



## Josephite Companions Autumn Newsletter - 2024 Victoria



Dear Fellow Companions,

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### SAVE THE DATE

Sat 25th May – 11.30am

Leaders Webinar

See *JCoLT News* for

More details

Sat 31<sup>st</sup> August – 11.30am

Companions Day Webinar

Sat 9<sup>th</sup> Nov - 1.30pm

Vic Companions

Annual Mass

### \* JCoLT News

Included with this  
newsletter. Please take  
some to read article on  
[Annie MacKillop](#)

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter. By the time you read this piece, we will be on our way to completing our Lenten preparations and looking forward to the joys of Easter. Considering what is going on in the world now: The war in Ukraine, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the ever-growing upheaval in Australia, this year, is a poignant time.

His Holiness, Pope Francis has issued his Lenten message for 2024 entitled.

*Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom.*

In his address, His Holiness says,

“It is time to act, and in Lent, *to act also means to pause*. To pause *in prayer*, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan *in the presence of a wounded brother or sister*. Love of God and love of neighbour are one love. Not to have other gods is to pause in the presence of God beside the flesh of our neighbour. For this reason, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying, in which we cast out the idols that weigh us down, the attachments that imprison us.”

[Message of the Holy Father Francis for Lent 2024 \(vatican.va\)](https://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francis/messages/ Lent2024/message_hf_francis_message_lenten_2024_en.html)

So, dear fellow companions, let us prepare well for our journey to Easter and may the joy of the Risen Lord find you at the end of your journey.

Greg

## HAPPY FEAST of St JOSEPH - 19<sup>th</sup> March

As Josephite Companions we share in the charism and celebrate this feast day of our patron with the Sisters of St Joseph.



**Saint Joseph, you are that just man,  
That wise and loyal servant,  
Whom God called to lead the holy family.**

**With a husband's love you cherished Mary,  
And with a fatherly care you loved  
And educated Jesus.**

**May we also experience your loving  
and watchful care in our lives as  
Josephite Companions  
Amen**



## Easter Reflection



*Whilst researching for the newsletter, I was looking for Mother Mary's thoughts on Easter. My search found an interesting Easter homily by Bishop Holohan, Bishop of Bunbury, Western Australia. I have edited the piece, which can be found in its entirety at [Bishop Holohan links MacKillop to Easter | The Record](#), for purposes of space. It was published prior to Mother Mary's canonization. I liked the 'Easter feel' and the way in which the bishop speaks of Mother Mary in the present tense. I hope you find it helpful and reflective.*  
Greg

In 1905, the Sisters of St Joseph re-elected a partially paralysed Mother Mary Mackillop their Superior General. Though clear in thought and speech, Mary had been confined to a wheelchair for four years after a stroke that left her right side paralysed.

This event reminds us of a most important fact: Mary was re-elected because of who she was as a person, not because of what she could or could not do. Mary is a saint because the Easter power of Christ, the power of His Resurrection, made her a holy person as she prayed, worshipped and lived as Jesus taught.

If we look a little more deeply at Mother Mary, we see her as someone who understands Australian life at many levels. She is someone one can ask to pray to God on our behalf.

As the eldest, Mary had to accept considerable responsibility to keep her family together. She knew the strains of financial pressures on her parents' marriage and the effects on her brothers and sisters as well as on herself.

She understands those today who are experiencing strain in their marriages, young people whose parents have split up and teenagers who are embarrassed with their peers for family and financial reasons.

She certainly understands teenagers who have to take on added burdens because one or more parents is absent. All of these people can pray to her.

Mary understands the anxiety and pressures on many in our society today, caused by financial difficulties. She understands how hard it can be to provide for families, and to keep them together. She knows what it is like to have to go to work 'to make ends meet'.

Mary understands poverty. But she also understands young people lacking parent support, and those who are troubled. She would understand why many today would seek relief through drugs and excessive alcohol.

Mary understands anyone today who feels undermined, including in families. She knows how hard it is to remain loyal, particularly to those who are less capable. She knows too what it is like to have to step in to clear up a mess, while being taken for granted or even resented for doing so.

Mother Mary Mackillop is an outstanding example of someone who opened herself to the Risen Lord and His power. Her story is of someone in whom Christ's power shone through human weakness.

As we reflect on Mary, let us remember that Christ loves each one of us no less than He loved her. He offers His power to each of us no less than He offered it to her.

May we all have a happy Easter – and be encouraged by Mary's example to seek Christ's power to become the people we are capable of being. Let us pray to her as someone in heaven who what it is like to live as an Australian.

+ Bishop Gerard Holohan

~ Catching up on some of last year's news ~

**COMPANION ANNUAL MASS**

Our annual November mass was held a couple of weeks later than normal so as to fit in with the busy schedule of Fr Michael Kalka.

Once again this took place at the Heritage Centre in East Melbourne, and we are so blessed to have such a fabulous team there who were able to organise someone to be there on a Saturday to let us in and open the shop for us.

A lovely group of Companions gathered for mass and then a few were even able to stay for afternoon tea afterwards.

We are pleased to announce that Fr Michael has already marked the 2024 mass into his diary and we are back to the second Saturday in November which will be Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>. Pop it on your calendar and we hope to see you there.



**BACCHUS MARSH FAREWELLS Sr MARY FERMIO**

One of our Companions informed me that there was to be a farewell mass for Sr Mary Fermio at St Bernards on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October so I decided to make the drive over the bridge to attend and surprise Sr Mary.

It was a lovely mass attended by a number of the Sisters of Saint Joseph – including Sr Audrey who was also a past leader of the Josephite Companions (Associates), as it was not only Mary's farewell but she was to be the last Sisters of Saint Joseph in the parish – a relationship that had run continually for 133 years.

One of the past parish priests who had been there when Mary arrived also returned and gave a reflection during the mass telling some wonderful stories of his time with the Sisters. And before mass ended a beautiful blessing was prayed over Mary by the new assistant parish priest.

After mass the parish put on a wonderful lunch for us all and Sr Mary did a presentation on the history of the SOSJ in Bacchus Marsh. It was a most enjoyable time and I was thrilled to be able to be there with the Sisters and other Companions as well as the local community to celebrate both Sr Mary Fermio and the many Sisters who had worked there over the years.

*Anne-Marie*



*Sr Mary.*



*Sisters of St Joseph with past & present parish priest*

**LEONGATHA VISIT**



I love getting out to visit our Josephite Companions and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October I joined the Leongatha/Wonthaggi group for mass followed by a short meeting and light lunch. Although it rained for my whole drive to Leongatha and back! The warmth and joy of gathering together made up for all of that. It was also good to be able to share some of Annie MacKillop’s story with the group. As St Mary MacKillop’s sister, Annie was a wonderful companion and support to not only her sister but the

institute of the Sisters of St Joseph through to her death.

It is lovely to be able to chat with our Josephite Companions and hear about all the works of service you are doing in your own communities with a Josephite heart.

Keep up the good works and I hope to visit many more of you in 2024.

*Anne-Marie Wilkinson*

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We continue to pray for deceased Companions and their families.  
Alice Cahill at Nagambie.

**May the souls of the faithful departed Rest in Peace.**

*If companion groups would like to create a Prayer List for the dearly departed and the sick, I would be pleased to include requests in the newsletter.*



**Stamps may be sent to:**

Josephite Companions  
P O Box 184  
CROYDON NSW 2132

**OR**

5 Alexandra Avenue  
CROYDON NSW 2132



These stamps are used by the Sisters to raise funds for projects in areas such as Peru, The Kimberley Region and Timor Leste.

\* Please label the package STAMPS  
\*\*Leave a border around each stamps.

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Anne-Marie, Aarti, who helps print and assemble the newsletter, and I, wish all Companions and their families a happy and holy Easter.

God Bless, Greg

*PS: Don’t forget to let us know of any news in your area so we can include it in our newsletter.*



## 2024 Subscriptions

To make a payment at any Bendigo Branch or online.

**BSB Number:** 633 000

**Number:** 171 035 447

**Account Name:** Josephite Companions Vic

**\*Please include your name on all Online Deposits**

Payment Amount: \$30.00                      Additional Donation \_\_\_\_\_  
(Includes \$10 for the JCoLT Levy.)

Mail Payment Method: Cheque made payable to Josephite Companions Vic with form included.

Post to: Josephite Companions,  
C/O Mary MacKillop Heritage  
326 Albert St, East Melbourne  
Victoria 3002

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Direct Payment handed to Core Team Member IN ENVELOPE WITH THIS FORM FILLED IN, TO BE INCLUDED.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

You only need to complete the personal information if it has changed recently.  
We are trying to update our data base and so would appreciate your assistance with changes so we have your most current address, phone & email details

Many thanks  
The VIC Core Team

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