



FRIENDSHIP  
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## NSW JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS

NSW Josephite Companions PO Box 184, Croydon NSW 2132 (Letters only) • 5 Alexandra Avenue, Croydon NSW 2132, (Parcels)

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NEWSLETTER • November 2023

### Reflection for NSW Josephite Companions



*The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. Ps 24:1*

About two weeks ago Blacktown Companions group and other Companions from Linden, Strathfield, Lakemba and the Chinese Community had a reflection day facilitated by Sr Marie Biddle rsj. The theme of the day's reflection was Beauty. Sr Marie encouraged us to see with the eyes of our heart and reflect on the beauty that is found around us, in each one of us and in everything that exists. We

debated about the care of the Earth. His views and concerns are especially relevant now, with growing environmental awareness, something which Pope Francis reflects upon and urges us now to look after the good of our common home, our Earth. Fr Julian worked for the betterment of society and the church.

May we, like Fr Woods, appreciate the beauty that surrounds us. May we cultivate the beautiful in our lives and in each other. May we celebrate with wonder and awe God's creation.

*- Antoinette Mangion*

did this through sharing, poetry and music. Sr Marie said that beauty is here to be noticed. Too often it is taken for granted because we are moving too fast to take it in and allow it to deliver its message in us. We need to pay attention. And it is also to be seen in every person.

This made me think of Fr Julian Tenison Woods whose 130th death anniversary we celebrated a few weeks ago on the 7 October. Though he lived all those years ago, he was truly a man of our time.

Fr Woods, as he was known, was an English Catholic priest, a geologist and natural scientist who served in Australia. In fact, some of his works are still used today. As we all know, together with Mary MacKillop, they founded the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

Fr Julian was gifted with many talents, a deep thinker who recognised the marvel and sacredness of God's creation. He believed that all created beings and things reflected the beauty and grandeur of God. 'Nothing is too wonderful for me to believe about God, the richness of whose creative power was a constant subject of love and admiration.' (Fr Julian Tenison Woods 1887)

Fr Woods believed that every leaf, every rock, every insect had something beautiful and wonderful to tell. We learn that the dust we tread upon was once alive, the rock on which we stand has lived and died – has been a thing of life and is now a stone. When he walked among nature he felt at home and immersed himself in its beauty. 'All around, above and below, the eye is bewildered by a profusion of ornaments and decoration of nature's own devising.' (Fr Julian Tenison Woods 1862)

Fr Tenison Woods was keenly aware of the natural environment, its beauty and wonder, and the need to care for it. He argued and



**Do what you can with the means at your disposal and leave all the rest calmly to God.**

*Mary MacKillop - 1888*

**God's will is to be your only guide, your only dependence, your only comfort.**

*Fr Julian Tenison Woods - 1870*

We would like to remind all Josephite Companions that contribution to the membership are now due. Membership contribution is from January to December. Thank you for your generosity.

#### NSW Josephite Companions Leadership Team

Antoinette Mangion, Geoff Barrett, Lyn Griffiths, Beverley Badcock

# Perthville and surrounds Pilgrimage 2023

‘People may think a Pilgrimage is simply an opportunity to go to different places, hear the stories relating to these places and learn about the people connected to these places, but a Pilgrimage is so much more than that.

Those of us who had the privilege of being part of ‘The Perthville and Surrounds Pilgrimage’ in September 2023 can attest to the fact that this Pilgrimage gave us the opportunity to spend time in the company of people who came together to explore a deep and beautiful history. We had the opportunity to attend wonderful informative sessions on the lives of Mary, Julian, local indigenous people and the situation in the Bathurst Diocese in the 1870s. We heard of the joys, trials and spirituality of the people connected to the places we visited, we immersed ourselves in the beauty of peaceful surrounds and got to know a little of the four brave women who pioneered the Perthville foundation. We heard how the first foundation in N.S.W. came about and had the opportunity of visiting and experiencing the areas where convent schools were established during the very early years of the foundation. We stood where Mary and Julian had stood when they visited the area to support and instruct the sisters. The story of the Separation and the

distress it caused the sisters was pivotal in understanding why things changed.

Planning is underway for next year’s Pilgrimage. I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, who wish to enrich their Josephite Spirituality, to explore ways to connect with people, as the sisters did and still do today, to be nourished and refreshed in the beautiful surrounds of St. Joseph’s Convent, Perthville and, as we are told often in the gospels, to take time away from the everyday and to be present with our God, quietly in prayer and contemplation.

After the Pilgrimage ended one of the Pilgrims sent this message to us. “I had the most wonderful time with all of you, I felt so welcomed. Hopefully this can become an annual Pilgrimage and I look forward to being part of this wonderful history again”. You too can be part of this ‘wonderful history’. Details of the next Pilgrimage will be distributed early in 2024.

*-Margaret Smith  
Member of the Perthville Convent  
Heritage Committee.*



*Relaxing in the Conference Room of the Vale Lodge*

*Anti-clockwise: Sr. Maureen Sanderson, Jeanette McManus, Ann Morris, Jan Vote, Cliff Smith, Marion Le Breton, Margaret Smith, Sr. Alice Sullivan.*



*Enjoying dinner on Friday evening in the Vale Lodge Dining Room.*

*Left to Right: Cliff Smith, Marion Le Breton, Ann Morris, Jeanette McManus, Jan Vote, Margaret Smith  
(In the background): Sr. Maureen Sanderson and Sr. Alice Sullivan.*

## Stamps Wanted



Used stamps wanted for the  
**Josephite Mission in Peru**

**Please send to:**

### Boxes of Stamps

5 Alexandra Avenue  
Croydon NSW 2132

### Envelopes and packets to

Stamps, PO Box 184  
Croydon NSW 2132  
Phone 02 8741 2335

*Thank you for all stamps received.*

**A sum of \$30,000 was raised the  
past year from stamps donated.  
Thank you all for your generous  
support.**



*Getting ready to board the bus to visit early convent sites*

*Left to Right: Sr. Ann Morrison, Cliff Smith, Margaret Smith, Jeanette McManus, Ann Morris, Jan Vote, Marion Le Breton, Sr. Alice Sullivan.*



*Standing in front of the original 1872 Convent building*

*Left to Right: Ann Morris (partly obscured), Jan Vote, Samantha Friend, Cliff Smith (back to the camera), Marion Le Breton (entering the original convent door), Sr. Maureen Sanderson, Sr. Alice Sullivan, Jeanette McManus (forefront), Margaret Smith.*

# End Celebrations of Sesquicentenary Year

At Mary Mackillop Memorial Chapel North Sydney on the 15 July 2023, we celebrated the closing Mass of Thanksgiving celebrating the Sesquicentenary Year of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart NSW. Mass was presided by Bishop Brian Mascord of Wollongong.

Companions, family, and friends gathered with the Sisters in praise and thanksgiving for the presence of the Sisters from 1872.

Bishop Brian blessed the water drawn from the well at Mary MacKillop's Place and sprinkled us with the embrace of God's unconditional love. Welcome to Country was given by an Aboriginal Elder, Theresa Alder. Bishop Brian spoke highly of the Sisters of St Joseph and of his connection with them since he was very young. The Vietnamese Josephite Sisters performed a Liturgical Dance as gifts were presented at the Offertory Procession and Josephite Sisters led both the Entrance and Recessional Processions. We had beautiful singing all throughout the Mass led by Josephite Sisters who made it such a joyful occasion.

After Mass we joined the Sisters for afternoon tea and celebrated with old friends and acquaintances. What a beautiful day enjoyed by all.

- Lyn Griffiths - Blacktown Group



End of Sesquicentenary Mass:  
Aboriginal Elder, Theresa Alder.



End of Sesquicentenary Mass:  
Recessional Procession



End of Sesquicentenary Mass:  
Offertory Procession

## Blacktown Companions July 2023 meeting



Sister Mary Cresp rsj, author of the newly released book, 'Evolution of a Movement - Josephite Associates to Companions 1979 - 2019' was a special guest at the July 2023 meeting of the Blacktown Companions. I have always felt that one of the outstanding gifts of the Josephites is their open-hearted hospitality, and this same hospitality was in abundance at the Blacktown meeting. Sharing a delicious lunch around the table was symbolic of the nourishment we had all received from our Josephite Sisters.

'Wisdom's Gift of the Heart', was the theme of this meeting exploring Praying, Gazing, Listening, Savouring, Rejoicing and Blessing and this led gracefully into Sr. Mary's presentation, focusing on the Charism and way of life of the Institute of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, and thereby drawing us ever closer to that Charism which we share with our dear Sisters.

Sr. Mary's book, after extensive research, is beautifully presented, and informs us, in words and pictures, of the formation of the Associates and the development and growth of many groups within the movement. There were so many people instrumental in ensuring that the sisters' mission should continue. The book takes us through the coming together of groups to form a unified body and how we will continue to grow and work into the future. We should all feel a real sense of pride and thanksgiving that we are privileged to be part of this richly spiritual and life-giving group. Hopefully, this book which tells 'our' story will reinforce your desire to remain part of the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Copies of Sr. Mary's book are available from MacKillop Place, North Sydney or [mary.cresp@sosj.org.au](mailto:mary.cresp@sosj.org.au)

- Margaret Smith  
Josephite Companion.

### NEWSLETTER IN BY EMAIL

Do you receive your Newsletter by mail?

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**Would you like to receive your Newsletter by email?**

If the answer is YES, please email us your request at

**[nsw.companions@sosj.org.au](mailto:nsw.companions@sosj.org.au)**

and we will update our database and forward your newsletter in future by email.

# Financial literacy now and beyond

*The impact of learning financial skills extends far beyond the now. So many people go on from attending Mary MacKillop Today's education workshops to build better futures for themselves!*

You might be surprised to hear that more than 1 in 6 children and 1 in 8 adults live in poverty right here in Australia.

We know the cycle of poverty can be broken when people can access basic financial services at an affordable cost. That's why, through your support, our Financial Inclusion program is helping people get on top of their finances and take control of their life.

At Mary MacKillop Today, our focus is on holistic support. That means building relationships with each person who comes to us seeking support to escape economic hardship, so we can address the underlying issues together that might be affecting their financial capability. That way, people can get the tailored assistance they need for their own situation.

One of the best ways we can walk with people **towards financial independence** is to empower them with the knowledge and skills they need **now** so they can stand on their own in the **long term**. This is the goal of our financial education workshops. People can come along to learn how to make more informed financial decisions and grow in confidence to manage their finances, now and into the future.

Our wonderful partner organisations play an important role in making our Financial Inclusion program successful. Without their connections with regional community members, we simply wouldn't be able to achieve the impact that people need to break free from financial hardship.

Anita, our Financial Inclusion Team Leader, explains:

*"We are guided by our partners who truly know the needs of the community. We ask them, what do your clients need? Our partners are incredible, and some have been with us since our program started."*

*Many people take financial literacy for granted — thinking everyone knows things like keeping a shopping list, understanding how to read an energy bill, knowing if you're eligible for fee free bank accounts, or what your rights are as a tenant.*

*So, our work is not just about financial literacy. It's life skills.*

*The biggest thing for my team is empowering people to work out what their own priorities are for themselves – rather than telling them. It is very rewarding to see our participants embracing what they've learnt with us and making changes in their life.*

*By giving people these skills now, they can go out into the community to share their knowledge with family and friends. Over time, people build their financial resilience and become self-reliant long-term."*



*Sophie with Financial Literacy workshop participants.*



*Financial inclusion staff Julie and Anita.*

Your support helps us reach regional communities with our Financial Inclusion support services. Your donation helps people suffering financial hardship to achieve financial freedom for a better tomorrow!

<https://www.marymackilloptoday.org.au/donate/>



*Bernard Collaery, Joel Hidge, Susan & Vincent Long - book launch 2022.*



*Susan, Josephine and Jan.*

# *Sr Susan Connelly rsj writes*

When I think of Mary MacKillop, I am struck by her capacity to break new ground with old tools. There she was with Julian Tenison Woods, setting up a whole new school system, dependent on the age-old Gospel message of love and inclusion, and walking into the unknown with Jesus.

And the Sisters of St Joseph have been doing that ever since. What a privilege it is to be among such great companions, such great Josephites – all of us.

Since 1994 I have been involved with the people of Timor-Leste, learning about their extraordinary history, their faith, their tenacity, and their friendliness. It's been a roller-coaster journey. I learned about their friendship towards our soldiers in World War II, and that stays with me as one motivation to continue supporting them. The Australian government dropped leaflets all over the then Portuguese Timor in early 1943 as our men were being pulled out. The leaflets said: "Your friends do not forget you". So many Australians are keeping that promise. And it's a promise that needs to be kept, because so many Timorese died – at least 40,000 of them – simply because they were helping our Australian men.

We Australians need to know the history of what happened later to these friends of ours – in 1975, when Australia stood back while Indonesia invaded and caused the deaths of at least 180,000 people.

Another disturbing event was Australia's spying on the new Timorese government in 2004 to get more money from Timor Sea resources. Our government sent spies dressed as AusAID workers to put listening bugs in the walls of the Timorese Prime Minister's offices to listen in to their plans. A Treaty regarding part of the Timor Sea was signed on the basis of that fraud. Two men who told the truth about it – Witness K and Bernard Collaery – were then prosecuted for four years at the cost of millions of dollars to the Australia taxpayer.

St Paul said, "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10). Jesus' accompaniment of the poor, his challenges to the rich and powerful, and his lifestyle choices showed his attitude to money and the power it brings. Mary MacKillop, Julian Woods and sisters since then undertook their imitation of Jesus according to their times and situations.

These days, the old tools needed to speak the truth to power in new situations remain those of the Gospel. I try to use them in political action, writing in newspapers and journals, giving talks, supporting various people's efforts and other forms of advocacy. I am fortunate to have discovered the work of René Girard, whose insights into the Gospel reality has opened new ways of thinking for me, new ways of seeing.

Of particular concern to me are the West Papuans who are victims of the greed of the Indonesian government which prefers the rich Papuan lands to the people. Indonesia's control of the area is based on the 1969 so-called "Act of Free Choice", where just over 1000 Papuans were lined up in various areas and read a statement saying that West Papua belonged to Indonesia. The process was conducted at gunpoint. I met one of the people who was made to read that statement when I visited West Papua in 2016.

Unfortunately, successive Australian governments have been too timid to challenge Indonesia on its treatment of our near neighbours, the Papuans. West Papua may as well be on Mars instead of one of our nearest neighbours. Foreign journalists are not allowed in, so it is not surprising that normal news outlets in Australia are full of advertisements, sport, fashion and commentary, but nothing about the cruel and repressive military regime that has killed hundreds of thousands of Papuans.

Let us pray for the Papuan people. Our prayer may lead us to find out more about them, and to stand with them, to tell the truth about them, as Mary and Julian would.

*At the Mama Markets West Papua.*



## News from Moree

Our mothers' prayer group commenced in February 2022 at St Frances Xavier parish Moree NSW. We are a group of mothers, sisters who meet weekly for an hour to pray for children. Sister Margaret Therese Cusack from the Josephite order is a valued member of our group.

We belong to the world-wide movement of 'Mothers who pray for their children' which had its beginnings in Brazil in 2011, when Angela Abdo {Foundress} was moved by the Holy Spirit whilst visiting the shrine of Our Lady of La Salette in the French Alps. Angela and her daughter Vanessa saw the need that, "all children need a mother to pray for them".

Moree became the second English speaking group in the world. Other groups are in France, UK, Canada, America, Italy, China to name a few.

Our Parish Priest Fr Vic Ignacio is a La Salette missionary and spiritual director for English speaking countries and regularly attends our meetings.

Guiding principles of the movement is to support its 3 pillars of: unity- Jesus being our inspiration; obedience - Jesus our example; humility - Mother Mary's example.

We have a beautiful Rosary, songs, Formation and prayer moments.

We enjoy each other's contributions to the group and share our stories as women, as mothers, as sisters.

We are well supported by our Australian coordinator Carolina Cetenaeski.

'Mothers who pray for their children' are having their first Australian Conference in Melbourne on 27th April 2024.

If anyone would like more information, please feel free to contact me.

- Suzanne Bouliopoulos, Moree group coordinator  
email: sbouliopoulos@hotmail.com



Donna, Val, Sister Margaret and Suzanne, with Our Lady of La Salette, patron of the movement, "Mothers who pray for their children".



Shirani, Suzanne, Sister Margaret Cusack and Maria celebrating the feast of St Joseph 2023.

*We pray for the souls of our departed  
Companion brothers and sisters*

Patricia Sullivan	Dunedoo
Kevin Hookway	Dunedoo
Marie Maloney	Dubbo
Pat Klien	Strathfield
Anne O'Hara	Lidcombe
Joyce Carini	Auburn
Pauline McGlynn	Lidcombe
Merle Kenna	Shell Cove
Arthur Palmer	Boambee
Eddie Gallagher	Penshurst
Noeline Nicholson	Portland
Joyce Williams	Portland
Fr John Alt	

*Please let us know if anyone from your group passes away or leaves. We can include them in our prayers.  
Thank you*



### From Pope Francis – His words. Your Journey Together

"Confidence, "nothing but confidence", is the sole path that leads us to the Love that grants everything. With confidence, the wellspring of grace overflows into our lives, the Gospel takes flesh within us and makes us channels of mercy for our brothers and sisters."

*Pope Francis – Wednesday, 18 October 2023*

### Companions' Office

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**(02) 8741 2335**  
nsw.companions@sosj.org.au

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