

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2023



Dear Sisters, Companions and Friends,

With Advent celebrations we commence our journey towards Christmas and we wait in joyful expectation of the coming of the Christ Child. Shopping centres have begun 'dressing up' their community spaces and playing Christmas carols to remind us that Christmas is only days away. Christmas trees, baubles, candles and even Santa himself greets us with a festive Ho, Ho, Ho. Sadly, we rarely see the Nativity crib and the REAL meaning of Christmas seems to be ignored as we are bombarded with a myriad of largely secular expressions of what Christmas is all about.

Pope Francis (2019) reflected on the meaning of Christmas, concluding that it is encapsulated in the nativity scene. "The enchanting image of the Christmas creche, so dear to Christian people, never ceases to arouse amazement and wonder, The depiction of Jesus' birth is itself a simple and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The nativity scene is like a living Gospel, rising up from the pages of Sacred Scripture. As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. We come to realise that so great is His love for us that He became one of us, so that we, in turn, might become one with Him." This is a plea to take the words of Pope Francis to heart and display the Christmas crib in a place of honour as an indication that for you, as a Christian, the message of Christmas is clear. The good news of the Christmas story is that the Christ-Child, Emmanuel (God is within us) was born into our world, with profound simplicity, God's precious gift to each one of us. We are invited, in turn to recognise that presence in ourselves and others we encounter this Christmas. Let the gift of God's presence in our hearts be a sign that this wondrous presence is real in our world and it can make a difference. May the Christ Child be born again in our hearts and homes this Christmas.

To reiterate the words of St Mary of the Cross , "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." MMK 1882

Our prayer in this summer season of 2023-24 offers us the opportunity to experience God's love among us, to pray for peace in our troubled world and to give generously to our brothers and sisters in need.

May the peace and joy of Christmas be with everyone.

Best wishes and love, Dot Savage for Dardanup, Metro & Esperance Groups.



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A Ministry of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS

St Mary Of The Cross Feast Day

We were blessed to have Father Pierre to celebrate Mass with us on this special day. In his homily Fr. pointed to the practicality of St Mary of the Cross who constantly advised her sisters to “Lean more on God and less on ourselves” (1877). She exemplified for us, her understanding of trust in God. She provided a wonderful model for us to follow because she trusted wholeheartedly in God’s providence and care. We were privileged to have Sr Mary Cresp rsj with us and to listen to her inspirational thoughts on the Josephite Mission. Afterwards Sr Mary and Sr Kath Hitchcock introduced “Evolution of a Movement—an overview of the historical development of the Josephite Associate Movement.”. In this book, Sr Mary captures the Josephite values of practicality, simplicity, adaptability and prayerfulness. She relates how the Sisters of St Joseph courageously gave expression to unique values and traditions and gave purpose and expression to a wider community of lay companions. We were indeed gifted on this special day with the presence of Sr Mary, Sr Kath, Sr Pauline and Sr Bernadette. We enjoyed a shared lunch with those who celebrated Mass in honour of St Mary of the Cross.



Living with Grief and Loss

In response to member requests, our October meeting centred on the theme of “Living with Grief and Loss” Helen Brown presented an empathetic, gentle session on grief, loss and how to cope with this painful, emotion-filled experience. Helen focused on grief and loss in all the ways it is experienced, not just from the death of a loved one but also the loss of health, work or sense of identity. All experiences of grief and loss are intensely individual and unique. At the outset, participants were assured of confidentiality, and freedom to contribute only if they felt they had the courage to do so. Respect for thoughts was the keynote. She gave contact details of selected organisations and resources for those searching for further guidance in this area. Several exercises were suggested that would help to ease the anxiety and pain that accompany grief. Mindfulness was such an experience. Practising mindfulness can help to ease trains of thought that may be exacerbating anxiety. Helen led the group through a session that; paid attention to the flow of breath; noticed bodily sensations; detected any tension from head to feet and let go of judgement. This was a deeply personal and cathartic exercise and the presence of God was felt deeply. Participants expressed that they found comfort, strength and support in the knowledge that they were not alone in their grief; that they can and will live through it. They felt that they can grow and learn through the experience of grief. Thank you Helen for leading the session. Our prayer focused on Ecclesiastes 3 and Jesus’ beatitude “Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.”



A Champion Companion—Annie MacKillop

On 2 September, Josephite Companions from Pinjarra and Bunbury joined others from across Australia, New Zealand and Peru to participate in the inaugural day dedicated to Josephite Companions. Sr Judith Geddes was the keynote speaker and shared her knowledge about the life of Annie MacKillop. Participants then had the opportunity to discuss the following questions in breakout rooms.

How did Annie MacKillop support the work of her sister Mary and the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart?

How has the life of Annie influenced Companions today?

"Annie is depicted as a talented, fashionable, cheerful, confident woman who complemented the Sisters of Saint Joseph way of life. She was kind and a caring nurse to Mary when she became ill. Annie is a role model for us as Companions, giving us inspiration along our Josephite path." (Robyn Phelan)

As a group of committed Companions, we look forward to celebrating Annie's Day in the future, looking to her life of friendship, prayer and service as a guide for our daily living. JCoLT has undertaken the task of deciding how and when Josephite Companions will celebrate the life of Annie MacKillop the Champion Companion.



The Charism in Action - Star of the Sea Parish Esperance

A wonderful day was held in Grass Patch with an amazing group of parishioners gathering at Our Lady of The Way Church to pray for all the farmers of the area and for a safe and abundant harvest. After Mass a shared meal was provided and a great day was had by all.



After Mass at Our Lady Star of the Sea, we shared a wonderful brunch with a lot of amazing discussions and great food. The chance to create new friendships and grow relationships was greatly appreciated by all.



The Esperance Care Service was grateful for the donation of food, collected by the parish community, which included the Josephite Companions.



The Esperance Agricultural Show is great event where the Star of The Sea Parish has its donut and fairy floss vans. It was a lot of work first of all, but a lot of great moments where we spent time together and we were able to meet and get to know each other better. Thank you to all the volunteers, those who have helped for very long time and those



who came for first time. The teachers from Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School contributed as well to making this a very successful day.



EXPLORE—EMBRACE— EMBODY

The Soft Plastics campaign is a shared Josephite endeavour between the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart and Sisters of St Joseph Lochinvar and supports the [Explore~Embrace~Embody Laudato Si' Action Plan](#).

P—Plastic Paralysis, **L**—Lightbulb Moment,
A- Asking for Change, **S**—Shopping Tips,
T— Taking Action, **I**— I Can, I Will, **C**- Changing Habits, **S**— Showing Off



I – I CAN, I WILL is the sixth theme in the Josephite Soft Plastics campaign.

I CAN implies that the person can do something, while **I WILL** implies that they are committed to doing it.

I Can is more about capability, while **I Will** is more about determination. Having the capacity and agency to do something is quite different from having the resolve to do something.

Call to Action

- ♦ **Visit** Soft Plastics Campaign 2023 - Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart (sosj.org.au)
- ♦ Commemorate Julian Tenison Woods' birthday on 15 November by prayerfully revisiting the [Sustainability in Daily Life](#) Identify two or three daily acts that you can commit to.



In November, the month of the Holy Souls we remember all those Sisters and Companions who have gone to God. May they sleep peacefully in the arms of Jesus.



Elaine Keiradh
(Esperance)

Dear Companions if your are aware of any companion/relative who has passed away, can you please email or ring the office: wa.companions@sosj.org.au or (08) 9334 0999

WA JOSEPHITE COMPANION GATHERINGS

SOUTH PERTH

10th December, 2pm-4pm (Christmas gathering)

ENQUIRIES:

Louisa Moore - 0438 616 228

Email: louisa.moore1@bigpond.com

Margaret Jones - 0437 336 245
9370 3260

DARDANUP

29th November, 9.30am

4th February 2024

ENQUIRIES:

Dot Savage—(08) 9791 4008

Helen Brown—0478 783 990

Email: helenbrown.hb@gmail.com

ESPERANCE

Third Thursday of each month

Mass, Rosary and sharing.

ENQUIRIES:

Helen Johnston—(08) 9071 1256

Email: donaldjohnston@bigpond.com

Fundraising for Mary MacKillop Today

WA Containers for Change

10c per bottle

Includes

Glass & plastic bottles

Aluminium cans

Cardboard drink cartons

With 10c printed label on them

Code for Mary MacKillop Today
C10473265

