



Josephite Associates

* Friendship

* Prayer

* Service

- May 2007 -

Hello from the Coordinator

We are now in the post-Easter season and look forward to celebrating that great feast of the Spirit at Pentecost. We give thanks for the beneficial rain that has fallen in some parts of the state and pray that more will come for the autumn plantings. In March when I visited Hillston the country was dry and barren and this gave me a new appreciation of the plight of our friends and Associates who make their living from the land.

Once again we thank Srs Catherine Thom, Bridie O'Connell and Merylin Browne, who led sessions for us over the opening months of 2007. We always enjoy those times when Sisters and Associates come together to learn, pray and celebrate.

I continued to visit groups at Peshurst, Kincumber, Canberra (which included groups from Bombala, Nimmitabel and Eden), Hillston and Belmont. The Blacktown group has had new life breathed into it and they met on the 19th March to pray and celebrate St Joseph's Day. Also on that day, I met with a group of people in Mittagong to begin a group there.

The St Joseph's day celebration was wonderful, with a good many Associates present at the Liturgy which was held at Mary MacKillop Chapel at North Sydney on Saturday 17th March, followed by an afternoon tea.

This year we are hoping to have a Pilgrimage to Goulburn as they celebrate 125 years of their Foundation. The tentative date is Saturday 22nd September. More about this later.

Until next time!

Sr Helen Sanders.

Coming Events

Kincumber Retreat

25th-27th May 2007

'Living the Eucharist
in the Spirit of Mary MacKillop'
Led by Sr Carmel Pilcher rsj

Mary MacKillop Place Prayer Day

4th June 2007

'Living the Spirit'
Led by Sr Bridie O'Connell rsj

Chapter Conversation

16th June 2007

At Lidcombe Catholic Club
(See invitation on page 4)

Mary MacKillop Place Prayer Day

17th July 2007

'Meditating on the Mystery of Jesus
through John's Gospel'
Led by Sr Marie Biddle rsj

Mary MacKillop Place Prayer Day

6th August 2007

'Mary MacKillop's Message in 2007'
Led by Sr Helen Barnes rsj

Kincumber Retreat

10th-12th August 2007

'Faithfully Following
Famous Founders'
Led by Sr Virginia Bourke rsj

Annual General Meeting

at Mary MacKillop Place

15th September 2007

Mary MacKillop Place Prayer Day

18th September 2007

'Behold Your Mother'
Led by Sr Maureen McDermott rsj

For further information phone 02 8741 2334

Associates Office - Locked Bag 3031
Burwood NSW 1805 - (02) 8741 2334

The newsletter is now available on the Web, at
<http://www.sosj.org.au/connect/NSWAssociates.html>.

Pebbles in the Centre of Lima, Peru

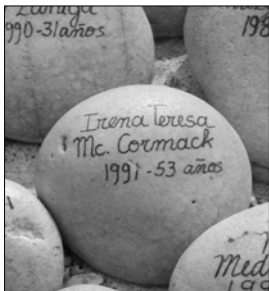
We had spent a week up in the Andes, visiting isolated poor communities eking out an existence from the land. These were communities working together to improve their animal husbandry skills and crop production with technical and financial support from Caritas.

We heard of the devastating impact of the civil war that has raged through the area in the 1980s and 90s. We heard of the massacres committed by the Sendero Luminoso and the retaliation by those loyal to the government. We heard of the hundreds and thousands who had fled these and similar villages in the hope that their lives and those of their families might be saved. We saw memorials scattered across the landscape—memorials to the named and unnamed who had lost their lives in the civil war that raged over a 20-year period.



The following week we visited the invasions, squatter settlements on the outskirts of Lima that have built up over the past 30 years as people have fled the unrest in the mountains and sought safety in the city. We saw the dislocation brought about by massive migration to the urban centres. We visited Sister Margaret Malady, working with the poorest of the poor in Lima.

Somehow the story began to come together when we visited the memorial in a park in the centre of Lima—a huge labyrinth made out of 60,000 large pebbles. Each pebble bore the name of a person killed during these 20 or so years of fighting. Slowly we walked the labyrinth, stepping past pebble after pebble, each name coming into focus. With the pebbles arranged in alphabetical order, one could see whole families who were wiped out in the same massacre. Such senseless violence!



Then one name, a familiar name, stared back at me. This was 'Irena Teresa Mc.Cormack 1991 53 años'—one name among many, one name among 60,000. I knew this name. I had heard her story. But each of the 60,000 names also has a story, and their stories must not be allowed to die with them. At least this memorial is attempting to not let the stories be forgotten. This memorial helps us remember that death leads to life, that goodness overcomes evil. Irene McCormack continues to touch the lives of the people of Peru and beyond.

Elizabeth Lee, Penshurst

Stamps Wanted



Used stamps wanted for the Josephite mission in Peru

Please send to Sr Helen Saunders
Locked Bag 3031
Burwood NSW 1805
Phone 02 8741 2334
Fax 02 8741 2399

Requiescant in Pace

Ida Adolphe (Rooty Hill)
Beatrice Bashall, mother of Leonie (Quirindi)
Helen Carter, mother of Pat Borthistle (formerly Tamworth)
Marjorie Conroy (Woy Woy)
Peter Daly, brother of Pat Blanch (Tamworth)
Sr Clotilde Evans
Dorothy Grove, mother of Joyce Law (Belmont)
Aub Hunt, husband of Millie (Quirindi)
Flo McNamara (Hillston)
Joyce Ragen (Umina)
Joseph Taggart (Quirindi)
Marie Walsh (Sefton)

St Patrick's Lithgow Junior Josephite Associates

The Spirit of Mary MacKillop is alive and well in Lithgow!

In 2005 Sr Anne Houston, the Pastoral Assistant in Lithgow, proposed to start a Junior Josephite group at St Patrick's School in Lithgow. After spending 12 months in the community and having spent time at St Pat's, Sr Anne felt **the spirit of Mary MacKillop** was very much alive in this school. Having the Junior Josephites in the school would help to strengthen their love of God through the example of Mary MacKillop. This proposal was put to the staff by Jenny Bray, as Religious Education Coordinator (REC), on behalf of Sr Anne. The proposal was well received by the Principal, Mrs Pam Haddin, and the Staff.

After speaking at a Primary Assembly, we invited the children to be a part of a group to be known as the Junior Josephite Associates. Gatherings would take place approximately **once a month** for about 20 minutes in the children's lunchtime. There would be an opportunity to learn more about Mary MacKillop, to pray together and to perform some form of charity work.

A number of children chose to attend and after several meetings a dedication ceremony at a

Introducing Jack Simonian

Jack Simonian is an Australian of Armenian descent, a devout Catholic and a long-time member of the Knights of the Southern Cross. For many years, Jack has devoted time, energy and his own funds to promote devotion to Blessed Mary MacKillop. His story may encourage others to make similar efforts.

Mary MacKillop and Jack

- From 1988 onwards, Jack has been distributing leaflets and books about the life and work of Mary MacKillop.
- Between 1993 and 1996, Jack, at his own expense, put together a display about the life of Mary MacKillop. This display was erected in thirteen libraries across NSW (Moree, Tamworth, Armidale, Maroubra, NSW State Library, etc.).
- Jack organised Sisters of St Joseph to address various branches of the Knights of the Southern Cross in preparation for Mary's Beatification.
- Jack encouraged ethnic papers to publish articles related to the visit of the Pope and the forthcoming Beatification of Mary MacKillop.
- In 1994, Jack became a Josephite Associate, joining a group at North Sydney which he still attends, despite advancing age and frequent health problems.
- On 12th May 2000, Blessed Mary MacKillop Close was proclaimed by the Mayor of Randwick as a result of seven years lobbying by Jack. Bishop David Cremin blessed a commemorative plaque.
- Icons of Mary MacKillop, purchased and donated by Jack, are displayed in the following Churches: Matraville, Clovelly, Randwick North, Botany, Moree, The Entrance, Mascot and Malabar.
- In 2006, Jack encouraged the organisation of a Parish Pilgrimage to Mary MacKillop Place.

What a wonderful story of one person's mission to inform Australia about Blessed Mary MacKillop! Well done, Jack!

School Assembly was celebrated with the children. They were presented with a **badge**, with an image of Mary MacKillop, that they **wear proudly** as a part of their school uniform. Their first project was to collect stamps for the missions and this was very successful. A prayer sheet is prepared for each meeting, and it includes a picture of Mary of the Southern Cross, a reflection on Mary's life, including her various devotions, and the Mary MacKillop prayer.

When the children were asked why they joined the Junior Associates, they replied: "**To learn more about Mary and to be good Catholics who care.**" As part of the school mission statement we have Mary MacKillop's saying, "Never see a need without trying to do something about it." In endeavouring to live by this example we hope to achieve and fulfil our school motto of Charity and Truth.

The Junior Josephite Associates are a special part of the school community. It is ever changing as the children move through the school, but hopefully it will be a part of the school for many years to come.

*Anne Houston rsj
Jenny Bray*

Penrith Farewells Sisters of St Joseph

On Sunday 5th November 2006, the parishioners of St Nicholas of Myra, Penrith, gathered for a celebration and dedication Mass for the Sisters of St Joseph, to bid them farewell and to show appreciation to the Sisters for their loyal service in education, care, love and friendship over the long period of 126 years.

Fr Chris De Souza, Parish Priest, concelebrated the Mass with Fr Geoff Dickinson and Fr Phil Medlan. Acolytes and altar servers were in attendance and the sanctuary was adorned with flowers. The music ministry – chief organist, cantor and choir – with a specially prepared Mass programme *Ave et Vale* did justice to the occasion.

Two Sisters of St Joseph did the Readings and after the Gospel Fr Chris gave a short history of the years the Sisters have lived and worked amongst us, some parishioners having three generations of their family taught by the Sisters. Pupils from St Nicholas of Myra Primary presented the gifts and the primary choir of Mary MacKillop School sang the thanksgiving hymn after communion. The Sisters were well represented in the congregation.

At the conclusion of Mass Sr Judith Sippel, Provincial Leader, spoke of early times in Penrith and thanked all the parishioners for the love and friendship the Sisters have received over such a long period of time. Sister then presented a beautiful gold-edged silver chalice to the parish on behalf of the Sisters of St Joseph. At the final blessings all Sisters stood as one to receive their own special Irish Blessing.

After Mass, priests, sisters, religious, friends and parishioners all gathered in the parish hall for delicious refreshments prepared by the Josephite Associates and willing helpers. Here the conversation flowed loud and long and many old friendships were renewed, snippets were swapped and cameras put to very good use. Jim and Gwen Daly's native flora displays on the tables were commented upon. A large farewell cake was cut and shared around. The Sisters were presented with a book on the early days of Penrith. One page depicted a photo of an earlier convent in High Street Penrith, demolished some years ago. That convent was blessed and opened by Cardinal Moran on November 4th 1906 – exactly 100 years to the day of the closure of the present convent.

Among Sisters and friends present were Sister Fidelis who traveled all the way from Boambee and Sister Anita Vagg who drove the long distance from Warialda, both being at the closure of the Convent on the Saturday. Also present were friends from Sister Margaret Lambert's Aboriginal Ministry.

We wish the Sisters every great blessing as they continue the great work of Mary MacKillop.

Una Galvin, Penrith

New Voices 2007

2nd November—15th December

New Voices 2007 is a time apart,
a sabbatical for people who are 60+.

It is open to both Religious and Lay people.

Any interested Associates are encouraged to
seek further information from:

Sr Helen Saunders
02 8741 2334

or

**St Joseph's—Baulkham Hills
Centre for Reflective Living**
02 9634 2317

You are invited...

to attend a

Chapter Conversation

with other members of the
Josephite family, in preparation for the
Provincial and General Chapters that will be
held later this year.

Saturday 16th June 2007
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Lidcombe Catholic Club

Information and RSVP
(by Friday 8th June):
Sr Helen Saunders rsj

Phone 02 8741 2334
Fax 02 8741 2399

helen.saunders@sosj.org.au

Star Gazing

I have always been fascinated by the mystery and size of our Universe and, because of this, I was encouraged to join our local Astronomical Society. Recently, while watching a video on our solar system, I had one of those moments of grace.

NASA launched the Voyager 2 space probe to collect information and images of our neighbouring planets, and especially to focus on the gas giants Jupiter, Saturn, etc. After its work was done and the probe continued into the vast universe, NASA reversed the camera. Thinking there was a speck of dust on their screen, they proceeded to brush it off. To their amazement they were looking at this tiny speck EARTH. At that moment I was overwhelmed at the vastness of our universe and the size of the gift we had been given. How much love must our God have for us to choose us to be guardians of this beautiful world? I marvelled at my smallness in this work of art, at such a gift to be treasured, and at the privilege of being given the task of caring for this creation.

So gazing up at the stars in our solar system has brought me full circle back to our wonderful earth and knowing my God's immense love for me.

Roy Derrett, Boambee

First Meeting of Josephite Associates in Nyngan

The first meeting of the Josephite Associates Nyngan was held on 10th December 2006 at 1 Gregory St, Nyngan, commencing at 10 a.m. The gathering commenced with the Associate Prayer to St Joseph and then the Newsletter for November 2006 was distributed.

As this was the first gathering, those present were anxious to find out what was expected of members and what other groups had taken on as their objectives. Sister Petra was asked to tell us about other groups she knew.

It was decided that for the time being the Josephite Associates at Nyngan would take on more of a social/fellowship/support role. We agreed to meet every three months around the time of the Newsletter is received. The Sunday morning meeting time after Mass at 10 a.m. seems to suit the group. Other parishioners will be invited to join the Associates or to just come and enjoy the social time over a cup of tea and a biscuit with other members of the parish. Our next gathering will be in March.

Leone Ward, Nyngan

Sister in Law

In the year 2001 I returned from ministering among Rwandan and Burundian refugees in Tanzania, where I had lived for four years.

I realised that I had been profoundly changed by the experience of living and working with the refugees in such challenging conditions. The plight of the refugees and the gross abuses of human rights that were occurring led me to begin a law degree in Australia on my return. I have completed my law studies and been admitted as a solicitor in NSW. The NSW Provincial and Congregational leadership are very supportive of this ministry. I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity.

The law studies have made it possible for me to minister in a Community Legal Centre among many disadvantaged people here in Western Sydney who cannot afford legal assistance. It is my privilege to work with African refugee women in the western suburbs in the field of legal education so that the women can learn about their legal rights and have access to legal services. I work in family law matters and appear in the Family Court where issues of family break-up, custody of children and contact visits have entailed family conferences and court appearances. Similarly in the Local Courts of the area, I represent people in their matters, covering a diversity of situations including debt, divorce, insurance disputes, wills, accidents, and many other issues that arise in the lives of people.

In recent months I have worked for two days a week with another solicitor to give legal assistance to women who have been trafficked into Australia. It seems to me that Mary MacKillop would hold these people very dear to her heart and remind us often to "Do what you can with the means at your disposal and leave all the rest calmly to God".

Louise Reeves rsj

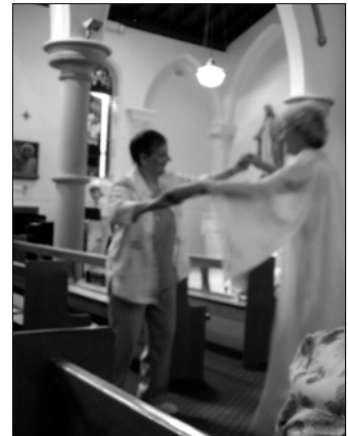
Mass of Thanksgiving

In the August 2006 issue of the newsletter we published Margaret Paton's reflection, 'On the Road to Recovery'. At that time Margaret was living at St Anne's Nursing Home, Hunters Hill, and was keeping busy each day with her physiotherapy and associated exercises. She was also very grateful for the prayerful support that she was receiving from so many people. Since then, Margaret has progressed from St Anne's—firstly to St Joseph's Hostel, Hunters Hill, and now to independent living, sharing a home with another Josephite at Croydon.

In February I received an unexpected, wonderful invitation from Margaret—to come and celebrate with her a Mass of thanksgiving for healing and answered prayers. I was really glad when I received the invitation, and the Mass (on 10th February) was lovely—a really joyful celebration of thanksgiving, at the Mary MacKillop Chapel at North Sydney. Margaret, walking unassisted, welcomed us from the lectern at the start of Mass. During her welcome, she said that, when she was in hospital just after her stroke, unable to talk or do anything much at all, Sr Kateri Duke went to visit her one day and found Margaret quietly singing (even though she couldn't actually talk yet!). She was singing 'Dancing with God' from Briege O'Hare and Marie Cox's CD 'Woman's Song of God':

*I cannot dance, O Lord, unless you lead me
And if you want me to leap for joy,
Then you must be the first to dance and to sing
And I will follow you; in your echo I will ring.
Then, only then,
Then, only then,
Then, only then, will I leap for joy!*

So there she was—couldn't walk or even sit up, and she was asking the Lord to lead her in his joyful dancing! So Kateri went home and learnt the song, so that she could join Margaret in her singing. And Margaret said to us, "We're going to sing that song today, and we're going to dance too!" So, at the Preparation of the Gifts, we did sing that song, and Sr Rosemary Mitchell, who is a champion Irish dancer, got up and started dancing, and then she invited Margaret to join her in the dance. So there was Margaret, dancing her joyful thanks to the Lord, and indeed leaping for joy, as she had asked of him! It was really great to see, especially when I remembered her in the wheelchair at Coorabel. What a celebration! And we continued celebrating with luncheon served in the Old Schoolroom. It was great to catch up with Margaret and to see her so well and happy, and to give thanks to God with her.



Christine Sivewright, Lakemba

Prayers for the Sick

Barry Becroft (Wattle Grove)
John Byrom, husband of Margaret (Belmont)
Angelina De Almeida (Fairfield)
Helen Hird (Quirindi)
Bruce Long (North Sydney)

National Pilgrimage
*In the Footsteps of
Blessed Mary MacKillop*

16-26 October 2007

For further information, contact:
Ministries Manager

Phone 02 8912 4818



WANTED

**Inspirational photos
for next year's calendar**

The theme will be connected to World Youth Day with its emphasis on three areas of witness, the cross and pilgrimage.

Exercise your creativity
and send your photos
to Sr Lyn Raftery
at the Province Centre
by the end of June 2007