



THE SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF AUSTRALIA

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Keep in touch

175 year

Anniversary for Sisters of Charity

At the end of this year, the Sisters of Charity will be celebrating 175 years in Australia!

The first five sisters from Ireland arrived on our shores on 31st December 1838.

In the coming months, we would like you to journey with us as we give thanks to God for all those who have been and remain so closely associated with the Sisters of Charity.



Banners to inspire!

The story continues...

by Denise Corrigan, Archives Manager

Our Congregational Archives discovered eight of 14 Sesqui-Centenary banners in the Textile Collection. After 25 years in storage all eight vibrantly coloured banners, were remarkably well preserved.

Sister Deirdre Hickey answered queries about the banners and wrote:

The banners were designed by Marigold, an art teacher with whom I worked at St Joachim's Lidcombe. Sr Myrna Lynch and myself gathered together the Sisters who had expressed an interest in the project. Our concepts were discussed with Marigold who took away our ideas and came back with some drawings.



'Women of Healing'

Myrna and I purchased the material and held a working bee every Saturday in a room in the Nurses' Home of St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn. Saturdays were great fun, and the results, as you can see, were outstanding. Work on the banners took over six months.

The thing I enjoyed most was working together, sharing a common interest in needlework and seeing the designs realised. The day we hung the banners in St Mary's Cathedral was a special day for all of the participants. The banners were only ever used once for the celebration in the Cathedral.



'Women for Outcasts'

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Banners to inspire!

Continued from page 1

The banners were titled:

'Women who made History', 'Women of Change', 'Women of Prayer', 'Women of Vision', 'Women for Outcasts', 'Women for the Poor', 'Women of Love', 'Women of Courage', 'Women of Suffering', 'Women of Frailty', 'Women of Mission', 'Women of Endurance', 'Women of Healing', and 'Women who Empower'.

The participants I remember were the following Sisters:

Ellen O'Carrigan	Margaret Valentine
Kathleen Doohan	Kathleen Fitzpatrick
Virginia Mahony	Maria Cunningham
Kathleen Higgs	Christine Henry
Maureen Delaney	Cecilia Kinsella
Myrna Lynch	Antonita Duthy
Josephine Hodges	Elizabeth Harper
Margaret Beirne	Valerie Green
Anne Crowley	Christine Madden
Regina Millard	Margaret Guy
Colleen Noonan	

Apologies if any Sisters have been overlooked.



'Women of Prayer'



'Women of Change'



'Women of Endurance'

Sr Marie – 90 years young!

On 7th February, Sr Marie celebrated her 90th birthday at St. Joseph's Aged Care Facility, Kensington. Handicapped and continually confined to her wheel chair, Marie's days, to all appearances, pass uneventfully except for the visits of her family, her friends and the Sisters.



The care Marie receives from the ministering hands and hearts of the Sisters and staff is outstanding and always very personal, but particularly on that day of celebration.

What prompts me to write this is the avalanche of loving birthday greetings that came by mail that day and many days afterwards, from the grateful hearts of the many girls who were residents at St Anne's and St Joseph's Orphanages over fifty years ago.

It was a joy for those present, to see Marie's smile of recognition as the letters were read and the girls' names echoed in her memory. It was also very obvious from the letters that there remains an extensive network which keeps them all in touch today. What a wonderful testimony to the loving care tended to them by Marie such a long time ago!

Although totally sedentary today, Marie's same outreach to others continues in her daily interaction with those who minister to her at Kensington.

Finally, Marie's subtle sense of humour is alive and active.

"Good shot!" I exclaimed, tossing envelopes into the basket as I left. "Bad miss!" Marie retorted.

Thanksgiving and farewell Mass

for Sister Annie

On Thursday 13th December 2012, Staff, students and parents of St Francis' School, gathered to thank and farewell Sr Annette Hall (Sr Annie as she was affectionately called), as well as other Staff members and students who were leaving. When the children came into the church before Mass, their faces lit up as they caught sight of Sr Annie!

The Liturgy had been thoughtfully prepared and began with the singing of the school song, the third verse reading: 'The Sisters of Charity whose story lives on, we follow in their many ways with Jesus in our hearts'.

The children sang wholeheartedly throughout the Mass, their voices were a delight! Some were lectors, others in the Gospel or Offertory processions and Year 6 students had a liturgical movement after communion. It was a prayerful and joyous occasion.



Sr Annie with her 'impish' smile!

After Mass, the School Captain, a past pupil and present Staff member recounted some memories of Sr Annie – someone who was greatly loved and who loved and cared for the school community. They told of the fun that Sr Annie created, for example, dressing up on 'Mad Hair Day' and looking hilarious! Another told about the 'sick bay' being very busy on a Thursday (the day Sr Annie was in the Office). The mystery was answered when they heard about Sr Annie's 'medicine' – a jar of lollies!

There were other stories, tributes and messages in the cards Sr Annie received from the children and Staff. They hope that Sr Annie will cherish their memory, hold them in prayer and always remember their gratitude for her presence at their school.

St Patrick's Primary School, Kogarah celebrates 150 Year Anniversary

On 2nd December 2012, Sisters Ellen O'Carrigan and Edith King attended the special 150th Anniversary Mass celebrated by Bishop Terry Brady at Kogarah. The Principal, Sue Bracken, was very grateful for their presence and warmly welcomed them as well as Sisters of St Joseph representatives, past and present Staff, parents and students.

St Patrick's School was established in 1862. The Sisters of Charity led St Patrick's School from 1886-1909 under the leadership of Mother M. Francis McGuigan with Sr M. Genevieve Cusack. Over a period of 75 years, the Sisters of St Joseph led the school.

Above: Sacred Space with photograph of Mother Francis McGuigan.

Below: Srs of St Joseph with Srs Edith and Ellen.



Symbols were placed on the sacred space, including a framed photo of Mother Francis. All joined with Bishop Brady to acknowledge and pray:

"...for St Patrick's School Kogarah as it celebrates its long history and to give thanks to the many generations of religious and lay teachers, students and their families whose stories are woven into the fabric of the school."



Milestones to celebrate

Jubilees in January 2013

In January 2013, a number of Sisters of Charity of Australia reached the milestones of 50, 60 and 70 years of service of the community as professed Sisters.

Sr Joyce Ginn rsc and Sr Pauline Nicholson rsc

Golden Jubilarians

Sr Joyce Ginn and Sr Pauline Nicholson, were professed on 15th January 1963 and held quiet community celebrations of their Golden Jubilee. They each received a Papal Blessing.

Sr Kathleen Munce rsc

70th Anniversary

Sr Kathleen's Anniversary was celebrated on the actual day of the anniversary, 28th January 2013, with the Eucharist celebrated by Fr Frank Shortis, in the beautifully decorated Chapel at St Vincent's Brisbane.

Despite the serious flood situation in various parts of Brisbane, most guests from Brisbane and inter-State were able to attend and the weather cleared beautifully about the time that the Eucharist began. During the Eucharist, Kathleen renewed her Vows and Sr Annette Cunliffe, Congregational Leader, presented her with a Papal Blessing to honour her wonderful service as a Sister of Charity.



Sr Kathleen (right) and a close friend at the celebration

After Mass all guests shared light refreshments in the Lillian Cafe within the complex. The whole celebration was wonderfully joyous, and guests shared some of their memories of Sr Kath and her quiet, loving presence to so many people.

In her reply, Kathleen thanked all who came to celebrate with her and those who had prepared the liturgy and celebration. Many sisters and friends had sent cards and well wishes which overwhelmed her!

Sr Kathleen expressed her gratitude to God for the blessings she has received and said she was very proud to be a Sister of Charity.



Sr Kathleen with Fr Frank Shortis.



The altar was beautifully adorned.

Sr Judith Peart rsc

60th Anniversary

Sister Judith Peart celebrated her Diamond Jubilee in three stages – with the parish, her community and at Mornington where she ministers.

Mrs Grace Beech and her husband Colin organized a Mass at their home and another at St Finbar's School, East Brighton. The Eucharist on both these occasions was celebrated by Fr Lou Heriot.

Sr Judith celebrated the 60th year of her first profession with her community – Mary Gabrielle Clarke, Eileen Thynne, Dawn Bang, Joan McKenna, Patricia Shinnors, Virginia Mahony, Anna Maria Parlevliet – on the 5th January. They were joined by Maryanne Confoy and Jennifer Fahey who came down from Sydney.

The celebration commenced with High Tea at the Park Hyatt and then the celebration of the Eucharist at the Cathedral where they were joined by Jo Kurapatoff and Christine Finch and her son Timothy (nieces and nephew of Sr Judith).



Judith celebrates with her Community (above). Fr Lou and Sr Judith's friends gathered for Mass (top).

On the 6th January Fr Lou Heriot celebrated the Eucharist in his house at Mornington and presented Sister Judith with the Papal Blessing that Sr Annette Cunliffe had asked Sister Jennifer to bring from Sydney.

Sr Judith was delighted to visit her co, Sr Rose Anne at Auburn and to receive so many cards, gifts and well wishes from the Sisters in the Congregation.

The Jubilarians renewed their Vows during the Eucharist and were presented with a Papal Blessing to honour their wonderful service over so many years.

Sr Natalie Pike rsc and Sr Rose Anne Croke rsc

Platinum and Diamond Jubilarians

A Jubilee Celebration was held on 23rd January 2013 at St Joseph's Village Auburn to mark the Jubilees of Sr Natalie and Sr Rose Anne. Sr Natalie's Jubilee (28th January 1943) was her 70th anniversary and Sr Rose Anne's (5th January 1953) her 60th anniversary.

The Chaplain to St Joseph's Village, Fr Isaac Koi MSC and Fr Ray Farrell, Parish priest of St John of God Parish, Auburn concelebrated Mass. During the Eucharist, Sr Annette Cunliffe, Congregational Leader presented Srs Natalie and Rose Anne with Papal Blessings to honour their years of service as Sisters of Charity.

Relatives and friends joined Sisters of Charity and residents of the Village for Mass.

A delightful morning tea followed, with a special cake cut to celebrate both milestones.

Right: Sr Annette presenting Papal blessings to Srs Natalie and Rose Anne.



Australia's Pioneer Priest and Pioneer Sisters

by Sr Moira O'Sullivan, Congregational Historian

Fr John Joseph Therry, as one of the two Catholic priests first authorised to serve people of his denomination in the new British colony of New Holland, acquired almost legendary status among convicts and emancipists for his whole-hearted devotion to them. They in turn were generous with him, so that, after some years, he had great wealth, though he still lived a committed life of service. A reading of his papers held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, reveals his long association with the Sisters of Charity.



Above front: Grave of Reverend Therry in the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral. Courtesy Kevin McGuinness. History Services NSW.

Above back: Reverend John Joseph Therry. JJ Therry [1854] P1/1745/SLNSW.

Therry's career was followed in Ireland with special interest by Mother Mary Aikenhead, foundress of the Irish Sisters of Charity, because she had been at his ordination as a priest. His generosity in volunteering for the difficult ministry of working with convicts and ex-convicts in an untamed land must have impressed her. She was to show her empathy with the unfortunate exiles by allowing five of her Sisters to follow his path to Australia in 1838.

A reading of his papers ... reveals his long association with the Sisters of Charity.

Bishop Polding of Sydney and his vicar general Dr William Ullathorne made no secret of how much the Sisters of Charity improved the conduct and attitudes of the convict women at Parramatta. Therry took the opportunity of a visit to Sydney in 1841 from Van Diemen's Land to ask for two Sisters to go back with him to Hobart where there was also a large Female Factory.

The superior, M. De Sales O'Brien, sent S.M. John Cahill and the newly professed S.M. Augustine Marum for the new venture. Since there was no convent in Van Diemen's Land, the superior was alarmed when Fr Therry was not there on the ship to make sure the Sisters were looked after when they arrived, and she recalled them. When they did go in 1847, it was Therry's former presbytery at St. Joseph's that became their first home.

From his papers, we also learn that Therry spent six weeks in May and June in 1856 living with the Sisters of Charity at Tarmons, possibly in the room that Fr Angelo Ambrosoli was to occupy for many years later, where he became their confessor and friend. In return they made caps for him.

[In an extract from a letter written from the St Mary's Convent in Parramatta, signed by M. de Sales O'Brien, 21 November 1844 (held in the Melbourne Historical Commission Collection) we also learn that the Sisters were making vestments for other priests].

There are many exchanges of requests for help and visits in the Mitchell Library letters. Therry even wrote to Lady Denison asking for the loan of a plain carriage for a couple of days so that the Sisters could reach more sick people.

A welcome addition to the archives

by Denise Corrigan, Archives Manager



This lovely dinner set has recently come to the Archives from the Potts Point Convent. Research on the manufacture of the 'Golden Court' design indicates that it was made in the 1950s in England.

Do any Sisters recall using the dinner set – perhaps seeing the burgundy and gold leaf design will trigger some memories of gatherings and stories to share?

Right: Ms Liz Sheridan accessioning the dinner set in to the Collection. Note the Outreach poster behind her.



Missioning of Sr Pauline Nicholson rsc

Sisters of Charity Outreach

On Friday 1st February, Fr Laurie Christy celebrated the Mass to open the New Year, 2013, for the Sisters of Charity Outreach, Sydney. The theme of the celebration was 'Come into the Garden' and Father Laurie wove that theme into his inspiring homily.

A large group of volunteers, staff and Sisters attended the Mass during which Sr Pauline Nicholson was missioned as the new Executive Director of Outreach.

As she was missioned and blessed, Father Laurie prayed that Pauline would continue with her special gift of being a 'people's person' and be strengthened and encouraged in her new ministry.

All enjoyed refreshments and the chance to congratulate Pauline personally and to mingle with others.



Sr Pauline receives her missioning blessing.

Blessing and launch of the Indigenous Acknowledgement Stone

St Columba's College, February 13, 2013

A Ceremony of the Blessing and Launch of the Indigenous Acknowledgement Stone was held on 13 February, 2013 to mark the fifth anniversary of Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generation. The ceremony was attended by College Directors, Mary Aikenhead Ministries Trustees, Sisters of Charity, a representative of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, College Staff and members of the Student Social Justice Group and Indigenous Perspectives Group. It was a simple and very moving ceremony.

The Reflection was given by Eva Angsiting, Indigenous Perspectives Co-ordinator (excerpts right).

I am very proud and grateful to work at St Columba's College where young women have been educated for 116 years to become strong and faithful, serving others according to the charism of the Sisters of Charity.

Today we face the truth about historical events that changed the life of our Aboriginal Australians. At the dawn of the 21st Century the Reconciliation Movement gave an opportunity to all Australians to transform our thinking. Five years ago the then Prime Minister, Mr Kevin Rudd, proclaimed an apology from the nation to Australia's Aboriginal people. A tiny seed of transformation began to grow and this seed still has a long way to go before it becomes a strong tree.

Today it is liberating for all of us here present and for the whole St Columba's Community to embark on a journey to discover new ways, new thoughts, new symbols and new rituals that are relevant to the present and the future of all cultures that make up our nation. We indeed give thanks and praise to God for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, the original custodians of our country.

The inscription on the stone reads:

'The community of St Columba's College is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the original inhabitants of this land. We recognise and regret the wrongs of the past and commit ourselves to working towards a just future for all people in our land'.



Indigenous Acknowledge Stone in the grounds of St Columba's College, Essendon.

Double CD set from Prague House available now!

Share the Love We Bring and The Songs of Disco Dave

When the Staff at Prague House in Melbourne had their new CD produced, Sister Joan Stapleton recommended that this article about it, feature in KIT, so that readers could hear about this marvellous achievement.

Elizabeth writes:

The new CD, *Share the Love We Bring*, features original songs and poems by Prague House residents and one favourite cover song. It includes a 'micro-opera'. The title reflects the feelings (and the romantic hearts) shared in the compositions by their creators.

It is surprisingly satisfying for residents and staff to hold the tangible CDs! Singer-songwriter resident, Laurie Ralphs says:

"It's fabulous that Prague House produces a CD. You wouldn't expect to come here and find people doing that, would you?"

The first CD, *Home*, with its cover photograph, taken by a resident, celebrates the move, several years ago to the new Prague House. Several of the more artistic and musical residents were particularly sensitive to the move, and the CD project sought to engage them, and to include the first women residents, and, indeed, as many residents as possible. Musician Michael Mathews continues to direct the program.

Resident Peter Bailes who has played keyboard and begun to write songs for the CD project over the last year says he gets "a sense of pride in my whole being" from the CD program.

The new Prague House CD is available for purchase. It is, in fact, a double CD set, as it is dedicated to resident Disco Dave McLeod, who died recently, and includes a special CD – *The Songs of Disco Dave*.

The cost is \$20 for *Share the Love We Bring* and *Songs of Disco Dave* – we hope you will enjoy listening to them.



The Prague House CD band of singer-songwriters, poets and musicians and romantic hearts!



Sr Annette missions Sr Claudette, wrapping her with a symbolic scarf.

Sr Claudette Palmer

On a mission to Southern Sudan

Before she left for Southern Sudan, a Missioning ceremony was held at the Congregational Offices for Sr Claudette Palmer.

Claudette is part of the mission entitled Solidarity with South Sudan which is supported by the International groups that represent women's and men's Congregations throughout the world.

This mission is very much focused on empowering adults to take up leadership roles in education, health care and agriculture. The role that Claudette has is in education, assisting in in-service programs for both beginning and ongoing teachers.

Obituaries

Sr Gemma Martin rsc



Sr Gemma died on 9th January, 2013.

Sister Gemma was born on 14th October 1922, the fifth child of Cyril and Florence Martin. She grew up in the Essendon area in a happy and devout Catholic family of six girls and two boys. It was at Essendon that she came to know the Sisters of Charity. She entered the Novitiate on 2nd February, 1940 and made her first Profession of Vows on 27th August 1942. Last year, she celebrated her Platinum Jubilee and 90th birthday!

When she began her teaching ministry, Gemma commenced as a Primary School Teacher at Ashfield and then Hurstville, but it was felt that she was more suited to Secondary students. Her teaching ministry took Gemma to Ashgrove, schools in New South Wales, to CLC Eltham and finally to Glenroy. Gemma was a gifted and devoted teacher. Her particular flair was in Mathematics and because she was patient, friendly and encouraging, a number of her pupils and their parents kept contact with her for many years, one even travelling from Brisbane for her funeral.

When Gemma retired from school ministry in 1998, she began Parish Pastoral Care work at Moonee Ponds until 2009.

It was in November 2009, that Gemma became a resident at Mercy Place Aged Care Facility at Parkville. She was a 'listening ear' for many a resident who would share their hopes and joys, but often their concerns and worries with Gemma.

Sister Gemma died suddenly on 9th January 2013. The congregation, her family, the residents at Mercy Place and her friends give thanks for Gemma's fidelity as a Sister of Charity, as she lived her motto:

*Love is repaid
by love alone.*

Sr Dorothy Harrison rsc

Sister Dorothy was a much loved member of the congregation. She was born in Tasmania on 18th October 1914, the youngest of seven children. The love for her family and her native Tasmania remained with her strongly throughout her life.

Dorothy entered the Sisters of Charity Novitiate in Sydney at the recommendation of her Irish Parish Priest. He had told her about Mary Aikenhead's sisters in Ireland who ministered with care to the poor and believed Dorothy would be very suited to that ministry. She was professed on 22nd August 1936 and this year was in her 76th year of religious profession.

Throughout her years as a Sister of Charity, Dorothy taught in schools in New South Wales, Victoria and her beloved Tasmania.



Sr Dorothy died on 16th February, 2013.

In the 1970's when she was in Hobart, she worked in Child Care at St Joseph's and at Centacare before being assigned as Library Assistant at Stella Maris Shellharbour where she shared her special creations of cakes, Devonshire Teas and the like!

Throughout her life, Dorothy exemplified the spirit of the Sisters of Charity. From 1991 to 1999, Dorothy's final active ministry was to maintain the running of the St Vincent de Paul "Op Shop" in Sandy Bay.

In August 1999, Dorothy retired to St Joseph's Village Auburn and was grateful for the loving care she received there. She moved to St Joseph's Aged Care at Kensington in February, 2010 and died peacefully on 16th February this year, 2013.

Sacred Heart Cabramatta

Farewell to The Sisters of Charity

Fr Patrick McAuliffe (Fr Mac) and Fr Liam Duong concelebrated Mass on 16th December 2012, to farewell the Sisters of Charity who had served in the Parish since 1935. It was also an opportunity to farewell Sr Frances Graham who concluded her ministry at Sacred Heart School at the end of term and began a new ministry at All Saints Primary School Liverpool this year.

In the Entrance procession, two children from Kindergarten led Sr Frances into the Church while the school banner was proudly displayed on the beautifully decorated sanctuary.

At the end of Mass, and at each Mass on that weekend, Fr Mac spoke passionately about the history of the Parish, showing photos of the early, semi-rural property and asking all gathered to remember the generosity and self-sacrifice of those who have toiled so hard at Cabramatta – Parishioners and the Sisters of Charity.

The Parish and school are the richer because of them. In the Parish infancy, parishioners gave of their time and resources to build the first church. Fr Mac also remarked on the enormous changes that have taken place since the first Principal, Sr M. Hubert and her companion commenced the school with 75 pupils in February 1935 in a shed on the property!

Sr Frances was presented with a beautiful arrangement of flowers and a plaque to remind her of her time in ministry at the school where she herself was educated. All were invited to light refreshments after Mass and enjoyed the typical 'Cabramatta hospitality'.



Above left: The School Choir made the Farewell so special!

Top right: Fr Mac and Sr Annette with Sr Frances as she receives flowers.

Bottom right: Sr Frances and former classmates with Sr Annette.

Inaugural Mary Aikenhead Awards

St Canice's School, Katoomba

In his address to the parents at the End of Year Mass, the Principal, Mr Attila Lendvai said:

"More than 100 years ago the Sisters of Charity began our school. They did that because it was a very good way that they could bring Jesus' love to our community and we are forever thankful.

As a Catholic school our mission is clear – continue spreading the Good News. As a result we decided that we would like to acknowledge the strong traditions of the Sisters of Charity by giving an award to one child in each grade. In honour of the foundress of the Order we have named the award after Sr Mary Aikenhead."

The class teacher chose one child who, throughout the year demonstrated, deep and growing faith, trust and responsibility, consistency of excellent behaviour, leadership with their peers, reliability, co-operation with children and adults, and who responded and cared for the needs of others.

The Sr Mary Aikenhead Awards will be presented annually.



Sr Colleen Holohan and Fr Ted Tyler present Isabella, from Kindergarten, with her award.

Keep In touch
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Taking the plunge

and letting go!

After Christmas, we went to Chelsea for a couple of weeks. I have always loved the water and, with the help of Mary Gabrielle and Anna, I headed into the shallows. To the entertainment of the families on the beach, I summoned up the courage to let go of my 'vice-like' grip on Anna's arm and let go of my feet gripping the sand, so that I could throw myself back into the water and float on my back. I probably looked like a beetle with arms and legs going in all directions! However, it was worth it, to float freely in water.

It got me thinking about how important 'letting go' is, for our carers and ourselves. I'm sure that it took just as much courage for Mary Gabrielle and Anna, as it did for me!

Every step of the journey, there is that 'edge of the cliff' feeling as you sit on the edge of the bed for the first time, take the first step. For our carers, the journey has meant letting go – when we left the house on our own for the first time, and probably every time since.

There is also the 'letting go' of things we could do once, so that we can concentrate on what we can do now.

by Joan McKenna rsc

In 2010 Joan suffered a severe stroke, but has since taken on and overcome many challenges.

