



# Seasonal News...

## Winter Edition – June 2015

JUNE

VOLUME 1,

### Welcome to the new look Associate Newsletter!

Recently, as part of our Renewal of Commitment to God's call to us as Associates living a daily option for Friendship, Prayer and Service, we were invited to reflect on the inspirational words from Isaiah 43:19 -

'See, I am doing a new thing...'. As we journey together along a new way forward, it is timely to hold these hope-filled words in our heart. Contributions to future editions of the Associate Newsletter should sit comfortably within one or more of the following categories, each with a particular focus in mind:

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**Prayer /Happenings**

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**Education**

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**Action in local areas**

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**Celebrations**

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**Events involving Associates**

With the recent unseasonal weather events and minimal rainfall in certain rural parts of Queensland, it might seem to us that the 'seasons are no longer what they used to be'. In her "For All the Saints" Lecture at the Institute For Mission, Parramatta, October 2010, Sister Bridie O'Connell, rsj suggests that Mary MacKillop is 'our saint for every season' (<http://www.parra.catholic.org.au/news---events/latest-news/latest-news.aspx/mary-mackillop---a-saint-for-all-seasons.aspx>) and she states so beautifully that:

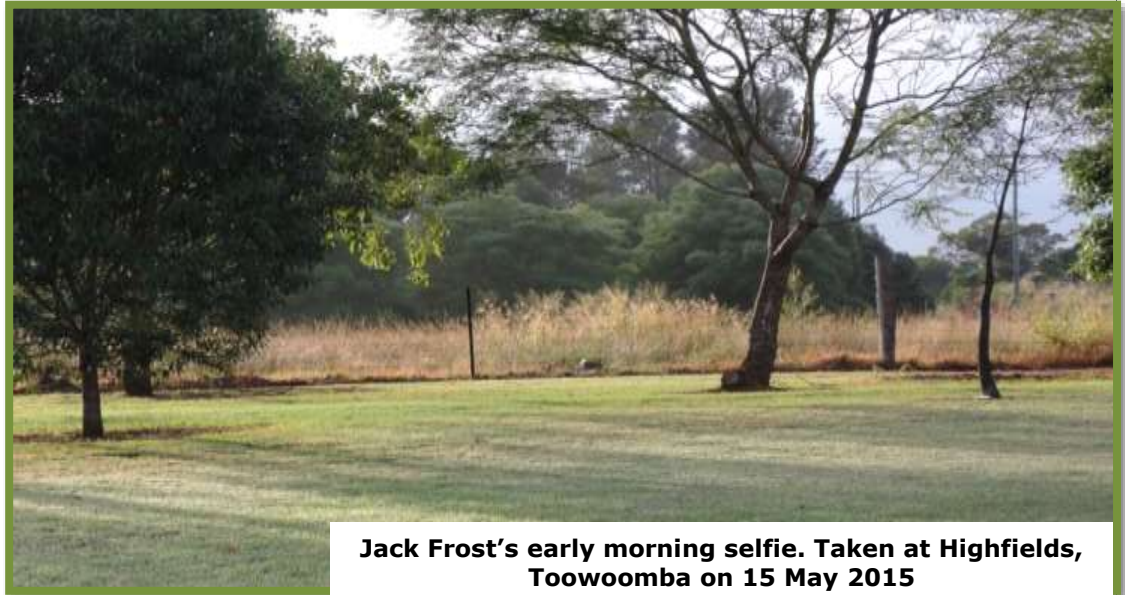


**Lady's Mantle -a herb 'doing a new thing' in a warmer than usual winter climate. Taken on 26 May, 2015**

'Through all her seasons, Mary revealed herself to be a woman of very great love. She continued to see the summer blessings across the bleakest winters, ever attuned to God's dream unfolding in and through the gifts and weaknesses.'

In times of change and sometimes uncertainty there is much to be gained from reflecting on the seasonal journey of both Mary and Julian Tenison Woods and the spring-summer, autumn-winter cycles experienced by all.

Each year, Autumn traditionally puts on quite a colourful show for all to see and enjoy. Winter, however doesn't tend to display the whole story. Beautiful plants and animals lie beneath the soil and landscape waiting to blossom and emerge at the acceptable time. Winter is certainly a time when inner things happen. We make the change from leisurely raking the golden autumn leaves to making the most of golden opportunities within shorter daylight hours. Perhaps the fallen leaves are more about paving the way for the winds to blow a 'new' freshness upon the Earth than they are about loss.



**Jack Frost's early morning selfie. Taken at Highfields, Toowoomba on 15 May 2015**

At the end of Autumn we celebrated the Feast of Pentecost. We are gifted with the Holy Spirit who 'renews the face of the earth' and creates possibilities in us through Presence. The 'strong driving winds' mentioned in the recounted story of the first Pentecost event (Acts 2:1-13) seem to usher and transport us straight into the warmth of the loving, nurturing Heart of Jesus. The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 12 is truly a 'winter' feast day. It is a time to celebrate our cosiness in being sustained and nurtured by Love and a time for donning our slippers and shoring up in the comfort of our spiritual Home.

Finally, as we journey ahead together - 'doing a new thing', let us recall on the frosty and chilly mornings that 'God's compassions never fail. They are new every morning....' (Lam 3:22-23).

Warm and prayerful wishes,

**-The Associate Transition Team**

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# Prayer

As this Newsletter is coming around the time when we celebrate the feast of the Sacred Heart, we have included a prayer that could be used for that Feast or, indeed at any time as the Feast of the Sacred Heart speaks of the provident love of God for each of us.

## Reading: Mark 12:28-32

*One of the religious scholars who had listened to them debating and had observed how well Jesus had answered them, now came up and put a question to him: 'Which is the foremost of all the commandments?'*

*Jesus replied, "This is the foremost: 'Hear, O Israel, God your God, is one. You must love the Most High God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You must love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." The scholar said to Jesus, 'Well spoken, Teacher! What you have said is true: the Most High is one and there is no other.'"*  
(The Inclusive Bible)

## Breaking Open the Reading

When do I recognise that others love me?

When do I recognise God's love of me?

Take time to reflect and share with others (if able)

## Blessing

**May God bless us with listening ears and open hearts  
to the world's needs.**

**May God bless us with responding hearts  
that care for the homeless and those in need.**

**May God bless us with hearts  
that create communities wherever we are.**

**May God bless us with the fire of love on our journey**

**Amen**

We also remember all those who need our prayers at this time – those who have died, those who are grieving, those who are sick and those who have special needs and worries at this time.

# Education

There is a report from the last Associates' Conference which we thought would make interesting reading as we search for the way forward. This report was written after the Conference in July 2013 by Sr Eileen Lenihan, a member of the Congregational Leadership Team at that time.

Also, each Newsletter we will include something from the Josephite Associates Handbook.

## a) BEING JOSEPHITE ASSOCIATES IN AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD

Forty Josephite Associate Leaders gathered for our Conference at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney from the 12th to the 14th July 2013. Associate Leaders came from every state in Australia as well as from East Timor, New Zealand and Peru. What a wonderful opportunity it was to meet and share with other Associates in a spirit of Friendship and Prayer!

The Conference began with Sr Angela Grant describing the beginning of the Associates' Movement as far back as 1983. At that time Sr Angela and other Sisters of St Joseph realised that many people, who were not vowed Sisters, shared in the Josephite charism. They explored ways of enabling others to share their spiritual homeland and so our Josephite Associate movement was born!

Against the backdrop of the Josephite Associates' birthing story, groups from different states or countries presented creative accounts of what is happening in their local area today. These accounts helped us all to appreciate the variety of activities and the spiritual riches that as Associates we bring to our local communities. The enthusiasm and energy in the groups as we shared our stories was 'contagious and encouraging!'

As Associate Leaders we came to the Conference with many questions. Many of these centred around formation programs, 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 we can support some of these ministries.

With Srs Christina Neunzerling, Katrina Brill and Michelle Connolly we explored insights on the charism and different pathways in sharing that charism. We reflected on Scripture passages and our place as Associates and laywomen and men in the Catholic Church today. We felt spiritually nourished and inspired and uplifted. Queensland gave us food for thought! We reflected with Jenny Walker on the Review of the Associates in that State and we heard about the Josephite Associate Network (JAN).

As well as receiving much new information we also faced challenging questions. Many of these questions were about the age profile of our membership, sustainability and change. We recognised that change is

already upon us. We acknowledged the need for openness to change, the time it needs, the difficulty involved and the education and support required for transition to be successful.

Now we look to the future! We believe we need to develop the International Josephite Associate Leadership Team (IJALT) further as a central contact for all Associate groups here and overseas. We have many dreams of what we hope for in years to come. Among our 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!

b) JOSEPHITE CHARISM (Page 5 Handbook)

The Josephite charism came to birth through Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods addressing the issues of their day. They experienced this charism as a special desire to serve God among the poor and the powerless.

This charism is a gift of the spirit which Josephite Sisters and Josephite Associates share with others.

It is characterised by:

- confident trust in God
- faith and courage to risk suffering and failure
- respect for the dignity of each person
- simplicity of lifestyle
- companionable support for the poor and powerless
- inclusive hospitality
- adaptability and flexibility
- a practical approach to service

## Action in local areas

### ROCKHAMPTON JOSEPHITE ASSOCIATE GROUP

We follow in the footsteps of the Sisters who first came to Rockhampton in 1912, establishing a school at St Joseph's Wandal. Another school was begun at Mt Chalmers (which was a rural and gold mining area) and the sisters travelled by train there each day while the gold was present, walking six miles each way from the train to the school. A subsequent convent and school were established in Park Avenue, a northern suburb of Rockhampton (1929), and a secondary school for girls was begun in 1964. Although the Mt Chalmers school no longer exists, Marian Secondary has been incorporated into a co-educational college, Emmaus, which still offers quality education. Both Rocky primary schools still retain their title of St Joseph's and have continued to thrive in the Josephite spirit and tradition. As Rockhampton was a staging post for sisters travelling long distances to and from the west and north of Queensland, a holiday/retreat venue

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was established at The Haven in Emu Park to reduce the length of travel and to provide a welcome break.

The Rockhampton Associates first began during the early 1980s, meeting at the Wandal Convent with Sister Anne Fleming RSJ. Following the withdrawal of the sisters from Wandal in the early 90's and the subsequent demolition of the Convent, our numbers reduced and we currently have approximately 10-12 members who attend our monthly meeting. To be honest, we would have to say that we are an aging group, as we do not have any young (in years) members. Sr Sandra Hopkins rsj, who resides and ministers within the Rockhampton/Capricorn Coast area attends our meeting when her commitments allow and this has been a very tangible link for us to the sisters.

We have marvelled in recent times at the coming together of the separate Josephite communities in Australia and New Zealand into one united body. This has encouraged us to explore further the role of Fr Julian Tenison Woods as co-founder with St Mary of The Cross MacKillop, as in the past we had tended to concentrate primarily on Mary MacKillop. There is a wealth of information and prayer resources available on the SOSJ website and we have been particularly taking advantage of Sr Mary Cresp's series "Prayer Chats with Julian". We would recommend these to any Associates who would like to expand their knowledge of Julian and better understand the man, his talent, and most importantly, his spirituality.

Because we have no younger members and we have no group projects etc, our commitment is on an individual basis. We try to respond in prayer, friendship and service during the everyday circumstances of our own lives and that of our parish communities. We would also like to develop closer relationships with some Associates who receive the newsletter but have not had any other connection with the local Associate Group. Together we might strengthen ties and look further afield.

Janette Dobson (for Rockhampton Josephite Associates)

### **JOSEPHITE ASSOCIATES TOWNSVILLE**

Greetings from the Townsville Associates. We are very excited to let you all know what is going on in Townsville.

We are a small group, but our members participate in several forms of prayer and service.

We have held an annual retreat for the past 5 years and on the 8th of each month, we hold a prayer meeting "Praying with Mary MacKillop". This is usually done in the form of evening prayer, however, we often change the format depending on the need at the time. We use these prayer meetings to catch up and discuss anything the group may be interested in getting involved in.

Our annual Mary MacKillop Family Fair is held in conjunction with the Mary MacKillop Parish, St Joseph's School and the Mary MacKillop Child Care Centre. It is held each year on the Sunday closest to the feast day and this year will be held on the 9th August 2015. It is designed to provide affordable family entertainment, with several families being funded to attend the event.

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We have recently been approached to assist in making Mary MacKillop Bags for distribution in our local prison. This is a very exciting project for us and we hope to include some people who are showing interest in being involved in the Associate movement.

The group is excited about the new way forward and look forward to hearing from different groups as to what they are up to.

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## Celebrations

In this newsletter, we have reports from Associate groups in Townsville and Rockhampton. In order to keep in touch with each other, for the next mailing, we ask that the Cairns and South side Brisbane groups write a short report of happenings in your area. If either group is not able to contribute, would you please let the Transition Team know so that we can ask another group. Hopefully, over time, we will have heard from all our Queensland groups.

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## Events

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### **8 AUGUST 2015 – FEAST OF ST MARY OF THE CROSS MACKILLOP**

You are all encouraged to renew your commitment to the Associates on the Feast of St Mary MacKillop on August 8th. There will be Handbooks available and the badges for those who choose to make this renewal and have not received these. Please let one of the Transition Committee know if you require a badge or handbook.

We would also be interested in any happenings in your area around this feastday.

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### **DATE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER**

We would appreciate any contributions for the next Newsletter by the 20 August 2015. Note the format, as set out in the Editorial, that we are now using.

Please send these to [TransPacificoQLD@sosj.org.au](mailto:TransPacificoQLD@sosj.org.au) with the subject line: Associates Seasonal News or mail to Associates – Seasonal News, PO Box 818, Nundah Qld 4012.

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