



Celebration of First Profession of two Good Samaritan Sisters

The Good Oil - October 2020

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan celebrated a day of great joy recently when two novices made their First Profession. Debra Vermeer spoke to the young women, both from Kiribati.

Sister Katarina Kabiriera and Sister Taabeia Ibouri made the traditional Benedictine vows of stability, conversion of life and obedience on September 26 in front of a smaller gathering than usual, due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The ceremony in St Scholastica's Chapel, Glebe, was livestreamed to other Sisters, Oblates, friends, and family members in Kiribati.

Director of Novices, Sister Maree Nash SGS, said it was a beautiful occasion made more special by knowing that that Katarina and Taabeia's families could be a part of it.

"Amid the pandemic it was nice to celebrate something joyous and it really was a special day," she said.

"When I looked back at the livestream video, it was very noticeable that there were far fewer people present because of the pandemic restrictions, but I'm also very conscious that so many more members of the Congregation and Oblates, friends and others could join and see it, and that's very exciting.

"Because of the livestream, members of Taabeia and Katarina's families were able to take part as well as members of our two communities in Kiribati and members of the Marist community there."

Maree said the two women had arrived at the point of making their First Profession as Sisters of the Good Samaritan after two years in the Novitiate at Lawson in NSW and a number of years before that as pre-novices and enquirers with the Good Sams' communities in Kiribati.

In her official Admonition at the First Profession liturgy, Congregational Leader Sister Patty Fawkner said that the taking of first vows was a serious step in the two women's lives.

"Katarina and Taabeia, what you are doing and what we are witnessing today is very significant," she said.

"You are deciding what you wish to do with your precious life.

"By the act of religious profession you are saying that you wish to truly seek God, and that you wish to seek God within a community, this community of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict."

Patty said Katarina and Taabeia were being asked to give their all to God.

"God asks everything of us, especially our love," she said. "Over the years our love can become lukewarm. God is a passionate lover and wants you, Katarina and Taabeia, to love God with all your mind, with all your heart and soul, with all your strength. God wants your best love, not your left-over love."

She concluded the Admonition with the formal invitation: "Taabeia and Katarina, behold the Law under which you are choosing to serve. If you can keep it, enter. If not, you are free to leave."

Both Katarina and Taabeia said they were nervous on the day and in the lead-up but were strengthened by God's love and by the support of the Good Sams' community.

"I had been nervous and excited for a week before Profession," Taabeia said. "However, during Profession, I was nervous, excited but also peaceful in my heart and mind."