

Queensland Josephite Companions News

Companioning each other with a Josephite Heart

August 2024

Welcome to the August edition of the *Companion News*. You will notice we have a new look banner to better reflect the real focus of our ongoing companionship.

We are a movement that combines a like-minded spirituality that values and honours relationships with the need to support each other and those in the wider community.

The Companion Movement has developed and grown over time necessitating the need to formalise the structure, allowing autonomy and sustainability into the future. Foundational roots continue to keep our movement solid and any issues emerging on this journey will be addressed by JCoLT to ensure the movement is viable.

JCoLT, the body entrusted with the leadership of our movement, will keep us all updated as decisions are made.

Pauline McGuire - Chair on behalf of Queensland Leadership/Pastoral Team

Editorial...

I am the vine: you are the branches

As I write this editorial, I'm grieving the loss of a young married man, husband, father to 6 children and heavily involved in life and living. He and his family grew up in a close relationship with our family and particularly with our children; a relationship that changed this week with his death from cancer. For all intents and purposes, that relationship can never be the same living, dynamic that it once was, but I doubt it will ever truly end. Graham's spirit will remain with all of us into the future. We can never touch him or speak with him as previously, but we cannot stop believing that Graham's earthly life may have ended at 46, but he will continue to live on forever with his God. It is for this reason that we view death in a different light.

Jesus will never stop loving us. Love is the reason he chose to live as one of us. As God, he had nothing to prove; but as a lover, he needed to show how much he loves and to seek our love in return. That's the absolutely amazing truth! That Jesus wants to share his love with us, just as we are, and that he yearns for us to love him in return.

We have many images that might describe that love to us; Emmanuel – God with us, Good Shepherd, Healer and Restorer, Calmer of Storms, Messiah, True Light, and ultimately, Saviour, who was prepared to die for us. One image that is particularly in my mind at present is Jesus Christ as "living vine" particularly in light of Graham's death. In John 15, Jesus assures us that he is the source of life and that he can bring new growth to the vine and even cause it to bear fruit. If we can remain close to Jesus, then we too take on the

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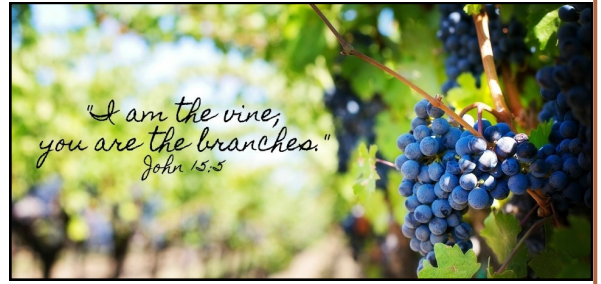
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qld.companions@sosj.org.au

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life of that vine. We become the branches that reach out to the world and to others. We have the opportunity and the mission to be fruit and hope for our world if we remain strongly connected to Jesus. No vine will bear a good harvest if it is closed in on itself. This is not an exclusively "Me and God" relationship. We also need the encouragement and support of others if we are to bear lots of fruit. We cannot do it all on our own. Our fellow Josephite Companions are travelling this same journey with us. We are all joined to the same lifegiving vine and, although our circumstances may be different, we are all tasked with promoting the growth of God's life and love in our world.



Saint Mary MacKillop always sent her sisters out in pairs, recognising that they would be more fruitful if they were supported in their mission. Let's try to take advantage of the common bonds we share as Josephite Companions, and endeavour to connect with each other to make our branches bear even more fruit.

If you have access to a computer, there is a mine of information on the [Sisters of St Joseph website](#), not only concerning the congregation, but also sections on the Josephite Companions, and prayer resources. If you are able to access a Companions meeting, this can be a very valuable place to meet other Companions and listen to their stories. If distance precludes this, then I'd strongly recommend accessing a virtual workshop via Zoom, which can be done in your pjs in the comfort of your own home. Look out for opportunities that may be offered. You may be surprised how supported in your mission you may begin to feel and hopefully your branch will bloom and bear fruit too.

Janette Dobson - Rockhampton

Feast Day of St Mary MacKillop - 8 August 2024

On 8 August, let us celebrate and think of each other and all those for whom this day is very special and dear to their hearts. Officially declared as Australia's second patron saint in 2013, no doubt there will be celebrations both internationally and Australia-wide to mark **The Solemnity of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop** - within Dioceses and Parishes, in schools on assemblies and in classrooms, and in our local community and homes.

This is a day when we are filled with deep gratitude to the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart, past and present, for their selfless dedication and all they have done and continue to do, to ensure that Mary's charism and legacy is very much alive and active in the world, today.

Bernadette Roche



Graphic source: marymackillopparish.org.au/index.php/about/your-parish-saint

On the Prayer Vine...

"We also need the encouragement and support of others if we are to bear lots of fruit. We cannot do it all on our own." (editorial)

Prayer Requests may be forwarded for inclusion in each Newsletter. If you have someone who has asked you to pray for them for a specific reason, please feel free to let us know, if they have given you permission to do so.

Newsletter items for contribution can also be sent to qld.companions@sosj.org.au



Around the Ridges...

ALLORA

We offer our sympathy and friendship to our member Noeleen on the loss of Morris, her husband of 40 years. Morris was a gentleman and gentle man whose chats our Parish has missed over his recent years of ill health. In early May, we were saddened by the passing of Ted Cavanagh, Sr Monica Cavanagh's youngest brother, who had grown up in the Parish. Ted made enduring friendships and served the community wherever he lived. Companions and Parish as well as all Allora were able to support Ted's family and the Cavanagh family when Ted was laid to rest at the Allora cemetery.

"Aging is a Gift" was the theme of our June meeting. We utilised website material from the Sisters' new ministry—*Eldering*—and found it both insightful and thought-provoking. We explored what is an elder and reflected on how spirituality in our life stories can lead us into our truest self. Whilst we shared much, we also left with many questions from the website to reflect on in our own quiet time:

I can leave you my recipes, I can leave you my funny sayings. I can leave you my stories and anecdotes.

I can leave you my keepsakes, my handiwork, my wealth, my talents, my knowledge too.

I can leave you my memories and photographs and my golden rings of love—a legacy dear to my heart, but a legacy born of my days, fated to fade and melt away into the sands of forgetfulness soon after my sun has set. So, what is lasting and what is true beneath this mask of temporal things?

What secret of heaven can I leave for you – What blossomed in my Soul?

Lorraine Muir, June 2023 <https://www.sosj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Leaving-poem-Lorraine-Muir-June-2023.pdf>

Robyn Phelan

BRISBANE NORTHSIDE

We were only a small group at our last meeting as three were unwell and Joan blew a tyre on her way!

We began as usual with morning tea with the Sisters, followed by prayer which was felt by those of us there to be uplifting and led to quiet contemplation.

Decisions that we came to were to visit Carlien Horvath at Villa Maria and to contact Jean White at her new residence with intention to visit her. We also offered to help Tanya out at St Dymphna's in her preparation for 8 August.

Our next meeting will be 24 August at Nundah.

Carolyn Grimward

ROCKHAMPTON

We continue to meet on the third Saturday of each month.

For those who are able to do so, we attend 9:30am Mass together and then move on to 4 West Street for reflection, cuppa and a chat. Any visiting Companions would be warmly welcomed if you are ever in Rocky. Just phone me on 0428 224 979 to check times etc.

We usually have approximately 8-9 members who live in Rockhampton, as well as a further 3-4 members who travel from the Capricorn Coast. We are also fortunate in that we sometimes have a Josephite Sister able to join us.

Our prayer group connects us also, as we have a number of people who have asked us to pray for them and these requests are forwarded on through email to group members.

Unfortunately, we have not yet been successful in attracting younger members and we are an aging group, although we are still hopeful that this branch of the vine will continue living for some time yet.

Janette Dobson



Around the Ridges... (cont'd)

HIGHFIELDS

A warm welcome to Chris Gabbett (Principal) and the members of the Leadership Team at Mary MacKillop College Highfields - Paula O'Rourke, Natalie Adler and Leisa Radley, who recently formalised their commitment to become Josephite Companions. The Josephite Companions Commitment Ceremony was held on Tuesday 10 June in the sacred context of the weekly parish Mass at the school, with Fr Brian Noonan, Parish Priest, as the celebrant. After a series of online Zoom meetings/workshops before school, working through the Josephite Discovery Program, and prayerful reflections in between these sessions, the Leadership Team chose to formalise their commitment to the Josephite Companions movement.

There was a wonderful communal feeling on this occasion, as parishioners, parents, teachers and school students joined in the celebration. A special thank you to Fr Brian for his support and special contribution to the ceremony and to Chris who generously extended a warm invitation to all present to remain after Mass, to chat and enjoy a delicious hot breakfast, prepared by the College Hospitality staff.

Bernadette Roche on behalf of the Queensland Josephite Companions Leadership/Pastoral Team



Members of the Parish and College Community in attendance



Fr Brian Noonan PP St Mary MacKillop Parish, Highfields, blesses the emblemed badges and candles for use during prayer and reflection at meetings



*Reciting the Companions Commitment Prayer
L to R: Leisa Radley, Natalie Adler, Paula O'Rourke,
Chris Gabbett*



Making a commitment

Please make a note of the following dates of upcoming events:

Webinar 31 August before Companions Day
Bookings will close 26 August and more details will be provided to you soon.

Josephite Companions Day 5 September 2024



(Please insert your name and yourself into this prayer. It is meant for each and every one.)

Jesus said: *"I am the vine, you are the branches"* John 15

Jesus, your life-giving spirit has flowed within me from the moment of my conception. You loved me into being. You filled my spirit and my body with your love. I thank you that I am so wonderfully made. I am connected to you with eternal bonds and your love courses within me.

You speak of that love when you remind me that you are the vine, the eternal source of life and energy. Amazingly, you also invite me into that life-giving energy. All goodness and fruitfulness flows from you. If I remain attached to you, the vine, I have the capacity to be life-giving too. Your life flows through me and is destined to be a source of energy for others. Every true branch carries the DNA of the vine, and seeks to further the love it carries.

How often do I stop to reflect on that? How does my life mirror your love and your grace? What actions do I take to ensure the life energy you have given me is also available to others? How do I ensure your love flows out from me? Your vine is intended to bear much fruit and each branch has the capacity to bear that same fruit.

My branch is intended to be joined with other branches to increase the scope and yield of the vine. How can this happen? As a Josephite Companion, what steps can I take to ensure that my particular branch of this vine experiences connection with other branches of the same vine? Distance probably affects my contact with other Companion branches, but distance can be overcome. Mary MacKillop never allowed distance to separate her from her sisters. Remember how important she thought communication was. She travelled enormous distances, but she also relied on the written word. Her letters are legendary. I'm fortunate that I join with a group of Companions who meet locally on a regular basis, and I truly appreciate the friendship, support and prayer they provide me, but this is not an option for everyone. Could e-Companioning be available more widely? Could it be helpful to you?

What steps can I take to enable the life-giving energy flow I experience be evident and available to others? How does my life reflect this gift?

e-Companioning Update

The e-Companioning online Zoom meetings will resume on **Monday 12 August** at the new trial time of **6.30pm to 7.30pm**.

Members of JCoLT have expressed interest in the e-Companioning initiative for Queensland Companions.

We are looking at the possibility of establishing e-Companioning groups interstate and in New Zealand. This would enable Josephite Companions to join e-Companioning sessions that might better suit their busy daily schedule, because of the difference in time zones.

If you wish to register to be part of our 12 August online gathering, please let me know via my email address below.

Some registered Companions may have changed their email address or are no longer available for the e-Companioning session on a Monday evening. Could you please let me know of any updates from your end, by emailing me at broche@onthenet.com.au.

Bernadette Roche



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VILLA MARIA CONVENT
123 WARREN STREET
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