



Josephite Associates, Victoria

Summer Newsletter, 2009-10



JAUNTS to OLD and NEW HAUNTS

As the year draws to an end and life seems to get more hectic, it is good to reflect on the past year. What have we achieved or gained? To take some time during Advent to reflect on the coming of Jesus and what this has meant for each, for our world and our future.

Since the last Newsletter my car has been notching up the kilometres. At Yarram and Wonthaggi over 20 have decided to become Josephite Associates. Inquirers have emerged

at Yarraville, Ballarat, Lakes Entrance and a number enrolled at Swan Hill. Beechworth is becoming an established group and I have visited Orbost, Maffra and Koo Wee Rup where the Bunyip group joined us.

Our regional meetings have had mixed results—only 4 at East Melbourne, 20 at Nagambie and 13 at Bacchus Marsh. All enjoyed the day and found it extremely enjoyable and worthwhile.

At each meeting I have been encouraging our Associates to always wear their badge just as Josephite Sisters wear their emblem as a visible sign of who they are. In this way you are saying: I am working as a Josephite; what I am doing I am doing in the spirit of Blessed Mary MacKillop. As well it is a good talking point and a means of introducing others to the story of Mary MacKillop.

Besides visiting Associates I have enjoyed wonderful celebrations with parishes. At Omeo we celebrated 100 years since the Sisters first went to East Gippsland, four of them travelling by jinker for over two days from Bairnsdale to Omeo. A full Church led by enthusiastic musicians nearly lifted the roof. Banners from every Church that had existed in East Gippsland were placed along the walls before Mass. And a generous

lunch was provided for each of the Sisters and clergy.

Yarram came alive to celebrate the life commitment of Sr Sharon Teresa in her home town with many friends, relations and Josephites, Sisters and Associates, joining her. We thank the Newborough Associates who have been praying for Sharon for a number of years.

My mobile shops of Peruvian and Mary MacKillop goods have been well patronised supporting the families of Peru.

May you know the peace and joy of Christmas and a happy 2010.

Mary Fermio RSV



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From Humble Beginnings



friendship
prayer
service

Summer Reflection ...

Welcome to summer! A time of freedom expressed in so many ways—holidays, thongs, lighter clothing, swimming, sailing, barbecues, cricket, longer evenings, camping, walks along the beach, lazing on the sand.

There are many kinds of freedom—to love, to work, to worship, to choose our partners, our way of life, to choose where we live, and how we live. So many throughout the world are bound by regulations, customs, governments and borders; cannot freely express their opinions and thoughts for fear of death or punishment.

Jesus was stupefyingly free. (what a great word! Albert Nolan uses it in his book *Jesus today*) Jesus contradicted customs, cultural norms, interpreted the Sabbath laws freely, was bold enough to disregard traditions about what was clean and unclean—he had a personal freedom to do God's will regardless of the opinions of others.

To live Jesus' spirituality today "we must learn gradually to let go, to free ourselves from attachments, throw away what we use as crutches, ignore our need for success and liberate ourselves from worries about our reputation". (*Jesus Today Ch 17*)

During Advent we reflect on the freedom Mary of Nazareth had, a freedom that allowed her to say YES to what God was asking of her—to walk into the unknown, to risk losing Joseph, to put her reputation on the line because she believed that was what she had to do. She did not seem to have time to weigh up all the consequences, but knew that this was God's will and freely gave her consent, revealing the great faith and trust she had in a God, she believed, loved her.

By using the freedom we have been given, we can, like Mary, say YES to God, by participating in God's work of healing, teaching, caring for creation and for our brothers and sisters. Nolan ends his book with: "God's work sometimes appears to be very slow...yet precisely because it is God's work the future is secure...When I die...my true self will continue forever in God, the Self of the universe."

ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM!

Mary Fermio R SJ

ASSOCIATES' REGIONAL MEETINGS 2010...

The Annual Regional Meeting at Morwell was postponed this year to enable Associates to attend the special Mass in honour of Blessed Mary MacKillop on 13th November.

This meeting will be held at Morwell in the Sacred Heart School Multi Purpose Room on **Sunday 7th February 2010**. The program will be the same used during this year—Film: "Mary" and a reflection on Imaging Mary, based on paintings of her by various artists. Start will be 10 a.m with a cuppa. Shared Lunch, finishing about 3 p.m. These regional meetings are great occasions to meet other Associates and discover more about being Josephite.

We will have another round of Regional Meetings towards the end of the year.

Dates to be announced!

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARY MACKILLOP: A PILGRIMAGE

For centuries people have travelled in groups, on foot or by transport, to holy places as pilgrims—journeying in honour of a holy person or to a sacred site praying for the intercession of the Saint for healing, strength, courage, wisdom, etc

The journey involves travel, sometimes hardship and inconvenience, prayer, acceptance of others, sharing and a growing in faith and knowledge of oneself.

For many years the National Mary MacKillop Pilgrimage “In the Footsteps of Mary MacKillop” has taken hundreds from all over Australia and New Zealand to her sacred sites—her tomb, her birthplace, her family home, the churches she prayed in, the chapel in which she was excommunicated, and to sacred places in memory of Fr Woods and the MacKillop family.

The pilgrims meet in Sydney and spend two days visiting sacred sites around this city. In Melbourne other sites are visited and prayed at e.g. birthplace, St Francis’ Church where Mary was baptised and received her First Communion. The bus then leaves for Adelaide, stopping at several places on the way, such as Bacchus Marsh, Penola and Portland where much of Mary’s story was lived out. In Adelaide the story unfolds further with a visit to the chapel where

Mary was excommunicated, the chapel she prayed in and the Mary MacKillop centre which tells the many stories of the work she started in Adelaide.

On board this year were three pilgrims who had made this journey over 10 times! Frailty will be the only thing that will stop them continuing!

The Pilgrimage is usually in October, giving you time to save and organise holidays. Carry with you those you love and wish to pray for. If you speak to those who have journeyed they will tell you of the incredible experience it was. Someone who has been on the Pilgrimage may like to write a few words about their experience and send it to me for the next Newsletter. Several Associates from Western Australia were on the last pilgrimage—they considered the distance travelled was well worthwhile.

We plan to enclose relevant information for the 2010 Pilgrimage with the next Newsletter.

For further information:

Ph. Melb: Heritage Centre 03 9926 9300 or

www.sosj.org.au : Click on MORE (Left side)

Go to Mary MacKillop Place/Spirituality Program and follow link to Pilgrimages.

Here you will find the day-to-day visits, costs, etc

BEECHWORTH BUSES TO MELBOURNE

On Friday 30th October the “*Brigid and Mary Social Justice Group*” from St Joseph’s Beechworth travelled to Melbourne. We visited the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre and had a wonderful time. Graham Lade, the owner of Beechworth Buslines took 28 children and 10 adults on the “Mary MacKillop” Bus. We broke up into three groups and each had a tour of the Centre. The children learned lots of new things about the life of Mary and had many interesting questions to ask. Sisters Judith and Lorraine were very impressed with their knowledge.

After our time at the Centre we visited the Fitzroy Gardens and St Patrick’s Cathedral. It was a great opportunity to learn about our Catholic heritage. The children all had their photo taken with the statue of Archbishop Mannix and were very happy to see a small statue of Mary MacKillop inside the Cathedral. We hope to take the children to Sydney next year!

Linda Murcutt and **Irene Sharp**
Josephite Associates, Beechworth.



AROUND THE TRAPS...

A STORY TELLING NIGHT AT RONA'S PLACE

Rona has recently joined the Bacchus Marsh Associates and lives in a mud-brick house at Greendale. The House nestles in the trees, has a high gabled roof which hides five bedrooms once used as a B & B

The road is dark and twisting and we watch for the gateway with the milk churn letterbox, then through the welcoming open gate and along the rutted track that winds through the dark trees. Neighbouring houses are unseen and in the darkness there is a sense of mystery, like a journey into the unknown through a vast forest. Another gate and past the dam, around the corner we see lights and a house. In the dark it is an ancient house, a house out of stories from childhood—the three bears' house; little Red Riding Hood's grandmother's house (is the wolf hiding in the trees?) Hansel and Gretel could be nearby—(is the house made of gingerbread?) Inside are the Seven Dwarfs sharpening their picks, or is Cinderella sitting by the hearth while her sisters prepare for the Ball. But it is Rona's house, and waiting at the door is a friendly bear-like figure, Chris, her son, ready with a welcome hug.

Under the leafy porch with its heap of logs stacked ready for the fire; through the heavy door and into the past. A huge wood fire is burning in the hearth and there is Rona with arms outstretched in welcome—the heart of this home. Others are there and greet us warmly—likeminded people who enjoy this once a month trip to a simpler world. On the table whole loaves, chunks of cheese and dishes of preserves invite us to eat and Chris, following us in, asks "Would you like a glass of wine?"

Rona calls us to attention with a little bell, and reminds us the bell was a gift from a Moslem visitor. Again welcoming us to her hearth, she invites the first storyteller to the storyteller's chair. Pat reads us a traditional Australian poem or story and in turn we share with other the stories or poetry we enjoy most. Rona ends the evening with a story of her own, followed by a cuppa and cake before we take our leave.

Simple this may all be, but for a short time a pleasant return to an unhurried earlier age, without the electronic distractions of today. This home is a perfect setting and Rona the perfect host. I can think of no better place for a story telling night. Thank you, Rona, for this wonderful experience.

Margaret H

ENROLMENT AT SWAN HILL

On 12th November, six Josephite Associates were enrolled at a special Mass celebrated by Fr Peter Hudson at St Mary's Church, Swan Hill. Three others were unable to be present that day. After Mass we celebrated with lunch together then watched a DVD on Blessed Mary MacKillop made by the Salt Light Group in Canada while in Australia for WYD. 2008.



CENTENARY MASS AT MORWELL

A large crowd including Josephite Sisters and about sixty Josephite Associates from the Sale diocese were present at the Mass to honour Blessed Mary MacKillop at Sacred Heart Church, Morwell. Associates catered for the lunch for about 200 adults and three young members of the Mary MacKillop Group from Maffra helped to serve. Bishop Christopher Prowse concelebrated with about 15 priests from the Diocese.

LIFE IN AMATA—The Sewing Project Concludes

I returned to the Amata Community in mid-August to complete my assignment there with Indigenous Community volunteers and Sr Marianne Zeinstra, teaching basic sewing skills. However, another sewing project was urgent. The MPY ladies were “going bush” for five days of law and culture and the organisers wanted at least 50 black skirts for each woman who attended. By the end of the week five of us had turned 75 metres of black jersey into 396-gored skirts! We used all the fabric.

Making clothing was my brief, but many of the ladies wanted to make curtains for their homes. Curtains added warmth, privacy and security and the community store did not sell them. Most have a real sense of pride in their homes and like to have them as clean and comfortable as possible, given that at any one time as many as 230 people may live and sleep in a house. No family members are turned away.

The lack of adequate housing in the community is a major problem and only Governments can alleviate this appalling situation. At present there are approx 350-400 aboriginal people living in around 35 houses, while about 40 white government employees live in 27 houses.

The children have big brown eyes and wide smiles and always appear to be happy and as long as they have mates to play, or scooters to ride all is well in their world. No-one wears jewellery of any description beyond the occasional wedding band. The Yr 12 students were given watches by the school so they could get themselves to school and exams on time, but after a day or two they were not being worn. It was something of a mystery to me to understand their system of time through the day, until I was told that the day is regulated by the store opening and closing times. As it closes at lunch time everyone takes their lunch bread at that time too, in most cases.

Many of the women would come to the sewing room just before lunch, have their lunch if they had helped Brenda and Marianne cook and serve the lunches for the Family Centre clients, and return to sew when I got back from my lunch. Until 3.00 or 3.30 p.m. the sewing room was a hive of activity until parents or carers left to collect children from school. In all, we made: 47 sets of curtains; 39 skirts; 16 skirts; 17 children's garments; 9 polar fleece rugs; 5 T-shirts!!

Dogs abound in the community and every household has several in a variety of breeds. They are regarded very highly by the people who willingly share their food with them and allow them to sleep with them for warmth on cold nights. I had the privilege of naming a litter of four, but had to wrack my brains for suitable names. The people of Amata are very special to me—they warmly welcomed and accepted me as a friend. My grateful thanks to Sr Mary McArdle who encouraged me to step outside my “comfort zone” and to Sr Marianne Zeinstra and Brenda for their care of me. This has been for me a most amazing experience.

Marie Mitchell

Numurkah

p.s. Costs of everyday items at Amata:

45g Bottled Gas \$191; diesel \$2.20L; Raisin Loaf \$5.20; Fresh fruit 60c per piece; lead-free petrol \$1.90L; etc !!!!.



TEN YEARS IN THE BUSH

Extracts from a lecture given by Fr Julian Tenison Woods on 19 December, 1866 to some 90 locals at Penola in connection with the Mechanics Institute.

Continued from the Spring Newsletter:

It did not take me long to see all that was to be seen in Robe town and as soon as I could get a horse I prepared to set my face towards Penola. A more dreary and melancholy seventy-three miles cannot well be imagined...The road to Penola was like Guichen Bay in its Chinese aspect. Both sides of the track were marked by stray articles of clothing or baggage indicating how like a retreating army, fatigue had made the Chinese abandon their goods one by one...I overtook the batch which had left Guichen Bay the day before my arrival. It was encamped at the Reedy Creek station then held by Messrs Davenport and Glen. I could not help being amused at the business propensities of the blacks who were for the occasion doing a brisk business in magpies, jew lizards and native cats...All the day following I kept passing small struggling parties upon whom fatigue was doing heavy execution. They seemed kind and attentive to each other and used to beam with unmistakable gratitude whenever one made them sensible by signs that they were near water.

As I neared Penola I was struck by the wonderful improvement in the country, which as you are aware commences about four miles on the west side of it. The change is so abrupt and so complete about the present site of Yallum Park, that it fairly takes one by surprise. Yallum Park was not in existence then, but in its place there was a shepherd's hut tenanted by a hospitable couple who treated me to a refreshing cup of tea, and this was my welcome to Penola. Before the door of the hut the country stretched out in an unbroken line, for there were no brush fences or indeed enclosures of any kind. The grass was long and not by any means so close fed as at present and the aspect of the country was very pretty. Penola was so small that I did not see it until I was very near. Well what was my first impression of a place in which I was destined to reside so long and so happily.

I thought it was a very pretty retired spot for a township with a sedate air of prosperity upon it, which became its small dignity uncommonly well. I counted the houses from the door of my residence...there were exactly thirty-seven then, but in this enumeration I included outbuildings such as stables.



...Mr Scott gave me a memorandum some months after which I have still by me and it states the number of inhabitants of all ages from infants to adults was 277...As far as the buildings were concerned the aspect of the place was not prepossessing. The Royal Oak was confined to two or three wooden buildings. The only house on the telegraph side of the way was Gladstone's store and a small hut. Coleman's store was built and the next two buildings, but no more.

...Yet Penola was then the largest township in the district and had double the number of houses possessed by Mount Gambier at the same time...but it is remarkable that nearly all the principal residents are dead and gone and those of the present residents who can remember so far back as ten years in the history of Penola were then in different positions...

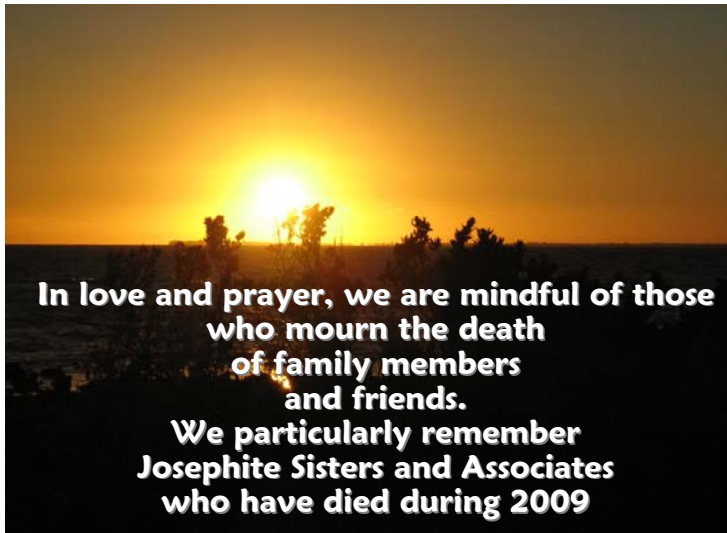
There must be something very good in this district when in ten years a man becomes a landed proprietor and of considerable importance in the society to which he belongs. He need not be ashamed of the bark hut where he offered such travelers as myself, a drink of tea. I know well enough that I could not have had a more kindly affectionate welcome, and I hope they will believe that though they may forget the old places, I shall never forget the good old times when I was a bushman too and had to rough it as much as anyone.

Penola was full of Chinamen on the day of my arrival and I am sorry to say that on the day of my first visit, I saw a good many drunken people. Penola and the whole district are, I am happy to say, very much better in that respect.

In the old days it used to be a regular thing for a mob of shearers as soon as they had been paid off, to go to the nearest public house and spend the money amid much misery and degradation. Now it is something different. Only the other day I met a fine lot of young men on horseback leaving the mallee scrub for the Mt Gambier district. They were farmer's sons who had been about shearing and were going home.

They were going without stopping a single night at a public house, and drink was not even thought of...without any difficulty I could enumerate thirty cases of awfully sudden or violent deaths, which have occurred within the last ten years entirely attributable to drink alone. They have numbered among them men of great wealth and position...capable of much good in society if their energies had been properly directed.

To be continued....



In love and prayer, we are mindful of those who mourn the death of family members and friends. We particularly remember Josephite Sisters and Associates who have died during 2009

"Those who die go no further from us than God ... and God is very near!"
Anon

BOOK REVIEW



Available from the Province Library:

THE BROKEN BODY - Jean Vanier

From his experience of working with disabled people in the L'Arche communities, Vanier reflects on suffering and the following of Jesus. A very reflective and moving book.

WALK TO JERUSALEM - Gerard Hughes sj

On his walk from Holland to Jerusalem, Hughes, with humour and reflection, describes the events and people he meets while walking and camping out.

Mary Fermio RSI

LETTER FROM SCOTLAND

My name is Peggy Walker and I am an Associate of your order. I first heard of Blessed Mary MacKillop in Rome in 1998. My friend Dorothy and I were on holiday and we met Sr Pat Robertson who was staying at the same Dominican convent. She told us the story of Mary. ...about three years or more ago my brother-in-law pointed out an article in one of our Catholic newspapers about Mary MacKillop who happened to spend one day and one night at our church, St Mary's Nairn. Paddy was so excited to think that we had had a blessed in our Church.i decided to do some research. I contacted the Scottish archives in Edinburgh and they found Fr Forbes who befriended Mary when she met him in France and then again in Scotland.

My daughter lives at Caol which is two miles from Fort William...she told me that two Australian Sisters had come to her parish. I took a trip a few weeks later and introduced myself to Sr Pat Keane and Sr Rose McDonald. I think it was God's providence. We became friendly and they kept me up to date in the work they were doing. Pat's book *The Scottish Connection* was very popular. It was sad to see them go but then Audrey and Therese came along.....Audrey asked me to become an Associate. Pat had asked me in her time but I was not ready. I prayed hard about it and accepted Audrey's offer.i have had them to my parish two or three times to give us a retreat. They work so hard always having lots of visitors. I don't know where they get the energy.

I was up to them two weeks ago. There was an Australian film crew recording a new film about Blessed Mary. I don't know if our shots will be on or not, but the director promised me he would air-brush and make me look 25 years old! I am 71 so he hasn't a hope.

Audrey passes on your newsletter to me and it is lovely to read what is happening. ...I have met several of your Sisters who come to visit and had lunch with Sr Anne Derwin when she was in Scotland. I have 2 children, 4 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

With love and prayers

Peggy Walker



With much love and praying God to bless you and give you all a happy Christmas and New Year

Mary MacKillop - December 21, 1897



GREETINGS FROM ST CLEMENT'S GALONG NSW

If any Associates or any group would like to come to Galong contact **SR HELEN BARNES** for a flier.

St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre is a shared ministry involving the Redemptorist Congregation and the Sisters of St Joseph.

The peaceful surrounds reflect the beauty of the seasons and provide an ideal setting for reflection, study, prayer and silence.

Galong is about two and a half hours beyond Albury, accessible by train or car. You would be most welcome for a weekend retreat etc.

Contact Ph 02 6380 5222

Email: info@stclement.com.au

ADVENT WITH MARY MACKILLOP

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a gift from the Sisters prepared by the Towards Canonisation Committee in Sydney.

The booklet **Reflecting with Mary MacKillop in Advent** is included instead of the usual Prayer Sheet. You may like to use this with your group or by yourself as you prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We hope this gift will bring you closer to God who calls us to share, as Josephites, the charism given to Mary MacKillop for the world.
Let us keep each other in prayer!

GOOD WEBSITES!

www.sosj.org.au

www.josephite.org.au

A REMINDER ...

So far we have received only a handful of responses to the invitation to join an Associates Group in Melbourne.

2010 options:

1. Heritage Centre East Melbourne
2nd Tuesday bi-monthly 10 a.m.
commencing February.
BYO lunch
2. MacKillop House, Hawthorn East.
2nd Tuesday bi-monthly 6.30 p.m.
commencing March.
Light refreshments provided
Donation \$5

As the first group was to start in February we need to know as soon as possible if there are other Associates or anyone interested in becoming Associates, who would like to join one of these groups. We look forward to hearing from many of you!!

**Please contact Mary Fermio RSJ -
by phone, email or mail ASAP**

AROUND THE ASSOCIATES' TRAPS ...

We'd love to hear from you, and would welcome reports, photos and any other items you would consider to be of interest to our Victorian Associates.

Please either mail to:

Mary Fermio RSJ,
Editor—Associates' Newsletter,
Josephite Associates' Office,
PO Box 37, Bacchus Marsh, 3340.

OR Email: associatesvic@sosj.org.au.
OR Fax: 03 5367 2078

For all enquiries related to Josephite Associates,
phone: 03 5367 2078