

The Longest Serving LCM Sister Celebrates 103rd Birthday at Calvary Ryde

31 March 2017

On 23rd of March Sister Eymard McNamara LCM celebrated her 103rd birthday at a celebration with family, friends and her LCM community at Calvary Ryde Retirement Community. Sister Eymard was surrounded by four generations of her family who had travelled from Brisbane to be with her for the special occasion.

Sister Eymard spoke of her life as a humble life, being thankful for all that has been given to her over the years. Her family professed how much of an important part of their lives she is and how much love they have for her.

Sister Eymard grew up on a sheep station in the Adelaide Hills which was managed by her parents, Jane and John, alongside her twin brothers Richard and John. At 9 years of age they moved to Yarcowie to another sheep station where she continued her schooling.

Sister Eymard left school at 15 to help at the sheep station. At the age of 17, after talking to a local priest, Sister Eymard made the decision to join the Sisters of Little Company of Mary so that she could train as a nurse and as a religious sister.

"I started my training at Lewisham Hospital, Sydney, 6 weeks before the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened. This year marks its 85th anniversary", said Sister Eymard.

Sister Eymard is currently the longest serving Sister in the Little Company of Mary Congregation worldwide. She looks back on a nursing career spanning over 56 years. Sister Eymard said "I wanted to become a nurse to care for the most vulnerable people".

Following 5 and a half years of nurse training at Lewisham hospital, she was posted to Christchurch, New Zealand for 6 years where she trained in midwifery. Sister Eymard spent a further 6 years in New Zealand in Wellington prior to returning to Australia.

On her return, Sr Eymard moved back to her home state of South Australia, to Adelaide where she worked for 25 years. During those years she was able to see her brothers and watch her family grow as nieces and nephews came along. Sister Eymard worked for a further 8 years in Wagga Wagga before returning to Lewisham for 3 years and a further 17 years in Adelaide.

At 89 Sister Eymard retired to Calvary Ryde Retirement Community and has been living at the Residential Aged Care Facility for the past 14 years. She is still very independent at age 103 and regularly makes her own bed and washes her own clothes.

Sister Eymard said "I am very lucky to live here. The staff are lovely, we have nice food and I get to go to mass regularly". Nowadays Sister Eymard solves crosswords, code breakers, reads detective stories and goes shopping.

When asked what her secret to reaching 103 years old Sister Eymard said "It's about perseverance. It's about knowing your limitations and getting on and doing the job anyway".

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