

# Associates News

Welcome to the JOSEPHITE ASSOCIATES QUEENSLAND Quarterly Newsletter

## Celebrating Winter — June 2018

### WINTER

Winter is upon us and as we reflect on the differences in nature let us also reflect on what this means in each of our lives. As the days shorten, the sun loses some of its warmth and the leaves on the trees drop silently to the ground, things and activities change also in our daily lives. Below is a thought provoking Winter Blessing to carry us on our journey.

Written by Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr their creative insight into winter provides us with so many beautiful images.



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#### **Winter Blessing**

*Joyce Rupp & Macrina Wiederkehr*

Blessed are you, winter,  
dark season of waiting,  
you affirm the dark seasons of our lives,  
forecasting the weather of waiting in hope.

Blessed are you, winter,  
you faithfully guard a life unseen,  
calling those who listen deeply  
to discover winter rest.

Blessed are you, winter,  
frozen and cold on the outside,  
within your silent, nurturing womb  
you warmly welcome all that longs for renewal.

Blessed are you, winter,  
your bleak, barren trees  
preach wordless sermons  
about emptiness and solitude.

Blessed are you, winter,  
you teach us valuable lessons  
about waiting in darkness  
with hope and trust.

Blessed are you, winter,  
season of blood red sunsets  
and star-filled, long, dark nights,  
faithfully you pour out your beauty.

Blessed are you, winter,  
when your tiny snowflakes  
flurry through the air,  
you awaken our sleeping souls.

Blessed are you, winter,  
with your wild and varied moods,  
so intent on being yourself,  
you refuse to be a people-pleaser.

## STEP FORWARD WITH MARY MACKILLOP

**S**r Monica Cavanagh rsj, Congregational Leader, delivered an inspiring address to the Queensland Josephite Associates Conference participants: **"Step Forward with Mary MacKillop"**. Below is a summary of Monica's presentation:

"As I considered what aspects of Mary MacKillop we are being invited to *Step Forward* with, these words and qualities emerged for me: Mary MacKillop, a woman of Presence and Passion, a woman of Courage and Compassion, a Woman of Hospitality and Humility.

**Presence:** Mary MacKillop had a keen a sense of the Presence of God. Perhaps her most profound experience was at the moment of the excommunication, an experience of which she wrote: *"The calm beautiful presence of God I shall not forget"*. In the depths of her heart, in her inner being she knew that she was the beloved of God and this flowed out into her encounters with people whether with friend or stranger whom she also recognised as the Beloved of God.

### Mary MacKillop – The Passionate One

Passion calls us to work together in responding to the cry of Earth, the cry of children and those places where humanity is diminished and to embrace the emerging realities of this time whether that be in attending to the needs of asylum seekers, preparing blue bags for those leaving prison, companioning children through grief and loss and natural disasters through the ministry of *Good Grief*, or supporting Indigenous Tertiary Scholarships, educating and supporting those in the school community with significant needs or the literacy of children and adults in Timor Leste. It invites us to be courageous risk-takers moving beyond the familiar to embrace new hopes and new dreams.

### Mary MacKillop – The Courageous One

Courage is that ability to act on one's beliefs despite danger or disapproval. That was certainly true for Mary MacKillop. Let us hear just one such disapproval. A letter of Bishop James Quinn to Bishop Reynolds in Adelaide about Mary MacKillop:

***'She is the daughter of a colonial seminarian, impossible for me to accept the government of a woman or to have a community of nuns governed by a lady from Adelaide. I won't allow any woman to make a disturbance in my diocese.'***

It is about having the capacity to persevere in the face of life's challenges. For Mary MacKillop this meant feeling lonely and bewildered as Bishop Sheil spoke at the time of the excommunication:

***'You are now, Mary MacKillop, free to return to the world, a large portion of wickedness of which you have, I fear, brought into this Institute.'***

It meant facing many difficult situations and choices in her life.

### Compassion Mary MacKillop stands as a Sign of God's Tender Love in Our World

Mary MacKillop is a woman with a hospitable heart. All were welcome at her table and she passed this message on to her Sisters. To Sister Josephine in Mackay she writes: *'Be kind to the poor foreigners. Remember I was a foreigner once, and as such was never laughed at nor unkindly treated'*. She welcomed the elderly and the orphans into the Houses of Providence and often the Sisters welcomed women into their homes to escape domestic violence.

As people inspired by her vision, we too are called to extend the hand of welcome to the stranger, those who see life differently to us, to people of other cultures. We are called to step out and find the path for hospitality into today's world.

Humility frees us up to use all our gifts and talents to the best of our abilities by enabling us to accept our limitations and vulnerabilities as well as our strengths.

It is stepping forward with dignity and taking the honourable action no matter what others think.

### Being the Presence of Love: The Power of Communion

How do we continue to animate and revitalise the Josephite spirit, the spirit of Mary MacKillop, as Associates, as teachers in our schools founded in the Josephite tradition, in our Archdiocese dedicated in her memory, as missionary disciples living the gospel with a Josephite heart in the spirit of Mary and Julian?

At the time of the Canonisation, James Fitzpatrick omi wrote a reflection on the significance of the Mary's canonisation. While he wrote this for the Sisters I believe its relevance is for all who are called to live the Gospel with a Josephite heart in the spirit of Mary and Julian: The challenge he placed before us included:

- The wider church will have the need, indeed the right, to know Mary's particular spirit and charism.



*(Continued on page 4)*

## Reflections – Queensland Josephite Associates Conference

The Queensland Josephite Conference was held on Friday 25 May concluding on Sunday 27 May. In total forty-six participants attended. The weekend was filled with challenges, optimism and enthusiasm. Each of the guest speakers provided a different perspective on the Conference theme, **“Step Forward with Mary MacKillop – Finding our Path in the World Today”**.

In this edition of the newsletter we have featured the address given by Sr Monica Cavanagh rsj, Congregational Leader.

Students from St Mary MacKillop College Nundah provided dinner music on Friday evening and on Saturday thirty-three students from St Joseph’s Primary School performed music written by Margaret Hatzis, a teacher at St Joseph’s Primary School, Beenleigh.

The recent Qld Josephite Associate Conference conveyed a promising atmosphere over the 3-day weekend. It was lovely to see the two Mary MacKillop schools represented with their attendance and informative displays as well as entertaining us with their musical attributes. We were also entertained with a small concert by the students from St Joseph’s School Beenleigh. Once the conference got underway, attendance of 40+ participants allowed for some vocal communication and some hopeful outcomes.

We were inspired and revitalised by our guest speakers - Sr Monica Cavanagh, Mary Hemings and Pam Betts - to look into the future with open hearts and minds and to look beyond our current status to enable our Association to grow, expand and move forward in a sustainable way.

The workshop presentations also gave us an insight into ways to step ahead, while still retaining the Josephite charism. I particularly enjoyed the workshop presented by Sr Jan Tranter on the Relationship between Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods told from Julian’s point of view and the workshop on Finding Our Individual Spiritual Pathway where we heard from 4 people who had chosen one of the authentic pathways and why they chose these pathways and the impact it has had on their lives.

**Erin Jones, Townsville**

I have experienced an energising sense of hope and encouragement through listening to our excellent keynote speakers, but also through the interaction with so many fellow Associates who have pursued this path for many years, and then also having the privilege of meeting with those who are only just joining this journey and hearing of their hopes and dreams.

- Hope demonstrated: that this Associate Movement will indeed proceed into the future;
- Hope evidenced: in that there are many people willing to become involved in local groups;
- Hope confirmed: that this is indeed a valid pathway we need to pursue energetically.

The conference provided a unique opportunity for many people on various pathways in life to come together, to share their thoughts in a very open and accepting environment, and then to commit to continue this journey to explore with a genuine openness what new pathways or future directions may eventuate.

Clairvaux MacKillop College also displayed photos of their recent pilgrimages to Peru and the Kimberley area, where they undertook projects in support of the local communities.

We thank all for their participation in our conference as your presence contributed towards the vibrant and rich memories that were created.

After what was a successful, fruitful and enjoyable weekend, the Planning Committee will now collate the feedback from the brainstorming sessions at the Conference and we look forward to being able to convey some concrete and useful information to our Associate groups as we work towards a sustainable and positive future.

What an experience of stepping forward with Mary MacKillop! It was so wonderful to have such a committed group of Mary MacKillop supporters at our Conference. I get the impression that all of us present at the Conference, took another step forward to walk in her spirit and with her energy, in our world today. Special thanks to the Planning Committee Queensland and all that each member did to bring this Conference to fruition. As Mary MacKillop said ‘Gratitude is the memory of the heart’ and we certainly have much for which to be thankful.

**Sr Moya Campbell rsj**

I thought the conference was very inspiring. There was energy, friendship, laughter, participation and warmth from all those present. The guest speakers were so enthusiastic in their love of Mary and we all are carriers of her story. I am looking forward to the beginning of a Northside Associate group beginning in July.

**Marie Sellin, Brisbane**

Everyone who attended obviously came because they believed that this Associate Movement was important and valuable, or because they wanted a deeper understanding. There were a number of suggestions put forward as to how we might progress into the future, but the over-riding atmosphere was that of determination to remain focused on the charism of Mary MacKillop. Mary is the reason that we have been drawn into living out our faith imbued with this Josephite spirituality. We’ve chosen this particular faith lens of Mary MacKillop in order to live out our lives with her values, her spirituality, her example, and her overwhelming trust that God will provide.

At the conclusion of this conference, the overall consensus was that we need to continue to follow in Mary’s footsteps and be open and attentive to God’s Spirit calling us to follow in love wherever that may lead. Let’s take up the challenge and bravely walk onward together into that great future!

**Janette Dobson, Rockhampton**

(Continued from page 2)

- All who commit themselves to living in the Josephite Spirit are summoned to model her life in their life and to keep all that she stood for alive in our day.
- Your manner of living, your mission and ministry, your approach to service must breathe her spirit, embody her charism.

Mary MacKillop is a woman who dared to believe in her dream and to trust in her God. Her life as a woman who lived the Gospel faithfully and who today we would call a missionary disciple, dared to trust in her God, to take risks and break boundaries. It called her to travel down roads that could lead to who knows where. Her presence brought an explosion of God's love to the great need in Australia to improve the lives of those who were poor. She was a woman ahead of her time with an incredible vision. She walked our land, knew our stars and read the signs of the time.

- **Mary MacKillop is the soul of this sunburnt country.**

*With Mary MacKillop  
let us step forward and find our Path  
in the World Today."*



## REPORT on VISITS to ASSOCIATE GROUPS around AUSTRALIA

I've had the privilege over the last couple of months to visit the Associate groups and Sisters in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Dardanup. The hospitality extended to me by all groups was just remarkable and, of course, I enjoyed every minute of it!

This was a wonderful opportunity to hear the local stories of the Associates and some of their history. It also gave me an insight into what the Associates wish to hold on to from the past as we move into this period of change. As you all know I have been asked to support the International Associates Leadership Team as they continue the journey for the Associates to become a sustainable and autonomous organisation. This involves a change in culture and structure for the Associates and also, a change in role for the Sisters as they walk in a different way with the Associates into the future.

Many issues are beginning to emerge... Gradually over the next couple of years, we will address these issues. At our October 2018 meeting IJALT members will be able to suggest a timeline for things to happen so that the move to the NEW is a gradual one.

Next week I go to New South Wales and visit a number of Associate groups there as well as the Executive of the Planning Committee. In July I go to New Zealand. In each place there are issues that arise so once I have completed these visits I will write a paper on what has emerged that we will continue to explore into the future.

*Moya Campbell rsj*



## FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART

**O**n Friday 8 June we celebrated the Feast of the Sacred Heart, a feast day of special significance to Mary and her Sisters.

In 1907 on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, Mary wrote the following words to her Sisters:

*“When storms rage, when persecutions or dangers threaten, I quietly creep into (the Sacred Heart’s) dark abyss: and securely sheltered there, my soul is in peace, though my body is tossed upon the stormy waves of a cold and selfish world.”*

These words are especially relevant for us today. How do we respond to those no-one else cares for? Am I open to people of all faiths and backgrounds living my life in service to others?

Mary’s life was an expression of the compassionate love of Jesus – a role model for each of us.

Let us pray  
Jesus, may my heart be open  
Warmed by the fire of Your love  
May others find in me a place of rest,  
A space that feels like home.  
Help me to love as You have loved



(adapted from Mary MacKillop — *Prayers and Reflections for each day of the week*)

## DATE CLAIMER!

### BRISBANE NORTH AREA ASSOCIATES MEETING

Feedback from our recent Conference requested that an Associate Group be established in inner North Brisbane. If you are interested in joining this group a meeting is planned:

**Date: Saturday 21 July 2018**

**Time: 2.00pm**

**Place: St Joseph’s Convent, Bage Street, NUNDAH**

**RSVP: 17 July to 0488 216 580 (please leave a message)**

### DVD for SALE

**Great Joy** is a DVD of songs about Mary MacKillop created by Margaret Hatzsis from St Joseph’s Primary School, Beenleigh for children.

If you wish to purchase a copy you can contact Margaret through her email address:

[mhatzsis@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:mhatzsis@bne.catholic.edu.au)



“Wherever we may be  
Let God’s glory absorb  
Our thoughts, deliberations and actions”

St Mary MacKillop 1898

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*Thank you to those who have made a contribution in 2018.*

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