



FRIENDSHIP
PRAYER
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NSW JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS

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NEWSLETTER • November 2021

Reflection for NSW Josephite Companions

Dear Companions

The Sisters' Constitutions begin with the quote from Micah (6-8):

This is what Yahweh asks of you

Only this,

To act justly

To love tenderly

And to walk humbly with your God.

The above quote reflects the way Mary MacKillop lived her life and she asks us to do the same. Mary knew from an early age that life was not easy because of all the difficulties she encountered. In full trust and confidence, she always turned to the Sacred Heart and it is there that she found comfort and peace. Mary said: *'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.'* (1880)

These last two years have proved difficult for all of us, for some more than others. We had to face isolation and loneliness, some even lost jobs, some suffered depression and had mental issues. We could not see our own children and grandchildren. Life has been really hard. Mary, nevertheless, encourages us to live life with trust and confidence in the Divine Providence of God.

Recently we celebrated the death anniversary of Fr Julian Tenison Woods (7 October). Julian looked at life with awe and wonder. He saw God in every living thing and in all Creation. He realised that we are somehow all connected and interdependent on each other whether we are living beings or not. *'Julian Tenison Woods was truly filled with the fire of his love for God'. This God he found, not only in the Church and people he served, but in the very rocks, trees, skies, plants and animals of our world...the whole of Creation.* (Symphony of Life)

This time of pandemic has made many of us realise that we all depend on each other; made us more conscious of the need to help and look after each other, to walk and accompany each other in this hard time. It made us more aware of the need also to look after our common home realising that everything is created and held in field of grace by the love of God.

Soon we will be celebrating the birth of Our Lord. This year was the year of St Joseph. St Joseph was chosen by Julian and Mary MacKillop to be Patron Saint of the Congregation. In Joseph both Julian and Mary saw a man of courage, a man of hope, resilience and open to the will of God. Joseph in the midst of confusion and fear gave birth to new possibilities and dreams



*We are not in the same boat. We are in the same storm.
In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.*

for the world through Jesus. May we like Joseph at this time say a wholehearted yes to our God so that we can give birth to new possibilities and dreams for our world.

May you and your dear families have a very holy and blessed Christmas.
- Antoinette Mangion

'Let us be joyful and thank God'

Mary MacKillop – 1870

'Try to think of God often throughout the day'

Fr Julian Tenison Woods - 1862



NSW Josephite Companions Leadership Team

Antoinette Mangion, Geoff Barrett, Lyn Griffiths
Beverley Badcock
Anne Bailey, Aileen Young

GETHSEMANE COMMUNITIY INC.

Gethsemane Community is a community house for a small group of men and women who have mental illness. Some also have intellectual disability or brain damage. At present, I live with three women and one man in our house at Petersham. This was purchased for us by NSW Housing in 1988 so we are tenants and lease our rooms through Amelie Housing, a community housing provider. The aim of Gethsemane is to help residents develop living skills so they can become independent. Since 1990, over 60 men and women have lived in the community for shorter or longer periods. About 15 have since died. We organised funerals for eight of them and for two men from boarding houses who had no family.

Gethsemane residents have caseworkers at Marrickville Community Health Centre and have their own choice of GP. All four current residents have NDIS support workers who spend time with them each week and involve them in a variety of activities. They also help them keep track of medical appointments.

At Gethsemane, we live as a community, sharing jobs and having an evening meal together. We celebrate birthdays, with pizza and a birthday cake. We all care

for our two older cats, Misty and Tommy and our tiny older dogs, AJ and Scoobie. Residents look after their own rooms, washing their clothes and bed linen.

Gethsemane has always reached out to people with disability in the community. Our Christmas project has provided personal gift parcels for a growing number of such people since 1994. In 2020, we reached 903 people throughout the State in 6 boarding houses for people with disabilities, 35 group homes, people without family contact in 26 aged care facilities and 33 people living in the community with support. We also packed hampers of general and festive food, toiletries and a calendar for recording appointment to 450 clients of mental health and drugs health through the Inner West of Sydney. We usually invite up to 70 people with disabilities to join us at Gethsemane for Christmas lunch. Due to Covid, this was a much smaller event in 2020. We also have a coded system that allows interested people to send a Christmas card to one of the 903 people on our data base. Coded address labels are distributed to parishes, schools and interested people.

If any Companions would like to help,



donations of toiletries, socks and small tins of food are useful in helping us carry out the Christmas project. Details can be provided by email. Donations by October would be helpful. Likewise, card labels can be sent to any interested people. These are put on the envelope of a Christmas card and a message written in the card. Once posted, the cards come back here to be readressed.

*Myree Harris RSJ, Gethsemane Community
5 Oxford St Petersham NSW 2049
myree.harris@sosj.org.au*

Stamps Wanted



Used stamps wanted for the
Josephite Mission in Peru

Please send to:

Boxes of Stamps

5 Alexandra Avenue
Croydon NSW 2132

Envelopes and packets to

Stamps, PO Box 184

Croydon NSW 2132

Phone 02 8741 2335

Thank you for all stamps received.

Request from Bathurst

Used stamps for the
Josephite Mission in Timor Leste
Sister Jean Cain rsj Perthville requests that
stamps continue to be sent to:-

Unit 1, St Johns,

Tension Woods Avenue,
Perthville NSW 2795

Warialda Companions celebrate Feast of Saint Mary MacKillop

Despite Covid and a number of our companions unable to attend, six of us had a great get together to celebrate Saint Mary MacKillop's Feast Day. Anne organized a special liturgy which included the induction of our new Companion, Joe Demech. Unfortunately, Joe had been to Armidale, so he had to be in self isolation, but was able to join in and make his commitment with us by phone

Being the Principal of our St Joseph's Primary School, Joe has a special connection to the Josephite Sisters, so he is a very welcome Josephite Companion. A personal reflection was included as to how we face the challenges of today's life and Mary MacKillop's words echoed "do what you can and leave the rest to God."

We concluded our celebration with the beautiful hymn 'You are the Light' which was followed by a cuppa and chats about the special Sisters of Saint Joseph we have had in Warialda.



Left to Right: Pat Carroll, Mary Hough, Helen Perret, Cynthia Stewart, Anne Jones and Jan Hawkins.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE SAINTS



Peter McVerry SJ, well-known activist for the homeless reminds us that saints always come to us in disguise.

St Mother Teresa was an extraordinary woman. She spent her life reaching out to the poorest of the poor and founded a religious congregation to continue her work.

St Francis Xavier travelled to the ends of the world to bring the Gospel to people who had never heard of Jesus, suffering attacks, hunger and cold on his journeys.

Many who died for their faith, sometimes suffering torture before death are venerated as martyrs.

That's the problem. The message we are being given is that saints are extraordinary people, who do extraordinary things, things that we, ordinary people, would do, or could not, do. So, we cannot aspire to being a saint.

St Alphonsus Rodriguez is my kind of saint. He was a Jesuit brother who spent forty-six years as a doorkeeper at a Jesuit college in Spain. He did what all of us do every day – if we're not homeless – namely, answering the door to those who knock. He talked if they wanted to talk, he gave them food if they asked for food. He was a saint because he did ordinary things, things that all of us do, and did them with love.

The twelve apostles are saints. While we know something about some of them, such as Matthew, Peter, James and John, we know absolutely nothing about the lives or achievements of most of the other apostles. In fact, for some of them we're not even sure of their correct names, as the names of the Apostles in the different Gospels vary slightly. If they had done anything extraordinary, it would have been recorded somewhere and we would know about it. They are saints because they did what Jesus called them to do, in an inconspicuous, unassuming way.

St Joseph did nothing extraordinary. He reared the child Jesus, like every other parent who reared their child. He went to work to support his family, like every other working parent. But because the child he reared was the Son of God, he is perhaps the greatest saint of all.

Jesus himself spent thirty years living with his mother. His life was so ordinary that those from his own town of Nazareth, with whom he had grown up and played with as a child, could not accept that he was the Messiah, this extraordinary representative of God whom Israel had been awaiting for thousands of years.



'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matthew 25:40.

Sanctity does not mean doing extraordinary things. Sanctity means doing ordinary things with love in your heart. The parent who feeds the children, goes to the shops, cleans the house, is being a saint, just by doing those ordinary things. The parent who goes to work, returns home tired, has their dinner and sits in front of the TV relaxing, is being a saint.

Imagine watching a beautiful, multi-coloured butterfly on a lovely summer day. All the butterfly does is to fly from flower to flower. Yet that butterfly reflects the beauty and glory of God, just by being a butterfly, and doing what butterflies do. How much more, then, do we human beings reflect the glory of God, just by doing what human beings do, living our ordinary daily lives. To be a saint is to reflect the glory of God. The newly born baby, with no achievements to boast of, reflects the glory of God, just by being a baby. The paralysed person, who can only move eyes, reflects the glory of God, just by being a paralysed person. Every human being who lives their ordinary lives with love, whatever that life may entail, is a saint.

We have saints all around us, we live amongst them, but we do not recognise them, just as the people of Israel did not recognise the Son of God because he was so ordinary. They expected a mighty powerful warrior to come, who would conquer their external enemies, and so bring peace to the land of Israel. Jesus did not at all meet their expectations, quite the opposite indeed. Saints, like the Son of God, always come to us in disguise.

News From Lidcombe Companions

For over 25 years our Lidcombe group has been meeting once a month starting with an "Anointing of the Sick" Mass then prayer and fellowship in our parish hall. Each month we take up a voluntary collection which has been given to different charities over the years.

In the last couple of years, we heard about a Josephite Nun, Sister Myree Harris OAM RSJ who has run Gethsemane Community in Petersham (inner west Sydney) for more than 30 years. Gethsemane Community is a "home for the homeless" providing secure housing in a family-like setting for men and women with mental illness and intellectual disability who have been homeless. It does not receive any government funding and relies solely on donations. Amongst other great work that Sister Myree does, she makes several hundred gift bags and Christmas food hampers every year.

Our Josephite Companions group apart from giving a small financial donation have also run a food appeal for the last 2 years through our Lidcombe/St Joachim's parish for the items most needed for these hampers e.g small packs/jars/tins of tea, coffee, tuna, salmon, long life cream, pickles etc. The response from our parish community has been nothing short of extraordinary!!!

We believe that many people are wanting to help in a more practical and hands-on way (not just giving money and not being sure where that's going or how much gets used for admin costs). For many in our group who may struggle with mobility, they give us the best support in their prayers. Those who are able, help deliver the food to Petersham where working bees are set up over a few weeks to sort and pack the gift bags and hampers. Our group also helps with local deliveries of these to Group homes and Aged Care facilities.

Our beautiful little group all agree this is a very worthwhile cause and definitely fits with St Mary MacKillop's ethos of "never seeing a need without doing something about it".

Rhonda Tanti, Lidcombe Josephites Companions

CHRISTMAS REFLECTION



Mary Mother of my Lord

LUKE 1:39-44

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

Reflect and Pray

Mary, mother of Jesus, has played a central role in the Church's life since the very beginning. How does Mary impact your relationship with Jesus? Do you have a relationship with Mary as mother? What has Mary taught you about being a follower of Jesus?

Mary was given the great gift of bringing Jesus into the world, a role that only she could do. Do you have a sense of your special place in God's plan? How is Jesus brought more into the world through you?

Companions' Office

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nsw.companions@sosj.org.au

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

as we approach the end of the YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH.

Hail Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
In you Mary placed her trust;
With you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
Show yourself a father
And guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage,
And defend us from every evil. **Amen**
St Joseph, pray for us

*We pray for the souls of our departed
Companion brothers and sisters*

Ellen Atkins	Bombala
Nancy Bannon	Portland
Margaret Burgess	Tamworth
Stella Cameron	Dunedoo
Beth Commins	Blayney
Maureen Cummins	Lithgow
Pat Dailhou	Mullumbimby
Kath Freeth	Dubbo
Charlie Gal	Warilla
Joyce Gordon	Hillston
Melva Grant	Canowindra
Marie Harding	Hillston
Robin Hartman	Warialda
Margaret Hunt	Prayer Member
William Kennedy	Warialda
Margaret Maunsell	North Leichhardt.
John McGrath	Padstow
John McNamara	Boambee
Leonie Miller	Lidcombe
Hope Moore	Warialda
Frank Morgan	Lidcombe
Nancy Nott	Dunedoo
Pauline Pattison	Portland
Maria Reynders	Blayney
Maureen Salkeld	Lismore
Colleen Schneider	North Leichhardt
Colleen Skinner	Hillston
Kath Smith	Blayney
Dorothy Spratt	Prayer Member
Bernadette Ulbrich	Lidcombe
Margaret Webb-Musch	Lismore

**We would like to thank all Josephite Companions
who contributed to the membership and to JCoLT**

Plenary Council Prayer



Come, Holy Spirit of Pentecost.

Come, Holy Spirit of the great South Land.

O God, bless and unite all your people in Australia
and guide us on the pilgrim way of the Plenary Council.

Give us the grace to see your face in one another and to
recognise Jesus, our companion on the road.

Give us the courage to tell our stories and to speak boldly of
your truth.

Give us ears to listen humbly to each other
and a discerning heart to hear what you are saying.
Lead your Church into a hope-filled future, that we may live the
joy of the Gospel.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
bread for the journey from age to age.

Amen.

Our Lady Help of Christians, pray for us. St Mary MacKillop,
pray for us.