



## Sister Helen Barry LCM

Helen Anne Barry was born in Christchurch on August 20 1939 to parents Arthur and Elsie Barry. She was one of 7 children, 3 of her siblings have predeceased her. The following are Helen's own words:

"I was raised in a Catholic family, my mother was a convert to Catholicism and our parents' strong faith was passed on to us children. Our faith continued to be nurtured at the Catholic schools we attended. I went to Addington Parish primary school and Sacred Heart College for secondary education.

When I left school and joined the workforce as a personal secretary. I prayed and attended Mass frequently and belonged to youth groups in my parish. In my early twenties my social life was good; I particularly enjoyed ballroom dancing and I had a steady boyfriend.

But I started to feel discontented and remember thinking 'there must be more to life than this.' About this time my parish priest approached me and asked if I had ever thought of consecrating my life to God as a Religious Sister. This thought had not occurred to me but the conviction I should at least try this way of life became stronger and stronger. As I had always wanted to be a nurse I was guided to seek information from the Little Company of Mary who had a great reputation here in Christchurch. After some time I decided to enter the LCM which led to arrangements being made for me to travel to Sydney to enter the Novitiate at Lewisham; I travelled with 2 other women who were also joining the LCM. From the beginning we were steeped in the spirit and charism of the LCM interspersed with Hospital work. It is said "nurses are born not made" that was certainly the case for me; I greatly enjoyed my studies and my contact with patients. The life and mission of Mary Potter and the LCM with prayer and maternal care for the sick and dying became very much part of my life." End of Helen's words.

When Helen received the habit she was given the name Sr Joseph, she later changed to Helen her baptismal name. She was finally professed in Christchurch in 1967 and chose as her motto "Your grace is sufficient for me." Helen was a very industrious and methodical person and worked hard even while battling a prolonged illness. She was well qualified as a Registered Nurse, Midwife and Registered Psychiatric Nurse; she also completed a Human Relations Course at the Richmond Fellowship College in London. Helen held many responsible positions in the LCM as Provincial, Regional Councillor and local Superior.

She spent time in charge of Calvary Psychiatric Clinic in Christchurch; she had worked previously at Calvary Hospitals in Wellington and Christchurch. Helen worked at Nurse Maude Hospital prior to becoming General Manager at the Mary Potter office, a role she held until her retirement from active ministry. In recent years, her great joy and relaxation had been tending her garden; her apple trees have thrived and were very productive this year, thank you Helen!

The Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." has always guided Helen's life. Throughout her Religious life she advocated tirelessly for the less fortunate, the elderly and those with mental health problems. Helen was diagnosed over 30 years ago with Slowly Progressive Multiple Sclerosis but she battled on bravely in spite of decreasing mobility and other issues until a year ago when she was admitted for Hospital care at Nazareth House. When still living independently but being less mobile, she spent many hours in quiet prayer continuing our LCM ministry of care and prayer for the sick and dying. Helen wanted her family to know how much she appreciated their visits, their love and support over the years. We extend our gratitude to Shona Lawson for her care and to the Nazareth Sisters and staff for their devoted care of Helen over the past year.

In thanksgiving for Helen's life of prayerful ministry let us pray together: "Eternal rest grant to her O Lord and let perpetual light shine on her, may she rest in peace. " Amen