

Seasonal News...

Summer Edition – December, 2015



Greetings to all Queensland Associates,



In this Summer Edition of Seasonal news, we are pleased to include a report on the *Josephite Associates – At the Heart of Life Leaders' Meeting* which we attended at Mary MacKillop Place, Sydney on 16-18 October, 2015. Now you will be able to put a face to the members of the Associate Transition Committee.

For a wealth of information, contacts, resources, updates and initiatives in both in the local and international context, the following website is very user friendly: <http://www.sosj.org.au/being-involved/>

For Queenslanders, the summer season is a time of watching, waiting, expectation, anticipation and joy. We all know that summer is here when The Cricket is on the radio and TV nearly all day and barbecues and tinsel are on sale in all the catalogues.



We watch the sky for signs of approaching thunderstorms and constantly check the weather report with the expectation of possible showers or relief in the form of life giving rain for our crops, tanks and gardens. Some things do not change though in relation to summer weather: We recall Mary MacKillop's words in her letter written to Fr. Woods from Sydney in 1869 on 22nd December.

"Sister Frances de Sales and I came into town today and have been here since. There has been a most terrible thunder storm, so we could not go out, but it now seems to be clearing off."

Five days later, while en route to Queensland, Mary states in her letter written from Ravensbourne (NSW) that :

"The day being very warm we had our Holland mantles on..."

(Sheila McCreanor rsj,(ed.) 2011, *Mary MacKillop and a Nest of Crosses –Correspondence with Fr. Julian Tenison Woods 1869-1872.*)



These days we no longer have to wait patiently for summer to enjoy mangoes, cherries and watermelons. Such seasonal fruit seems to be available pre- seasonally and remains available for a lot longer. Some produce is not always quite up to our expectations, though.



The Liturgical Feasts that occur during summer fill us with anticipation each year and seem to always meet with our expectations. Advent is a season that directs the mind, heart and focus to the stillness within... as we move closer to the wonder of the Incarnation. It is a 'period for devout and joyful expectation.' (GNLYC 39)

On the twelfth day of Christmas, the Feast of the Epiphany invites us to joyfully turn our gaze upwards to the heavens again for the New Year's journey ahead. The Magi were travellers in the Bible for whom faith was literally a journey. Michael McGirr in his book *Finding God's Traces, (2004)* suggests that 'They had nothing to follow but a star, a source of light and a symbol of hope.' Joy comes from such anticipation and trust because 'When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.' Matthew 2:10

The recurring theme of *expectation*, is a bit of a slippery notion. At one level we expect that we will get our cards done, shop wisely, buy the right gifts and even get them wrapped in time amidst the 'busyness' and hectic countdown rush. On a deeper level however, our expectation for *The Star*, that is Jesus, our 'source of Light and Hope', is cradled in stillness, patience, calmness and a feeling that is grounded in a truth and reality that will never change. We experience the profound wonder of the Incarnation each Christmas and beyond.



Drawing water from the well under the *Tenison Woods Memorial Centre* at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney. (18 Oct, 2015) This site was formerly the Chapel that Mary had built when she was living at Alma Cottage between 1884-1909.

We wish you a happy and holy Christmas and a New Year that is replete with many special blessings from a loving God who quenches our thirst with Living Water. We can draw on God's wellspring of great love and grace no matter what season we are currently experiencing.

Pope Francis has declared that 2016 will be the Holy Year of Mercy and a Jubilee Year. The New Year is also cause for many celebrations. It is the Sesquicentenary year which marks 150 years since the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart were founded in Penola. A logo in honour of this special year will be promulgated by the Sisters of St Joseph throughout 2016.

Warm and prayerful wishes,

- The Associate Transition Committee