

Homily Fr Webster

(homily that includes tribute to Nin's work in the Church)

In the beautiful words of Paul in his letter to the community in Philippi, we are reminded that we are to acknowledge where we have been, and what we have shared, but to constantly move on towards the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. He continues, as we have heard, that goal, our aim in life, is to achieve citizenship in heaven who will transform our earthly bodies into the body of his glory, making all things subject to himself.

Today, as we gather in this holy place in Macedon, part of the wider parish of Gisborne, we gather in a place where Nin had indeed been aware of the call, and the imperative to make the most of the life she shared with those who make this their community home. Together with Robert and their family, the Gisborne and Macedon community was indeed that place that was the place where life was lived, loved shared, and community enhanced by their presence.

Deep faith is one that is lived as a prayer. It does not have to be extroverted in terms of hard-lined evangelism. For the community of Antioch, the first to be known as Christians, it was the extroverted action of love and service that drew attention to their presence in the community and opened the Way to the non-believers to hear the call of Christ Jesus.

I was not privileged to know Nin: she had moved to the city before I arrived here, and it is only through the testimonies of others that I have come to appreciate the impact and importance that she had in the lives of those who call the Macedon Ranges Shire home.

From her time at the Clyde School (on the other-side!), Pengarook and then Macedon village, the Hardiman's were indeed quite a presence. Many have spoken to me with great love and admiration about the welcome and friendship extended to them, and how they, in turn, became part of the Gisborne-Macedon community. They were drawn in by the qualities that both Nin and Robert showed in their care and attention to the detail that was YOU.

Within the Parish, Nin was involved in the St Paul's Guild for around 50 years. Not only was she secretary for most of her time in the Guild, she was also the

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Convenor of the Flower duties, making many floral arrangements for weddings and community celebrations. She helped at many Parish Dinners in the Parish Hall and in past years helped organise dinner dances that were held at either the Golf Club or the Mechanics Institute.

Central to the Parish activities has been our Op Shops, and indeed, Nin was very involved in the Gisborne Op Shop. She served customers at the counter on Friday mornings, and enjoyed many a jovial chat with the customers. She contributed to the Missions Auxiliary Trading Table held each Friday, making many a cake for sale. They would come straight from her oven, always freshly made, and always different, and I'm told, occasionally, unusual. Green iced cupcakes immediately sprang to mind for my scribe!

Nin also assisted in the bi-monthly dinners: it was known she was a fabulous cook. She convened the annual Cake Stall at the Church Fete. Our annual Fete is tomorrow – so the timing of sharing cake today at refreshment is encouraging. I cannot guarantee that the cloths on the cake stall tomorrow will be cloth, as Nin preferred, but I'm tempted to put up a sign in her memory nearby!

Together with Robert, and with great characters such as Hobbsy and Meggsy, as we have heard, they were instrumental in the building of what is St Paul's Gisborne today. In the St Paul's Guild tribute, I read:

They remained faithful, integral, honoured and regular members and worshippers at St Paul's and will always be fondly remembered. In her later years after moving to Macedon and following Robert's passing, Nin worshipped regularly at the Church of the Resurrection.

Nin was also involved in the wider community including Vision Australia, Gisborne and Mount Macedon Historical Society and Meals on Wheels. They were also noted for their dinner parties, and their love of dining out.

Again, I quote from the Guild Tribute the following epitaph.

Nin was a generous, loving and caring person who had the ability when required to give reassurance, praise and encouragement, she managed to see good in everyone.

Looking back on the letter of Paul to the Philippians, this indeed is what we are reminded is at the core of not only having faith but living it. It is part of the transformation from this life to the next, the prize of the heavenly citizenship in which we stand in the presence of our loving and creating God. Through our faith

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and worship, and then service in the name of Christ, people will, as they did in Antioch, know us as Christians.

Today, celebrating the gift of life shared in Nin with all who knew and loved her, we commend to our Lord a child of his own making. We pray that any separateness along the way has been forgiven, and that we, throwing off that sin that clings so easily, may strive to hear that call from Jesus to us: *come to me, and I will give you rest.*

May Nin be now in that eternal rest that is the prize, and may she, and all the faithful, at the end of all time, rise in glory in the beautiful presence that is God's love and heart for us all.