Celebrating the life of

Venerable Mary Potter

2019

Continuing the Mission of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary
Welcome

We welcome you to our celebration of the life and legacy of Venerable Mary Potter, founder of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary.

As we begin our service, let us acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and Owners of the lands on which our service operates. We acknowledge that these peoples have walked upon and cared for these lands for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to this land and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Welcome to guests and dignitaries

We welcome our guests and dignitaries and we acknowledge everyone here present. You each bring a particular life experience, faith, cultural and spiritual tradition – all of which enriches the cultural tapestry of Calvary. We thank you for being with us today.
Opening Prayer

Lord, our God, source of all life, you reveal yourself in the depths of our being, drawing us all to share in your life and your love.

Make the doors of our hearts, our homes and communities wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship and narrow enough to shut out all envy, prejudice and pride. Amen

Reflection from Scripture

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reminds us that “You are like a light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl; instead it is put on the lampstand, where it gives light for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine before all, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven”. (Matthew 5:14-16)

It is our Calvary people who are our shining lights – the care and the service they provide shines a light into the dark places of people’s lives – illuminating, providing warmth and comfort.

Lighting the Mary Potter Candle

We light the Mary Potter Candle on occasions such as this to remind ourselves of the light of Love that is within each of us and never dies.
The charism we have inherited

In essence our Mission derives from the charism of the Little Company of Mary, offering us a way of seeing, being and acting in the world.

“This charism – to live out the self-giving love of Christ for humanity focuses all LCM ministries and facilities. Each facility is to give witness to the love of God for the whole of humanity, regardless of wealth, race, colour or creed. This is the fundamental reason for their existence, and cannot be given second place.”

Liz West LCM
The Charism of the LCM, 2005
Welcome to New Staff

Friends, this day we formally welcome you to Calvary. Those words we just read, the Spirit of Calvary, are central to what it means to be a part of Calvary. We ask you to participate with us in making certain that the Spirit of Calvary is at the centre of the care we provide.

You, like us, are called to demonstrate the values of Hospitality, Healing, Stewardship & Respect in all your undertakings, as part of the Mission and the culture you are being asked to shape and to live.

Response from New Staff

I have accepted the invitation to be part of this community and will endeavour to serve and promote what the Spirit of Calvary signifies in a spirit of trust and hope, demonstrating the values and the spirit of Venerable Mary Potter.
Standing on the Shoulders

I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me
I am stronger for their courage;
I am wiser for their words
I am lifted by their longing,
for a fair and brighter future
I am grateful for their vision, for their toiling on this earth.

We are standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before us
They are saints and they are humans, they are angels, they are friends.
We can see beyond the struggles and the troubles and the challenge
When we know that by our efforts things will be better in the end.

They lift me higher than I can ever fly
Carrying my burdens away
I imagine our world if they hadn't tried
We wouldn’t be here celebrating today

I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me
I am honoured by their passion for respect and dignity.
I will stand a little taller;
I will work a little longer
And my shoulders will be there to hold the ones who follow me.

Standing on the Shoulders by Joyce Johnson Rouse ©1995 Rouse House Music (ASCAP)

Used by permission. All rights reserved.

As recorded by Earth Mama® on HerStory and Love Large CDs available at www.earthmama.org
Mary Potter founded LCM to bring the healing ministry of Jesus to those who are vulnerable and dying. LCM Sister’s, your Mission of ‘Being for Others.’ is alive and well at Calvary Health Care Kogarah!

Compassionate care is provided until a patient’s last breath, then a viewing is held allowing the family to say a final goodbye. The nurses bathe and dress the deceased, pack the room and swap the clinical white hospital linen to a colourful quilt and a coloured pillowcase. This small change of linen creates the appearance of home.

As an act of humility and service, pastoral carers wash and iron the pillowcases themselves. While ironing each one, a prayer is said for the patient who will eventually rest their head on that pillowcase - may the patient experience serenity, may the patient know they are loved and may the patient experience a peaceful death. It is a small detail, but it makes a big difference.

Mary Ashton
Manager Pastoral Care Services
Calvary Health Care Kogarah
Over one intensive week, my family had the privilege of being supported by the incredible women from the Calvary Community Care Team as we cared for our dying mother.

Caring for our Mum at home seemed the perfect idea until we actually realized the complexities and emotional challenges this involved. Linda from the Central Palliative Care Service arranged for daily nursing visits to assist us with caring for Mum. When Calvary Care nurses came to the house we were delighted to have the Catholic connection, and the Mary Potter charism to assist us. However we could not have anticipated the incredible dedication of this small group of women to our Mum, and to us, over that intensive week.

It seems that the Community Care program is Mary Potter’s vision reframed for the 21st century.

In our experience, the Calvary Community Care team reflected Mary Potter’s desire to love those who are dying.

“I cannot but feel I have had a call from God to devote myself to help save souls in their last hour. I have been drawn so strongly to pray for the dying.”

Venerable Mary Potter

We experienced women who personified the Mary Potter’s call in our home through each nurse’s complete dedication to Mum and to us. Their presence, in person and on the phone, reflected Mary Potter’s desire to pray for the dying through the practical care of them and their loved ones. Every one of these wonderful women is living their own vocation to those who are dying, in the spirit of Mary Potter.
The conditions in which the Calvary Community Care team carry out their duties are a far cry from an organised, pristine, organisationally controllable hospice environment. Audrey, Lidia, Donna, Rosemary and Sarah, sat in the small kitchen or lounge room, surrounded by people who had come to see Mum, mostly family from interstate. People everywhere, they cleared a little space on the table in which to measure medication, write up notes, respond to questions, comments, or concerns. Their dedication to being with the family to support us to care for Mum, was integral to protecting the rights of Mum to a peaceful, pain-free death. Caring for our mother at home was a great privilege. It was also challenging and we sometimes felt unequal to the task. Even though we had different nurses the consistency of advice from each member of the Community Care Team was vital so we were not confused. All this takes time, more nursing time perhaps than in a hospice. My sense was that they often worked long hours with no one to hand over to if their shift finished while they were still preparing medications, so they kept going. They managed time well, but they gave more than those funding the program might realise.

Mum died with dignity. Respected, loved and pain-free surrounded by those who love her. It was ultimately a profound experience enabled by the Calvary Community Care Team and the Central Palliative Care Services. As I said to the nurses as Mum was close to a peaceful and pain-free death: Thank you is too small a word.

Calvary Community Care South Australia
Catherine Whewell
Leader: This day reminds us of the tradition in which we stand and the mission with which we are entrusted.

All: We recommit ourselves to each other, and to our work together in the service of Calvary: those we work with, our volunteers, and all the people who continue the mission of the Little Company of Mary in our services.

We commit ourselves to seek creative ways to live out the values of hospitality, healing, stewardship and respect throughout the course of our day-to-day activities.

We acknowledge the human capacity to transcend difficulties, to display compassion, exercise sensitivity, to strive for understanding and to support and collaborate with each other.

---

**The Legacy of Mary Potter**

“The light of the sun brightens everything it falls upon, just as the light of God’s love falling upon us will brighten our days and enable us to live lives of purest love.”

*Brides of Christ p58*
A Blessing

For those who work in the ministry of healthcare.

Good and gracious God, you are the source of all healing. In you we share in this wonderful work we call “caring”.

Today, we honour not only those who give direct care to those in our services, but all in this community who care for each other.

We celebrate the way your Spirit moves through each of us, revealing your love through a healing touch, a compassionate act or a consoling word.

Bless all who live and work in this place and strengthen them so they may continue to be your compassionate presence to others. In particular, bless those in our care and their families who need to feel that you are with them.

May we never forget that your love works through all of us.

We ask all of this in the power of your, Holy Name.

Amen
142nd Anniversary of the Little Company of Mary

Tuesday 2 July 2019 marked the 142nd anniversary since the first Little Company of Mary community was established by Venerable Mary Potter at Hyson Green in Nottingham, England 1877. On 4 November 2019, we mark 134 years since the first six Sisters arrived in Australia on the SS Liguria.

Venerable Mary Potter had a vision for that Calvary spirit to live through the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary and through what she called, the Greater Company of Mary – and that includes all of us who share this journey of spirit and service across the Calvary organisation in retirement communities, hospitals, and community care.

“My heart feels more for the friendless, than even for the loved poor. The poor are generally not friendless, but see the numbers of frail women who have no home, orphans or worse, who battle on alone. This is not in the Providence of God. He has designed otherwise.”

Venerable Mary Potter