

Josephite Companions Summer Newsletter

Victoria - Tasmania 2022 ~ 2023



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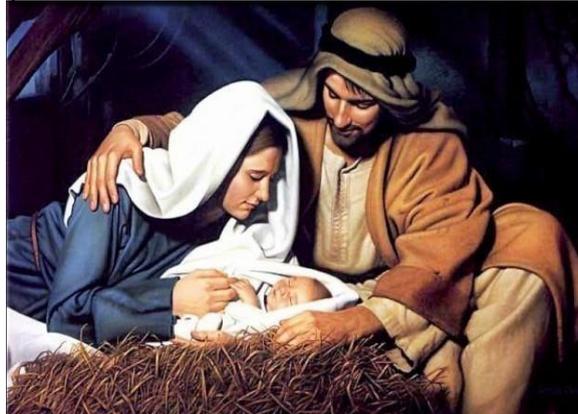


Advent Christmas

Dear Josephite Companions

Our Prayers go out to our Companions and to all those who are being, or have been, affected by the floods.

This year we have had some success in returning to 'normal', whatever that normal is to be in the future. Quite a few Companions' Groups have been meeting regularly and this year we have had five new Companions enrolled and two who have begun the Discovery Program. The Core Team will meet in January 2023 and dates and plans for 2023 will be discussed.



ADVENT –

We prepare for the
coming of Christ

We can all meet together
in Spirit at the Crib of
our loving Infant and pray
for one another.

I wish you every grace
and blessing of this holy
time with fondest love.

Mary MacKillop, 1881

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

-Robert Louis Stevenson

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Season of Hope



Blessings to you all this
Christmas Season.

Greetings from the
VIC-TAS Core
Team: Anne-Marie,
Diane, Christine,
Greg and Noreen

FRIENDSHIP

PRAYER

SERVICE

Alexander MacKillop - Father of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop

Alexander MacKillop 1812 - 1868

Alexander was born on the 21st January 1812, at Roybridge, in the Highlands of Scotland. At the age of twelve and a half he went to study for the Priesthood. He spent seven years in Rome and was a brilliant student. But ill health and being so young, forced his return to Blair College in Scotland in 1831. In 1833 Alexander left the Novitiate without completing his course, but he remained an independent thinker, a prolific writer and a formidable opponent in philosophical and theological debate.

Alexander's son, Father Donald MacKillop, later wrote:

After nine years in Rome my dad found it cold in Scotland. He asked for a fire in his room and was refused. Now the young man, who in Rome had been made much of, fancied himself not a little no doubt, when he found himself among the old fossils of Blair's College, and went off in a huff to complain to the Bishop. Of course His Lordship advised immediate return to his College. This was just too much! He returned to his home! The family were about to start for Australia. Dad came with them and in due course met my mother in Melbourne. He had never taken Orders."

(Extracted from "In Search of Alexander MacKillop" by Victor Feeham and Ann MacDonell)

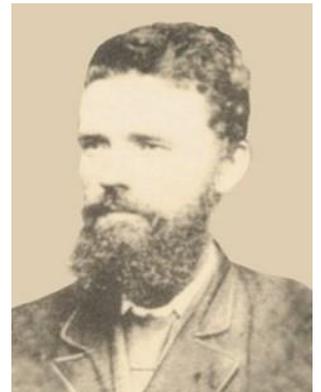
In 1837 Alexander left the Highlands for Australia, on the sailing ship "Brilliant" arriving in Sydney Cove on the 20th January 1838. He worked successfully in Sydney for some time before moving to Melbourne where he met Flora MacDonald, also from the Scottish Highlands, and they were married in St Francis Church Melbourne on July 14th 1840.

Mary Helen MacKillop, their first child was born on the 15th January 1842.

The MacKillop family, while strong in Faith, experienced many financial difficulties and moved constantly, often relying on relatives to provide for them.

As the eldest, Mary often carried the responsibility of supporting her mother financially and maintaining the wellbeing of the family, as Alexander was very often absent from the family home.

These notes have been taken from many sources, including from a booklet put together by Hamilton Josephite Companion, Ted Oliver. Ted spent many hours over many years passing on his remarkable knowledge of Alexander MacKillop. Noreen McLeish 2022



Remember "Without Alexander we would not have had Mary"



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sosj.org.au.companions

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Significant Dates for Summer Months

2022

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Season of Advent | 27 th Nov to 18 th Dec |
| Death of Alexander MacKillop | 19 th Dec |
| Christmas Season | 25 th Dec |

2023

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Birth of Mary MacKillop | 15 th Jan 1842 |
| Ash Wednesday | 22 nd Feb |

2022 Pilgrims



Sr Annie and driver David



We were Blessed this year at Hamilton, with Six groups of Pilgrims who came to hear about Alexander and visit his grave.



Our Honorary Companions, Trish and Margaret, who always provide great hospitality.



Fr David Catterall, from Brisbane, a Josephite Companion.

And our happiest Pilgrim.



Our Pilgrims are very generous and so we are able to donate some funds to Josephite projects. Such as Joseph's Corner and Mary MacKillop Foundation.



Lakes Entrance Josephite Companions—Meeting Again

We began the morning with Mass at St Brendan's Church, which was offered for the repose of the soul of Angelo Elia, the father of one our Josephite Companions, Lena Zagami, who went home to his Maker on 16th August 2022 aged 100. RIP

Six Companions met for our gathering at my home for the convenience of accessing YouTube.

I read with interest in the Josephite Companions Spring 2022 Newsletter, about the launch to implement the document Laudato Si, and embraced the idea to lead our Lakes Entrance Josephite Companions in learning about Pope Francis' Encyclical, on the care of our common home.

There is so much information on YouTube teasing out the Pope's Document, so decided on the presentations done by Daniel Horan OFM which comes under the heading of Understanding Laudato Si. The first episode was on 'What is Creation' which was very informative, clearly presented and food for thought and action.

I received an email from Sr Lynette Young the morning of our meeting with the following message from Julian Tenison Woods for our ecology gathering which she knew we were going to discuss. Her email was a great introduction for the morning's gathering and theme: -

'Every rock, every leaf, every insect has something beautiful, nay wonderful to tell... a perfect fairyland of beauty will open to the gaze at every step. The flowers will unveil the hidden secrets of their beauty, the stones reveal their crystalline structure and the tiniest insect display wonders of mechanism... all new, all varied, all instructive and all tending to raise the mind to higher and nobler conceptions of what creation does to declare the glory of its author. (1869).'

The morning was well embraced, and the ladies agreed to continue with the Laudato Si programs for our next gatherings.

Our members are wonderful cooks and generous providers of delicious food which was shared for morning tea.



Louise Anketell ~ Lakes Entrance Josephite Companions

R.I.P

RIP Mary Wicks OAM
Sunbury Companion for many years.
We will miss her friendship very much.
-Jenny Coutts

We remember all our Josephite Family who have died or are ill at this time.

We keep the Josephite Sisters who are unwell and for tall those who care for them.

Please pray for all our Josephite Companions who are finding life difficult because of illness.

USED STAMPS for the MISSIONS

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Thank you

Getting Old

It's not much fun this getting old
No matter what one is told
The bones begin to ache and creak
One needs a walker down the street.

Outings are mostly medical trips,
Doctors, physios, chemists with scripts.
Teeth start to show their ancient age
And start disappearing stage by stage.

A garden walk is very tempting
One feels obliged to try some weeding
But the fear that one might hit the ground
Decides the gardener to just look around.

Let the gardener worry about the weeds
And strange plants where birds leave
seed. The best time is every night
When bed is such a welcome sight.

Here one can rest with a good book
And dream of running by a brook.
So as time goes by one takes each day
And hopes someone will call to say Giddday!

Sr Mary Fermio rsj



THANK YOU

I have very much enjoyed preparing the Victorian Josephite Companions Newsletters over the last three years, but it is time for someone else to have the privilege. A very big thankyou to the members of the Core Team, Christine, Diane, Greg and especially Anne-Marie. A great group to have worked with. Also, to the Hamilton Companions and my family who helped to make sure that the Newsletter was printed and posted, when Covid made things difficult.

Thank you to Sr Sue McGuinness rsj and Aarti Munohur who have been very generous in their support in printing the Newsletter for us. Special thanks to Sr Mary Fermio rsj who has been my 'go to' person for many years.

As I live in Hamilton, getting to Core Team Meetings etc has become more difficult. For me to get to a Meeting/Gathering in Melbourne and back it is a 600 Km round trip by car or a 5 hour trip each way by Bus and Train. I will miss being on the Core Team but I look forward to continue meeting Companions. Thank you.

Noreen McLeish

JOSEPHITE COMPANION'S PRAYER

Companioning Spirit Intensify our living of the Josephite Charism now as you inspired St Joseph, St 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**



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.

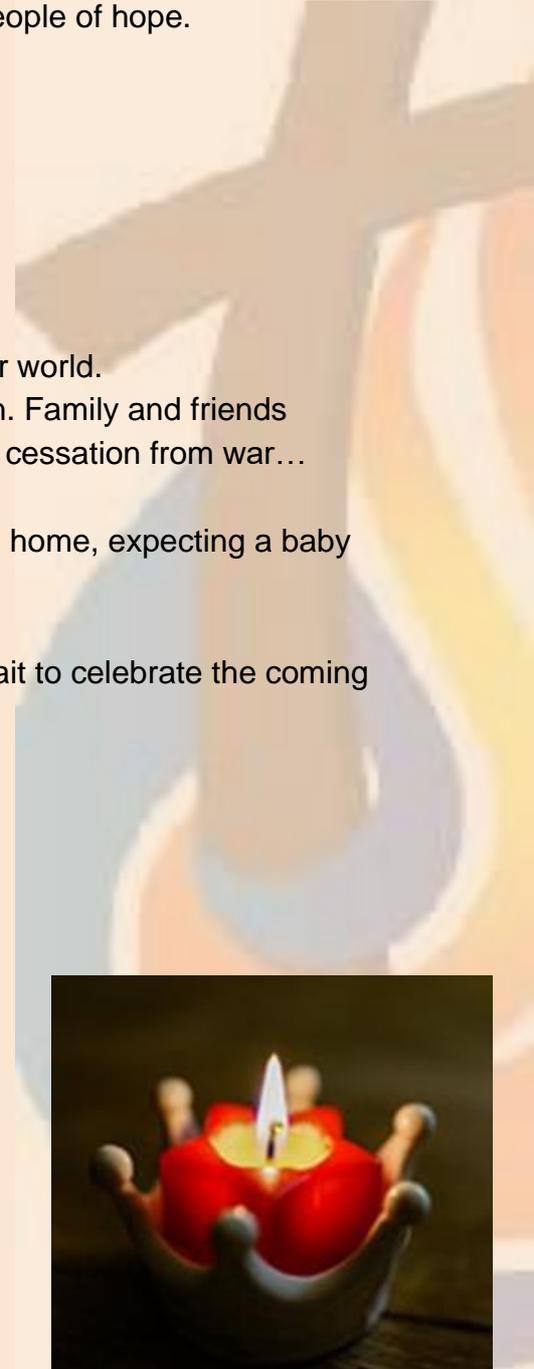
We light the first candle for the hope we find in the world, as we wait to celebrate the coming of Christ into our world and into our lives.

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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