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Autumn 2022

March 2022 Newsletter

The Josephite Ministry in Peru

By Bridgette Barrett

The focus in 2022 for the Josephite Companions fundraising is the *Josephite Ministry in Peru*. During the summer of 2021/22, Katrina van Ruth rsj, who has lived and worked in Peru for 12 years so far, returned to Adelaide for a holiday after a 3-year absence. It was while she was in Adelaide that an opportunity arose for Sr Katrina to share her story.

And so, on the 5th of February, Sisters, Companions, Covenants and friends gathered in Bethany for a presentation by Sr Katrina. She spoke about the Peruvian Josephite mission, the effects of Covid, Companions and the support of *Mary MacKillop Today*, which is the fundraising arm of the Josephites.

The Josephite Sisters in Peru and Brazil are involved in many and varied roles including working in the parish with children, working in kindergartens and with senior groups. In Lima, these groups offer seniors activities such as craft, cooking and bingo. There is also a centre for children with disabilities providing psychology, physiotherapy and language therapy. These activities are all in Spanish.

Covid has had a big impact on poverty increasing from 20% to over 30%, and this has

been further enhanced by refugees fleeing from neighbouring countries due to unstable governments. It is estimated that due to no internet or television in many parts of Peru that 1½ years of schooling has been lost.

Here are two stories about Covid in Peru as related by Sr Katrina:

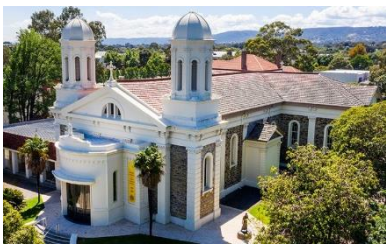
“Firstly, on the 15th of March 2020, the President of Peru, Martin Vizcarra, declared a state of emergency and ordered a nation-wide lockdown. All schools and universities were closed, with only banks, markets, supermarkets and pharmacies allowed to remain open. Only one young person per family was allowed to do the shopping on a weekly basis. Children and seniors were not to leave their house. There was a curfew from 6pm until 5am. Double masks and face shields were required.

One of the most obvious results of the pandemic in Lima has been the increase in the number of people coming to our door asking for help. Many come asking for food parcels or for money to help pay for medicines or to pay the rent or their electricity and water bills or simply to buy a bag of caramels which they can sell and, in this way, make some more money.



“In St Joseph’s care
I leave you.”
MMK 1873

Sisters Celebrate in Style



On Saturday the 19th of March, the Feast of St Joseph, eleven Sisters celebrated significant years of their profession

starting with a Mass in the Church of St Ignatius, Norwood. The main Celebrant was Archbishop Patrick O'Regan with a number of other priests in attendance.

Prior to the *Renewal of Vows*, Brigette Sipa rsj, Regional Leader of the CentreWest region, shared a noteworthy fact about the St Ignatius

Church, 150 years ago, to the day:

“Today marks the 150th anniversary of the day when, after the lifting of the Excommunication, Mary and ten other Sisters ‘received back [their] habit and openly renewed [their] vows’¹ here in St Ignatius Church. As they renew their vows, the Jubilarians and all other Sisters present here this morning are especially mindful of the significance of this anniversary.”

After Mass, Sisters gathered with friends and family to continue celebrating in style!

1 Letter: Mary MacKillop to Julian Tenison Woods, 23 March 1872



Our 2022 Jubilarians

75 Years Professed

Sr Joan Mangan

70 Years Professed

Srs Teresa Cooper and Shirley O'Loghlen

60 Years Professed

Srs Maria Hennekam, Elizabeth Morris and Anna Spaccatore

50 Years Professed

Srs Loreto O'Connor, Mary Ryan, Brigette Sipa and Theresa Swiggs

40 Years Professed

Sr Moira Byrnes

RIP Josephite

We remember with love and gratitude **Sr Joan Barry** who entered eternal life on the 10th of January 2022. Sr Joan was formerly known as Sr Marie Therese. She was in her 100th year of her age and in her 80th year of Religious Life.



“Let us be joyful
and thank God.”
MMK 1874



✧ Making a Difference ✧

Recycle ⇄ Reuse ⇄ Re-purpose

Saturday 9th April 2022

2pm

Bethany Centre

4 High St Kensington

"All of us can co-operate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents."
Pope Francis, Laudato Si'

Come, share and learn ways to make a difference creating an eco-friendly lifestyle in our homes, our parishes and beyond, to minimise our impact on the environment.

Bring along clean, good quality items, surplus to your needs, and enable them to find new homes with other Companions or Op Shops. Share your ideas of ways to reuse and re-purpose household items to lessen our footprint on Earth.

Afternoon tea will be provided.

Please RSVP Mary on 0417 871 904 or SA.Companions@sosj.org.au



✧ Making a Difference ✧

Adelaide Holocaust Museum

Sunday 22nd May 2022

1pm

33 Wakefield St, Adelaide

(Fennessey House, in the grounds of St Francis Xavier's Cathedral)



Mary MacKillop was inclusive of people of all faiths. Two of her well-known supporters were Joanna Barr Smith, a Presbyterian, and Emanuel Solomon of the Jewish faith.

What do we know of Jewish faith and Jewish history? This Museum traces some of the history of the Holocaust and enables our community to learn about this tragic period in history. It encourages critical thinking around themes still relevant to issues in contemporary society such as positive citizenship, antisemitism and racism.

Meet outside at 12.45pm for a start time of 1pm

Cost per person: Adults \$10 or Concession \$8

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL

Please RSVP Mary on 0417 871 904 or SA.Companions@sosj.org.au

What has this Museum to offer? Come and explore the exhibition and see for yourself!

Josephite Companions Leadership Team – JCoLT

March 2022



Dear Josephite Companions,

Greetings to you all, wherever you are across our many countries. We recognise that these times are providing challenges for us all in different ways, including many not being able to gather with fellow Companions. Perhaps the words for February, in this year's Josephite calendar, provide us with a word of hope from Mary MacKillop at this time:

What may seem a great misfortune in one sense is generally ... a hidden blessing.

Following our successful Josephite Companions' Webinar last September we are planning an online gathering for Companion Leaders from each Region on the 2nd of April. This will be an opportunity to have input and discussion with other Companion leaders about leadership as we all continue to share God's mission with Josephite hearts, in our different circumstances. Sr Clare Conaglen, the Congregational Leadership team member who is part of JCoLT, will lead us in this process, inviting us into conversation across our leadership groups as we learn from each other.

Further information will be provided to Leadership Teams shortly, with starting times ranging from WA commencing at 9am to Aotearoa New Zealand at 2pm.

Later in 2022, JCoLT hopes to host another webinar for all Companions who wish to be involved: a time to reconnect and continue nurturing each other as, through Friendship, Prayer and Service, we try to make a difference.

For the past few years, we have produced a newsletter in March. This year we are sharing this letter at this time through your regional newsletter instead, and hope to provide a JCoLT newsletter following our April gathering. This will provide feedback from our Leaders' gathering and information about our proposed Companions' Webinar in September/October.

May God's Spirit be with us in all of our endeavours and may we be alert for the 'hidden blessings' that Mary MacKillop alluded to in the opening quote.

Blessings to all.

Mary Hemmings

Chairperson: Josephite Companions Leadership Team



Looking After Our Home – Earth by Patsy Sandretti

As this year's theme is *Making a Difference*, our presenter on the 26th of February, Kateri Duke rsj, provided us with a thought-provoking look at our Home, Planet Earth.

We were led on a journey of Earth's evolution from its beginning. We watched a short film, *Turtle World*, directed by Nick Hilligoss which is available on YouTube and well-worth viewing.

In this animated film, a lone sea turtle, representing Earth, travels through space, her breath creating the atmosphere. Her outer shell becomes filled with forests, rivers, mountains and enterprising monkeys ... so enterprising that they are forced to learn about sustainability the hard way. A thoughtful discussion followed taking note of the significance of the journey of the turtle – Earth.

Sr Kateri incorporated times of creativity in quiet reflection, sharing, drawing and dance.

The following psalm by Nan C Merrill expresses something I learnt on the day:

You have made us in your image,
You fill us with your Love.
You have made us co-creators of Earth!
Guardians of the planet!
To care for all your creatures,
To tend the land, the sea,
And the air we breathe;
All that you have made,
You have placed in our hands.

Psalms 8 – adapted from *Psalms for Praying*

Hopefully through our understanding of God's creation and our part in its evolution, we can make a difference in how we care for our home, Planet Earth.

Mary MacKillop & St Joseph

a Homily (abridged) by Fr Maurice Shinnick



The young Mary MacKillop chose to be a Sister of St Joseph, and through the years she discovered that he was the best 'older brother' she could have chosen.

In his gift of the Year of St Joseph, Pope Francis, through his insights, we see how Mary learnt from her brother Joseph, and truly lived as a disciple of Jesus.

We see Joseph in the Gospels, first of all, as the man of dreams, and Mary's own dream, shared with Julian Tenison Woods, for the education of children, far exceeded her own humble hopes. Mary's passion was for those who were poor and disadvantaged. Pope Francis reminds us, "Joseph saw Jesus grow daily *in wisdom and in years, in divine and human favour.*" Mary watched over the children in her care, seeing them grow in knowledge and wisdom, and most importantly for her, to see them grow in God's grace.

Throughout his life, Joseph faithfully followed God's will to be the protector of his wife Mary and then of Jesus. Pope Francis says, "Joseph teaches us that amid the tempests of life, we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture." This happened to Mary in her dramatic trip to Rome to seek approval for her young Institute. Inspired by Julian, she sought for her Sisters to live in true poverty, but the wisdom of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith guided her to establish a rule which would bring stability to the Sisters back in Australia and into the future.

To accept this will of God meant that she and her inspirational friend, Julian, had to part company. God, through the wisdom of Rome, showed her the 'bigger picture' and she accepted it.

A driving force in her theology and spirituality was to trust in the Providence of God. *So do not worry. Set your hearts on God's kingdom first, and on God's righteousness.* She named her home for the poor elderly on West Terrace 'The Providence.' Pope Francis says of

Joseph, "God always finds a way to save us, provided we show the same creative courage as the carpenter of Nazareth, who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence." That was how Mary lived as she steered the community through many and varied problems caused by bishops and priests, from financial struggles and the tyranny of distance in this land.

Pope Francis calls Joseph, "A father in the shadows," and in that section of his Apostolic Letter, he speaks of the silence of St Joseph. He says, "In Joseph we never see frustration but only trust. His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust." Now Mary was not a silent woman – she was a prolific writer of letters to the Sisters in general, and personally to many people, family and friends, bishops and Sisters, Catholics, Protestants and those of Jewish faith. But there is a moment of profound silence when she heard the awesome words of excommunication. No protest, no arguing, no screaming. "I really felt like one in a dream. I do not know how to describe the feeling, but I was intensely happy and felt nearer to God than I had even felt before. The sensation of the calm beautiful presence of God I shall never forget." Later Mary would write to her Sisters, "St Joseph's humility was of the silent kind ... we must be like him in this."

When Mary took her first vows, she took the name, Mary of the Cross. Fr Paul Gardiner writes, "Mary was a sufferer, but not a sad sufferer, and she was certainly not a confused sufferer. She was always serene." Pope Francis writes, "Every true vocation is born of the gift of oneself, which is the fruit of mature sacrifice." Such a sacrifice, he says, is to be "a sign of beauty and joy of love" otherwise it is "an expression of unhappiness, sadness and frustration."

Pope Francis wrote, "Joseph's attitude encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak, for God chooses what is weak." This attitude was constantly in the heart and mind and actions of St Mary of the Cross. She learnt from her older brother, Joseph, and it is what she teaches us today.

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We began to prepare bags of basic food supplies. Luckily, we were able to use some of the money left over from *Mary MacKillop Today* projects which had stopped due to the lockdown. Other people came to the door with bags of lollies or biscuits asking that we buy some. One enterprising woman would come one day taking orders for a rice dessert that she would then deliver the next day. Some young people came equipped with broom and dustpan and swept the footpath outside the house and then asked for a donation. The daughter of one of our Companions sent a message asking if we would buy some cleaning products that she was selling. In order to help her out, we bought several products, even though we didn't really need any. When she delivered them and received payment, she said "Now we can eat!"

And secondly, one of the very sad stories for me is that of a man called Wilfredo and his son, Samuel, who is 12 years of age now. Wilfredo was a man in his fifties who had been left with two children when his wife walked out on him. Feeling that he could not look after them both, he decided to put his daughter into an orphanage whilst he did his best to look after the lad who has learning difficulties.

Wilfredo had been coming to me for help, off and on for more than two years, asking for such things as help to buy Samuel's school needs, asking if we had any clothes that would fit him, asking help to pay for medicines, etc. When he first came to me, he explained that he used to get by, by selling cake portions at bus stops and outside markets. He was able to sell on average about three cakes each day which was enough to feed them and pay for the rent of a single room. But when the Venezuelans came, in their droves, they were equally desperate and doing the same thing to survive. Now he was lucky if he sold one cake. I was moved when he told me that he did not begrudge the presence of the Venezuelans, as they too had to live, but it certainly made life much more difficult for him.

At one point early in the pandemic, he made it known that he was renting a single room for himself and his son, but he had no furniture. We put a call out to the Companions for help. He was ever so grateful when he was able to

come and collect a bed, a small cooker, an old TV set, some speakers, a small table, some clothes and a few other items. Sometime early in February last year, he rang me telling me he was quite sick and needed to go to hospital the next day, but he did not have pyjamas, soap, alcohol spray or shampoo. He also needed more money to be able to pay for the tests that he needed done. He had collected just over S/.300 from neighbours and people at his local market – begging for help is a common necessity for so many poor people here – but he needed S/.150 more. (1 Australian Dollar is about S/.3 – pronounced *so-lees*). I bought what he needed and the next day the young lad came to pick them up, along with the money.

Several weeks later, Samuel appeared at our door and told me he had bad news – but that I was not to cry! "My dad has gone to heaven," he said. He told the story of how his father had died on the 14th of February at 7.10. He had gone to the hospital and had the tests but was unable to be admitted as there was no room – our hospitals have been at saturation point for some weeks and nowhere in Lima are there any ICU beds available – so he was sent home, ill with Covid. Samuel said he died because they could only afford 4 hours of oxygen. Luckily an aunt agreed to take care of Samuel and his 10 year old sister. May Wilfredo rest in peace."

The photos below show people waiting to have their oxygen tanks filled during the height of the pandemic. Some camped on the median strips so as not to lose their spot in the queue – sometimes having to wait days for their turn to come up.



At the conclusion of the gathering, Sr Katrina was presented with funds from the Companions, donations and proceeds on the day from a raffle, amounting to \$1900. She will use this money to support the work of *Mary MacKillop Huasi* – The Centre for Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs.

Our Josephite Partners

Living in the Spirit of Mary MacKillop

- **St Joseph's Old Scholars Association**

An Old Scholar is anyone (female or male) who has ever been connected to a Josephite school or college in Australia, as a student or teacher. Our Association has been in existence for over one hundred years.

ADVANCE NOTICE: This year there will be a 'ONE ONLY' luncheon. Here are the details:

Wednesday 22nd June – 11.45am for a 12noon start
Lockleys Hotel, 493 Henley Beach Road, Lockleys
A Seniors' Menu is available for \$19.90 which includes a free drink
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL Contact Josie Van Pelt on 8295 3667
Seating WILL NOT be allocated. All welcome.

Our Newsletter will be sent out in early May.

- **Mary MacKillop Old Scholars Association**

The Association continues the friendships and encourages the building of life-long networks amongst past students and staff. It also fosters justice and compassion, hospitality and concern for those in need and has a special relationship with the Sisters of St Joseph.

We usually have an Annual Reunion Dinner which is held on the last Friday in October. Everyone is always very welcome to join in and connect with other Old Scholars.

Our popular Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/179768134304>) keeps people in touch with each other. Make contact and share your news.

- **Mary MacKillop Precinct – Bethany, Museum and Chapel**

- Museum and Gift Shop – open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 4pm

The Museum has a display of some of the South Australian story including the early companions, and the history and legacy of the Josephites.

The Gift Shop has many products available for sale including the monthly *Southern Cross* magazine, books, cards, Ethica products and much more!

Order online through www.marymackillopadelaide.org.au

For phone orders or other information call 8130 5910.

- St Joseph's Chapel

Due to the uncertainty surrounding Covid, the Chapel is closed to the public until further notice.

- Bethany Centre

Check out the *2022 Events Programme* which offers workshops, reflection and retreat days. Details online through www.marymackillopadelaide.org.au or collect a copy when visiting the Museum.

- Spotlight on Mary MacKillop: Monthly Morning Cuppa

This is a new and exciting venture starting in June! Each 8th of the month from 10.30am – 12.30pm join us in Bethany for opportunities to enrich our appreciation of Mary's story and legacy. There will be storytelling, songs, reflection as well as a cuppa, cake and chat – the 3C's. All are welcome!

No registration and no cost

Enquiries: phone 8130 5900 or email infos@sosj.org.au

COMPANIONS' PRAYER

*Companioning Spirit,
Intensify our living
of the Josephite charism now
as you inspired
Saint Joseph, Saint Mary MacKillop
and Julian Tenison Woods.*

*Grace us with friendship and hospitality,
as we make community
in the ordinariness of our lives.*

*Grace us with prayerful hearts
that listen to your voice
and contemplate your presence
in creation.*

*Grace us with service,
promoting human dignity
and love of neighbour.*

*Strengthen our commitment to live justly,
love tenderly and walk humbly,
conscious that we are participating
in your mission.*

*Companion, encourage and enfold us
in the fullness of divine Love.*

Amen.



***Wishing you and your family many
blessings for a very HAPPY EASTER***