



Josephite Associates

* Friendship * Prayer * Service
- November 2009 -

Hello from the Coordinator

In between the 100th anniversary of the death of Blessed Mary MacKillop and the 120th anniversary of the death of Julian Tenison Woods many events have taken place. 8th August was a wonderful day of celebration! Thank you to the many Associates who made their way to the North Sydney Oval to witness this historic day. After the Eucharist I had the pleasure of announcing the winner of the Lucky Draw – Gabriella Spinetti of the North Sydney group. She has just returned from the Mary MacKillop Pilgrimage, and has promised to write something for the Newsletter. Congratulations Gabriella!

I was privileged to address the Knights of the Southern Cross at their 90th Annual State Conference, which was held at Mary MacKillop Place on 12th September. They were keen to hear something of the charism of Blessed Mary. A number of the Knights are Associates from various groups.

The Annual General Meeting and the Kincumber retreat were times when we came together to pray, meet each other and share ideas and stories.

The country visits to Bombala and Nyngan went well. The Bombala group heard Sr Virginia Bourke rsj speak on the elements of the Josephite emblem, while I showed the Nyngan school and parish communities the PowerPoint presentation on my Peru visit. While down south, I also enrolled new members in Bombala and Cooma. I have also visited Lalor Park, Penrith, Auburn and Lidcombe.

It is hard to believe that another year is passing! Thanks one and all for your contributions that made 2009 a special year for the Josephite family. Now we look forward to the Canonisation.

Christmas blessings to you and your families!

Sr Helen Saunders

Coming Events—Associates

Sydney Gravesite Pilgrimage
21st November 2009

Bookings essential ASAP
\$30 non-refundable; BYO lunch

Advent Prayer Day
Tuesday 1st December 2009
St Gerard's

Rear 5 Alexandra Avenue, Croydon
9:30–2:30 p.m.
Advent Theme
Led by Sr Mary Baker rsj
Cost \$10; BYO lunch

Kincumber Retreat
19th–21st February 2010
“New Horizons”

Led by Sr Bridie O'Connell rsj
Cost \$180

For further information phone
Sr Helen Saunders on 02 8741 2334

Requiescant in Pace

Sr Magdala Bennett; James Blakemore (Kincumber); Sr Kathleen Burford; Ted Candrick, brother of Sr Marj Candrick and Anne Summerell (Barraba); Alexandre De-Almeida, brother of Nancy (East Timorese); Cecilia Fogarty (Corrimal); Sr Gemma Gallagher; Vilma Gomes (Lidcombe); Mary Hannon (Arncliffe/Rockdale); Veronica Harrigan, mother of Neil (Canberra); Doreen Hines (Warilla); Therese Hoareau, daughter of Patricia Anable (Auburn); Ivy Langham, Penrith; Denise McKinnon (Lennox Head), wife of Ross and daughter of Margaret Hunt (Concord); Joyce Mansfield (Cooma); Joy Reid-Meakin (North Turrumurra); Graham Rumph, husband of Therese (Bombala); Gert Salcole (Nyngan); Tamara Wolstencraft (North Sydney); Sr Kathleen Woodhouse

Lochinvar Pilgrimage

On Saturday 8th November 2008, a busload of Josephite Associates and Sisters set off from Strathfield as pilgrims, on our way to visit the sacred sites of the Sisters of St Joseph of Lochinvar (see <http://www.ssjl.org.au/>), who celebrated 125 years in September 2008. We collected a few more Associates (from the Central Coast) at Kariong, and then some more (from Belmont) were awaiting us at Lochinvar.



Srs Patricia Egan, Margaret Anne Geatches and Celie Creigh welcomed us and led us to a small grove of eucalypts, planted in 2008 to mark the 125 years. Here we all prayed together, finishing with The Lochinvar Hymn (http://www.ssjl.org.au/spirituality/our_spirituality_hymn.htm), sung in beautiful harmony by the Lochinvar Sisters. We then adjourned to the dining room for a tasty morning tea to revive us after our journey. Sr Virginia Bourke spoke to us about the history, work and spirit of the Sisters in the area, as well as the connections between the Lochinvar Josephites and the Central (Brown) Josephites.

Srs Margaret Anne and Cecelia looked after us well, showing us around their buildings, grounds, chapel, museum, parish church, and cemetery (Sisters' graves) and telling us about their history. User-friendly videos in the museum provided a fascinating way to connect with different aspects of the Lochinvar story. On our way home, we made a brief detour to visit Morpeth, the hometown of Sr Helen Saunders. Sr Patricia has added photos from our visit to the Lochinvar website (see <http://picasaweb.google.com/patricia.lochinvar/Nov8RSJ?authkey=U-2nAWhiAtI#>).

Christine Sivewright, Lakemba

First Encounter

Marian Court Strathfield was the venue for a commemoration held on Wednesday 24 June 2009 celebrating the 100th anniversary of the death of Blessed Mary MacKillop.

Groups of Associates from the neighbouring suburbs of Lakemba, Campsie, Lidcombe, North Sydney, North Leichhardt and Penrith joined a number of Josephite Sisters and the residents of Marian Court in the celebration of the Eucharist, presided over by Fr Robert Flaherty, Chaplain of Marian Court. There was a welcoming speech by Lillian Stansell, who is both a resident of Marian Court and an Associate. We were also addressed by Sr Angela Grant rsj who spoke of progress in the quest for canonisation of Blessed Mary MacKillop. A book, *The Little Brown Book* (see article in this Newsletter), was presented to Fr Flaherty and flowers to the pianist, Sr Vena Skinner rsj, and the flautist, Sr Tess Formosa rsj.



At the conclusion of Mass, a buffet lunch was hosted by the residents and the North Sydney Associates. It was an opportunity for Associates, visitors and the residents of Marian Court to mingle and enjoy the company of old and new friends. Associates and visitors were invited to stroll around the grounds and inspect the units and facilities of Marian Court, which is a project of the Catholic Women's League, providing residential accommodation. Sr Tess Formosa rsj conducted a tour of the Bethany Holistic Centre, located in an adjoining building, and gave details of the services provided by the Centre.

As a new member I will not forget my first encounter into the realm of the Josephite Associates.

Maureen Rayner, Strathfield

Homily—100th Anniversary of Mary MacKillop's Death 25 July 2009, St Declan's Church, Penshurst

This year 2009 is an exciting year for anyone with links to Mary MacKillop because it is the year marking the 100th anniversary of her death and also because there has been such promising progress made in the cause for her canonisation. We wait in hope for an announcement.



So what can one say about this? If we look at the Gospel reading from Matthew, which is from Mary's Feast Day Mass, we have a reading that could well be the flagship for the NRMA advertising campaign that we've seen on TV and in the print media. "Unworry" is their motto and this Gospel today is the supreme "unworry" message. "Do not worry about tomorrow—it'll have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings." I don't know whether Mary MacKillop would have invested in NRMA insurance but I certainly know that she invested in the call to

"unworry" and to trust in God's Providence. She said: "Do what you can and leave the rest to God"—"unworry". Her life witnessed to this advice. She certainly did what she could. She was no slouch in the "doing" for others; in education, in welfare, in providing whatever was needed for those who were in need. And she also did "leave the rest to God".

Her best known maxim, "Never see a need without doing something about it", actually reminds me of one of Fr John's homilies—one of those from the eight and a half years of inspiring homilies we've heard—and remembered. Do you also remember a couple of weeks ago he spoke about St Francis' saying: "Preach the Gospel and, if necessary, use words"? The point made was that our actions speak louder than words. We can talk until the cows come home but if we don't match our actions to what we say it won't mean much. Mary worked hard—as did the pioneering Sisters who brought her vision and plans to reality—and it was not just what she did, but how she did it, that was – and is – the inspiration. This "way" of hers is what has made the cause for her canonisation not just possible but strong and confident.

The first reading from Colossians gives us the words that describe the way Mary worked. What are the words that stand out? Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, love, unity, peace and gratitude or thanksgiving. This is a pretty impressive list. Clearly Mary MacKillop took the Scriptures to heart. She didn't just know the words, if you like, but she lived the meaning. Her words and her actions overlapped. I remember hearing a great and very simple definition of integrity. It is when your words and actions overlap with no gaps. Mary was a woman of integrity. Jesus taught her this. She believed. She taught others. So simple!!

We here who are inspired by Mary MacKillop – who can engage with her story because she is an Aussie, a woman, a down-to-earth, unpretentious, roll-your-sleeves-up type of person – also need to take to heart the Gospel message. The everyday challenge is: "What am I doing to make God's love real to those who cross my path – those whom God sends my way – those whose needs are not being met? The question is "What am I doing to keep Mary's dream alive?" Do my words and my actions overlap—no gaps? Does my total trust in God allow me to live an "unworried" life? Or does the punch line from the Gospel, "How little faith you have", more accurately describe me? These are the questions I ask myself. These are the challenges in being a fair dinkum Gospel bearer—preaching the Gospel and only, if necessary, using words.

We can look back over the 100 years since Mary died and see lots of wonderful things that have been accomplished that have kept the dream and vision of Mary alive....hundreds of Josephite schools, thousands of people educated by the Joes, thousands of mothers and babies going through the birthing experience at St Margaret's, Darlinghurst, newer ministries in Peru and for the people of East Timor, family and school support ministries, aged care, parish, prison and pastoral care ministries, Aboriginal ministry, grief education and support to relieve suffering and bring hope. There are too many things to list. There are over 1460 Associates in NSW compared to about 300 Sisters. The dream of Mary MacKillop is being kept alive by all those who are inspired by Mary's story—and so it should be. The canonisation is a spreading of the ownership of the story. Mary MacKillop belongs to everyone—all Australians and all nations. Her name will be placed in the canon of Saints' names for the universal Church.

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We saw a sampling of what this universal ownership of Mary MacKillop means during WYD in July last year. It was astounding to see the variety of people from so many nations come to visit her tomb, some because they didn't really know her but many because they did. They had read of her – the wonder of the internet – were inspired by her courage in the face of enormous difficulties and criticisms and warmed by her generous, kind response to her greatest enemies as well as to the smallest and dearest.

I still have memories of speaking to a large group of German people (about 80) who just wanted more and more of her story—listening in awesome silence through an interpreter for more than 45 minutes!! I was ready to stop after about 20 minutes but they weren't. Another group of about 40 Italians stood in the cold and drizzle at the back of the Museum in Mount Street and asked me to tell them about Mary MacKillop. They had the Italian translation on one of the leaflets made available but they wanted to know more. They thought she was just wonderful "standing up to the Bishop!!"

So...what does this 100-year anniversary mean to each of us? I went to a funeral once for a dear woman who'd lived a good long life and the priest threw out a challenge to each of us present. He said if we walked out of the church no different to the way we walked in—that the celebration of this good woman's life was only that and not one where we acknowledged that her life, having touched our life, really made a difference to us, so that we couldn't help but be transformed, shaped, converted a bit more into the goodness that had inspired her and was then passed on to us.

Perhaps the challenge today is to be a bit more changed, more deeply transformed by the inspiration of Mary MacKillop, knowing that she did something to make a difference and so can we, in our own place, with our own lives in 2009. Why? Because we believe in Jesus and God's unconditional love just as she did and the vibrancy of the Spirit has no time limits. So simple! So...how has Mary MacKillop helped you to be all that God would want you to be?

Sr Jeanette Foxe rsj

The Little Brown Book

Recently launched by Bishop David Cremin, this little book sets out to help us access Mary MacKillop's spirituality. It makes use of extracts from Mary's writings, and provides reflections upon these, linking them with texts from Scripture. Readers are encouraged to be drawn into a deeper knowledge of Mary's Gospel values and beliefs. Her insights prove to be a rich source of inspiration as we try to live the Gospel in today's world. She also throws down a challenge for us to grow, and to continue her work, wherever we are and whatever we do.



Sue, Helen & Leo

We, the authors, chose the title, not only because brown is the Joeys' colour, but because it captures Mary's simplicity and groundedness. As well, it resonates with this 'wide brown land'. The delicate symbolic illustrations by Sr Helen Barnes rsj enhance the gentle simplicity of the text. The book is linked to a website that provides practical help in leading a group in prayer or spiritual formation.

Writing the book was a labour of love for us over the last couple of years. The launch at Mary MacKillop Place took the form of a simple, moving and reflective liturgy, and was attended by about 140 guests. Sr Annette Arnold rsj spoke beautifully on behalf of the Sisters of St Joseph. People felt inspired to "settle down with a cuppa, pick up this book, and allow Mary's 'good God' in".

Sue and Leo Kane, Associates

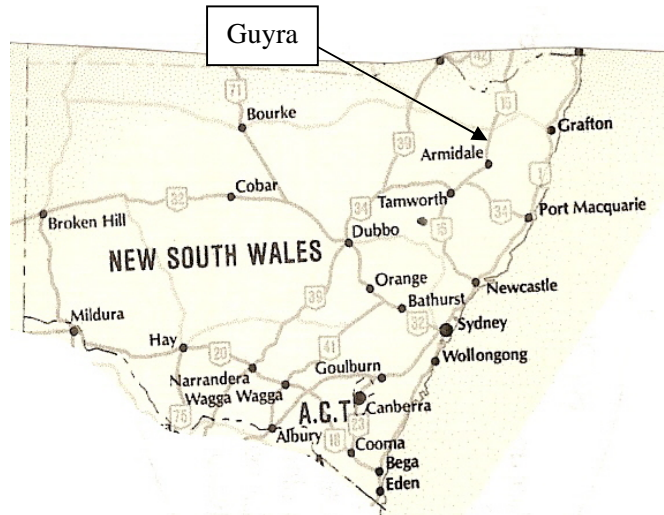
Congratulations
to Margaret and Frank Battam
(The Oaks) on their
40th Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations
to Dawn Fitzpatrick (Lidcombe)
who recently celebrated her
80th birthday

Guyra Profile

Guyra is situated in the Northern Tablelands Region about 25 miles from Armidale. We are a small group consisting of seven women. Most of us were enrolled by Sr Carmel Maher when the idea of lay Associates was first suggested. Sr Carmel was then the Catechetical Coordinator in the Armidale diocese. We do not meet as a group of Associates, but are always meeting at CWL, Scripture teaching, and church gatherings. We have attended regional gatherings at Armidale in the past.

Doreen Garniss, Guyra



Phone Friends—A Rewarding Josephite Ministry

MacKillop Community Care offers care in their homes to frail aged people in the Ryde-Hunters Hill area and in the Central Coast. It operates from the Josephite Aged Care Facility at Hunters Hill. Several years ago a need was discerned for more social support than could be given by the carers who came in to assist the clients with domestic matters. So **Phone Friends** was born.

A simple ministry, it has become a valued and valuable addition to the work of caring for the aged in the spirit of Mary MacKillop. The Phone Friend is allocated one person who has special social and relational needs because of loneliness due to absence of regular family or other contact. The Phone Friend undertakes to ring their Friend, usually once a week, at a mutually satisfactory time. The calls grow in length as the friendship develops.

It gives the isolated people a listening ear to talk about their lives and their concerns. Occasionally the staff from MacKillop Community Care will arrange a face-to-face meeting for maybe morning tea together, but basically the ministry is on the phone. Some beautiful friendships have developed. One isolated gentleman has taken a new interest in his life, now cooking better meals (with vegetables) for himself, after his Phone Friend kept expressing concern about his nutritional needs. The carers told us he bought new clothes when the chance was provided for the face-to-face meeting!

One elderly lady had many family concerns and found it a relief to discuss these matters with a person outside the family circle. Her anxieties were addressed so that she was not worrying alone and going round and round in her mind. The carers were aware of her anxieties but could not take the time to discuss with her, as other clients were expecting them. The Phone Friend was available to help. As trust develops, some aged persons have opened the topic of religion and even death. They clarify their beliefs and name their fears and even choose to discuss plans for their funeral arrangements. They choose to raise these topics in their own time, maybe after months of discussing gardening, sports, TV programmes or whatever interests them.

Until now, the Phone Friends have all been Sisters of St Joseph but now that the ministry has been trialled and found so valuable, we would like to open it to interested Associates. There are simple guidelines and assistance to get started. We now have experienced Phone Friends who can make suggestions and offer support.

Does this sound like something you could be interested in? Or even enquire about? Why not ring either Sr Helen Saunders (8741 2334) or Sr Angela Grant who coordinates this ministry (9715 1826)?

*Let St Joseph's true children remember their mission to seek first the poorest,
most neglected parts of God's vineyard.
(Mary MacKillop, 1890)*

Sr Angela Grant rsj

Penshurst Celebrations

The year 2009 brought with it an opportunity for renewal within our group. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of our patron Blessed Mary MacKillop and our group took on the challenge given at last year's Annual General Meeting to initiate action to celebrate this year. Group numbers have been steadily growing and our July meeting saw two of our newer members, Moya Smyth and Dawn Todd, enrolled. We were blessed to have our Coordinator, Sr Helen Saunders rsj, with us for the purpose and she enlightened us about the canonisation process.



The month of July leading up to the feast saw fervent activity, with the Josephite Sisters and the Josephite Associates teaming up for an Open Day at the Convent on Saturday 25th July 2009. The day began with a beautiful Mass celebrated in St Declan's Church by our Parish Priest, Fr John Crothers, which was very well attended. We had parishioners and well wishers and groups from neighbouring Oatley, Peakhurst, Riverwood and Lakemba teaming up with us to make this celebration of the Eucharist very special. The enthusing homily by Sr Jeanette Foxe rsj (see page 3), the heartwarming music, the gentle beauty of the sacred space and the spirituality of the Eucharistic celebration made it a truly memorable experience.

The Eucharist was followed by the warm and loving hospitality of the Josephite Sisters Berenice Cornish, Helen Cooke, Irene Macinante and Jeanette Foxe and a tour of the lovely heritage-listed property of Rostrov, or St Joseph's Convent as we know it. The chapel inside the convent has an atmosphere of calm and serenity. It was the ideal atmosphere for the prayer session which followed the delicious morning tea of scones and yummy treats. Josephite Associates Lee Slucher and I prepared and led the prayer session, with delightful insights into the prayer life of Blessed Mary MacKillop from Seasons of Grace by Sr Genevieve Ryan rsj. This was followed by quiet listening to the lovely hymn 'When I Pray' by Peter Kearney and the 5 Finger Prayer as a suggestion for our routine quiet time with God. Refreshed and revived in grace, the day ended with the sharing of friendship, fun, laughter and food. All who attended praised God for the fine weather and a true celebration of our faith.

The Associates also continued the celebration by spreading the story of the life of Blessed Mary MacKillop among the children in the parish and state schools in local and surrounding Parishes. Over 500 copies of activity sheets were prepared and distributed for the children of different age groups (Kindergarten to Year 6) to work out and colour and hear about the life story of Blessed Mary MacKillop. To end with the words of Gerard Coleman sj: "May the Spirit of Mary MacKillop **keep on going on!**"

Year of the Priest

God, our Father, grant that our priests be strengthened and healed by the power of the Eucharist they celebrate.

May the Word they proclaim give them courage and wisdom.

We pray that all those whom they serve may see in them the love and care of Jesus Christ, our Eternal High Priest, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

International Day for People with Disability 2nd December

Bookmarks available for sale

Patricia Mowbray
Disability Projects Officer
Bishops Commission
for Pastoral Life
GPO Box 368 Canberra ACT
2601

Phone 02 6201 9868

Fax 02 6247 6083

disability@catholic.org.au
www.catholic.org.au

Selma Coutinho, Penshurst

Prayers for the Sick

Les Magee (Blacktown);
Vera and Jack Sivewright,
parents of Christine (Lakemba)

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