



Josephite Companions Aotearoa

Nga hoa puman o Hato Hohepa ki Aotearoa

Friendship ♦ Prayer ♦ Service

SUMMER NEWSLETTER - December 2013

Dear Josephite Companions Aotearoa

Summer blessings to each of you as we move into this season of rejuvenation and holiday. At this time of disastrous natural events in the Philippines we remember those who have lost their lives and pray for their families who are struggling to come to terms with the events of the last few weeks.

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SISTERS

Taken from www.sosj.org

On 20 November 2013 at St Joseph's Baulkham Hills where the Sisters of St Joseph are holding their 26th General Chapter, the following Sisters were elected to leadership of the Josephite Congregation:



Congregational Leader Sister Monica Cavanagh - and members of her Council: Sisters Catherine Shelton, Marion Gambin, Louise Reeves, Maryellen Thomas.

They are pictured here with the current leadership team.

Back Row (l-r): Sisters Annette Arnold, Ann Gilroy, Anne Derwin (*Current Leader*), Eileen Lenihan, Sheila McCreanor

Front Row (l-r): Sisters Maryellen Thomas, Catherine Shelton, Monica Cavanagh (*Leader-Elect*), Louise Reeves, Marion Gambin

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS AOTEAROA LEADERSHIP MEETING

In September the Josephite Companions leadership team met at Mount Saint Joseph's in Whanganui. This was the first time we had met following the Fusion of the two congregations and we began by the twelve of us attending a Parish Mass on the Saturday night where we were all warmly welcomed by Father Des Levins as "The Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart". We lay members of the committee basked in the reflected glory!!

Time was spent discussing matters arising from the International Associates meeting in Sydney which four of the team members attended.

There was discussion around a proposal to hold a series of "Roadshows" in various areas around the country in order to better inform members of the latest developments in the Josephite Companions movement.

It was hoped that in conjunction with the roadshow meetings for the Companions, the leadership team members would also have time to talk to school principals about the Josephite schools' network. This is an idea that schools founded by the Josephite Sisters might link together to identify with and strengthen the Josephite charism. The Junior Joeys movement for children might also be started in some schools. Pleasant Point and Temuka have already begun with this initiative.

The Associates/Companions resources were found a new home in the archives at Mt Saint Joseph from where they can be easily accessed.

Peta Lindstrom reported on the numbers of Companions in New Zealand currently. There are 67 newsletters emailed out and 38 are posted. These are mostly to prayer members. 22 groups also operate around the country and hold meetings around prayer, friendship and service. The total altogether is 366 members.

During this year 35 Principals from Auckland Schools visited Mary MacKillop Place in Sydney and held their conference there. It is hoped that the Hamilton Principals will do the same next year.

We talked about the problem of interesting younger members in the movement and ways of showing Parishes what JCA is about. This was also talked about extensively at the Conference in Sydney.

As usual with our meetings we spent time together in friendship and prayer as well as the formal discussion times. Our next gathering will be in March at Mt Saint Joseph's.

ROAD SHOW

November 2nd Feast of All Souls saw a group of Companions gather in Whangarei for the first of the "Roadshow Presentations". Unfortunately the Dargaville group were not able to join us on this occasion but it is hoped to catch up with them in the next round of visits. The Whangarei Companions, who include Fathers Damian and Thige from the Parish, were joined by Sister Win Fouhy rsj from Orewa for the day in the beautiful setting of St Francis Xavier's Catholic School.

Jane Gunson and Catherine Birt presented the story of how the formation of the Companions group had developed over several years with discernment and help from a number of facilitators. They showed the power point that had been presented at the Conference in Sydney which gave the outline of what we in Aotearoa NZ were doing to live out the Charism.

Other information from the Associates Conference in Sydney was displayed including the history of the development of the movement which began in 1983 and has now been going for 30 years. The title "Being Josephite Associates in our ever- changing world" and



Margaret Crawford and Sr. Win

hearing about groups around Australia, in Peru and East Timor showed us that we were part of a vital group based around the charism of Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods. We ended the first session with special prayers for the Sisters who were due to begin their chapter deliberations the following week. Photos of the Wanganui Fusion Mass were shown and Sister Win also gave her experiences of this great occasion.



Trish Backhurst and Nancy Hodgson



Fr. Damian and Mary Robinson

A shared lunch followed with much talking and renewing of friendships.

The afternoon was devoted to topics around where we go from here and how we fit into the movement as a whole; the Transpacifico region we now belong to; how we can invite people – particularly young people to share the journey with us. Some talk centred on the different ways of joining the melody today that have been developed by the Sisters and also on our aspirations for the future and the ways we find a spiritual home in the Companions movement.

We finished with a beautiful All Souls Day liturgy having been united in friendship and prayer with each other and all those who also live in the Josephite spirit.

Happy Christmas to everyone from the Josephite Companions of Whangarei and the North.

TRANSPACIFICO REGION

The Sisters are organized into 5 regions. The Associates and Companions belong to these too. The new regional group New Zealand belongs to is called Transpacifico. The sisters living in the local communities of Aotearoa New Zealand, Queensland and Peru belong to this region. Each region has a Regional leader assisted by several Councillors. These leaders and the central leadership team of the Congregation are elected at each Chapter. We are not sure exactly how this will impact on us as Companions, but we will be in contact with Associates from Queensland and Peru to consider how we might work together in the future.



SOSJ website <http://www.sosj.org.au/>

This is a treasure trove for those who have a computer. This is the web address for the home page. From there you can find sections on news, spirituality with wonderful prayers and devotions and information about all areas of the Sister's work.

As well at <http://www.marymackillop.org.au/> you can read and watch video clips about Mary's life and work. You can go on a virtual tour of the chapel at Mary MacKillop place in North Sydney and pray at Mary's tomb. This is a great resource for children in schools too. If you don't have a computer of your own ask one of your children or grandchildren to show you this on their computer!!

The Mary MacKillop online bookstore also has items for purchasing.



NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

DUNEDIN: There is no exciting news to report from the Dunedin group of Josephite Companions. With a lot of ill health among our group, we haven't had a Christmas get together, but hope to do something in the New Year. We would like to wish all Josephites throughout the country a happy and holy Christmas from all of us "Way down South". Mary Parker

PILGRIMS IN ARROWTOWN: Joy Cowley's road retreat pilgrimage group called into Arrowtown during November. The travellers enjoyed their time looking and reading the information that is in Mary MacKillop's cottage and the Church and liked just being there. Chris Potts from St Patricks Parish spoke to the group about Mary MacKillop's time in Arrowtown and read a quotation from the Little Brown Book of Mary's sayings. Then the pilgrims had a space for reflection and quiet time.

The people of the Parish are wonderful in the way they look after the cottage and the display about Saint Mary MacKillop in the church. It is open every day. Call in if you are in the South Island and make your own pilgrimage.



Tui Motu this month also has an account of a pilgrimage written by Fr Michael Hill. Eighty people from several Dunedin parishes walked to Port Chalmers another place where Mary MacKillop spent time while in New Zealand. If you would like to read about it on line the link is included here.

<http://www.tuimotu.org/2013/11/a-year-of-faith-pilgrimage>

GISBORNE: We are about to gather for our final meeting for 2013 on November 30th at The Convent. Our prayer theme will be Advent and members are asked to bring along a favourite Advent prayer or memorabilia. Sr. Marie Hogan will be in town having a little holiday with her family and Sr. Joan Anderson, We all look forward to catching up with her. We send warm Christmas Greetings and Blessings for 2014 to all fellow Josephite Companions around the country. Breda Bernstein JCA.

WHANGANUI: In October we gathered at Mt St Joseph's for our annual pot luck tea. Just over twenty people were present and we shared a wonderful meal together. The group was informed about the International Meeting in Sydney and there was interest in the new Transpacifico Region. We also reviewed the year's activities and considered what we may do next year. The Aramoho group who meet monthly for reflective sharing was enthused and keen to continue next year. Many Companions attend the monthly liturgies and some help to prepare them. Others are keen to help with the liturgies next year. Some Companions are keen to participate in a Book Club focused on Josephite Spirituality next year. All in all things are looking very positive! We wish all our fellow Josephites a wonderful, holy and blessed Christmas.

REST IN PEACE

We pray for the repose of the souls of:

Sister Peggy Thompson rsj

Peggy was the Secretary for the Josephite Companions for many years.

Carmel Minards JCA from Waihi. Carmel was the sister of Colleen Storey rsj

Joan Luxon and Norma Tripp two Christchurch Companions who died earlier this year.

Patricia Ellis a Gisborne Companion who died in November.



THANK YOU

Our summer prayer sheet was prepared by Sister Liz Hickey of Palmerston North. Liz is one of the recently fused Sisters of St Joseph and is a member of the Josephite Companions Leadership team. Many thanks Liz.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL

In this season of Christmas with Josephite Spirituality let us respond in unique ways to the Gospel call, to fullness of life for all as Josephite Companions Aotearoa.



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.



Helen Dougherty and Catherine Birt
On behalf of the Josephite Companions Aotearoa Leadership Team