

Companions News

Welcome to the **JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS QUEENSLAND** Quarterly Newsletter
June 2023

Editorial

Hope for the Journey

In 2023 our newsletter editorials will focus on the four promises of Jesus:

Hope, Love, Peace and Joy.

These are four wonderful gifts that come from a lively relationship with Jesus.

"Remain in my love"

Over recent months, we have walked together with Jesus through the passage of Lent and accompanied him to the summit of the cross on Calvary. We waited with him in the tomb for those three days from Good Friday until the climax of his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Now, in Eastertide, we await the revelation of the Spirit at Pentecost.



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**FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
QUARTERLY NEWS PLEASE EMAIL:**
qld.companions@sosj.org.au

Before he returned to the Father, Jesus told his disciples:

"I have loved you, just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love" (John 15:9-10) and again: *"This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15: 12-13)

I'm sure we've heard these words many times, but do we really believe that God is present and active and calling us today in our lives? That the source of all life has chosen to enter into a loving, personal relationship with us? And yet, that is the reality we live: our God not only truly loves us and calls us into being, but He longs to share His love and His life with us. This is the amazing reality we live in, and through, our Baptism.

Saint Mary MacKillop recognised the presence of God in her life, but she also struggled to find words to describe this. As she wrote in 1870, *"God's love is too deep for words to express"*.

Nevertheless, both Mary and Father Julian Tenison Woods were willing to trust God, to return his love, and live it out in their daily lives. Mary loved with a humble but joyous heart, knowing that God had first chosen her and personally invited her, and she responded freely. It was God's work and she reacted faithfully and generously to Jesus' call, conscious that His command was *"to love one another"*. Mary responded in love to the source of all love, her God.

It is this same love that God has for us that gives us hope, draws us out of our complacency, and excites us to respond in love to others we encounter.

Janette Dobson
Rockhampton Companion

*Divine Spirit of Wisdom and Kindness,
enlighten my mind, penetrate its blindness.
Make me in all things what I ought to be.*
Mary MacKillop 1877

Annual Face to Face

The long weekend in May saw the **Queensland Leadership Team** gather for reflection and planning. We were gifted this year with the presence of **Sr Mary Cresp rsj**, who presented us with some insight into the book she has written on the evolution of the Josephite Companions. As always we were joined by two Companion Partners, **Robin Phelan** from Allora and **Tanya McNeil** from Brisbane North. The ladies were enthusiastic participants who brought a different aspect to our discussions. Robin has agreed to join the group; we welcome her and look forward to her insights.

Sr Annie McGuire rsj and **Sr Jenny Scari rsj** who journey with us throughout the year joined us at different times and we thank them for their companionship and wisdom as we look towards the future and how to spread our 'Jam'.

Bernadette Roche once again helped us to delve into our 'Jam Recipe' to thicken and spread the recipe we have been creating. I thank her for her unique spirituality and guidance in deepening our understanding of 'companion' and 'leadership'.

The team was invited to celebrate Sunday Mass at Nundah and join the sisters for a special lunch to celebrate **Sr Angela Carroll's** birthday. It was a lovely day with good food and good company. The weekend was challenging and nourishing. We even learnt how to use UBER EATS.....kinda?

I thank the group for the work they do each year to strengthen and develop our movement. Watch out in the next newsletters for some variations on the recipe....

Pauline McGuire



Collage of the weekend, produced by Robin Phelan

Evolution of a Movement

We still have some copies of **Sr Mary Cresp's** book available. Orders can be made by emailing to gld.companions@sosj.org.au with an indication that a direct deposit has been made to our Bank Account or by letter with payment to our office (details on the Donation page).

e-Companionship

We have many Companions in Queensland who for a variety of reasons are not able to attend one of the group meetings and the idea of establishing an online platform to provide a means of connecting with them was suggested. It was hoped that such a venture would give Companions an opportunity to

- Engage in prayer and reflective dialogue
- Share and enjoy ideas in friendship
- Explore options for engagement and service.

The focus for such a group would be on sharing the values and spirit of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods in the context of our living as Josephite Companions.

Bernadette Roche has offered to be the mentor for this group so any suggestions or expressions of interest can be addressed to her at broche@onthenet.com.au.

Around the Ridges...



As always, thank you to those generous members who support the work of the Companions in Queensland.

Also, a big “Thank you” to **Ken Theodore** for his contributions to the Leadership Team over the last few years. Our prayers and best wishes go with Ken as he pursues his goals and dreams in the years ahead.

Thank you for the prayers for those of our members who suffered ill health and hospitalisation since our last newsletter:

- **Joyce Gibson** continues to inspire our Companions in Allora.
- **Judy Harris** of Moorooka is out of rehab and making progress at home.

Do let us know of others for whom we can ask for prayers.

Rockhampton & Capricorn Coast – Janette Dobson

Rockhampton Companions meet monthly on the 3rd Saturday of each month. If possible, members participate in Saturday morning Mass at St Joseph's Cathedral at 9am, and then gather at 4 West Street afterwards. Because not all members are able to attend Mass at this time of day, particularly in cooler weather, we include a small prayer component when we've gathered again later, followed by morning tea. It's also an opportunity to share what is happening in our lives, to request prayer or to update on the progress of prayer for particular intentions. Our prayer aspect is never without need and we pray for whoever has requested prayer. It's amazing how many people from the wider community request and value prayer, so there is never a shortage. Equally valued, but not sought, is the gratitude from people when prayer is answered, or they have felt supported in prayer in their time of need.

Although we are quite a small group and average 6-15 members attending each month, our common unity under Mary MacKillop binds us quite closely together.

Allora – Robyn Phelan

Our last get-together was missing two of our members who were undertaking knee and hip surgery. We wish **Marg** and **Daph** all the best with their respective recoveries.

Our reflection remembered **Sister Irene McCormack**. Like Jesus and St Mary MacKillop, Sr Irene offered her life in the service of the poor and isolated. The people of Peru have claimed her as their own with a deep understanding that she gave her life for them. They celebrate the anniversary of her death (21 May) with special services for peace and justice, followed by Eucharist and a walk to her grave in a hillside cemetery.

During her time in Peru, Sr Irene wrote this morning offering which also reveals something of her relationship with God and how God was working in her.

*God, my Father, you love and forgive me.
So today I accept all as gift
And ask to find you Lord,
The giver in the gift.
I choose to face life without fear
And to live wholeheartedly
In each present moment.
May my heart sing today
A song of loving, grateful praise. Amen.
I am God's work of art.
I am precious in his sight.*

Gold Coast – Carolyn Grimward

Our Gold Coast local leader, **Bernadette Roche** is currently away enjoying a well earned overseas adventure travelling from Alaska back to Seattle and Chicago. We look forward to a travel report on her return.



We encourage all groups, or even individual members, to send in any items of interest to let other Companions make connections. For our next newsletter please have contributions to qld.companions@sosj.org.au by **20 August**.

Around the Ridges... (cont'd)

Townsville – Pauline McGuire

Townsville Companions met on 13 May in Anderson Park for coffee, cake and a chat, and we loved experiencing the cooler weather amongst God's beautiful creation. The companions also joined **Sr Valerie Houston** in celebrating the 150th Anniversary of St Joseph's Church/School in North Ward. This Church/School was opened by the Sisters of St Joseph in 1872 and was later run by the Sisters of Mercy.

Mass was celebrated by Bishop Timothy Harris and the parish hosted a lovely morning tea.



L to R: Patsy O'Connor, Pauline McGuire, Mary Wallace, Sr Valerie Houston rsj, Kath Knight, Same Knight, Erin Jones

Brisbane Northside – Marie Sellin

Our Northside Companions meet four times a year at the Convent at Nundah, having morning tea with the sisters before our gathering for prayer and discussion. There are about 10 members in our group and we regularly receive enquiries.

This year our emphasis has been on ways we can serve as Companions. We are always looking at ways to continue expressing the charism of Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods.

At our May meeting Carolyn filled us in on **Sr Mary Cresp's** talk given at the leadership Team's annual Face to Face meeting and also reviewed Sr Mary's book written about the history of the Josephite Companions - *Evolution of a Movement: Josephite Associates to Josephite Companions 1979 – 2019*.

Our next meeting will be 19 August.

Nostalgic Trip to Mt Isa

I had a recent excursion to Mount Isa with my mother Patsy (also a Companion) and my sister Jillian to participate in some of the celebrations for the 100 year anniversary of the founding of Mount Isa. Mum and I were both born in Mount Isa and her family were some of the original pioneers who helped establish the town in the early 1920s with an iceworks, a hotel, an electric company and a movie theatre, so it was a nostalgic trip for us as well to see how the town has changed over the years. We also undertook a little road trip to Cloncurry, visiting the old township of Mary Kathleen (the site of the uranium mine) and the Burke & Wills memorial on the way, and then a tour of the John Flynn (Royal Flying Doctor founder) Museum. To end the visit, we attended the Mount Isa Rodeo on the Sunday afternoon. All in all, it was a very lovely and enjoyable weekend.

We also celebrated our granddaughter Darcee's 4th birthday at the end of May. The party for her little friends was held at our place and the highlight was a huge pink jumping castle with a slide. A beautiful Skye & Everest Paw Patrol themed cake made by our friend Rebecca was a delicious surprise for Darcee. She had a wonderful day.

Erin – Townsville Josephite Companion





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JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS QUEENSLAND LEADERSHIP TEAM
VILLA MARIA CONVENT
123 WARREN STREET
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006

EMAIL: qld.companions@sosj.org.au

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