



Our Farewell to Woolwich

On this day 8th December 2018, the feast of the Immaculate Conception we Marist Sisters gather on Country on which members and Elders of the Walumatagal people and their forebears have been custodians for many centuries; Country on which Aboriginal people have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge and remember their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region together with the reverence and care with which they have tended this land.

We acknowledge and remember those who consequent to European settlement lived, loved, toiled, brought up families on this property. We recall in a particular way Mr John Usher who sold this property to our Congregation in 1908.

We acknowledge and remember the support, service and friendship shown us by the Marist Fathers from the beginnings till now. We particularly call to mind Fr Placide Huault sm, who located for us a property suitable for the establishment of a secondary school. We remember also parishioners Judge Heydon and Lettie Hazelton who generously gave financial assistance for its purchase.



We acknowledge and remember the many thousands of teachers, students and their families who have walked through the doors of the College since its beginning. They sought for young women an integrated education and formation to equip them to assume, in a Marist way, their place in the world.



We acknowledge and remember those who have worked for us in caring for this property, the buildings and gardens of our homes and the school. We think too of the doctors, nurses, carers, cooks, cleaners and other good people who have been so much part of Marian House since its beginning in 1979.

We acknowledge and seek God's and others' forgiveness for the times we have failed to care for creation in this place; for the times we have failed to love as we'd want to, and have said or done things that have hurt other people or each other; for the times when we have made poor decisions and have let others down. We pray for healing.

We acknowledge and thank God for the privilege it has been for us to live and be at the service of God's mission here at Woolwich and to care for this place for these 110 years. We thank God for all those who have been associated with us in any way over these years. We ask God's blessing on them all.

As we did when we gathered for the beautiful liturgy in February 2017, we give thanks for our Sisters who following our pioneers Melanie, Cyrille and Odilon have lived and ministered at Woolwich. In the spirit of Mary, they lived their joys and struggles and challenges of life with faith, courage, gratitude and incredible generosity. Their contribution to the Work of Mary, only fully known by God, has indeed been profound.

It is time now to hand over this property to the keeping of Sydney Catholic Schools and we ask God to guide and bless its future and all those who we trust will benefit from association with it.



Hymn: Holy Ground (John Michael Talbot)

***This is holy ground
We're standing on holy ground
For the Lord is present
And where He is holy
This is holy ground
We're standing on holy ground
For the Lord is present
And where He is, is holy***

These are holy hands
He's given us holy hands
He works through these hands
And so these hands are holy
These are holy hands
He's given us holy hands
He works through these hands
And so these hands are holy

Invitation to a time of quiet...

Philippians 3:8-14,16

I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ and be given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me. I can assure you my brothers, I am far from thinking that I have already won. All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus.

Meanwhile, let us go forward on the road that has brought us to where we are.



We pray: Holy and Gracious God,
As we take leave of this property, our home as Marist Sisters for 110 years,
we give You thanks for all the blessings You have bestowed upon us.

On this day we are reminded of your enduring faithfulness.
You have dried our tears, heard our laughter, cheered our successes and loved us
through our failures.
You have been with us and for us, nourishing our faith, strengthening our hope,
deepening our love.

Your hand in ours continues to lead us forward.
May your love, your grace, wisdom, compassion and mercy go with us into our
futures.
Enable us, in the way of your Mother, to embrace with courage the paths yet
untrodden. With your Spirit supporting us, may we be your hands and heart
wherever these paths take us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn: Pilgrim Companions

Daniel L. Schutte

***Drawn by a dream,
lured by a love,
pilgrim companions,
as friends on the journey
we come through the storm,
pass through the fire,
hungry yet hopeful,
sustained by the love of the Lord.***

Harken, o people, remember the
journey
that brought us through flood and
through fire.

For the God who is gracious
has seen how we hunger
and fed us with bread for our hearts.

Over and over we hunger for
someone
to feed us and fill our desire.
When the God of our longing
has courted and captured our hearts,
we will hunger no more.

Daring to dance in the shadow of
death,
willing to gamble a love for all time.