



Josephite Associates

Friendship ♦ Prayer ♦ Service

Summer Newsletter

1 December 2009

Another Look at Christmas

When a story is as familiar to us as the Christmas story, we don't really pay attention to the details. The Christmas card image – a cherubic baby in a spotless manger, surrounded by adoring parents, shepherds, angels and wise men – is probably the image most of us have in our minds.

In reality, the story is about an unmarried mother, her fiancé who chooses to support her, both forced to make the long journey to Bethlehem in the last weeks of Mary's pregnancy because they are living in an occupied country and the Romans have demanded a census. When they arrive, Mary is having her first contractions so they know they need to find a place to stay quickly but "there is no room at the inn". The kindly innkeeper lets them bed down in the stable, and those of you who live in rural areas will know that stables can be messy, smelly places – not like the Christmas card picture! Sometime after the baby is born, they are forced to flee to Egypt – refugees in a strange land where they have no friends or family – and stay there for some years until the coast

is clear and they can return to their home town of Nazareth.

Have you ever wondered how Joseph coped with all this? He possibly had to put up with questions, maybe even ridicule from his family and friends when Mary became pregnant. Then he had to organize the long journey to Bethlehem, provide for mother and baby until they could travel, and somehow find work to sustain the family in Egypt until it was safe for them to go home. Joseph was a man who trusted in the dream – God's dream for a world where justice and compassion meet. Read Matthew Chapter 1, verses 18-25.

Blessed Mary MacKillop was another person who trusted in God's dream by working for and with the poor, the disadvantaged, the refugee, the homeless, the unmarried mother. In 1874 she wrote "God will not fail you, no matter how much you may be tried".

The Leadership Team sends you our Christmas Blessings and invites you to take another look at the reason for the season:



*When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone
When the kings and the princes are home
When the shepherds are back with their flocks
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost, to heal the broken,
To feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations, to bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.*

Around the Country

Queenstown

August 8th dawned fine but chilly with a Southerly wind blowing, but that did not daunt those who had come out to celebrate and thank God for the life and inspiration of Mother Mary MacKillop. The Arrowtown Church was aglow with a joyous feeling of excitement and expectation as Fr Tony Harrison celebrated the mass of Mother Mary. Rupert Hyland was especially remembered in the prayers of the faithful for all the wonderful work he and Margaret had done in restoring the cottage and bringing history to life. After Mass we went over to the cottage where St Mary Anna op gave us a history and reflection on Mother Mary and her sisters in Arrowtown in the early days. We could well imagine how bitter those winters must have been. So much for history, we then adjourned to the priest's cottage to share a pot luck lunch and chatter. It was lovely and warm in there with heaters going, hot soup, cups of tea and plenty of food. Life was hard back in those pioneering days and Mother Mary met those challenges. Those challenges are still with us today and let's hope the spirit of Mary will work through us. With her help it will. *Madeline Lawn*

Dargaville

It is with great sadness that we prepare this report. With the sudden death of our dear leader, Dorothea Geraghty we found ourselves floundering somewhat in taking up the gauntlet and reorganizing our group to cover the multitude of tasks that Dorothea did for our group. She led us by example, with a great sense of duty, perseverance and a multitude of talents which she shared graciously with the Josephites, our parish and the wider community. There is no doubt her passing has left many vacancies to fill along the way. We thank God for her life, also that He allowed her to live with all her faculties intact till the day he called her

home, and she, in turn, used those generously in His service.

Rest in peace, dear Dorothea. *"God will protect and work with us."* Mary MacKillop 1885.

Mary MacKillop Centenary

We invited parishioners to join us to celebrate at our Mary MacKillop Parish Centre on 7th August, with St Joseph's School performing a concert for our Senior Citizens Outreach. Our MC, Gary Molloy, opened the afternoon with a welcome and short speech on the significance of the occasion and the importance of the Sisters of St Joseph having founded our parish convent school in 1908 and their 80 years of service here. We presented the school and parishioners with laminated bookmarks we had made of the Mary MacKillop stained glass window in the Temuka church. The afternoon was a great success. It was a joy for us to organize and carry out the initial plans that Dorothea had been part of before her death. God certainly did work for us.

Four of our Josephite members, including our new leader Alba Evans, travelled to Remuera the next day for the centenary Mass at St Michael's, Remuera, to complete a truly memorable feast day celebration. During the month of August we have also included in our parish bulletin one of Mary MacKillop's inspirational writings.



St Joseph's School Music Group

Whangarei

The Whangarei RSJ Associates are a committed group of people, who meet once a term to share a liturgy and hospitality time. The Friday night evenings are focused on the life, work and reflections of Blessed Mother Mary MacKillop. The Whangarei Associates have a long history of practically supporting the Sisters of St. Joseph. These Sisters taught in St. Mary's Catholic Primary School and in St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, for eighty-one years. Once the Sisters of St. Joseph left Whangarei, the Associate group kept meeting due to the willingness of people, like Mrs. Patricia Lindstrom and Mrs. Margaret Emmett, to lead the group. The RSJ Associate group now has a cross-section membership of people from the local St. Francis Xavier Parish. The group meets in the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School staffroom. One of our tasks is to pray for the fostering of the founding Mary MacKillop Charism of St. Francis Xavier Catholic School. Our prayers have seen the Charism become an integral part of the school's vision. We also endeavor to support Sisters Tina and Win with their work in Warkworth. During the year we visited with the Sisters at Warkworth and were treated to a wonderful lunch and a tour of their extensive garden. Another goal has been to strengthen links with the Dargaville and Panguru RSJ Associate groups. Our Josephite Elizabeth Farge recounts below a special Associate Day

hosted by the Dargaville Associates earlier this year.

"In September, some of the Whangarei RSJ Associates and Sisters Tina and Win, enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Dargaville Associates, in their beautiful Mary MacKillop Centre as we celebrated together the centenary of the death of Mother Mary of the Cross. After a shared lunch and chat, Sr. Win spoke about what it has meant to her to be a Josephite. We journeyed with her through the forty years of her life as a religious, as she, the sisters who joined with her and the order developed and broadened, always endeavouring to continue the spirit of the vision and the charism of Bl. Mary MacKillop. Over afternoon tea we admired the scrapbook of their activities kept by the Dargaville Associates, a great record.

We wish Sr. Win a wonderful time in Australia in December-January as she and her contemporaries celebrate their fortieth anniversary. Imagine the reminiscences as they reflect on their pilgrim lives and faith together and apart over the decades! We sympathise with Sr. Tina in the sadness that has struck her homeland and we look forward to returning the hospitality of the Dargaville group next year."

Elizabeth Farge

Whangarei Associates look forward to meeting with Dargaville and Panguru Associates in 2010. We wish Josephite Religious and Associates around New Zealand a blessed Christmas.

Group Coordinator, Jane Gunson

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

Molly McAuliffe and Madeleine Dougherty (Christchurch Associates)

Tess Kelly (St Heliers Associate)

Jack McMillan, husband of Pat (Rotorua Associate)

Bob Emmett, husband of Margaret (Whangarei Associate)

Alison Swanson (Thames Associate and sister of Sr Angela McArthur rsj), and for Alison's daughter Karen who is seriously ill.

Prayers also for those who are seriously ill:

Sr Ann Gilroy rsj

Alex Millar, husband of Hilda (Rotorua Associate)



The Whanganui Experience

On a brilliantly sunny weekend in early September the Associate Leadership Team travelled to Whanganui to share progress and experiences with the Sisters and Affiliates of the Federation Sisters of St Joseph. We gathered on Friday night at Mt St Josephs for prayer and introductory meeting. On Saturday morning we explored the wonderful markets down by the river, and then did a short sight-seeing tour before resuming our discussions and activities. By Sunday we were basking in the sunshine at the Sisters' beach house at Kai Iwi.



The charism and history of the Sisters, the mission and spirit of both groups of Sisters bonded us strongly in oneness, and, together with the Associates and Affiliates we experienced a new strength of who we are and where this growth may lead. I was impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of the Affiliates and Associates.

I acknowledge that for some years the Associates I knew were excellent and supportive friends but I could not see a direction that would bring any future beyond our own passing.

However, as the weekend progressed it came clearly to me that there is every hope of a future. Just as Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods saw the needs of the day and dedicated themselves to drawing others to share in their ministry, so, in this modern changing time we are ready to form a new vision in the charism and spirit of those who have gone before. In fresh ways we can open our minds and ourselves to God's world of today, develop a Josephite outreach through the men and women who choose to take up these 21st century challenges.

A starting point for me is in encouraging Associates to use Tui Motu articles for lively points of discussion. As we listen to and observe today's world we can better come to understand the hearts and minds of our developing generations whose lives and experiences differ so very greatly from ours!

Margaret Louisson RSJ



Please join us on St Joseph's Day 2010

- Friday 19th March at the Mission Bay Convent
 - Liturgy ~ 6.30pm
 - Followed by supper ~ please bring a plate
 - Please bring a small item for the raffle basket
- (in aid of House of Bethany and Beautiful Daughters)