



JOE KEARNEY SAC RIP  
30.8.1921 - 15.5.2020

“One who had accompanied us.” This quote from Acts of the Apostles commenced the Eulogy for Fr Joe Kearney SAC shared with us by Fr Ray Hevern SAC last week. Joe was certainly one who accompanied us from the early days. He was ordained in 1946 with two other Australian men. The first ordinations of Australian born Pallottines.

Fr Jacob suggested that I write these few lines about Joe with a focus on his role within the broad Pallottine Family in Australia. It is with great joy that I undertake this task and will write from my personal experience.

My first meeting with Joe was back in 1971 when I was a lay missionary in Western Australia. At that time Joe was the Provincial (now known as Regional) of the Australian region. I recall him visiting Tardun. He was open and had time for all who worked there. It was never that we were working “for the Pallottines” but we were working together as one. Speaking with Mark Brolly, a member of the UAC, he also spoke of his time as a Lay Missionary working with Joe at Rossmoyne, a suburb of Perth in Western Australia. By that time, now into the 1980’s Joe was in charge of Rossmoyne. Mark recollects the listening ear of Joe as mentor and the development of a strong friendship. Mark edited the book written by Joe wrote in later life.

My next strong recollection is in the 1970’s when, as a trainee of Mariana Community, we would join the SAC students and the community of young people working with Fr Pat Jackson, for formation weekends, here we had the opportunity of forging strong bonds and discovering together the vision and charism of our founder Saint Vincent Pallotti. At that time Joe was rector of the Pallottine Students and encouraged these great times of shared formation. A clear example that we are all one family, each with our own roles as Vincent Pallotti visualized.

I will skip a few decades and speak of the ongoing wisdom of Joe in his retirement years. Back in 2010, when presenting a paper at our UAC Congress, titled *The person as apostle in the vision/thinking of Saint Vincent Pallotti*, when speaking of Vincent’s recognition of the need for continuous formation, I said “An example of this being lived in action is to tell of you about a SAC Priest in Australia, who at the age of 87 enrolled and audited four units at Yarra Theological Union in Melbourne – two units in Social Justice and two units in Religion and Culture. He was the oldest person on campus! And why did he want to undertake the course - to keep himself up to date with modern thinking.” The priest I spoke of was Joe Kearney. In addition to study, he began painting – and he was a good artist. He wrote a book titled “Growing in Faith - Ramblings of a happy old man.” And continued to welcome the many people who came to visit.

Over his 25 years of retirement, Joe remained an open and loving man, always ready to listen and certainly ready to participate in all of our Pallottine / UAC activities. The last time I met with Joe was about 6 months ago, when, at the age of 97, he participated in our UAC Cenacle Prayer (as he did each month) and was very much part of our UAC Commitment / Gathering Day in Perth, always listening and showing great interest in our lives.

The final word I will leave to Joe, from the closing lines of his book, he wrote: “relax and enjoy the journey with the Greatest Companion anyone could have.”

Vale Joseph Kearney.

Cheryl Sullivan