

EASTER Associates News

EASTER EDITION 2017



Welcome to the Josephite Associate Queensland Quarterly Newsletter

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FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SEASONAL NEWS

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EDITORIAL 2017: PART 1

This beautiful Editorial is quite long but we thought for this Newsletter for Easter, it is pertinent. Instead of the usual format for the Newsletter of PRAYER, EDUCATION, ACTION, COMMUNICATION, EVENTS, we will break this Editorial into four parts and print it throughout the Newsletter. We have added to each part some questions for reflection. Please use these over the next few weeks as we celebrate the Easter festival.

“The night will be as clear as day. It will become our light, our joy.” We sing these words as we proclaim the Exultet during the Easter Vigil Mass. We’ve just witnessed the lighting of the Easter Candle or Paschal Candle and now process it into the darkened church to the singing of the Exultet, our Easter hymn of praise, recalling God’s faithfulness to his people right throughout the ages. As we travel the journey through Lent to Easter each year, we try to become more immersed in what it means to enter into the great foundational truth of our faith – the Paschal Mystery. By his life, his death and his resurrection, Jesus invites us to enter into the mystery of God’s enduring love for us. Living and dying are usually accepted as part and parcel of human experience. We rejoice at the birth of children; the companionship of family or special friends; maybe our gradual promotion in the workplace; that longed-for special holiday; or a win in the lotto. The joyful bits of life are easy and we often take them for granted, almost as a right. It’s the dying that has more of an impact on us. It’s not so easy when children grow up and leave home to begin new lives; our friendships sometimes do not endure; maybe our efforts are never recognised at work; and we never did manage to save enough money for that dream vacation; or loved ones die.

Through our Baptism we were invited to enter more fully into that whole mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. As the baptismal water flowed over us and through us, we were transformed into a new creation. We effectively died to our old selves and took on the new life which only Jesus can offer. At the Easter Vigil, we traditionally welcome new members into our church community through the baptismal waters, as was the practice for the first 300 years of church history. Fr Richard Leonard SJ puts this into perspective for us in his book 'What Are We Waiting For?' when he writes "This sacrament was always done at dawn on the Easter Vigil, not only because the rising sun symbolised Christ's light dawning into our lives, but because Baptism was always done in secret. For centuries, Christians who took the waters of baptism at dawn could be dead by lunchtime. For them, baptism was no social day out; it was a life and death commitment. Standing on the shoulders of the martyrs, most of us now gather for baptism in freedom and peace." Would we really have been willing to risk all by entering those baptismal waters? We may well have had to experience life, death and resurrection to eternal life all within a brief twenty four hours.

We need the support of a faith community to truly fulfil our baptismal commitment. We live out our individual baptismal pledge, but we will find it much easier if we join with others on the same journey. Jesus returned to the Father, but he always intended that we, the church, would continue his mission into the future. It was commissioned to remind us of the way forward, to encourage us when we needed encouragement, to goad us when the going was hard, and to be a source of consolation and hope to us. It was designed to point to the everlasting realities and remind us of the enduring love of that Incarnate God-with-us.

- a) **In my life since Baptism, how have I experienced death and resurrection?**
- b) **Who has supported me on the journey?**
How?



NEW BEGINNINGS FOR THE



HAVEN, EMU PARK

There was mixed emotion at the property at Emu Park known as 'The Haven' on Saturday 10th December 2016 when many sisters and locals gathered to mark the conclusion of its use and ministry by the Sisters of St Joseph and its transfer to the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton.

Originally purchased by the Sisters in November 1946 from its previous owner, Mrs Annie Margaret Wheeler OBE who gave it the name 'The Haven', it stands proudly on a headland overlooking the Keppel Islands. For the sisters it also became a haven of rest and relaxation after a year's work in the schools of the north and the west of the state.

Over time, additions were added and, when the sisters were not using the building, it began to be used by various groups within the diocese including priests, parish and school groups, and also enabled needy families to have a low-cost holiday by the sea.

The Thanksgiving Ritual was very simple, yet profound, and recognised the spirituality and influence of the Sisters of St Joseph in this ministry. Those Sisters present had fond and enduring memories of their time spent there and they expressed what the Haven had meant to

them as they processed a large banner hand-to-hand to the lectern. Sister Monica Cavanagh RSJ,



Congregational Leader, symbolically transferred the Haven to Bishop Michael McCarthy during the very moving and prayerful ceremony. Following the theme of the Ritual "Thanksgiving for all that was Celebration of all that is Anticipation of all that is to come...." Sister Monica expressed the hope that the Diocese of Rockhampton will continue the tradition of hospitality for which the Haven has become known over the past 70 years. It was the heartfelt prayer of all present that it will continue to be a haven in the future for all people who come there to experience their God in the peaceful surroundings, the wonderful sea views, and the company of others who are also on that journey to peace and harmony in the presence of their God.



EDITORIAL PART 2

"The night will be as clear as day. It will become our light, our joy." The church is no stranger to situations where the path ahead was not clear. In his book 'What is the Point of Being a Christian', Timothy Radcliffe OP offers the following reflection: "Christianity does not offer a road map, but it does have a story. The core of our story is those three days that take us from the Last Supper to the empty tomb. But the Last Supper was also the moment when the disciples lost any story to tell of the future. On the road to Jerusalem they had been sustained by some story of what was going to happen.....As the disciples on the road to Emmaus confessed to Jesus: 'We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel' (Luke 24:21). Whatever story they told collapsed that evening. Judas had sold Jesus; Peter was about to betray him. The other disciples would flee in fear. Faced with his passion and death they had no story to tell of the future. At the moment that this fragile community was disintegrating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and gave it to them saying, 'this is my

body, given for you". Radcliffe follows on to say "So every time we gather as a community to celebrate the Eucharist, we remember the moment in which Jesus faced death and desertion, when suddenly the disciples lost anything to say about where they were going. And we do so with words that come from the gospels, which were written in the light of that second great loss of a story of the future, when Jesus failed to return in glory. So we should know by now that hoping in the kingdom does not give us a road map, rather it takes it away. The church was born in a crisis of hope."

- a) **Reflect upon 'What is the point of being a Christian?'**
- b) **How has being a Christian supported me in the 'death' times of my life?**
 - i) **in times of sorrow?**
 - ii) **in times of rejection?**
 - iii) **in times of doubt?**
 - iv) **in times of family crisis?**
 - v) **in times of misunderstanding?**

LEADING INTO THE FUTURE

The influence of the Sisters of St Joseph is not only enduring in Central Queensland - but continuing. St Joseph's School Wandal and St Joseph's School Park Avenue, both previously established by the Sisters of St Joseph, are examples of students learning about a need and acting to do something about it. When the Gate Ministry was introduced to Rockhampton last year, the students were eager to contribute by providing items for the Mary MacKillop Kit Bags, which are given to those prisoners who are at risk when they are released from the Capricornia Correctional Centre. This may be because they have no family connection any more, or because of health concerns or mental conditions. Students at St Joseph's Park Avenue collected assorted toiletry items through the school and presented these to our Associate Group, while members of the Mini Vinnies at St Joseph's Wandal decided to fundraise instead. They spent many hours making ice blocks for sale

through the tuckshop at lunchtime and raised \$200, which was then presented to the Gate Ministry. As the Telstra phone cards and food vouchers are the more expensive items provided through the kit bags, this money can now be used to fund these items. It is so heartening to witness the action of these students in caring for those less fortunate, and especially in an era where social and cultural trends are tending to self-gratification. Well done to St Joey's students at Park Avenue and Wandal. Saint Mary MacKillop is proud of you all!

REFLECTION ON OUR ANNUAL ASSOCIATES PLANNING MEETING

The six members of the Planning Group –Joan Gilbert (Brisbane), Marie Sellin (Brisbane), Janette Dobson (Rockhampton), Pauline McGuire and Erin Jones (both Townsville) with Moya rsj - met on the weekend of 4/5 March 2017 for our annual meeting. On the Agenda were further issues to lead us to a sustainable Associates organization. We made decisions around the following issues:

A. RESOURCES

The group will continue the development of resources for formation and spirituality to assist in deepening the understanding of the charism of St Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods with local groups.

B. MEMBERSHIP

Conversation focussed on increasing membership through contact with primary/secondary students and young adults who desire to live out the charism. In this discussion we also explored the need for a subscription to ensure that the organization could operate. No decisions were made other than we put this on the agenda for the Leadership Conference of Associates in Sydney early April 2017. For this newsletter, you will again be invited to make a donation as many of you have been doing.

New membership is the responsibility of all members. Brochures are available from the Associates Office.

EDITORIAL PART 3

“The night will be as clear as day. It will become our light, our joy.” As I write this editorial, we have just experienced the first week of the final hearing into the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that has focused on the Catholic Church in Australia and its response to that abuse, which appears to have been systemic in some institutions or dioceses. It has been an extremely confronting time for most Australian Catholics to see the detailed facts and figures. The enormity of the extent of the abuse could not be ignored when those figures were presented. The heartbreaking and dramatically stark reality is that each of those numbers represents a human being who was originally made in the image of God and who has suffered unspeakable and incomprehensible hurt. You may also have witnessed the anguished and impassioned address presented to the Royal Commission by the Chief Executive of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council, Mr Francis Sullivan. Francis has been a gift to the Australian church in his advocacy on behalf of those who should have been protected. He has continuously and courageously challenged the Australian church to face these shocking revelations but, more importantly, to work towards genuine reconciliation, just compensation, healing, and the introduction of recognisable and effective structures to ensure these actions never occur again.

Some people might feel that, coupled with the shocking evidence, the prolonged and devastating effect of the Royal Commission Hearings and the fact that the church has historically been reluctant to act, it is difficult to find a way forward. Nothing could be further from the truth. It often takes the most abject sense of failure to allow change to occur. If we continue to conduct business as usual, then there will be no change, however now is the perfect moment to seize the transforming power of God's spirit. While we put up all the barriers to the action of the Spirit there will be no change, but when we, as a church, can humbly and sincerely admit to past failure and call on the merciful and transforming love of God, then we can begin to remodel into a church which might eventually

truly be a beacon of great hope in an often darkened world and one which can meet the challenges of the future.

I'd like to share with you something which I recently came across. The words are spoken by Rev Tim Costello AO, Chief Executive, World Vision Australia. Tim says, "Recently, whilst visiting the Middle East, I met a Jordanian mother of twelve and grandmother whose life has been severely impacted by the Syrian crisis. I asked her, "How do you keep going?" She replied, "My faith keeps me going, and I tell my kids not to be angry but to be generous." This grandmother exemplifies how faith at its best can change perspective and transform experience. Jesus commands us to be involved.

a) Ask myself the question "How do I keep going when confronted by

- i) the facts and figures of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse and its impact on the Church?**
- ii) the violence in our world?**
- iii) the unimaginable suffering of refugees and Asylum seekers?**

Townsville Josephite Associates

Update on the Townsville Josephite Associates.

We are still gathering for our monthly prayer meetings on the first Thursday of the month. The Gate Ministry is flourishing with over 180 bags sent to the prison in 2016 and we have already sent 45 bags this year. In conjunction with the prison chaplains, we are looking at expanding the bags into gender specific bags. 'Share the Dignity' organisations have also donated personal toiletries for women. We are grateful for this donation. This week the associates will join the rest of the Townsville Diocese to celebrate 24 Hours with the Lord. We will be conducting prayer and reflection for 45 minutes on Friday 10/3/2017 from 5.45pm.

Those who are attending the Leadership Conference in Sydney in April 2017 are looking

forward to meeting other Associates and exploring the exciting ideas they have about the future.

C. SERVICE

Further education and development of the concept of Service was discussed. There are new opportunities emerging for areas that Associates could be involved in to fulfil their commitment to the area of Service. Please watch each Newsletter as Associates share what they are doing in the local area e.g. the Gate Ministry in Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane. We'll keep you posted for other suggestions. Also see the Catholic Leader 12 March 2017 (P:17) for a further understanding of SERVICE.

D. STRUCTURE

This was a significant discussion focussed on how the Organisation will be structured into the future. No doubt this discussion will continue at the April Conference in Sydney. We looked at the roles of the Planning Group, Office Volunteer (Joan Gilbert) and Consultant to the group (Moya rsj).

E. COMMUNICATION

Newsletters will continue four times a year. For this year, our themes will centre around Easter, Pentecost, Mary MacKillop and Christmas .

We really encourage all groups/individuals to contribute to the Newsletters about happenings in their areas. The dates that for articles to be to qldassociates@sosj.org.au are as follows:

Pentecost – articles in by 26 May 2017

Mary MacKillop – 26 July 2017

Christmas (Advent) – 27 October 2017



CONFERENCE 2018

An important development is the news that an Associates Conference will be held in Queensland on the 18-20 May 2018. We are encouraging all Associates to think about attending such a Conference. For obvious reasons, the Conference will be held in Brisbane. We would like representation from all areas or from individuals to attend to have their say about the future. Joan, Marie and Moya are exploring possible venues and speakers. Updates will be in the next Newsletter.

F. FINANCE

We recorded our appreciation for the donations we have so far received. These are now being used for administration needs and supporting service outreach which Joan and Moya hope to do later this year. As said above, the matter of subscriptions will be part of the Sydney meeting.

EDITORIAL PART 4

“The night will be as clear as day. It will become our light, our joy.” Let’s celebrate the risen Christ come into our lives and into the life of the Australian church in a new way this Easter. Let’s put aside past prejudices and inaction, and invite the radiant light of the risen Christ to enter in and transform us into a beacon of hope reaching out across the nation and the horizon.

Cardinal St John Henry Newman understood only too well the significance of the Christ Light and its power to brighten the darkness. Originally an Anglican minister, he later converted to Catholicism and became an amazing example of faith and trust in God’s loving and generous providence. He wrote “Pillar of the Cloud” in 1883 and today we know it as “Lead Kindly Light”. I think it is an apt note on which to conclude. Only when we have the eyes of faith to see through the darkness and to believe in a new dawning will we be able to embrace the Christ Light with joy.

Lead Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on!

The night is dark, and I am far from home – Lead thou me on!

Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray’d that thou shouldst lead me on.

I loved to choose and see my path, but now lead thou me on.

a) **Thank God for the hope we share
through our Baptism on the journey of
life**

EASTER BLESSING

On the journey of this day, accompany us

In the stories we share, inspire us

In our breaking of bread, sustain us

In our desire for you

may our hearts burn

and overflow with joy and love,

Gracious Companion.

Amen

Act Love Walk Praying in the Josephite Spirit P:21



Josephite Associate Queensland Groups

**Allora
Cairns
Clermont
Caboolture
Moorooka
Rockhampton
Townsville
and places in between**



Thank you to those who have made a contribution in 2016

DONATION TO THE QUEENSLAND ASSOCIATE MOVEMENT

NAME: _____

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ASSOCIATES PLANNING COMMITTEE

123 WARREN STREET

FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006,

PHONE: 3833 6119 & E: QLDASSOCIATES@SOSJ.ORG.AU

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