



March 31 marks the 50-year anniversary of the foundation of the Missionary Sisters of Service in the Port Pirie Diocese. On this date in 1971, Sisters Frances McShane and Helen Haywood MSS (deceased) arrived in Whyalla, South Australia.

A special Thanksgiving Mass was held at St Teresa's Catholic Church in Whyalla on 26th May to mark this special occasion. Francis McShane, who now lives in Tasmania, penned the following letter, which was read to those gathered:

It is hard to believe it is 50 years since Sr Helen and I arrived in Whyalla to begin our MSS mission in the Diocese of Port Pirie. But the marvellous memories of those early years stay with me still.

Sr Helen went to her eternal reward in 1989, but we always had a close personal relationship following our time together on the west coast and in the north.

Any chance we had to share it would be a case of 'Remember when' always with great joy and gratitude.

How can I thank you and your forebears from those days, for your wonderful welcome and acceptance of us? We came as strangers to your area, but you made us feel very much at home as we travelled from parish to parish. Your country hospitality had to be experienced to be believed.

I couldn't possibly name any names as I could miss out on some I should personally thank. Many have, like Sr Helen, gone to their reward. But I think I could be forgiven in saying a special debt of gratitude is due to the priests who welcomed us into their parishes and the Good Samaritan Sisters in Whyalla and the Josephite Sisters in Port Lincoln and Port Augusta who in turn offered us hospitality. You deserve a special mention in gratitude.

Thank you does not seem enough to say, but Fr John Wallis, our founder, who many of you would have met in earlier years always said, 'gratitude is the ex-checker of the poor.

So, it is prayerful gratitude that we offer for all of you these 50 years.

We send you these greetings in love and friendship.

Bless you and yours, each and every one.

Sr Frances McShane