

Companions News

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

APRIL 2024

Editorial...

CREATOR GOD: NEW BEGINNINGS, NEW LIFE

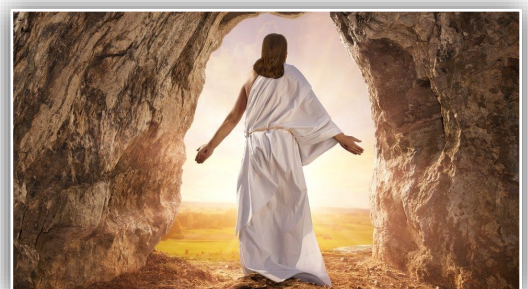
During our Easter ceremonies we recall the story of God's love for us from the very beginning. We commence in darkness, until light glimmers from the Easter fire and we light the Paschal Candle. Then we recall the marvellous story of God's everlasting love for us, beginning with the formation of our Earth from an empty void, moving on to God's creation of our human life. Do you truly know that God has loved you forever and called you into being in the image and likeness of God?

We listen to examples of those who, throughout the ages, trusted God and remained faithful despite living in a world that did not always remember or value God's love and goodness. We trace the stories of Abraham, Moses, Isaiah and Ezekiel and take heart from their constancy, while we build up to the good news of Jesus, Love Incarnate, who lived in our world, died for our sins, and rose in glory at the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

These are the truths of our faith. But they are not just bare facts or statistics. They point to a love that is like no other; love that called you into being; love that will never end; and love that seeks to draw you ever closer throughout your life. That is the almost incomprehensible mystery of our Creator God.

But the story does not end there with Easter Sunday! That is just the beginning of this story of new life and wonder. God keeps on dreaming dreams for you and for our world. Who can tell where it will end? Who can imagine the longings of our God for what his people might achieve and what paths they will follow in their search? This post-Easter period is given to us to rekindle in us some sense and acceptance of the mystery that is God's love. How will you respond? Can you be brave enough to trust the God who called you into being through love? Are you able to imitate the trust of Abraham, or Moses, or Isaiah, and listen carefully to the whispers of love that you might hear from the God who personally loves you? What difference might the resurrection make in your life? You may be surprised.

Sr Michele Shipperley rsj writes *"Resurrection happens every day. Jesus calls us each day to be touched and to rise in our dying and our rising. Mary did not expect Jesus in the garden; the apostles did not expect the stranger to join them on the road to Emmaus; Thomas had to touch the wounds. Jesus Christ is found in familiar and strange places. Belief in the Resurrection calls us to, as Joan Chittister says, 'stand in the light of the empty tomb and decide what to do next'."*



QUEENSLAND COMPANIONS LEADERSHIP TEAM

Pauline McGuire (Chair)
pmcguire0306@gmail.com

Erin Jones
epjones7@bigpond.net.au

Bernadette Roche
broche@onthenet.com.au

Robyn Phelan
robyn.phelan@bigpond.com

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

Janette Dobson
Rockhampton

Josephite Companions Leadership Team (JCoLT) Meeting

Mount Street Sydney ~ 16-19 January 2024



Earlier this year, the members of the JCoLT Leadership Team gathered in Sydney to pray, deliberate, and unpack the key focus – *Responding to the call to live the Josephite charism as we proclaim God's mission in 2024.*

Profiles from the various regions, States, and countries (NZ and Timor Leste) and a response to the following questions were prepared before we gathered in order to enable JCoLT to have a sense from a broad group of Companions:

- ♦ Who are we as Josephite Companions as we move into 2024?
- ♦ How do we see our relationship with the Sisters currently?
- ♦ How do we keep sharing the Josephite charism with others in the future?

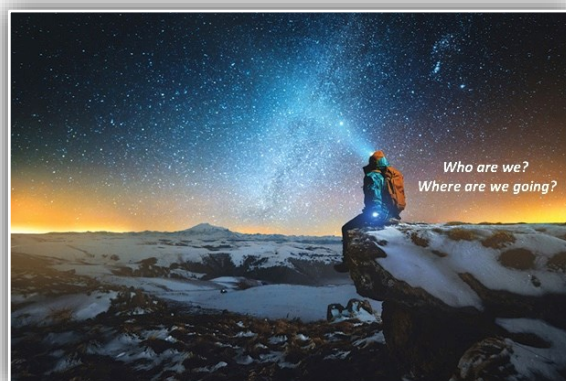
We gathered in the Molloy Room of Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, for an inspirational and enriching prayer, *Travelling Together—Travelling as One*. Our prayer over the coming days was beautifully facilitated by Clare Conaglen rsj from the JCoLT Team and grounded our agenda for each day.

It was fitting to commence our sessions with reference to Mary MacKillop's words, written in a letter to her mother: *Oh how I wish that we could only remember that we are but travellers here.* (Mary MacKillop 27 Nov 1866 Penola)

Unpacking the Focus:

Each member was issued with a crossover travel bag, which contained three questions for the sessions, designed to further explore the nature of journey and the nature of our travelling together as Companions in 2024 and beyond:

- ♦ Who are we?
- ♦ Who do we want to become?
- ♦ What are some of the most urgent needs and initiatives we need to look at or put in place, given the demographics and/or perceived issues evident in the Josephite Companions regional groups?



After lunch we provided feedback from our responses to these questions and shared the profiles from each of the regions/States/countries.

A snapshot and overview of our festival of 'Post-it Notes' containing our prioritised responses to the three questions was then presented to the CLT, for consideration prior to our meeting with the Congregational Leadership Team, for a discussion the next day.

The Qld Leadership Team will inform Qld Companions, with some of the insights gained from these sessions, in upcoming newsletters and correspondence.

Leadership and Succession Plan:

Pauline McGuire (Qld Chair) has agreed to take over the role as JCoLT Chair in light of Mary Hemmings concluding her very successful and capable role as Chair of JCoLT. We are all truly excited that Pauline has agreed to take the Chair, as her wisdom, insights and generous efforts have been such a blessing for the Josephite Companions movement over the years.

I will also be joining the JCoLT team as of January 2024.

Bernadette Roche

Qld Leadership Team

Please see overpage for our photos!



JCoLT *in the Frame*



Helen Brown (WA), Antoinette Mangion (NSW), Anne-Marie Wilkinson (Vic), Helen Dougherty (NZ), Mary Hemmings (SA), Pauline McGuire (Qld), Clare Conaglen rsj (NSW), Bernadette Roche (Qld)



Around the table from the left:

Helen Brown (WA), Clare Conaglen rsj (NSW), Anne-Marie Wilkinson (Vic), Helen Dougherty (NZ), Mary Hemmings (SA), Pauline McGuire (Qld), Antoinette Mangion (NSW)

Around the Ridges...

TOWNSVILLE

The Townsville Josephite Companions have had a busy start to the year linking up with St Josephs School, Mundingburra for several activities beginning with their Centenary Mass in January. This was followed in March with a Mass on St Joseph's Feast Day where some of the Companions were asked to hand out certificates to those students who have acted in ways that embrace the qualities of St Joseph (*see photo below*). We also joined with the school for Evening Prayer on the feast day and look forward to joining together in August for the formal centenary celebrations.

The Townsville Group continues to meet for prayer and coffee catchups and has plans in place for an Eldering Retreat on 8 June 2024.



BRISBANE NORTHSIDE

Commitment Ceremony

On Saturday 16 March the Companions of the Brisbane Northside group gathered at St Joseph's Convent at Nundah. As usual we began by sharing morning tea with the Sisters, always a great opportunity for us to catch up and exchange news. After morning tea the Sisters accompanied us to the chapel where we held a Commitment Ceremony to welcome Kath Byrnes as a Josephite Companion. Kath has had a long association with the Josephite family. After prayer and studying the Discovery Program encouraged by the group and especially her mentor, Sr Carmel Street, Kath was happy to make public her commitment as a Companion. There was a special moment when Sr Carmel handed Kath her Companion's candle which she had lit from the Josephite candle.

All present found the ceremony a moving one, particularly the acknowledgment of the connection between the Sisters and the Companions.



Around the Ridges... (cont'd)

Emerging group—HIGHFIELDS

Prayer and companionship permeated the welcoming of members of the St Mary MacKillop Parish to Mary MacKillop Catholic College, Highfields on 12 March. The College has had a Josephite Companions prayer group since 2022 – which is about the same time that the local parish chose to rebrand from Our Lady of the Southern Cross to St Mary MacKillop Parish.

The College Josephite Companion's prayer group welcomed parishioners to Mass and a breakfast after Mass catered by the College chef. The parishioners came to learn about how the Josephite charism is animated and enlivened at the College, and how the example of St Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian is found in College outreach and service.

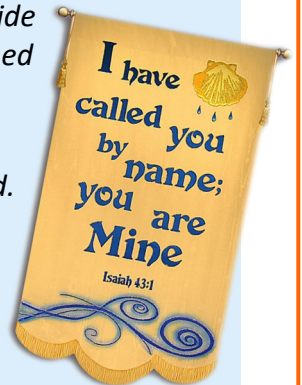
College Principal Chris Gabbett addressed the parishioners about the fortnightly prayer gathering of colleagues from different areas of the College, and how the witness of St Mary MacKillop provides community, example and encouragement to staff.

PRAYER

God of love, who created the whole universe, open my eyes and my heart to better recognise your love. For it was in and through love that you ordered the pattern of our Earth, the sun, and myriad of stars. We cannot hope to understand the complexity of your creation; the plant life and vegetation; the animals and sea creatures; or the skies, where clouds form to provide life-giving rain or blanketing snow; yet we can marvel at the order you have ordained in order to provide seasons for planting or reaping, as well as flooding rain or scorching drought. You hold the universe within your love and your care.

How much more then, do you love me? You longed for me before our world existed. When the time came, you loved me into being and breathed your spirit into me. I, like the universe you created, have been part of your plan from the beginning. You have always known me and you called me by name. I am your beloved.

But I do not always recognise your love. I can easily get caught up in my own little affairs and fail to recognise that your spirit remains in me, even if I do not actively acknowledge your love. In this post-Easter period, remind me of the gift of your salvation: Jesus died so that I may live forever in your love. Give me the gift of constancy so that I may always live my life in the light of this fantastic truth. As I stand at the opening of the empty tomb, fill my whole being with the desire to show your love to the world. Guide me, so that as I leave the tomb behind, I too can rise to greater faith. May my ongoing life reflect your love by example and deed. Amen.



PRAYER FOR HEALING

We pray with St Mary of the Cross and Fr Julian Tenison Woods...

Compassionate God, we pray for all who are ill in body and spirit, for those who have died and those who mourn. May You bless all with Your loving care, renew our strength so we can let your loving embrace carry us through the next part of your plan for us, in Your loving name. Amen.

e-Companioning

We have commenced our e-Companioning group for 2024. Anyone may join by contacting Bernadette who will forward details of the meeting dates and times along with the Zoom link. Our next meeting will be in May after the Leadership Face to Face.

Bernadette Roche: broche@onthenet.net.au



DONATION TO THE QUEENSLAND COMPANIONS MOVEMENT

NAME:

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AMOUNT GIVEN: (PLEASE CIRCLE)

\$20 \$30 \$40 \$50 OTHER \$.....

ALL DONATIONS CAN BE FORWARDED TO:

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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Thank you for your donation!

