

14 Years of Chaplaincy Behind Bars



Through her ministry as chaplain at Long Bay men's prison, Sister Therese came to understand there are both light and dark places inside every one of us. At the age of 82 she prepares for retirement after 14 years of service and looks back on her time with fondness.

Sister Therese provided prisoners with a listening ear, without fear of judgement, giving them someone they can talk to and trust.

“The people had made terrible mistakes, and some had done evil things, but they have been judged and punished and now they need someone who will listen to them and treat them with the dignity they deserve.”

As prison Chaplain, Sister Therese provided a safe place for prisoners to tell their story. To talk about what they are going through and how their lives have changed as a consequence of their actions, to help them on their path to rehabilitation.

“There is always a spark of potential for good in everyone”

“A lot of people in prison experience feelings of loss through marriage and relationship breakdowns, and feelings of being forgotten by society, friends and family. Chaplains are the ones they can safely express their grief too.”

“I was told by a Corrective Services Officer that there is an unwritten law in gaols that religious women are deeply respected, and I did find that to be true. I experienced little acts of gentlemanly behaviour from men who have done horrific crimes on the ‘outside’ and that taught me there is always a spark of potential for good in everyone.”

In her retirement Sister Therese does not look for congratulations or glory. She is graciously humble when accepting praise for her work and is shy to admit her career has been anything extraordinary. She feels all the gratitude she needs just knowing she been there for so many in their time of need. Sister Therese now looks forward to relaxing and enjoying the fulfilment of a life well-lived under the loving care of the Marist Sisters.