

Companions Medal



"The Three Companions of Jesus"
by George Drance SJ

Ray and Kath Wood

In 1972, the Rector and Headmaster, Fr Philip Hosking SJ, had a small chapel constructed at the senior campus of Saint Ignatius' College, Adelaide. In the ensuing years, a small community gathered each Sunday in this chapel for Mass. As the numbers grew, a second Mass was added. When the small chapel could no longer accommodate the congregation, a more spacious room in the College was allocated. Archbishop Leonard Faulkner gave these worshippers a measure of recognition by designating those who gathered on Sundays as a 'Basic Eucharistic Community'.

Ray and Kath Wood have been the mainstay of this community almost from its inception. Initially, along with others, they made all the necessary preparations for the celebration of Mass. With the passage of time, however, their involvement in all matters pertaining to the worshipping community proved to be invaluable and has been deeply appreciated. Among the many responsibilities they have undertaken, they have shown a keen and ongoing pastoral concern for the welfare of community members.

They have been models of fidelity in their constant presence and valued assistance on so many levels. They took the initiative in establishing the outdoor Stations of the Cross ceremony at the Black Hill reserve, held each Good Friday, and they were the organisers of an Ecumenical Service held annually in conjunction with the Athelstone Uniting Church.

The then Fr Greg O'Kelly as Headmaster was eager to ensure the construction of a full-size chapel. Both the College and the Eucharistic community were involved in the planning of this enterprise, and the chapel was dedicated for worship in 2006. Since then Kath and Ray have ensured that the chapel has been a prayerful and inspiring venue for worship, with their focus the weekly Eucharistic celebration, but they have also lent valuable assistance across the full range of liturgical celebrations.

They are assiduous in their care for the maintenance of the chapel fabric and for ensuring the ready supply of the wide range of material required for worship on behalf of the community, the College and the Jesuit community.

They encourage involvement of all members of the community and welcome newcomers. They welcome visiting celebrants and provide guidance as to local custom with unfailing courtesy. They are especially pleased with the success of the Christmas Eve Mass, which brings together an expanding congregation of hundreds from the parish and the wider community.

With reduced numbers of Jesuits, Kath and Ray have shouldered a wide range of responsibilities to ensure the chapel is a thriving place of worship. Their unassuming commitment and quiet dedication are a labour of love.

In many ways Ray and Kath Wood model the Church of today and, most importantly, they model the Church of the future. Those at Athelstone are most fortunate to have experienced their years of devoted service to the community and the College.

Ray and Kath Wood are true examples of humble Christian service, and so today we honour them with the Ignatian Companion Medal.

Thank you Kath & Ray.