



# *Josephite Companions Aotearoa*

*Nga hoa pumau o Hato Hohepa ki Aotearoa*

*Friendship ♦ Prayer ♦ Service*

SPRING NEWSLETTER - September 2013

Dear Josephite Companions Aotearoa

Spring Blessings to each of you as we move into this time of new life, new beginnings and new growth. As we embrace this lovely spring season, we bring to you much news of events for the Sisters and Josephite Companions.

In this newsletter we share snippets from the International Josephite Associates Leadership Conference in Sydney and the recent Fusion celebrations in Whanganui – truly momentous events!



## **The Josephite Associates' Conference Sydney 12-14<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

The second International Josephite Associates' Conference was held at Mary MacKillop Place, in Sydney, in July this year. The conference was organised by the International Josephite Leadership Team (IJALT). Delegates from as far away as Ireland, Peru and Timor Leste (East Timor) attended. Four Josephite Companions represented Aotearoa New Zealand at the Conference. They were Peta Lindstrom (Auckland), Catherine Birt (Auckland), Helen Dougherty (Whanganui) and Jane Gunson (Whangarei).

Sister Angela Grant opened the Conference by describing the beginning of the Associates' Movement, as far back as 1983. Against the backdrop of the Josephite Associates' birthing story, groups from different Australian states and countries presented creative accounts of what is happening in their local areas today. These accounts described the hospitality, service and spiritual riches that Associates bring to their local communities.

Associate Leaders explored the future of the Associate Movement. Many questions were asked around the sustainability of formation programmes, forms of governance, relationship with the Sisters into the future, Covenant Josephites, new membership, connections with ex-students, networking, resources, Congregational ministries carrying on Mary MacKillop's legacy today and how Associates can be supported in these ministries.

Sisters Christina Neunzerling, Katrina Brill and Michelle Connolly led the delegates through insights of the MacKillop Charism, its culture and the different pathways that are now available to women and men for sharing the charism. States such as the Queensland Associates and their Josephite Associate Network (JAN) explained in detail the practical aspects of Associate Groups moving to an independent model of giving prayer, service and hospitality.

Speakers from some Josephite Congregational Ministries also presented at the conference. These ministries include the Mary MacKillop Foundation who provides funding sources for small projects, Mary MacKillop International (MMI) who work in Peru and Timor Leste, Sister Margaret and the Sydney Detention Centre for helping trafficked refugees and the Josephite Rural Community Services who work with Aboriginal communities. The service

that these ministries provide reflects strongly how St. Mary MacKillop helped the poor.

Delegates discussed the fact that change is already upon the Associate Movement and that there needs to be an openness to change. Change needs time to take place. There are challenges about education and the support required for transition to be successful.

The Conference concluded that the International Josephite Associate Leadership Team (IJALT) needs further development as a central contact for all Associate groups around the world. Among the aspirations are the following: to strengthen our appreciation of the Josephite charism; to keep close to the Sisters; to open doors for younger members; to promote unity in the Associate Movement; to find 'where we hang our hat' with the Congregation's ministries; to spread the Josephite charism through Friendship, Prayer and Service and to hold another Conference three years from now!

Jane Gunson

Josephite Companion of Aotearoa New Zealand (JCANZ)

Source – 'International Josephites' Leadership Team Associate Conference Report'  
[www.sosj.org.au/news-events/view\\_article.cfm?id=1456&loadref=7](http://www.sosj.org.au/news-events/view_article.cfm?id=1456&loadref=7) August 2013



***Delegates at the Josephite Associates' Conference 2013  
Mary MacKillop Place, Sydney, Australia***



## **FUSION Celebrations Whanganui Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

The Celebration of Fusion of the Sisters of St Joseph of Nazareth Whanganui with the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart took place on a beautiful winter's day in Whanganui on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August.

Bishop Charles Drennan was the celebrant of a joyful Mass at St Mary's Church, also concelebrated by Bishop Peter Cullinane and Bishop Owen Dolan along with many priests from local and visiting parishes. Sister Anne Derwin, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart and the Final Leadership Team of the Sisters of St Joseph Whanganui, Sisters Catherine Shelton, Anne Burke, Noelene Landrigan and Colleen Woodcock were joined by many visiting Sisters from New Zealand, Australia, Ireland and Peru.

The warmth of the Welcome Powhiri by the local peoples set the scene for the joy, hope,

happiness and strength in unity experienced by all who attended.

Sister Colleen Woodcock introduced the Ritual that proclaimed Rome's approval of the request to merge or fuse with the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. The Decree was read, the Whanganui Sisters were asked to accept a new set of Constitutions as their way of vowed life and then each Sister was presented with a new emblem. All Sisters present then stood to renew their vows together – a truly momentous occasion that was acknowledged with long and very loud applause from the congregation gathered.

Mass was followed by a luncheon at the Whanganui Racecourse where celebrations and many conversations continued! Sunday Mass was again celebrated at St Mary's the next day with the local parishioners hosting many visitors to their special place.

A lovely note from Sister Marie Skidmore sums up the festivities...

*"Kia ora koutou, Thank you very very much for the wonderful gestures you have made to celebrate our fusion celebration!*

*The flowers (presented on behalf of the Josephite Companions Aotearoa) are absolutely beautiful, and I hope the local group will be able to view them when we meet next weekend.*

*I hope those of you who were able to come, enjoyed it and felt inspired and re-created by it all. I know I certainly did.*

*After the Mass on Sunday, we went in buses around our historical spots in Whanganui (where the first four Sisters landed in 1880) and then up to Kaiwhaiki Marae, where Sr Makareta comes from, for a lovely afternoon and evening of entertainment and shared storying.*

*All in all it has been a wondrous few days and I feel truly blessed. I hope some of the blessings of the occasion flow through to each of you and you are rewarded 100fold for your generosity.*

*Arohanui, Marie"*

Join us in Celebrating the Whanganui Fusion by visiting the website [sosj.org.au/news-events](http://sosj.org.au/news-events)

The celebration of the Fusion of the Sisters of St Joseph of Whanganui with the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, took place on Saturday August 24, 2013. It was live streamed from [St Mary's Church Whanganui](#) and can be viewed - To watch the replay of the Mass, press the blue arrow in the middle of the video screen.



**Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop Feast Day  
Celebrations around New Zealand...**

## Feast Day in Whangarei

Whangarei Josephite Companions (JCAs) celebrated the Feast Day of St. Mary MacKillop (8.8.13) by attending the Feast Day Liturgy at St. Francis Xavier Catholic School and attending the JCA reflection the next evening (9.8.13).

The JCAs were invited by St. Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School to attend their celebration of St. Mary MacKillop's Feast Day, held in the parish church. The children led a liturgy of prayer, story and hymns, which shared the life and charism of St. Mary MacKillop. A tasty morning tea in the school's staffroom followed the liturgy.

On Friday evening, the next day, Whangarei Josephite Companions shared in a reflection liturgy with the theme of service. We reflected on the statement 'never see a need without doing something about it', adapted from the rule of St. Mary MacKillop and Fr. Tension Woods. We prayed for the various forms of service for others, which we give in our own lives and we prayed for people in need from our parish community.

St. Mary MacKillop's Feast Day holds a significant place in the lives of our parish community and primary school.

Jane Gunson  
Whangarei JCA

## Feast Day in Gisborne



We had a lovely day August 8th, remembering St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. For Mass we set up a little focal tribute in front of the lectern with the beautiful photo of Mary, flowers and a special Mary candle. Two classes from the primary school attended, they brought their big Mary MacKillop flag, which was also placed by the lectern. We began with the lovely hymn about Mary's life and work. In the Homily, Fr. Gledhill shared many memories of all the Sisters he had worked along side over the past 47 years! Some were very humorous! Mass closed with a round of applause for Mary MacKillop

which the children joined in with great gusto! Following Mass, 8 Josephites took Sr. Joan Anderson for morning tea at a local café. The weather was glorious so we were able to enjoy God's wonderful sun and each others company.

Breda Bernstein  
Gisborne JCA

GISBORNE NEWS - Our Autumn gathering was held at the Convent May 11th, 15 attended. Our theme was Pentecost, which is often referred to as the "Birthday of the Church!" So we had a cake with candle numbers 2013 as our centrepiece! Our prayer centred on the Holy Spirit and we shared memories of our Confirmation Day. We closed the meeting with afternoon tea and birthday cake!

Our Winter gathering is planned for August 17th and our prayer focus will be St Mary of the Cross as her Feast Day is in August 8th.

Over the past 7 months we have farewelled four of our members, Nan Gordon, Pat Cleary, Margaret Lanigan and Eileen Parker, all women of faith, May they rest in Peace. We offer our sympathy and love to their families.

## Feast Day in Dunedin

On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August, the Dunedin group of Josephite Associates met at the home of Trish Clark to celebrate the Feast day of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop. An apology was received from Fr Kevin Morton whose father had just passed away. Sr Jennifer Scholum was our guest speaker and

she shared with us the work she does with Catholic Social Services in Balclutha. Sr Jennifer is the only St Joseph Sister in the Otago Parish. Father Merv McGettigan started the get together by saying Grace before our shared lunch. Our little shrine of St Mary was shared with a statue of Our Lady as Trish said it was the Feast of the Assumption this month as well. As usual, we all enjoyed our mutual friendship, prayers and love of Our Lady and St Mary MacKillop. Our raffles were drawn with the proceeds going to the Mother House in Auckland.

Denise Mitchell  
Dunedin JCA

### **Mural of St. Mary MacKillop**

The children of St. Francis Xavier Catholic School, Whangarei, have painted a mural of St. Mary of the Cross MacKillop to represent her historical and inspirational links with their Catholic Primary School. This mural is one of a series of murals, which were created to give the children ownership of the school environment and to brighten it up with children's displayed work in visible places.

In 1903 St. Mary MacKillop received a letter from the Parish Priest of Whangarei requesting that she send some sisters to teach in the new primary school. She said yes. The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart would teach at St. Joseph's School and at the second established primary school, St. Mary's, for over eighty years. The Sisters finished teaching in Whangarei at the time of the amalgamation of the two primary schools, onto the St. Mary's school site. The new school took the name of its parish, St. Francis Xavier. Since 2000, St. Francis Xavier Catholic School has been reclaiming its charism of St. Mary MacKillop. The charism is based on the five clauses of the 'rule' that St. Mary MacKillop and Fr. Julian Tennison-Woods wrote for the Sisters of St. Joseph. These are: make room for all, listen to God's call, have an attitude of gratitude, do you bit and never see a need without doing something about it.

The pupils chose images for the mural that would reflect the school's values and also have a connection to New Zealand. St. Mary MacKillop was chosen as the central image because her Sisters established the Whangarei Primary Schools. The cross represents the school's Catholic faith. The children gathered in a circle before the cross represents unity. The school office represents the entrance to the school. The tui and Southern Cross stand for New Zealand and the rainbow represents creation.

St. Mary MacKillop's mural hangs in a central place in the school grounds. It reminds the school community everyday to embrace the gospel values, as inspired by St. Mary MacKillop's charism of faith.

Jane Gunson  
Whangarei JCA



**St Mary MacKillop mural at St Francis Xavier Catholic School, Whangarei**

*Rest in Peace*  
*We pray for the repose of the souls of:*

*Helen – young niece of Gayle Dodunski*  
*Nan Gordon – Gisborne JCA*



*Pat Cleary – Gisborne JCA  
Margaret Lanigan – Gisborne JCA  
Eileen Parker – Gisborne JCA*

*May they rest in peace.*

*Prayers please for:*

*Jo Birt – young daughter-in-law of Catherine and Douglas Birt  
Monica Glenn, her sister Joy Kerr and Rita Lauder from the Dunedin Josephite  
Companions who have recently shifted to the Little Sisters of the Poor Resthome.*

*THANK YOU to all of the Group Leaders who returned updated contact information of  
group members. We are very appreciative of this information and have almost fully  
completed our combined database.*

*Our spring prayer sheet was prepared by the NZ Josephite Companions, who attended  
the Sydney Conference. We wanted to share our prayer service with you all.*

With Josephite Spirituality  
Let us respond in unique ways to the Gospel call  
To fullness of life for all  
as Josephite Companions Aotearoa

Jane Gunson and Peta Lindstrom  
On behalf of the Josephite Companions Aotearoa Leadership Team



## JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS AOTEAROA

As we walk in the footsteps of Julian and Mary, we Josephite Companions Aotearoa respond to the Gospel by reverencing the Sacred in ourselves, others and our environment.

We do this in the ordinariness of our everyday lives by:

- Living simply and prayerfully
- Acting justly with integrity
- Responding to the needs of our time
- Being thankful for God's love
- Providing inclusive hospitality and down-to-earth practicality  
in the spirit of Aroha.

