



**Contact Details:**

**Mail Address:**

Josephite Companions  
Mary MacKillop  
Heritage Centre  
362 Albert Street  
EAST MELLBOURNE VIC 3002

**Email:**

[vic.companions@sosj.org.au](mailto:vic.companions@sosj.org.au)

**Core Team Members:**

Anne-Marie Wilkinson  
VIC Core Team Leader  
JCoLT Member  
[awilkinson@padua.vic.edu.au](mailto:awilkinson@padua.vic.edu.au)

Noreen McLeish  
Hamilton Pilgrimage  
[noreen.mcleish@gmail.com](mailto:noreen.mcleish@gmail.com)

Christine Van Order  
Pastoral Care  
[cnvanorder@hotmail.com](mailto:cnvanorder@hotmail.com)

Greg Nelson  
Newsletter and Data Base  
[gne@stpeters.vic.edu.au](mailto:gne@stpeters.vic.edu.au)



## VICTORIA - TASMANIA JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER

*Springtime is upon us. The birds celebrate her return with festive song, and murmuring streams are softly caressed by the breezes.*

*(Sonnet accompanying Vivaldi's Four Seasons)*

Dear Fellow Companions,

Welcome to Spring. I trust that you are all well and looking forward to the blooming of the flowers and the singing of the birds. Perhaps you are a football fan, and your team is in the finals. If they are, good luck and enjoy the journey. Maybe you have other interests that you find inspirational. Once again, Enjoy!

Speaking of journeys, it is one hundred and fifty years since Mary MacKillop set out to visit the Holy See to seek approval for a Rule for the newly formed Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart. When Mary journeyed to Rome in 1873, it was the beginning of Autumn in Australia, however, in Europe Spring was about to return.

Sr Maria Carey's describes Mary MacKillop's journey and the pitfalls that Mary had to overcome. Sr Maria's account can be found at [Mary Mackillop goes to Rome-Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart \(sosj.org.au\)](http://MaryMackillop.com)

I hope that you find it interesting and inspirational. Mary's journey was a fruitful one, albeit long and arduous, but thanks be to God, her hopes and aspirations were eventually fulfilled.

On the other hand, as we are hearing during our Sunday readings, some journeys are not as enjoyable as others. Christ journeyed to Jerusalem to face his eventual death and resurrection. The reading from Matthew's Gospel for the 22nd Sunday of the year has Jesus tell his disciples that he is 'destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously.' Christ is willing to make the journey, just as Mary of the Cross was willing to make the journey to Rome to have the order of the Sisters of Saint Joseph recognized by the Holy See. Whatever, your journey is may it end where you hope it should end. I hope that your Spring journey, which will quickly lead to Advent, is a fruitful one.

*St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Pray for Us.*

Greg

*"I am going to Rome...and I go full of hope!" Mary MacKillop - March 25, 1873*

*"Go on courageously and continue to pray" Fr Julian Tennison Woods - 1868*

### DATES TO REMEMBER

**October 14<sup>th</sup>** Voice Referendum

**October 17<sup>th</sup>** Anniversary of the Canonization of Mary MacKillop

**November 25<sup>th</sup>** 10.30a.m Meeting for Leaders (BYO Lunch)

1.30pm **Josephite Companions Annual Mass**

all Companions welcome

**Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre, 362 Albert Street, East Melbourne VIC 3002**

Could Group Leaders please email Anne-Marie by Nov 1<sup>st</sup> if you are able to attend the Meeting (and Mass)

Other companions who wish to attend the **Mass, RSVP by Nov 8<sup>th</sup>** (day after Melbourne Cup)  
*Please note the Mass date had to be altered this year so that Fr Michael Kalka could celebrate with us.*

## COMPANION NEWS - Webinar



On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, JCoLT held a webinar to discuss Annie MacKillop's participation in the work of her sister, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and the Sisters of St Joseph.

The webinar concluded that Annie MacKillop was in fact the first Josephite Companion and is a good example for us to follow.

Sr Judith Geddes rsj wrote about Annie in the JCoLT July Newsflash. *(included in this newsletter)* There was discussion about what we should call Annie... some of the thoughts included: Patron? First Companion? Companions Champion!

Further discussion about making the 5<sup>th</sup> of September *(the anniversary of Annie's birth)* a day for Companions to celebrate who we are as part of the Josephite charism. Attendees were asked to consider ways in which this 'celebration' could be done in the future. The webinar with Sr Judith as guest speaker this year being a first example.

Please feel free to offer your thoughts. Anne-Marie Wilkinson would welcome any feedback from Companions about the webinar and how we might celebrate and name Annie MacKillop.

Please email her on: [awilkinson@padua.vic.edu.au](mailto:awilkinson@padua.vic.edu.au)

### IN THIS ISSUE

Regional News - Page 2-4

Bereavements - Page 5

Bacchus Marsh History contributed by Sr Mary Fermio rsj - Page 6 - 8

Attachment JCoLT Newsflash – Page 9-12

***This Newsletter has a slightly different format than usual. I have tried to include all the wonderful news that has been submitted to me from around the Regions. If I have inadvertently omitted any news, please forgive me and let me know.***

***I will endeavour to include it in the Summer Edition.***

**Greg**

NOTE: We apologize for the delay in banking some of your subscriptions this should all be sorted shortly.

### **\* NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGIONS \***

#### **MELTON**

Marian Muller from the Melton Group has submitted the following report of the activities of the Feast of St Mary of the Cross. She writes:

Due to the health conditions and life situations of many of our members of the Melton group, we were not able to meet. I felt very blessed to make it to evening Mass, after a hectic day of appointments caring for mum and sat with my fellow companion Margaret Richards, who greeted me so warmly and kindly shared her sheet with the Novena to St Anthony with me.

Together we sat, for Eucharist and absorbed the fine and beautiful homily our young priest, Fr Wilford gave of our patron St Mary of the Cross and how her life gave witness to the readings of the day and is exemplary for us as in our daily lives.

Our priest is new to our country and very new to our parish. His gentle, loving, and knowledgeable deliverance of his homily was enriching and moving.

With gratitude for all the people and elements that made the feast day special, in its simplicity, in The Way of Christ and of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop



Another new Companion  
*Left to Right: Marj Missen, Jenny Coutts,  
Jan Cavaghan and Sr Jose Noy rsj*



## LEONGATHA / WONTHAGGI

Julie De Bondt has let fellow Companions know what has been happening in the Leongatha/Wonthaggi area. She says:

On Mary Mackillop's Feast Day, 11 Companions from Leongatha and Wonthaggi met for Mass at Inverloch's Star of the Sea Church. Fr Darren Howie celebrated it.

We then invited the rest of the congregation to join us for lunch at the Esplanade Hotel and we all enjoyed celebrating this special day.

## MORWELL

Monica Lappin from the Morwell Group describes sharing the Feast of St Mary of the Cross and combining the celebration of the day with the enrolment of a new companion. Monica says:

“Here in Morwell we were able to celebrate St Mary MacKillop's feast day with the enrolment of Jenny Hansch as a Companion. She had waited long time, but it was worth it. We first gathered in the tennis centre at Sacred Heart and Anne Barrett (my daughter) conducted the Liturgy for twelve us, with three apologies. Kath Tisdale one of our longest serving members signed the certificate.

Afterwards we went off to the Morwell Club for a further celebration with lunch. Fr James Fernandez was able to join us there which made it even more memorable. We meet monthly and really enjoy each other's company. Two of our members recently went on a quick pilgrimage to Sydney with the Catholic Women's League of Traralgon and were really impressed with the Heritage Centre and many other places.



*Jenny Hansch at her enrolment as a Josephite Companion. God Bless you, Jenny, and your fellow Companions.*

## HAMILTON

Noreen McLeish has described the recent events that the Hamilton Companions took part in. Firstly, she says, "Sadly we lost our wonderful Josephite Companion, Ted Oliver, on the June 20, at the age of eighty-nine. Ted was a founding member of the Hamilton Josephite Associates group at Hamilton in the 1990's. Ted was a loyal friend of Alexander MacKillop and loved telling Pilgrims about Alexander's life. When I took on the responsibility Ted said one day, "Noreen I know that Alexander was no saint but without him we would not have had our Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop." I knew that Ted had converted me when I found myself talking to Alexander as I put flowers on his grave on Mary's Feast Day recently!"



This year so far, we have had four groups of Pilgrims visit, with the National Tour coming in October. We are a small group, but we enjoy giving hospitality to the Pilgrims in the Josephite tradition. Sr Rita and Melbourne/Geelong Pilgrims are pictured below.

Our Library is now in use in Mary's Chapel and open to anyone in the Parish to use. We celebrated St Mary's Feast Day with the parishioners at our daily Mass, and of course a cup of tea and refreshments together.

We would like to thank Sr Mary Fermio rsj for her devotion and valuable input into the Josephite Associates/Companions over many years. She is a splendid example of a woman who lives and breathes the Josephite way of living. Her organizational skills and knowledge of Saint Mary MacKillop's life and family have been shared with us over many years. *(Sr Mary has contributed a piece recalling her time at Bacchus Marsh in this Newsletter)* I am sure she will continue to share as she moves to her next move.

Thankyou Sr Mary, from Hamilton Companions.



## PAKENHAM

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August I joined the KooWeeRup/ Pakenham group for mass to facilitate the commitment ceremony of 3 new Companions. The group had mentored Jo, Gerald and Maria as they worked their way through the Discovery Program and it was wonderful to have so many join in the celebration. After mass we had a lovely morning tea together and it was great to catch up with this very active group once again. They were also planning to meet for mass on the Feast day with a supper afterwards.

Anne-Marie Wilkinson

## BEREAVEMENT

**Eternal Rest Grant unto them O Lord and let your perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May They Rest In Peace**

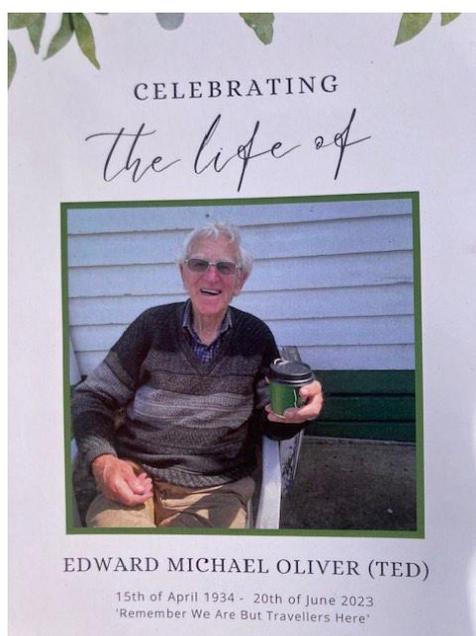
Mary Rosetti

Tony Barker (*Incorrectly listed as Tony Barber, in last Newsletter.*)

*Tony was a loved Companion and a member of St Vincent de Paul, Cranbourne, for over ten years.*

Ted Oliver

Ted gave over 30 years to the first Josephite Associates/Companions in Hamilton. He was dedicated to spreading Alexander MacKillop's story.



## STAMPS FOR THE MISSIONS

Please leave a border of about 3cm around stamps.

Forward stamp to: STAMPS Locked Bag 3031 BURWOOD NSW 1805

Boxes of Stamps to: 5 Alexander Avenue CROYDON NSW 2132

**Thank You**



## BACCHUS MARSH – 133 YEARS

Three months after Mary MacKillop took Sisters to Numurkah, Mother Bernard accompanied four Sisters to the first Convent in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Bacchus Marsh. They were met at the Station by Archbishop Carr, who had paid for the building and the land where the school was to be built in the future. Joining him was the Parish Priest, and all were welcomed by Parishioners at their Convent.

Srs Germaine Scanlan, Irene Kemp, Leo Touhey and Margaret Mary Williams formed the new community, and they were accompanied by Mother Bernard.

The Sisters were transported by horse carriage to their new home on a hill on the outskirts of Bacchus Marsh, then a small town on the way to Ballarat. Their first home was a single storey house that had belonged to Dr Rae. The school was situated in Fiskin St, a kilometre or so from this residence. The Sisters attended the school on the Monday, 2 days after their arrival on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 1890. Not much time for preparation or orientation for themselves or their work! Did they walk to school each day in rain and frost? And in those days the Sisters rose at 5.00 a.m! In the years to come school rooms were set up on land adjacent to the Convent and the school in Fiskin St closed.

We need to remember that the Sisters received no salary for their work. The families usually paid “school money” which was very little in those days and nothing if they could not afford it. I can remember going to school in the 1940’s with one shilling, school money for the three of us. Some of you would remember mothers who helped to fill the pantries in January before the Sisters arrived, taking vegies and fruit to the Sisters, weekend baskets of cakes etc., butter from the local factory, eggs from your fowls, concerts and fund raisers to obtain money for the Sisters’ fares to Melbourne, holiday expenses, new clothes. And in many cases the Sisters shared what they had with those families in greater need. They reciprocated with generosity providing hot cocoa to youngsters who attended first Friday Mass at 7 am and then took their toast to the convent where the Sisters provided a hot drink.

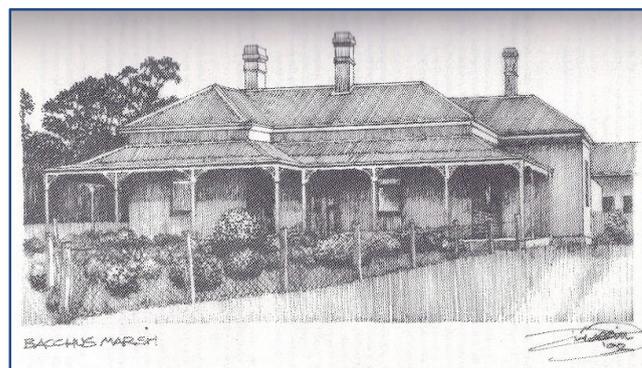
So how did the Sisters survive? Maybe the parishioners had stocked the pantry before they arrived. Being a dairy area, someone may have provided them with milk and cream.

Vegetables and fruit would have been donated. One of the farmers may have killed a beast (sheep or cow) and gave them meat. The Parish Priest would have been expected to contribute something, but that often depended on the generosity of the Priest and the circumstances of the parish.

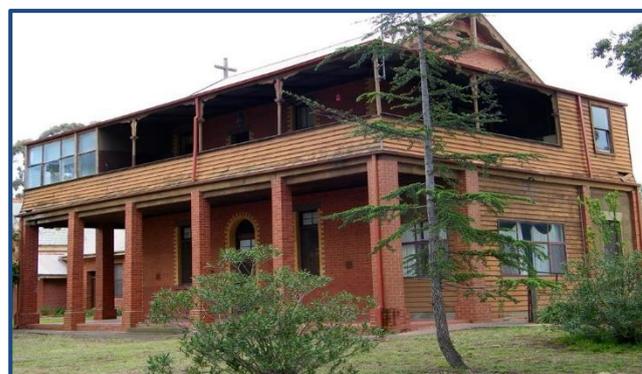
So out of this small amount the Sisters had to keep themselves fed, clothed, medical supplies, shoes and whatever other needs turned up during the year. At the end of the year the Sisters usually had to find funds to travel to their annual retreat venues and to contribute either in cash or kind to supplies for the duration of the retreat e.g., 8 days.

As Sisters gradually settled in Melbourne, Bacchus Marsh was the largest convent in the whole of Victoria so the Sisters would come there for their Retreat. Probably sleeping on straw pallets, several to a room to accommodate the number. By 1900 the original residence was collapsing, so a two-storey building was erected with room for boarders to stay during the week and classrooms. As numbers had expanded a larger chapel was needed especially for retreat times and in 1905 a chapel, attached to the new convent, was blessed, and opened.

These two buildings were paid for by donations and loans, another expense for the Congregation to pay off - the loan and interest. It wasn't until the 1970's that Sisters were paid a stipend for their teaching duties in schools. So, the generosity of parishioners was gratefully accepted and prayers for benefactors were part of the daily routine.



Original Convent



Brick Convent in 1910

The Sisters were happy at Bacchus Marsh. Mary MacKillop loved to visit and stayed there for a short time whenever she was in Melbourne. Her visits were remembered by the children for in a time of few luxuries, she was always able to find a lolly for them.

In 1987 the Parish took over ownership of the convent, school and land and bought a house for the sisters in Lederderg St. Sisters no longer acted as principal and were involved in liturgy, visiting and taking Communion to sick and housebound.

The last Sister to live in Bacchus Marsh is Sr Mary Fermio, who arrived in 2009 as Coordinator of Josephite Associates (now Companions) until 2019. Since then, Sr Mary has helped with liturgy, Minister of Communion, visiting and by being a Josephite presence in the Parish promoting the life of St Mary MacKillop and understanding of the Scriptures. She will leave towards the end of 2023 to take up residence at Yarraville.

The Sisters have always been grateful for the friendship and assistance given to the Sisters during their 133 years at Bacchus Marsh and memories will be treasured.



Convent – 68 Lederderg Street – Bacchus Marsh

### **JOSEPHITE COMPANION PRAYER**

Companioning Spirit Intensify our living of the Josephite Charism now as you inspired St Joseph, St Mary MacKillop, and Fr Julian Tenison Woods.

Grace us with Friendship and Hospitality, as we make community in the ordinariness of our lives.

Grace us with Prayerful Hearts that listen to your voice and contemplate your presence in creation.

Grace us with Service, promoting human dignity and love of neighbour.

Strengthen our commitment to live justly, love tenderly and walk humbly, Conscious that we are participating in your mission.

Companion, encourage and enfold us in the fullness of Divine Love.

Amen.



# JCoLT newsflash

July 2023



Dear Companions,

***“To forget to celebrate is to forget to imitate the God who created us and then relaxed and said, ‘That’s good.’”***

These words of Joan Chittister remind us of the importance to celebrate life, and in the coming months we have two occasions to gather and celebrate the Josephite story.

Mary MacKillop’s Feast Day invites us to recall the life of this great woman whose legacy we continue to live and share today: she who has inspired so many to live life with an open and generous heart.

In September we will recognize Annie MacKillop who accompanied Mary and many of the early Sisters. That is, she ‘companioned’ them, and would have shared in many challenges and celebrations along that pathway, sharing in the charism. We hope that many of you will be able to gather online on September 2nd with Companions from many places to learn about Annie’s gift to the Josephite story and celebrate her as our inaugural Josephite Companion. (see p2)

We also welcome two new members to our Josephite Companions Leadership Team and look forward to their contributions as we move forward. (see p3)

Happy celebrations and many blessings,

**Josephite Companions Leadership Team (JCoLT):  
Mary Hemmings, Helen Dougherty, Anne-Marie  
Wilkinson, Pauline McGuire, Helen Brown, Antoinette  
Mangion, Clare Conaglen rsj**

**International Companions Day  
Webinar**

**2 September 2023**

**Walking Together  
Honouring our History  
Enriching our Future**

*Breakout Rooms - Open Discussions*  
To book your free ticket - Use QR Code or go to  
<https://www.trybooking.com/CJRTC>  
Bookings Close 28 August 2023

Guest Speaker  
Sr Judith Mary Geddes rsj  
Author: A Faith Filled Family

AEST 11.30AM TO 1.30PM - SA 11.00AM TO 1.00PM - WA 9.30AM TO 11.30AM  
NZ 1.30PM TO 3.30PM - TIMOR-LESTE 10.30AM TO 12.30PM  
PERU 1/9/2023 8.30PM TO 10.30PM

**Come and discover Annie MacKillop,  
our first Josephite Companion!**

# Annie MacKillop

## Companion & Friend to Mary MacKillop & Sisters of St Joseph

Annie MacKillop was a younger sister of Mary, now celebrated as Australia's first saint. From her teenage years Annie grew in her care of her siblings as companion, helper and confidante, especially of Mary.

Before and since the canonization of Saint Mary MacKillop, many people have become associated with her spirit, her work and her dedication to helping the poor. Over time, these followers or associates have been men and women who follow in the spirit of Mary and have now chosen to be named as Companions. They not only pray through Saint Mary of the Cross but live in the same spirit of dedicated service. As the numbers of professed Josephite Sisters lessen, these Companions are assuming a greater and more active role in following Christ as companions and friends.



Annie MacKillop has been chosen as the model for Josephite Companions. Besides being Mary's companion, and often co-worker, she also knew, as a single woman, the difficulties of earning a living, finding a home, and coping with daily problems as we do today. In later life after receiving some financial help from her uncle Peter MacKillop after his death, she wrote to her brother Father Donald: *How glad I am to have things settled and to get my £100 a year without having any bother over rates, gas, etc. besides the fear always of fire or accidents. It would be so nice to be at "peace" about money matters for the rest of my life.* (Personal Letter 8 Aug 1910)

Annie became Mary's life-long friend, support and confidante, deeply involved in Mary's mission, even though she never became a vowed Sister of St Joseph, never had her own home. After teaching in Penola with Mary, she later taught music in early schools to help with living costs. Annie can give us inspiration for our own living and service.



Text: Judith Geddes rsj  
Sketch: Kate Warlond

# Who are we?

Hi, my name is Antoinette Mangion. I was born in Malta and migrated to Australia in 1982. I am a widow and a mother of three young men.



I've been involved with the Josephites for 20 years. For the last 13 years I've been the leader of the Blacktown Josephite Companions and at the moment I am discerning the Covenant Josephite Pathway/Private Vows Pathway. I'm also a member of the leadership team of the NSW Companions and very recently joined JCoLT.

I worked as a Respite Care Co-ordinator with the Maltese Community. Here I organised activities for the senior Maltese community and supported clients with day-to-day tasks and outings. After this, I worked in Blacktown's Parish Office as a Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. This involved looking after ministers who give Communion to the sick, organising RCIA and baptism meetings and I was also part of the Sacramental Team.

Now retired, I'm involved in our Parish Social Justice Group where I organise a morning Tea every Wednesday morning for those experiencing social isolation. I also help in the Pantry, a grocery service offered to those doing it tough in Blacktown and beyond. I'm a Minister of the Word and a Eucharistic Minister. I love reading, travelling and going for walks in the open or sitting on a bench admiring God's gift of creation. I also love walking on the beach or just looking at the vastness of the ocean.

My name is Helen Brown and I am honoured to be representing West Australian Josephite Companions on JCoLT. I hope that I can contribute meaningfully to the future of the Josephite Companion Movement, building strong, vibrant and self-sustaining communities.



I have a deep appreciation for the important role that strong, innovative and faithful women have played in my life. One of those women is St Mary of the Cross whom I admire and try to imitate in my interactions with others, extending selfless love to all, particularly children, women, the marginalised and First Nations people. I am committed to living simply and contemplatively while trusting in the divine mercy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

I am a mother of two grown children who bring me great joy, happiness and fulfilment. I am a teacher and have been in education for over thirty years. I hope that I have had a meaningful impact on the lives of those students whom I have had the pleasure to teach, shaping and inspiring them along their journey."

I am grateful for the contribution that the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart have made to the Australian way of life and admire their ongoing and tireless work in areas of great need today - care of the earth, reconciliation and care for the poor and marginalised in society.

## Josephite Companions in Timor Leste



During the week leading to St Joseph's day the Timorese Josephite Companions had three link-ups. On Sunday March 12th they met at Mary MacKillop Today Centre and had a meeting. It had been quite a long break from the previous one. Sister Nola was able to be at the meeting, which was great as Covid and travelling had meant she could not be at one before this. At the meeting they decided on many things and prayed together and just had a great time catching up.



On Saturday 18th early in the morning they met up and climbed up the steps to Christo Rei and prayed the Stations of the Cross with beautifully harmonised singing and then had a combined breakfast at the bottom of the walk.

Then on St Joseph's day (Sunday) they all went to the 11am Mass at Balidi and after Mass had a 'bring-something' meal together. The food was amazing. Hopefully this year will see many more connections and mercy works from the Companions.



### Social Media:

Companions making a difference? Share an item of interest from your local Companions' group that may inspire others. Send information and a photo to our Companions' email address so we can share it on the website. Use the **#JosephiteCompanions** on Instagram to tag your group's activities. Let's keep connected!