

# Josephite Associates

Friendship ♦ Prayer ♦ Service

*Summer Newsletter*

*November 2011*

Dear Associates, Sisters and Friends

This morning as we gathered at Eucharist, for the First Sunday of Advent, we all heard those challenging words from Mark's Gospel:

'Stay Awake...we don't know the day nor the time.' Our Indian priest in reflecting, referred to his years in the Seminary, which was over TWO days travel from his home town, with the restriction imposed of *family visits* allowed only after *three* years away! His mother's words on his eventual return "My son, how long I have been *waiting* for you!"

That is what Advent is all about, waiting! Waiting for our God to be born, to be born among us! to be born in our families, our society, and once again in our hearts! We wait for so many things, for a bus; for a homecoming; for a visit; for a loved one - we humans are always waiting. It is the *waiting* 'filled with poignant longing' that determines the joy of the event. It is the *waiting* that has us alert and awake, that enables us to prepare for that great event. In our waiting this Advent, let us find a little space each day, to stir the longings of our hearts, and to find simple ways to create a welcoming environment for the coming of our God!

## FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF CANONISATION...

Barbara Thompson from the Auckland Associate Group writes of celebrating with the Sisters on the 16<sup>th</sup> October, the first Anniversary of Mary's canonization.

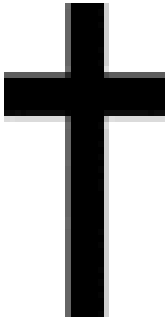
'... it was unusual in that we started with a cup of tea first and then the ceremony, the theme of which was "pilgrimage.' Yes, Mary MacKillop had some outstanding events in her unique pilgrimage. So continuing with this theme, we processed to different places in the Chapel and entrance of the convent recalling what we as pilgrims (those of us who went to Rome) experienced.

The thoughts and recollections of the various Associates and sisters was to highlight the impressions that have lasted over the year and will be with us for good.



We ended in the side chapel with the icon of Mary. Sister Colleen gave a wonderful and informative talk on the icon of Mary. I learned something; the idea of an icon is to establish a one-to-one conversation with the person in the icon.

How terrific! It came to mind the tranquility of Mary even in all the upheaval of life! Just the exact lesson, which we need over and over again.”



*Rest in Peace*

We pray for the repose of the souls of:

Eric Stalker, husband of Colleen Stalker - Hutt Valley Associate Group.

Margaret Higgs - Thames Associate Group.

Margaret died earlier in the year.

Frances Mitchell who died in Gisborne on the 5/9/11. Frances was the twin sister of Eileen Clune, Gisborne Associate.

**GISBORNE ASSOCIATES...**

Catherine Birt from Gisborne writes:

Gisborne Associates met in September and based their prayer and discussion around 'Social Justice Week.' We discussed whether the concept of the "level playing field" applied to our town and our country. Ideas included how big companies were able to manipulate things to their own ends; how drilling and mining were affecting our East Coast area; how charging for books in our library would impact on local residents; how the unborn had no rights in law; the place of women in the Church and how children were often those who were the most disadvantaged.

We then thought about Mary MacKillop's desire to provide opportunity for all and her wish for the congregation to identify and walk with those who are today's poor. We also talked about Bethany a ministry that the Sisters run in Auckland and to which the Associates contribute. This led us on to prayer and reciting the litany of Mary MacKillop. We followed this with afternoon tea and a chance to catch up with everyone.

**TE AWAMUTU...**

On Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October we gathered in Patty and Tom Dudson's house to share prayer, discussion, a meal and social time together, in memory of Mary MacKillop's day of canonization one year ago. We enjoy the support and friendship, appreciating always the generous ministry offered in the parish by each Associate member. Money was raised THROUGH A Christmas Cake raffle in support of Bethany House to the tune of \$50, as every little helps!

*Margaret Louisson RSJ*

**GATHERING IN WHANGANUI**

Early September the Associate Leadership team met up with the Whanganui Sisters Affiliate Leadership team for our third annual Conference. Hosted by the Federation Sisters in Whanganui we enjoy the company, the sunshine and the strong bond of friendship that we share whenever we meet.



*Back row::*

*Jane Gunson (Whangarei) Rita Cahill rsj (Taumaranui) Gayle Dodunski (New Plymouth)  
Marie Skidmore rsj (Whanganui) Adrienne Smith (Whanganui)  
Monica Robinson (Wellington) Helen Dougherty (Whanganui) Liz Hickey rsj (Palmerston  
North) Trish Clark (Dunedin)*

*Front Row: Patty Dudson (Te Awamutu) Irene Back (Whanganui) Jill MacLoughlin rsj  
Peta Lindstrom (Auckland) Margaret Louisson rsj*

*Missing from the photo but present at our meetings: Virginia Hillgrove (Christchurch)*

Discussion, discernment and prayer centred on a choice and final decision to combine our Associates and Affiliates as one united team. In this way we feel we can walk strongly together in the spirit of Mary MacKillop and Julian Tennison Woods. Further communication will take place next year whilst we, at the same time, carry on with our own Associate and Affiliate ministries, gatherings and meetings.

*Margaret Louisson RSJ*

Whilst in Whanganui I had the pleasure of staying out at the Kai Iwi Beach house with Liz, Jill, Peta, and Jane, overnight. As this was my first visit to Whanganui as part of the Leadership Team, it was an amazing place to be. Time spent reflecting as I walked the beach in the early morning helped clear my head of the week's work worries and left me fresh for the tasks ahead. The weekend was very rewarding, and I look forward to meeting up again with the combined Leadership Team in 2012.

*Patty Dudson – JA – Te Awamutu*

**PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS...**

In the busy days ahead, let us continue our 'waiting' as we wait for the coming of our God. We leave you with this poem by Ann Weems:

It is not over,  
    This birthing  
There are always newer skies  
    Into which  
    God can throw stars.  
When we begin to think  
    That we can predict the Advent of God,  
    That we can box the Christ  
    In a stable in Bethlehem,  
    That's just the time that God will be born  
    In a place we can't imagine and won't believe.  
Those who wait for God  
    Watch with their hearts and not their eyes,  
    Listening  
        Always listening  
        For angel words.

*From Kneeling in Bethlehem, by Ann Weems*



HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

AND

MAY THE HOLIDAYS BE RESTFUL

AS FAMILIES GATHER AND FRIENDSHIPS ARE RENEWED