

The Australian Province
of the Society of Jesus

Companions Medal



"The Three Companions of Jesus"
by George Drance SJ

Maureen and John Yates

Maureen Yates has been a lifelong parishioner of St Mary's, North Sydney, and in 2003 started work at Riverview. In 2005 she was appointed the College Sacristan and has to this day overseen all the many liturgical and varied ceremonies that occur there.

John Yates was baptised by Fr Hartnett SJ in the Star of the Sea Chapel of St Aloysius' College. When he retired in 2002, John was asked by Fr Tony Smith SJ to be the Monday to Friday carpark attendant at Ridge Street, something he is still doing – hail, rain and shine – 17 years later.

While the sacristan and carpark jobs may seem lower key, the pastoral importance of them is immense. The Yates are the first voices and faces some people encounter in our Jesuit ministries. And while not every bride or driver is the easiest person to deal with, Maureen and John see their courteous outreach to everyone as a ministry of Ignatian hospitality.

Married by Fr Paul Coleman SJ 57 years ago, they have four wonderful children – Leanne, Kim, Nicole and Christopher – and eight grandchildren.

Most notably, their care for sick and elderly Jesuits in Sydney is as devoted as it would be unknown to most of us. John and Maureen don't seek the limelight. But today, it is for such quiet and faithful ministry that we are honoured to name them as recipients of the Companions medals.

Thank you, Maureen and John.