

The O'Leary legacy

*The Mount Gambier Catholic Parish is fortunate to have been the beneficiary of a significant bequest from one of its beloved parishioners, Catherine O'Leary, who died in December 2008. The bequest is helping the parish to provide spiritual and pastoral care for its people. One of Catherine's cousins, **Tom Preece**, of Mount Gambier, provided this brief outline of her life.*

Dan O'Leary lived on the outskirts of Mount Gambier where he ran a dairy. He had five sisters, four of whom never married, and they were very generous to all, particularly to the Church and the Sisters of Mercy. Dan used to give milk and eggs to struggling families in the district – it was in the O'Learys, to be giving.

Dan and Mary O'Leary (nee Preece) had four daughters – Julia who helped with the milking, Sylvia who kept house and Frances and Catherine (Kitty) who went nursing. They all carried on the tradition set by their aunts and were always very generous and helpful to those in need. As an indication of their popularity they had 40 godchildren between them. It will never be known just how much they helped others.

Frances and Kitty worked at the Mount Gambier and District St Neots Hospital locally and in Melbourne. They also did private nursing in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. Later they went to work at Boandik, a nursing home in Mount Gambier where Kitty was matron for ten years from 1965 – 1975.

After leaving Boandik, Kitty returned to the farm on O'Leary Road where she lived for 20 years. She sold the farm in 1995 and returned to Boandik Lodge. She died in December 2008 in her 101st year. She was very generous during her time at Boandik and helped many a charitable organisation. She left a significant bequest to the Church she loved and to other benefactors.

She will long be remembered for her generosity as the last of the O'Leary clan that came from Ireland three generations ago.

- If you have information on someone who has bequeathed to the Catholic Church or if you are interested in making a bequest, contact Jane Juniper on 8210 8223 or email her at jjuniper@adelaide.catholic.org.au