



Marnie Ryan
Diocese of Geraldton

Marnie's story tells us why she has been an influential and inspirational Australian Catholic Woman.

Marnie was born into a loving Anglo-Irish Catholic family where she says she inherited a unique sense of humour and a love of a good debate from her father and also what it meant to be "fair dinkum" and a loyal friend. From her mum she inherited how to always listen with her heart to whoever wanted to talk.

On leaving school, Marnie spent some time with the Sisters of Mercy, during which she was sent to Papua New Guinea where a whole new perspective on life and faith opened up. She said it was like being thrown into a melting pot of cultures.

After leaving the Mercies, Marnie met and married Jack Ryan and had her first experience of Aboriginal Ministry through their contact with Father Ted Kennedy. She and Jack were married by Fr. Ted in St. Vincent's Church in Redfern. They have two beautiful children.

On coming to the west Marnie and Jack worked with the Pallottines and the Aboriginal people at Tardun. Marnie says it has been a privilege to have been able to share in the struggle, tears and joy of the Yamiitji people.

When they came to Geraldton Marnie spent time teaching religious education in the government schools because that was where most of the aboriginal children were.

In more recent times, following Jack's death, she has been teaching at the prison and at TAFE, where she teaches English as a Second Language to migrants, another group who are on the margins of our society.

Marnie says that it seems to her that if she professes to follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd who goes in search of the lamb that is lost, she must continue to work in these ministries while she can.