

## **FAREWELL TO SISTER CARMEL ARNOLD AND THE SISTERS OF MERCY**

### **BOWEN**

27/6/17

Good afternoon everyone.

On behalf of our Northern Community Leader, Sister Helen White, who cannot be with us today and of all the Sisters of Mercy, I thank you for providing us with this opportunity to give thanks to God, to reminisce together and to acknowledge Sister Carmel Arnold's great contribution over the last twenty-one years.

Bowen has been a very rich source of religious vocations, and I believe that the Sisters who have ministered here have drawn from the strong roots of faith planted by so many, as well as from their individual love of God and the inspiration received from our foundress, Catherine McAuley. My own personal association with Bowen runs very deep. This town was my mother's home for many years. It is where my family enjoyed some wonderful summer holidays, and where later, I had the privilege of leading St Mary's Parish School. But now, as an Institute, with sadness in our hearts, it is time to say goodbye.

And here I wish to draw on some of the encouraging words from the Book of Ecclesiastes: "There is a time for planting and a time for uprooting what has been planted. A time for tears, a time for laughter; a time for mourning, a time for dancing; a time for losing, a time for keeping; a time for loving; a time for peace." (Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8) In the strength of those words, we Sisters of Mercy promise that we will never forget you – the people of the Bowen district - and the many kindnesses extended to us.

We will treasure the love and care you have shown to Sister Carmel and also to Sister Leo. Carmel has loved you, and you most certainly have loved her in return, and will miss her dearly. Thankyou Carmel for all you have been and done for this beautiful part of God's world. We stand with you today, as we know you greatly mourn the fact that you must now leave.

Thankyou one and all for your presence here at this special gathering, and let me assure you and your families again that you will always remain deep in our hearts. When the first Sisters of Mercy arrived here well over 130 years ago, Catherine McAuley would have said: "Hurrah for foundations – makes the old young, and the young merry". Today I believe she would say: "If we are humble and sincere, God will finish in us the work He has begun".

Thankyou and God bless.

**[Carmel Ruddick rsm](#)**