many and varied....from the places I have worked and the communities that I have belonged, to the variety of jobs I have performed along the way. I have made many life-long friends along the way, many more friends when my work became parish based, rather than Institute based. My parish work opened me up to a whole new world of wonderful friends."

"Challenges were often when asked to do jobs that I did not feel capable of - however, I always managed to do them... and the fact that you never knew where you might be sent next. We would receive a little brown envelope called a "brownie" and inside would be your next post. You could be comfortable and cosy....and you would have to up and go. However, looking back, I learned that every new place was an opportunity for "growth" and that there is always an outcome, ... it may not be what you most expect!"

Sr Marg shared a poignant memory of an outcome that she did not expect. After a successful and very comfortable period in Perth, she received the call that she would be returning to Victoria to a school in Portland. She had been away for twenty-four years and saw this as a great challenge because she was very happy in Perth. However, on her arrival back in Victoria in 1981, she noted how unwell her aging father appeared. His health declined rapidly and sadly, he passed away three months after her return to Ballarat. Sr Marg declared she remains eternally grateful that this change brought her home to her family, at that point in time.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? Can you tell us about your favourite footy team?

"I don't have a lot of spare time....in saying that, I believe it is bad management to not have spare time! It is important to have a balance in your life."

Sr Marg enjoys an early morning walk every day, except Sundays, and enjoys quiet times listening to classical music and the company of friends. However, with a glint in her eye, she also shares her love of the Geelong Football Club and the Spring Racing Carnival!

The Cats have given her great pleasure for as long as she can remember - and those that can remember, will recall the Loreto Convent being decorated in Cats colours the year they won the Grand Final.

What challenges do you think the Loreto Sisters will face in the future?

"There are fewer young people in Australia interested in what we (Sisters) are doing now. However, in saying that, there are more Loreto Girls out there than ever before. Our Loreto Girls are leaving our schools and they are "doing good" themselves!"

Sr Marg states that a religious life was never meant for the masses and that this is a time in the Church, where lay people are now doing what the Sisters may have done in the past. She is proud of the work that people like Ms Potter, Principal of Loreto College Ballarat, are doing in our schools and can see that our Loreto Schools are stronger than ever before. Whilst growth may be slowing in Australia for the Sisters, there is significant growth in other parts of the world, such as Vietnam, Kenya and Peru.

What are you most proud of?

"I have been graced to be able to stay the distance! I have always tried to do my best at whatever I had to do. I feel privileged and grateful to have been in positions where I have had the ability to create change".

Sr Marg was instrumental in the concept and building of the Loreto Archives Centre in Ballarat and the concept of the Mary's Mount Centre. She has maintained a wondrous legacy of jobs well done, and..."upon which others can build". Appropriately testament to her favourite quote by Mother Gonzaga Barry.

Loreto Province Roles:

Community Leader, Community Bursar, Provincial Consultor

Mary's Mount Community Leader 2004 - 2009, 2013 - 2016

Loreto College Ballarat roles:

School Council - 2004 - 2009

Council Review Committee - 2004 - 2009

Finance Committee - 2006 – 2009

Development (Marketing, Community Relations and Fundraising) Committee - 2006, 2007 (Chair), 2008 (Chair), 2009 (Chair), 2013 - 2016

Interview conducted by Caitlin Hetherington and Madolyn Canny

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