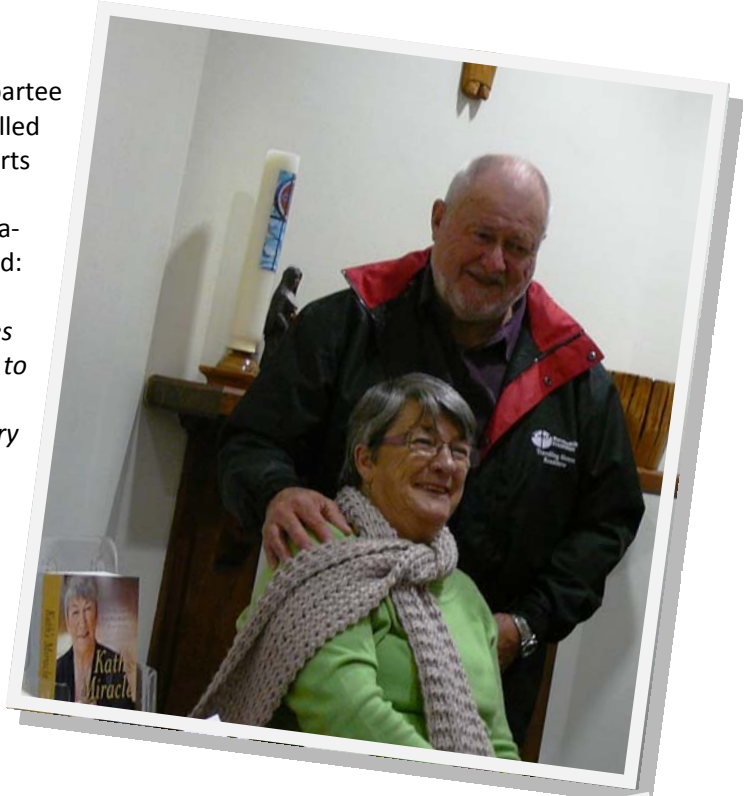


# 'Good Evans'! ... Great Ambassadors for Saint Mary!

For almost the whole of August, Kath and Barry Evans travelled around what Barry very quickly described “the South Pole.” Despite some bitterly cold weather, but also many signs of the beauty of Spring, Kath and Barry took their Good News story - from the South, to the North and North West and then to the West Coast of Tasmania. Barry shivered his way around what he kept insisting was the South Pole, while Kath stoically kept her real assessment of Tasmania’s climatic conditions under wraps!

Large groups of people were attracted to the advertised events at each venue and they were not disappointed. Kath’s wonderful Josephite, down-to-earth presentations grabbed the attention of her audiences. The delightful repartee between Kath and Barry amused, brought tears to eyes, filled people with awe and wonder and strengthened faith. Hearts were deeply touched. Experiences were shared. Sr Sue McGuinness, who was present for many of Kath’s presentations has described some of what she saw and experienced:

*“Many stories emerged of people’s own sickness, or the crises endured by members of their families. Long queues presented themselves before Kath for a book signing, or to plea for her special prayers for their intentions. Young Cooper moved Kath very deeply with his courageous story of how he is battling leukaemia. Josh’s teacher asked us to pray as an assembled school for Josh’s brother who is seriously ill. These stories and other incidents like them could fill a book. Compassion was tangible. Fierce loyalty, passion and belief in the power of St Mary MacKillop was with out question. Cheerfulness, simplicity, respect, inclusiveness – all the Josephite qualities were modelled naturally, without pretension and with humility.”*



Kath and Barry completed a marathon journey around the State. Shortly after they landed in Hobart, Kath was whisked off to the ABC to be interviewed by Elaine Harris for the “Your Afternoon” radio programme. The interview went “live” to audiences over Tasmania. The following

day they began quite a gruelling schedule of visits to schools formerly administered by the Sisters of St Joseph for presentations to class groups, assemblies and staff groups. Schools visited were: St Therese’s School, at Moonah in Hobart; Immaculate Heart of Mary School at Lenah Valley; Sacred Heart College, New Town; Sacred Heart School, Ulverstone, Our Lady of Lourdes School, Devonport; St John’s School, Richmond, St Patrick’s College, Launceston, Sacred Heart School, Geeveston and St Joseph’s School on the West Coast at Rosebery. One lucky group of Grade 3 boys from St Virgil’s College in Hobart was visiting the Josephite Mission and History Centre and were thrilled to have Kath and Barry as special, unexpected guest speakers.



The following delightful letter, received from one of the boys following this surprise, reads:

*Dear Sister Sue and Sister Colleen,*

*I am writing this letter on behalf of Grade 3 at Saint Virgil's College.*

*We really liked all the special things you showed us especially Kath. All of us, especially Mrs Fielding, were excited to meet someone who had a miracle performed on her. I on the other hand was mostly interested in her story, because I was hearing it from Kath herself. It was not new for me to see a nun because I saw one in grade 1. But I have never been to a nun mission centre or history centre.*

*This is a question I wanted to ask: did Kath stay overnight at the mission centre or book in to a motel. If so, where did she sleep? Because I am sure we went through all the rooms except for the kitchen!*

*Why did you call it a mission centre? Spy missions don't happen in there or science missions.*

*Once this gets to you, I reckon you would have got a lot of letters but I really hope you respond to this letter.*

*From Luke Johnson.  
Gr.3  
St Virgil's.*



On another occasion Kath was asked, "Did Mary MacKillop ever wash her face?" Kath was highly amused by questions such as these, but she responded very seriously and with great respect for each enquirer!

Kath and Barry were particularly impressed with the enthusiasm and commitment of the Junior Joeys and encouraged schools where they are not yet established to "sign up" and form groups to continue the story and the work of St Mary MacKillop and Father Julian in Tasmania.

Children were cautioned about the destructive power of even trying a cigarette lest they be caught up in a habit they would find impossible to discard. Even the most lovable larrikins could be heard promising in their hearts never to be tempted!

It was wonderful for us to celebrate the Feast Day of St Mary MacKillop with Kath and Barry. At New Town, they attended the special Sacred Heart College Mass for the Feast Day at St Mary's Cathedral after Kath had addressed the whole school Assembly. In the evening, we held a "Conversation with Kath" at the Josephite Mission and History Centre. Kath gave a presentation following some drinks 'n' nibbles and then we prayed together the beautiful Josephite Evening Prayer for the Feast Day of St Mary MacKillop. It was a happy, celebratory event, made so by the ease with which our guests mingled and interacted with the large number of people who attended.

At Cygnet the venue had to be changed to the Church to house the many students from St James College who joined the parish community members to hear Kath and Barry. Following their presentation, the couple joined the community of Sisters at St James' Convent for lunch and sat for a long session of "table talk" during which memories were shared and even more stories were told.

At the Emmanuel Centre in Launceston "Spirituality over Supper" was held. Again, the large numbers of people who attended were delighted with their opportunity to meet the person who was honoured to receive the miracle which contributed to the canonisation of Australia's first saint.

At Forth, along the stunningly beautiful North West coast, Kath and Barry spoke to yet another large group of interested people and then shared in a celebratory barbecue lunch.

Despite being the special focus at each event, Kath and Barry involved themselves fully, generously and seemingly effortlessly. They did, however, manage a little sight-seeing during their "time off". They visited Port Arthur, Cradle Mountain and the East Coast without the curious questioning of audiences. They have been assured there is still much more to see in Tasmania. The word from Barry was, however, that the next visit will take place in Summer!

Sue clearly was touched by her August encounter with Kath and Barry. She has concluded her reflections thus:

*"We are extremely grateful, blessed and privileged to have had Kath and Barry with us. They graced us with their warmth, their good humour and their willingness to respond to whatever was needed or asked of them.*

*We are inspired by their living out of the charism and the hope they model so naturally.*

*We thank God that St. Mary MacKillop's powerful intercession is drawn to people's attention through the example of these two great Aussie ambassadors!"*