



Sr Catherine Mary Kelly

Catherine Mary Kelly was an inspiration and role model to many in her local community and at the schools she taught. Her bravery, strength and compassion empowered many students and teachers—particularly those from marginalised backgrounds—to live meaningful lives, and her remarkable contribution will be carried on through the countless lives she touched.

Born and raised in Ireland, Catherine migrated to Australia at the age of 18 to join the Brigidine Sisters. Moving so far away from her family and friends at a young age instilled in her an understanding of the challenges of separation and the strengths of community.

After travelling to the United Kingdom to complete her Masters degree, Catherine returned to Australia and brought new insights and learnings to Brigidine colleges across the state. Notably, at St Joseph's College Echuca, Catherine encouraged the enrolment of Koori students. Thanks to Catherine's advocacy, today St Joseph's has the largest enrolment of Koori students amongst Victorian Catholic secondary schools.

A gifted educator, Catherine made an outstanding contribution to secondary students and trainee teachers in Brigidine Colleges, but was also driven by her desire to make a real difference in the lives of those who were marginalised. Catherine was a passionate advocate for asylum seekers and refugees, and wanted to ensure that every student, regardless of their cultural background, had every opportunity to succeed.

Her commitment to the resettlement of asylum seeker and refugee families led her to co-found the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project in Albert Park, Melbourne.

Catherine firmly believed that an understanding and awareness of education was a significant investment in the future of a community. The actions of people such as Catherine will be a witness to the potential of an individual to make a difference to the lives of ordinary people. Catherine passed away in March 2015.