



## Olive Boddington

Diocese of Geraldton

Olive Boddington – a Watjarri woman – is regarded as an inspirational Aboriginal Catholic in our region of Australia.

It was sometime in the early 1940's that Olive was born on Muggon Station, W.A. With the exception of one year, all her schooling took place at the Pallottine Aboriginal Mission in Tardun which later became known as Wandalgu. It was here that she received her First Communion and was confirmed.

When Olive married she travelled around with her husband, Ross, as he looked for work. When their children needed schooling they were sent to the Tardun Mission. Eventually Olive and Ross took up residency at the Tardun Mission as house parents. By this time Olive had become very good at painting, silk-screening, carving and pottery and so she began art lessons with both the primary school and high school students.

Olive was chairperson of the Parents' Council which helped the Mission Staff to develop the right policies for looking after Aboriginal children. She was also a member of the School Board.

When the Pallottine Community celebrated the sesquicentenary of their foundation, Olive and Ross were chosen to represent the Aboriginal people on a pilgrimage to Rome. Olive was the one chosen to present the Pope with a painting.

When NATSICC (National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council) began Olive was the first representative for the Geraldton Diocese and it was she who designed the logo for this Council.

In the 1980's Olive painted the Stations of the Cross which hang in the Beachlands Church in Geraldton. In 2007 these Stations were published as a booklet.

Over the years Olive has painted many religious paintings as well as ones about her culture. Many of these paintings have appeared in exhibitions. Today Olive continues to share her skills with young Yamatji's, prisoners in the Greenough Regional Prison and wherever she is called upon to help.

Olive believes it is important to give the Aboriginal children and young people all the opportunities to become strong Christian persons.

