



## **SR MARIE THERESE RANUM SM**

**16 May 1939-4 December 2023**

Unit of Aotearoa-New Zealand

Marie Therese was born 16 May 1939 in Matamata, the Waikato, followed by her baptism on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1939 in the town she grew up in, Putaruru. Marie Therese was the second child born to Colin and Margaret Ranum, the first being still born. The family grew to 4 girls and 2 boys, of whom Marie was the eldest. 4 girls and 2 boys. It was there that Marie Therese and her siblings attended St Mary's Primary School which was staffed by the Marist Sisters. Her secondary school education was as a boarder at Sacred Heart College in Hamilton with the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions finishing in 1956. Marie Therese then spent a few years helping out as a farm worker and domestic helper on her parents' farm.

Marie Therese entered the novitiate in 1961 at Merrylands, Australia and was professed as a Marist Sister in 1962 – as was the custom of the time she was given a new name of “Sr Marie Bede”!

Marie Therese was a quiet, humble person. It became obvious over the years that her way of living her religious life was on a deep level developing that Marist characteristic that we call “hidden and unknown” in its truest meaning. The best way to remember Marie Therese is to highlight some of those experiences which reflect the depth of her witness to others as ‘Marist.’ First and foremost, Marie Therese was a woman of faith. This was especially shown in her love of the Eucharist which she sought daily where possible.

Marie Therese had a deep love of her family and over the years she accumulated a number of family photo albums covering more than one generation and which she would share with us. Each photo was clearly identified. In September 1990-to September 1991, Marie Therese went home to care for her mother in Putaruru. Marie Therese also had a great love for her family of Marist Sisters. Whenever she came down from the North or up from the south, Marie Therese always made a point of visiting the sisters, especially those in care. She was also interested in happenings in different parts of the Congregation and about Sisters whom she had met and/or ministered with overseas.

Marie Therese was a woman of ‘generosity of spirit’ - if there was work to be done, she was there - be it in the garden, some sewing to be done, cleaning the house, volunteering for what was needed, meeting other people. Marie Therese was able to

put people at their ease: those she knew and those she didn't: after Mass on a Sunday, at the shops down the road, with parents in the school – this was done unobtrusively, without a fuss, not drawing attention to herself. It was her way of reaching out to others and making them “comfortable” in the way of Jeanne-Marie Chavoin.

Training as a teacher at Loreto Hall enabled Marie Therese to bring a number of talents to her ministry of education. Over the years she was a primary school teacher, a music teacher, a remedial teacher, an assistant principal, and a principal. After her school teaching involvement, her skills were used when asked to participate in the Diocesan Motor Mission with Sr Florence Mary based in Moerewa in the North. Theor mandate was to help children prepare for the sacraments of Holy Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation and to teach those who had little or no Catholic education. Marie Therese also spent many years in the Far North at Waitaruke at Hato Hohepa Primary School and Hostel among our Maori people where she was teacher, acting Principal and Principal, superior and bursar.

Although she appeared to be “shy” at times, Marie Therese was very courageous. When the call went out to the Congregation for volunteers for personnel for assist in Slavutich in the parish of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the Ukraine. When asked if she was interested, her response was, “*well I can't think of any reason to say “no”!* And off she went with two others. Her reflection was that *‘she thought she could be a support to those Sisters who could speak Russian, as she could not’*. She did tutor some young people in English. Besides the Ukraine, she also assisted at our general house community as a hospitality person in Rome. She was a welcoming and hospitable presence among us.

More recently Marie Therese's cancer returned, and she was moved to The Sisters of the Poor in Auckland where she was lovingly and professionally cared until she died on the morning of December 4<sup>th</sup>. In conclusion, she faithfully lived out who she was called to be.

As a Marist Sister she answered the  
*“...call to humility, poverty and simplicity, a love of work, the readiness to undertake various tasks, the integration of prayer and action, of a life of constant union with Jesus Christ.”* as expressed in our Constitutions No.3

**. Rest in Peace, Marie Therese!**

