

JCoLT newsflash

November 2022



Dear Josephite Companions,

Leaders' Webinar: 17th September

Our second Leaders' webinar proved a valuable time for leaders to come together again. Bernadette Roche, Josephite Companion from Brisbane, led us in a gentle reflection on "Hope and New Life". She reminded us that waiting involves hope: as we wait, be it for Covid to lessen its hold on our world, or for a child to be born, for humanity to hear the cry of our earth, or for the war in Ukraine to cease: all include people 'hoping' for things to be better or to go well.

'Hope is to want something to happen and hope moves us to be proactive in God's mission'. As Companions, our Mission statement calls us to 'make a difference in our local area and so further the reign of God'. We hope that in the ordinariness of life, inspired by Mary MacKillop's living of the Gospel, we can leave this world a better place each day for having touched the lives of others.

Mentoring

In our webinar gathering Helen Dougherty (Aotearoa New Zealand) and Anne-Marie Wilkinson (Victoria) presented examples of how mentoring has supported people who wish to explore becoming a Josephite Companion. Helen outlined possible strategies to mentor a group of people. This needs to include 'active listening': to be aware of what's happening in the lives of others and to 'listen with the heart' and not always the head. It involves sharing the knowledge and wisdom of others. Something to remember is 'Who we are encourages people rather than what we say.' Anne-Marie spoke on behalf of Noreen McLeish's (from country Victoria) experience of mentoring individuals who wish to explore the Companion journey. This included at times being in touch with people through telephone conversations, especially when distances made personal contact difficult. In each case, the use of our "Josephite Companion Discovery Book" has been a valuable resource as it provides content for discussion and pondering around themes such as charism, Mary MacKillop, Julian, Joseph and living our mission through Friendship, Prayer and Service. May we continue to have many who are touched by the Josephite spirit be mentored into this movement!

Chat Groups

Topics covered in our small chat groups online included:

- How do we best continue communicating with our Companions? Two JCoLT newsletters a year, together with local newsletters are provided. Communication via email enables more information to be shared and we hope that email communications can be shared further.
- Would occasional webinars which are based around various topics/themes eg ecology or social justice issues, enable people to communicate from different places/perspectives?
- Our Companion groups vary considerably: some are parish based, others gather centrally in a town or city, others have sprung up to respond to different needs. How do we invite and engage others to share in this great Josephite story?
- Recognizing that younger people are drawn to gather in different ways and often around 'action based' ideas, how do we enable and support this to happen?

Josephite Companions Leadership Team (JCOLT) Meeting: January 2023

Our international JCoLT members are looking forward to gathering face-to-face in January in Sydney - the first time in three years! We have, however, been blessed with the advent of Zoom to meet online regularly to keep the momentum going as best we could. Zoom also empowered us to connect in ways we would never have dreamed of in pre-Covid times! We launched our new name, Companions, and our badge and resources, in October 2020; in September 2021 we held our Be Courageous and Full of Hope Conference online, with Companions from Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and Timor Leste communicating across oceans! This was remarkable and allowed our Companions to gain a wonderful insight into being interconnected with so many others! Then this year, in April and now in September, group leaders from across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand appreciated the further opportunities to be nourished. Out of adversity can come amazing gifts and opportunities!

In January our team looks forward to reviewing and updating our Strategic Plan so that we can continue growing and nurturing our Companion movement and finding ways to bring new life and direction so that the mission of Jesus, through a Josephite lens, can continue to flourish. This will include reviewing our Leadership Team and its succession plan, Communication strategies, Resources required into the future, Finances and our ongoing Relationship with the Sisters.

We are Companions with each other and with the Sisters. In light of this, we warmly welcome any suggestions or comments regarding these areas of discussion for our January meeting and invite you to **email jcolt@sosj.org.au** or phone **Mary Hemmings 0417 871 904** by November 30th with your thoughts and creative ideas for our future!

A JCOLT Subscription policy has been outlined to provide guidelines for the collection of donations/subscriptions for the sustainability of the Josephite Companions Leadership Team. These funds are to be used for Leadership Team expenses incurred in administration and the development and growth of the Companions Movement. A copy of the policy is available on the website: <https://www.sosj.org.au/become-involved/josephite-companions/jcolt-documents/>

History of Josephite Associates /Companions

Our Josephite Companions, formerly Associates, have been in existence for over 40 years! In this time there have been many whose lives have been impacted by this movement. Sr Mary Cresp, a former Congregational Leader and prolific writer of books reflecting different aspects of the Josephite story, has written a history of these 40 years. Titled "Evolution of a Movement", Sr Mary has drawn together many threads from the different 'branches' of the Sisters of St Joseph, namely Central, Whanganui, Goulburn and Tasmania, each of whom had a different history of Associates, to create a rich recording of the composite story of Josephite Associates. This book will be launched in December and will provide interesting reading, both for those of us involved since the early years through to those who have 'joined the melody' more recently. The book will be available for purchase and details will be communicated through local newsletters in the new year.

Wishing you many blessings

Josephite Companions Leadership Team (JCoLT)

Mary Hemmings, Beverley Badcock, Pauline McGuire, Helen Dougherty, Anne-Marie Wilkinson, Moya Campbell rsj, Clare Conaglen rsj

Advent ... A Season of Hope



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Candle of Hope

As we begin the season of Advent, we look for signs of hope in our world. People helping each other. Walls of separation being broken down. Family and friends gathering again to celebrate Christmas. Recovery from floods and cessation from war...

We find signs of hope in a young family, travelling a long way from home, expecting a baby and being surrounded by the compassion of strangers.

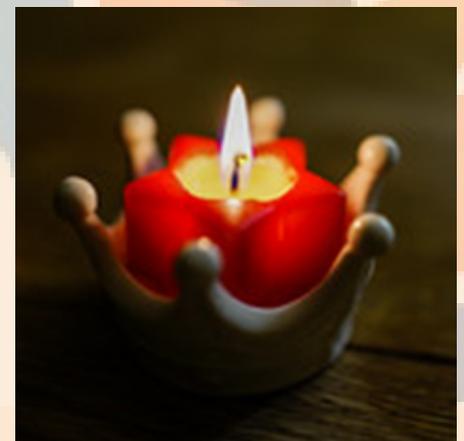
We light the first candle for the hope we find in the world, as we wait to celebrate the coming of Christ into our world and into our lives.

Candle of Peace

We light the second candle and listen for the word of peace. We listen for stories where people stop hurting each other and start helping, for words of peace from leaders, that they may unite people and give them hope. We listen for ways to take care of our environment and bring hope for the future of our planet.

We remember that Christ is the Prince of Peace.

We light the second candle for the peace that sings in our hearts, that God's reign is near.



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Candle of Joy

We light the third candle, yearning for the joy of God that comes to us through the birth of Christ. We remember how Mary sang a song of joy before Jesus was born, of how God was going to make all things new.

We sing our own songs of joy, hoping that sadness and mourning will be turned into gladness and dancing.

We light this third candle for the joy we know in Christ Jesus.



"File:Advent wreath with violet and rose candles 4.JPG" by PHILIP János is marked with CC0 1.0.

Candle of Love

We light the fourth candle, knowing that God's love has always been with us. God's love has been made known to us in a new way, through the birth of the Christ-child.

God has become one of us, the Word that breathes the Spirit into us, and in Christ we know the fullness of God's love.

We are called to share this love with the world.

We light this fourth candle with the hope that all may know the love God has for the whole world.



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