



Cela was born 6<sup>th</sup> April 1924 in Bendigo, Victoria.

She was educated by the Sisters of Mercy in Bendigo and after Matriculation and Leaving Honours in 1941 she became a student teacher at Smith Street State School, Collingwood before completing Primary Teachers and Infant Teachers Certificates at Melbourne Teachers College and being appointed to North Brunswick Demonstration School in 1945.

Married to Michael William (Bill) Cooper in 1948, they lived in Sydney before moving to Leeton in 1951. They had seven sons, two daughters and seventeen grandchildren. There are now fifteen great grandchildren. Bill died in 2001.

Cela was an active member of her Catholic Church and school auxiliaries before returning to full time teaching at St. Francis' College, Leeton in 1966. After retirement to Corrimal in 1986, she became very involved in St. Columbkille's Parish as a regular reader at Mass, a scripture teacher and a member of the Parish Pastoral Council (serving a term as President). As a member of the Catholic Women' League she held executive positions at Branch and Diocesan level and was the first editor of the CWL Diocesan Newsletter, "The Flame".

In 1996 Cela accepted nomination as one of the eight Catholic delegates to ACW NSW Unit. She served a term as Social Issues convenor for the NSW Unit and as National Vice President 2003 – 2005. Moving to Canberra in 2006 she joined the ACT Unit of ACW and was "Newsletter" Editor for some years. She considered it a privilege to host executive meetings in her home for a number of years.

Membership of ACW provided the source of many lasting friendships and faith development and, above all, a fostering of her deep belief in and desire for the growth of ecumenism.

Cela was made a **National** Life Member in February 2011 and it is a joy to have her as a member of the ACT Unit of ACW.