



Sr Margaret Graves RSM Sr of Mercy

Before entering the Sisters of Mercy at the age of 21, I earned my living for six years working at a few different jobs - as a doctor's receptionist, a domestic, and as a shop assistant.

It was my involvement in the Young Christian Workers Movement that helped to increase the knowledge of my faith and to deepen my personal spiritual life, as well as introducing me to working for justice. Eventually, reluctantly at first, I came to surrender to a conviction that God was calling me to something more. At that stage, I knew little about the different Religious Orders, so I asked to join the local Sisters of Mercy.

God's initial call has persisted through the years, in spite of the difficulties and disappointments which are part of every walk of life - even religious life! There have been some rewarding times too, such as: certain prayer retreats, my father's reception into the church just before his death, opportunities to share the lives of people of other cultures and faiths, and being part of the current gatherings of Mercy Sisters discussing the future of Mercy in our part of the world.

There have been many changes during my 47 years in the Sisters of Mercy - changes in society in general, in the Church, in Religious Life, and in my own life and ministry.

Initially, after training to be a primary school teacher, I taught in various Mercy schools, mainly around the Mackay area. Later, I became involved with adult Literacy-Numeracy students at TAFE and later on with newly-arrived refugees. This was a turning point in my life - leading me to retrain as an English Second Language teacher, to learn a new language, to travel to Indonesia, to study in Darwin, to teach English to overseas students, to tutor new migrants. It was a privilege to share the lives of many wonderful people from other cultures as they rose to the challenge of a new life in Australia, either permanently or temporarily. Working for justice has always been important in Mercy tradition and for many years has led me to become involved in various efforts for justice.

Health problems in recent years have taught me patience, deepened my prayer life, and made me more sensitive to others' pain. Presently, I find myself tutoring English and Indonesian languages, supporting women's groups in the parish and the region, visiting elderly people, and being involved in our City Council's celebrations of various multicultural events, e.g., National Harmony Day and National Refugee Week. I am full of hope that Religious Life will continue into the future, albeit in new places and new ways in answer to the needs of the times.

As the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, said

"We have ever confided largely in Divine Providence and shall continue to do so."

"The Poor need help today not next week"

