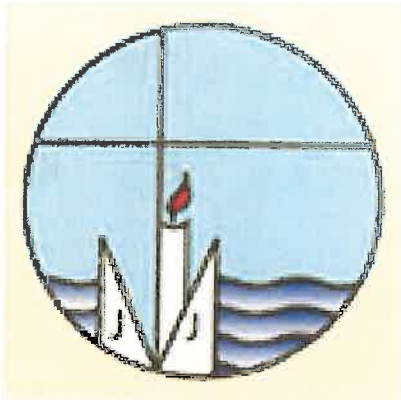


IJALT Newsletter

December 2019



Greetings - Tena Koutou -

Saludos - Bon Dia

In this month's newsletter we have

- ◆ A Report from Catherine Birt
- ◆ Report from Scotland
- ◆ NSW update
- ◆ Information about the next Associate Conference 2020

God Bless

IJALT

We have moved into a new Church year with the start of Advent, a joyful time of anticipation waiting for the birth of Christ. Christmas is all about presence. Christ becomes present for us as a child in Bethlehem. Christ will become present for us at the end of time. What sort of presence will you provide this Christmas? We wish you and your families a blessed and holy Christmas.

Other Voices



I had the privilege in October to attend the Sister's Chapter meeting for a day as part of the "Other Voices" section where I was able to speak on behalf of the Associate movement.

What I said had been collaboratively prepared with input from the NZ Companions Leadership group and Mary Hemmings from IJALT.

There were 11 speakers from a wide range of Josephite Ministries – from education, from the Josephite action group, an aboriginal leader, a family services worker, a chaplain working in a hospital, an administrator from the Melbourne Mary MacKillop centre, a woman working on the plenary council and more.

I was struck by the way the process on the day was very carefully crafted moving from "What is the most important global issue" to "What is the most critical edge of Josephite mission today" to "What does the global call to religion mean for us in the Josephite communion."

There were three amazing videos, specially made, which were used as a starter for each discussion.

Monica used the phrase "Other Voices" to describe our input and we were spaced out during the day in groups of three between the discussion and feedback. I was the first one after lunch and I felt that some of the ideas we were putting forth fitted in well there. Later in the day I noticed some of the phrases I had used were picked up by some of the speakers!!

Overall, I felt very privileged to have had this opportunity and I certainly gained insights into the way the Chapter works, and the enormous amount of work done beforehand by all the Sisters to ensure its success.

Catherine Birt (Josephite Companion/Associate Aotearoa/New Zealand)

Greetings from Scotland!

We are a small group of Associates based in the parish of St Mary's, Nairn, not far from Inverness, and the very place where dear Mary spent a night while on her travels around her family homeland in the Highlands of Scotland.

Peggy is the 'evangelist' in our group. She introduced all of us to the story of Mary MacKillop and made us aware of the Saint in our midst. She is always happy to recommend a book to read from her vast collection, informing us of the amazing saintly people who have sustained and encouraged our faith through the ages. Chloe is a beautiful artist and has used her gifts to contribute many amazing works of art to the church and beyond. Elaine MacDonald (also known as 'wee' Elaine), does a lot to help around the community in Nairn and volunteers for Shelter, a charity helping to improve the lives of those affected by bad housing or homelessness. Anne Stuart is a senior member of our Church and she always has a warm smile, gentle manner and kind word for those around her. I'm the other Elaine, (also known as 'big' Elaine as I'm taller than 'wee' Elaine), and I try my best to help out where I can, and often call on St Mary's help with family challenges, especially as my family are still relatively young. Emily is a stalwart of the Church, creating beautiful flower arrangements for the altar, taking Communion to those in care homes, preparing teas and coffees after mass, and more!

The Associates here, as well as the people living in communities around the Highlands, have benefitted greatly over the years, from the presence of the Sisters of St Joseph based near Fort William. They have provided friendship, encouragement and guidance as well as travelling some distance to offer us here in Nairn, day retreats during Lent or Advent. As well as offering spiritual renewal, there was great warmth and friendship on every occasion.

Therefore, it was with great sadness that we discovered that the Sisters would no longer have this local presence and would be returning to Australia. With heavy hearts, we travelled down to Lochaber in August, to bid a fond farewell to Sr Ann Leesue, who has worked tirelessly in the Lochaber area (the ancestral home of Mary MacKillop), and beyond. There was a special Mass organised on Mary's Feast Day with a cake and a great spread of food. The next day, we attended a ceilidh with lots of local musical and spoken talent, Highland dancing and once again a great spread of food. As the Parish priest was also moving on to pastures new, it seemed like a double blow for this remote community who have built up a deep affection for Sr Ann and all the Sisters who have lived and worked here. Sr Ann was in quite a unique position, as she was carrying out her duties on her own here, rather than with the company of another Sister, and this would have



been no mean feat. Highland weather and the isolation of some places would have been daily challenges no doubt! Though despite the sadness of saying goodbye, we hope that Sr Ann and the other Sisters of St Joseph who have served this Scottish community so well over the years, will have fond memories not only of Scottish and Highland hospitality, but also of the stunning surroundings and the beautiful Ben Nevis on their doorstep.

A huge debt of thanks to Sr Ann and all the Sisters who have served this area so well, and for the legacy they leave behind. Their kindness and warmth have touched many hearts, and we wish them all the very best for the years ahead. 'Haste ye back' would be the only words left to say on this occasion!

Scottish Associates with Sr Ann Leesue (Blue/green jacket)

Written by Elaine de Ste Croix

New South Wales:

For many years, the NSW Associates have been an incorporated body. In this changing era, the decision has been made to 'de-incorporate', as all of our Associates link together with the support of IJALT. The faithful leadership team that has served NSW so loyally for a long time has chosen to step down. A small group of Associates will gather in the near future to begin to determine a pathway forward to develop leadership for NSW. Further information will follow in 2020.



These are some photos from the meetings IJALT members have had as they have travelled throughout the States and New Zealand. We will share our reports and observations from these in our first newsletter next year.

Above: Anne-Marie Wilkinson from IJALT gathers with South Australian Associates



Right: New Zealand Companions/Associates were visited by Pauline McGuire from IJALT in November



Left: Helen Dougherty from IJALT presents to the Victorian Associates



IJALT CONFERENCE
Mary MacKillop Precinct
4 High Street Kensington
Adelaide SA

BE COURAGEOUS
AND FULL OF HOPE

• • • •

JULY
5 - 7
2020

Re-imagining the Josephite Associate Movement
Inspirational Speakers
Workshops & Future Planning
Visit Mary MacKillop Museum

'The Vision' Jan Williamson

© Used with permission of the artist and the Trustees of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Must not be reproduced without permission of the Trustees.