

Josephite Companions of South Australia

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Friendship Prayer Service

Summer 2022

December 2022 Newsletter

Advent and Beyond

by Mary Hemmings

Dear Companions and Sisters and Friends,

As Josephite Companions this year, our focus, from our Mission Statement, was **to make a difference in our local area**.

This season of **Advent** is a time to prepare and look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus coming among us. For many of us though, life seems to be a hub of activity, as we try to catch up with people, shop for gifts, prepare food, and so much more! Perhaps as we attend to all of this, we can *make a difference* by being conscious of why we are writing a card (to keep in contact) or baking a pudding (to celebrate with family) or singing Christmas Carols (to share the delight of this season with others) or putting food items under the Vinnies Christmas trees (to offer a sign of hope to others). Our awareness of each action thus becomes a prayer of reflection as we acknowledge the gifts that God has given us as we try to share with others and so *make a difference in our local area*.

International Women's Day, observed annually on the 8th of March, is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. It also marks the call to action for accelerating women's equality. IWD has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911



*"God is all goodness
and love."
MMK 1880*

held on the 19th of March, and supported by over a million people. Follow this link to find out more:

<https://www.internationalwomensday.org/history-of-international-womens-day/>

Next year on the 8th of March we have decided to host a gathering to mark this day, and all are welcome! We have invited two First Nations women to speak with us. **Leith Mynott and Ali Farmer** will share insights into the **Uluru Statement of the Heart and the Voice to Parliament**. This latter topic is very relevant to all Australians, as a referendum around this is expected in the coming year or so. We look forward to these women, Leith and Ali, sharing from their experiences and engaging with us.

Mary-Ann Casanova rsj has spent many years working and studying in the field of ecology. In her thesis study, she has focused strongly on the scientific work of Julian Tenison Woods, together with that of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a French Jesuit priest, scientist, palaeontologist and theologian. We are delighted that Mary-Ann has offered to share with us across two sessions, on the 3rd of June and the 7th of October, some of her learnings and insights from her study in this field of science/ecology.

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We have also had a number of people interested in deepening their understanding of what it means to be a Josephite Companion. A small group met in November, and we will keep on gathering to deepen our understanding of Josephite charism, living in the Josephite spirit, history of Josephite Companions, and much more! When we celebrate Mary MacKillop's Feast Day in August, we then hope to acknowledge formally

their connection as Josephite Companions through a simple liturgy and presentation of our badge and certificate. If you too would like to deepen further your understanding of being a Companion, please speak with one of our Team members or phone 0417 871 904 or email SA.Companions@sosj.org.au

Further details of happenings for 2023 will be included in our Autumn Newsletter next year.



In Loving Memory compiled by Pauline Morgan rsj



Carmel Thomas rsj was born in Adelaide, South Australia on the 28th of November 1948.

Carmel was educated by the Sisters of St Joseph at Tranmere and then at Mary MacKillop College. She was professed as a

Sister of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in January 1970. After training as a teacher, Carmel taught in schools in Newton, Jamestown, Port Lincoln and Port Augusta. She enjoyed all forms of art and encouraged her students to enjoy and appreciate art and to express their creativity.

Following opportunities for study and renewal, Carmel worked on the Motor Mission in the Peterborough and Booleroo areas, and then provided religious education in the Modbury and Blackwood parishes. Again, her creativity and artistic ability could be seen in her lessons,

stories and presentations, and even simple things like children's worksheets.

In recent years when Carmel became more limited physically, she was still active in neighbourhood ministry, visiting people and keeping in contact by phone.

After a fall early this year, Carmel recently joined the community at Kensington. Although her health declined, Carmel was able to live in community with the Sisters at Kensington until her death on the 29th of November 2022, one day after her 74th birthday.

There is a moving description of death being like a gentle pause between one breath and the next. In the early hours of the morning of the 29th of November, Carmel had a gentle pause between one breath and her next, and found herself in eternity with the God she loved and had served so faithfully.

*Vale, Carmel.
In St Joseph's care we leave you.*

*"Remember, there is, even on this Earth,
a day of bright reward for all your
prayers and faithful perseverance."
MMK 1874*

We Pray For ...

We pray for all who have experienced grief and loss this year. May the support of family and friends be a constant in their lives.

We pray for all who find this time of year challenging. May there be healing and respectful dialogue as we reach out to others.

We pray for all those displaced by events out of their control, such as fire, flood, conflict and abuse. May they have the courage to face an uncertain future in the certainty that God is with them.

During Advent a Homily(adapted) by Fr Maurice Shinnick



John the Baptist and Jesus both began their ministries with the same word. *Repent. Repent, for the Kingdom of God is close at hand!* The word *repent* is from the Greek, meaning 'to change one's mind.' As Fr Michael Fallon puts it, "The way they have been accustomed to look at God, and life and religion, is not good enough. They will need to prepare their minds and hearts to see life differently."

This repentance, this change, is never complete. The way we saw God and life and our Church as a child was seen differently from when a young adult, and different still as we grow older. It is an evolution of grace; dynamic, exciting and awesome. And why repent? *For the Kingdom of God is close at hand!*

The emblems of the Sisters of St Joseph and the Josephite Companions carry the letter *J* three times, for Jesus, Joseph and John the Baptist. It is particularly during Advent that the mission of all three are revealed in a unique way. Joseph, who physically in his family, prepared the way for the birth of Jesus. John,

who spiritually prepared the way for the people to see the coming of Jesus as their Teacher and Master. And Jesus, born in Bethlehem, prepared the way for the world to see in himself the presence of the Kingdom of God.

As Pope Francis says, "It is a question of leaving behind the comfortable but misleading ways of the idols of this world and instead, preparing the way of the Lord. This does not take away our freedom, but gives us true happiness. With the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, it is God who abides among us to free us from self-interest, sin and corruption."

Advent is such a beautiful time of the year; full of hope and joy. The nastiness of the Pharisees and Sadducees is conquered by the silent devotion of Joseph, the powerful preaching of John and the innocent presence of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit, into whom we have been baptised, is full of wisdom and insight, counsel and power, knowledge and reverence of the Lord. Given by the Father through to the Son. So radical is the presence of the Spirit in us, the Kingdom of God dwelling within, that opposites can dwell together in peace: wolf and lamb, calf and lion, all led by a child.

John's preaching and the action of the Spirit *unites us in mind and voice* in every Eucharist, and enables us *to give glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. So it is that we, in this evolving and constant repentance, 'changing our minds,' can live the dream of St Paul:

to treat each other in the same friendly way as Christ treated us.



Thank You and Farewell

Pauline Grear and Amanda Taverna have been a very valuable part of our SA Josephite Companion Leadership Team for many years. Pauline, and Amanda earlier this year, have decided that it is time to take a break from this. We are very grateful to both Pauline and Amanda for their great contribution and enthusiasm. We know that with their Josephite heart, they will both continue to 'make a difference' in so many ways.

In Our Next Newsletter

Read about our October Reflection Day at Murray Bridge in our first newsletter next year. Further details will also become available about our other events next year.

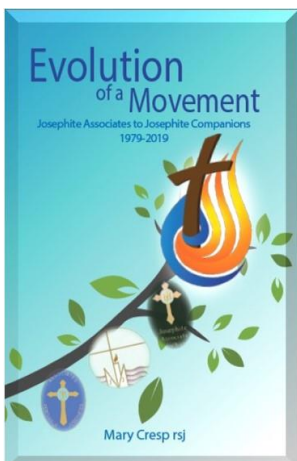
Launch of the Book About Us!

Mary Cresp rsj recently launched her latest book which tells the rich story of the history of the Josephite Associates, the name by which Companions were previously known. This book:

Evolution of a Movement

Josephite Associates to Josephite Companions 1979 – 2019

collates the history of many groups across Australia, New Zealand and beyond, and Mary has managed to weave all the threads together. Copies of the book will be available for sale in 2023, and we will also have a few that can be circulated to those interested in learning about our history. Read below Mary's insights into her book and more.



In her Foreword to my book, Mary Hemmings muses on the opportunity reading the book gave her to 're-live' the story, to 'relish' it and to 'view' it in its broader context. As the book's author, I can identify with those feelings. I must say when I was asked to write the history, I was apprehensive – in the

main, its beginnings were familiar to me, but I had little idea of what had happened during the years of this century. Getting to know this part of the story has been a privilege. I have 'met' you all and feel I now know you as true companions on the journey.

I was thrilled that in her reflection on the book, Anne Benjamin picked up that the story of the Josephite Companions is one of relationships. If what I have written does no more than remind readers of this fact, then it is enough. We have been graced with a precious gift of the Spirit, demonstrated in the lives of Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods, and re-interpreted over the years by hundreds of women and men in their own context. I hope that as you recall your local and personal stories, you will be inspired once again to nurture the gift and to develop it even more.

At the launch of the book that took place at Kensington on Thursday 1st of December, Professor David Hilliard gave a succinct yet

informative and lively talk on the history of lay movements in the Church. Archbishop Patrick O'Regan then launched the book, speaking as a Companion himself about the relationships he has formed with Sisters and others who share the charism.

Let us pray for one another during this Christmas-tide that we, who have been graced with the companionship of a Joseph who in his parent-hood nurtured in Jesus an understanding of what God's 'fatherhood' is like; of a Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods who handed on to us their understanding of God's compassionate love; and of all our forebears who likewise have incarnated God's presence to us in the ordinary – may we show to others today that same **great love** that embraces us all and calls us to be **joy and hope** in a world longing for both.



L→R: Mary Cresp rsj, Mary McNamara rsj (original Leader of the Associates), Mary O'Donnell (a Companion) and Mary Hemmings (on the current Leadership Team).

***"Take refuge in the heart of Jesus
in all your cares."
JTW 1872***

Hectorville Josephite Companions by Mary Gill

Once every month, a group of Josephite Companions come together at the home of Mary O'Donnell, where we are encouraged to pray, share and listen to each other as we deal with the concerns, challenges and joys of our daily lives. Having a cuppa afterwards is always a relaxing and vital opportunity to carry on the conversation and have a few laughs. Every few months we have a delicious cake to celebrate recent birthdays. When possible, we begin the year with the celebration of a Home Mass and Anointing as we all agree that this is a great way to start the new year. Our monthly afternoon get-togethers are very special for our little group, with Majella O'Sullivan rsj being our main leader.

The beauty of our group is that we come together with very different life experiences, backgrounds and points of view, knowing that we can be ourselves and say what we feel, think and believe – without being judged. The discussions have certainly been very interesting, challenging and thought-provoking. It has been good to 'step out' of

our 'comfort zone' and listen, share, learn and, importantly, to GROW! I believe we are definitely a non-static group. As we have gained in confidence, more people have been willing to lead the group in Majella's absence.

We even have an excellent monthly newsletter, very ably put together and posted to all members by our very generous Margaret Emery. We are treated to lots of interesting information – news regarding Companions, special birthdays, how people are travelling and those needing our prayers. She also includes up-coming events and feast days and some excellent, inspirational reflections and prayers – and of course, the all-important, JOKE SECTION!

I will end with a quote from our most recent newsletter:

"We certainly apply FRIENDSHIP, PRAYER and SERVICE to our gatherings" and hopefully leave inspired to continue our commitment in our communities.

Advent to Christmas Find-a-Word



- Advent
- Angels
- Christmas
- Companions
- Friendship
- Jesus
- Joseph
- Josephite
- Magi
- Manger
- Mary
- Prayer
- Service
- Shepherds

Our Josephite Partners

Living in the Spirit of Mary MacKillop

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

To date we will be having a Fashion Parade – Postie Fashions – on Saturday 15th April 2023 at Bethany, Kensington. Their fashions accommodate both young and older people. There will also be a Luncheon at the Lockleys Hotel later in 2023. Further details on both of these events in our SJOS Newsletter in February 2023.

The Old Scholars gave a donation of \$550 to Theresa Swiggs rsj to help in her ministry of assisting and supporting families at Nazareth College. We received a "thank you" note in appreciation from Theresa, outlining how the donation was distributed.

- **Mary MacKillop Old Scholars Association**

Our Reunion at the Maylands Hotel on the last Friday of October 2022 was a joyous gathering of sixty alumni from all corners of Australia. The graduating and starting classes of 1972 made particular efforts to find each other and had a wonderful time re-establishing friendships. After restrictions of the past few years, other year groups had similar fun, determined to invite others along next year. Mark the 27th of October 2023 a date in your diary now!



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

Closed for the Christmas break from 4pm on Thursday the 22nd of December, re-opening at 10am on Tuesday the 10th of January 2023.

- St Joseph's Chapel

Remains open to the public every day from 10am to 4pm.

- Spotlight on Mary MacKillop: Monthly Morning Cuppa

Continues at 10am every 8th of the month from February next year.

- Museum Turns Three!

The re-developed Museum opened on the 1st of December 2019, and on Friday the 2nd of December this year, volunteers gathered in Bethany to celebrate its third birthday. There was a shared evening meal followed by the traditional *cutting of the cake*.



- Garden Party

Thank you to all who contributed in myriad ways to our recent, wonderful Garden Party, held on Sunday the 6th of November on the lawns adjacent Bethany. See the photo above. The event was a sold-out success, raising over \$6,300 for the Museum. What an amazing amount!

A special mention must go to Bridgette Barrett and Gabrielle Waters, two of our Museum volunteers, who initiated and co-ordinated this very enjoyable and memorable afternoon.

For all enquiries: phone 8130 5900 or email infos@sosj.org.au

Advent Stillness



Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Mary set out and travelled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Reflection

Why did the young Mary choose to seek out the older Elizabeth?

Elizabeth was open to 'the new,' not stuck in old thought patterns. She shared some precious gifts with the younger Mary: openness, mutuality, trust, respect and love.

Elizabeth was Mary's 'wisdom woman'!

Elizabeth is a model for our encounters with others.

Each of us is called to be an 'Elizabeth' – a wisdom woman/man to others!

From the Pen of Mary MacKillop

1867: Who am I to stand in God's way?

1871: There where you are, you will find God.

1898: God's work does not depend on any of us.

1907: God gives me strength for what is necessary.

Prayer

Holy One, prepare your way in us.

Give us **faith**, like Elizabeth, to recognise your presence in others.

Give us **courage**, like Mary, to let your life give birth in us.

Give us **strength**, like Joseph, to protect what is tender and growing.

Give us **patience**, like the shepherds, to be still and listen.

Give us **humility**, like the magi, to kneel before your presence.

Give us **trust**, like the Christ-child, to let ourselves be born into a new world.

Give us **joy**, like the angels, to bring good news to others.

Give us **love**, like the manger, to hold Jesus, Emmanuel, within.

Holy one, prepare your way in us.



Adapted from Advent Stillness 2018 by Mary Ryan rsj

*May you and your families
experience peace, joy, hope and love in the birth of Jesus,
and many blessings in the year ahead.*