



THE SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF AUSTRALIA

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Keep in touch

Commissioning of Congregational Leader and Council 2014-2020

8 December 2014: the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – a wonderful feast and a joyful day for all RSCs!

Sisters of Charity, families and friends gathered for a special Eucharist led by Fr Paul Smith ofm for the commissioning of the new Congregational Leader, Clare Nolan and Councillors – Margaret Beirne, Suzette Clark and Cate O'Brien. In his meaningful homily, Fr Paul invited us to be imitators of Mary, remembering that *"nothing is impossible to God."*

There is always something special about being in the beautiful Potts Point Chapel. On this happy occasion, it was filled with the sound of prayerful song and the musical accompaniment of the organist. The sanctuary, so tastefully decorated, was a joy to behold. At the end of Mass, Clare shared her 'Dream' with all gathered in the Chapel (see page 02). Later, all enjoyed Morning Tea in the College Dining Room.

The past and present Leadership Groups can be assured of the continuing prayers of all our sisters – women of Mary Aikenhead.

Photos of this happy occasion are featured right and on page 02.

Top to bottom, left to right

Clare with three Councillors; Fr Paul and Sacred Space; Clare being called; Srs Clare and Annette during the commissioning; Congregation with arms outstretched for blessing of the Congregational Leader and Council; Readers – Srs Maureen Walters and Margaret Mines.



Clare's dream

8 December 2014 – Congregational Chapel, Potts Point.

by Clare Nolan rsc

This morning I find myself surrounded by dreams – this Chapel was the dream of Mother Mary Francis McGuigan, the ground on which we are standing was the place where 157 years ago Alicia De Lacy opened St Vincent's Hospital – her dream, a hospital where the poor might be given for love what the rich can buy for money.

Each of us by reason of our Consecration to God is committed to sharing the dream of Jesus which was to establish the Kingdom of God – to bring to fulfilment the dream shared by the Prophets who had gone before him – those who kept reminding the People of Israel what it meant to be the people of the Covenant – the honoured agreement between God and his chosen people.

In his turn Jesus shared this dream with all who followed him, those who listened to his preaching and those who observed him at work and at prayer. He fired them up with enthusiasm and a passion for the kingdom of God, for Justice and Mercy – for doing what was right, for setting things in right balance between God and humankind. Jesus dared to share his dream of the Kingdom of God, a dream which contradicted the values of the society in which they lived... "Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are the lowly for they shall inherit the earth... Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for Justice... Blessed are the peacemakers... Blessed are they who mourn... Blessed are they who suffer gladly for justice sake...."

My dream is that each morning 145 Sisters of Charity of Australia wherever they may be, awaken – filled with the joy of the Gospel and committed anew to sharing the love, tenderness and concern of Christ for all, to building the Kingdom of God... to sharing Jesus's dream with all whom we come into contact. Our primary motivation for whatever we do is summed up in the words chosen by Mary Aikenhead, almost 200 years ago, to be the driving force of her Congregation, "Impelled by the love of Christ" [2 Corinthians 5:14]. It is this love of Christ, our impelling force that enables each of us to be Christ for one another and to see Christ in the other whoever they are and wherever they are, as



Top to bottom, left to right
Srs Cate, Margaret, Clare and Suzette
with family and friends at Morning Tea.

together we strive to promote the greater glory of God in our Congregation.

Margaret, Cate, Suzette and I see our role in Leadership as one that is first and foremost, pastoral. We are missioned by you to build up the Body of Christ. We, all of us, are the Body of Christ. Each of us is called to serve and support the other, sharing the love of Christ with each other as living members of the same body, impelled by the love of Christ to continue our mission to serve the poor.

It is our intention to visit every Sister where she lives and to hear from each what her dream is and what she needs to accomplish it. The challenge for each of us on the Congregational Leadership Team will be to keep our ear on the heart of God and our hand on the pulse of time.

The Chapter has set before us three specific tasks – re-founding our Congregation and through this process deepening the richness of our Ignatian heritage, to consider re-joining our Sister Congregation in Ireland and the revision of our Constitutions.

Family and friends form the building bricks of society and we value very much the love and support of each of our families... that is, each of the families who have contributed the bricks that now make up the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Australia. St Paul reminds us that "it is love that makes the building grow" [Ephesians 4:16]. Our families and friends have been there for each of us in the good times and in the times when we have experienced difficulties and troubles. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all that you are to us – for the love you have shared with us, for the great support that you have been to us and we ask, Sisters, family and friends, that you continue to pray for us as we will for you as together, filled with the joy of the Gospel, we journey to build the Kingdom of God and to "wake up the world" [Pope Francis' letter for the opening of the Year of Consecrated Life, page 6].

Remote and Rural Ministry

of Sisters of Charity Community Care

by Anne Mayberry rsc

Recently, Sisters of Charity Community Care sent some funding to needy families. One of the recipients was a lady at Wilcannia, who invites Aboriginal children to her home to engage in creative work, like drawing, painting, paper construction and more recently, clay modelling.

This year, the teacher has chosen to offer the clay work to children who are having a difficult time emotionally, as it is known to have beneficial effects. Untimely deaths are not uncommon in their community. They find the time therapeutic and relaxing and go home feeling more confident and satisfied, in having produced a beautiful piece of work for a gift. Some craft a religious symbol for the grave of a loved one (examples shown right).

So far this year, thirty five children between the ages of seven and fourteen have engaged in clay modelling. They are mostly girls, but a number of boys joined in as well. The time is special for the children and is seen as a peaceful and positive place, where they are encouraged to be friendly towards one another, praise each other's work and not touch the work of others unless asked to help.

With the funds, the teacher is excitedly looking forward to purchasing some turntables for pottery, some glaze colours and some clay paper. She was so excited with the donation, that she enclosed nine pages of photographs of the children enjoying their activities and many of their pieces, along with a two-page report!



L'Arche Celebration


50 Years!

by Kathleen Doohan rsc

This year, the L'Arche communities around the world celebrated 50 years since their beginning in Trosley, France. Jean Vanier, with two men from the local Mental Hospital, lived in a house in the village and formed a community. From this small beginning came the 1,349 communities of L'Arche around the world today.

About 150 people from Newcastle, Wollongong, Brisbane, Melbourne and Tasmania came to Sydney for a celebration of prayer, dance, song, story telling and sharing food. It was a time to catch up with friends, to hear where life was for them today, and to share stories of our time together in L'Arche homes and our continuing journeys.

Peter Kearney also came to celebrate with us. He composed the song for L'Arche, *All Aboard the Ark*. It was sung more than once throughout the afternoon. The words of this song convey clearly the message of the L'Arche communities –



<i>All aboard the Ark...</i>	the invitation to all.
<i>No first or second class...</i>	L'Arche aims to give all a place in their communities and to value the contribution of each person.
<i>Everyone is welcome...</i>	Again people are welcome to come to L'Arche, to community nights or be involved with activities with the people with disabilities. They may only be able to come on occasions or to come and live in a community for a year or two. All are welcome.
<i>The tickets are for free...</i>	L'Arche is inclusive. People are welcome and need bring only themselves and a willingness to contribute. There is no fee, nor qualification, except the person's good will.

My own journey in L'Arche commenced when I was at St Brigid's Nursing Home in Potts Point. I went to a talk by Jean Vanier and was very moved by his message. Jean introduced me to a spirituality which valued the person. I lived in a L'Arche community for a time and, today, continue to offer my support for the wonderful good they do.

We give thanks for the L'Arche communities around the world and ask God to continue to bless them.

Blessing and opening

of Mary Aikenhead Clinic at ACU Strathfield

by Annette Cunliffe rsc

On Wednesday, 26th November a new Mary Aikenhead Psychology and Counselling Clinic was blessed and opened at the Strathfield campus of Australian Catholic University. This was a special tribute to the Sisters of Charity who have been celebrating 175 years since the first five Sisters arrived in Australia on 31st January 1838.

The Clinic is housed in a completely refurbished building in Barker Road, in front of the Edward Clancy Building. It will be a home for the practical component for those completing the new Masters of Counselling course at the University and will provide an important counselling service to members of the University community and others from beyond the University.

The building, a gracious old home, has been reconfigured to provide reception and waiting areas, consulting rooms and offices for staff and students. Special "child friendly" and family spaces are included, in a homely design that retains some of the features of the original home.

The building and a special plaque were blessed by Fr Gerard Kelly, President of the Catholic Institute of Sydney, at a function attended by a number of Sisters of Charity, Trustees and representatives of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, the Vice Chancellor of the University, Associate Vice-Chancellor (Sydney), Executive Dean of Health Sciences, Head of the School of Psychology, students and staff members, representatives of local schools, the architects and other invited guests.

Fr Kelly spoke of the importance of the service that the Church provides for those in need through this and other services as a witness to God's practical compassion, evident throughout scripture, especially in the life of Jesus and also shown in the many ways that people are served through the work of people of faith.

Sr Annette Cunliffe spoke to those attending, highlighting links between the University and the Sisters of Charity. She also noted how appropriate it was to name such a facility after Mary Aikenhead, a true pioneer, whose focus was always on meeting unmet needs and serving the disadvantaged and who always insisted on preparing and educating her Sisters for whatever work they undertook.

This was a special tribute to the Sisters of Charity who have been celebrating 175 years since the first five Sisters arrived in Australia on 31st January 1838.



Top to bottom

Vice Chancellor Greg Craven unveils the plaque; Other guests who gathered at ACU for the Blessing; Special Guests Fr Gerard Kelly, Srs Elizabeth Dodds and Annette Cunliffe.

Plaque gifts for 175yr Anniversary

Our heartfelt thanks to Mary Aikenhead Ministries

by Gaye Reynolds rsc on behalf of all our sisters

In recognition of the 175th Anniversary of the arrival in Australia of the first five Sisters of Charity, on 31st December 1838, Mary Aikenhead Ministries arranged for commemorative plaques to be installed at significant sites where the Congregation has been in ministry over the years. There have been countless ceremonies held in the Eastern States of Australia and one or more of the Trustees have conducted each ceremony.

Throughout the Congregation, there is deep appreciation and gratitude for these generous gifts and the graciousness of the Trustees in travelling far and wide to present these plaques at special ceremonies. At each gathering of sisters, School Staff and students or CEOs and Executive Staff at Health facilities, Parishes and other places, the story of the sisters was

recalled, friendships and connections renewed as memories were shared. All present experienced a deep sense of pride and gratitude.

The wording on the plaque reads:

The Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries honour this place as significant in the sisters' story.

The whole congregation joins with me in sincere appreciation of this kindly gesture of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. May the love of Christ continue to urge us on to bring about the greater glory of God.

The 175yr Anniversary plaque. Design and production by Jenssen Design Associates.



Medals...medals...

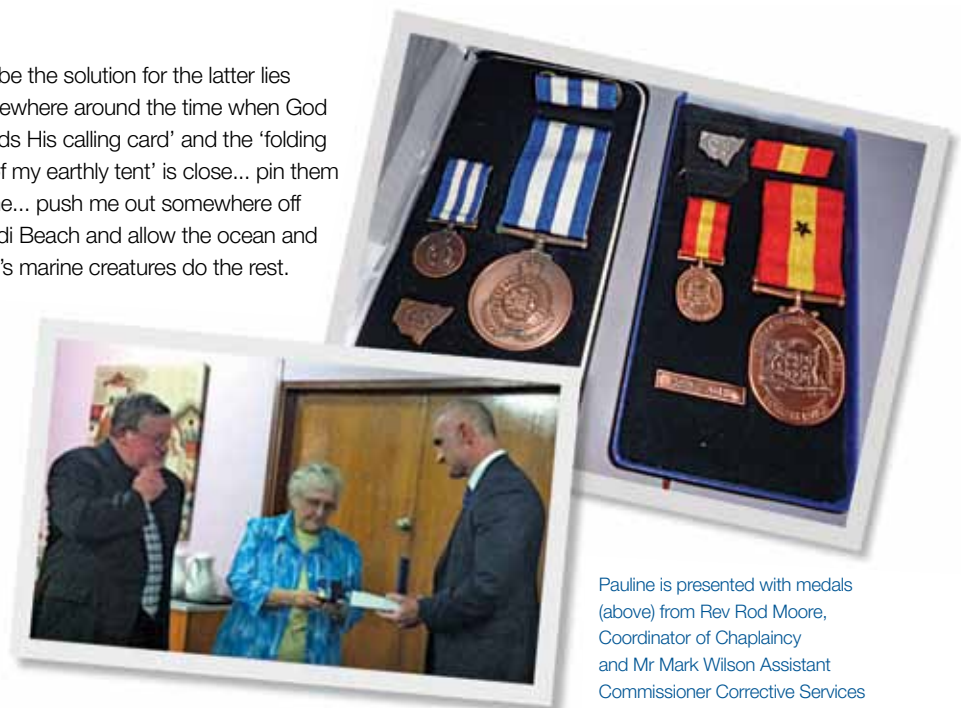
by Pauline Staunton rsc

Being awarded first with Meritorious Service Medals for 15 years' service and, this year, on 15th September, 2014, my 25 years MSMs, I could only think how quickly the years pass. Actually this is my 26th year as Administrator of Corrective Services NSW Chaplaincy.

Being honoured simply for doing the ministry that I have loved for 26 years is a bonus... tho' I am reminded that in legal terms that it is longer than 'life' for a very serious crime!

However, the medals also create a problem and beg the question "Which do I wear and when?"... certainly my simple dress would not hold the weight of the armour and were I to borrow a Corrective Services Uniform to which they might be attached, I would probably find myself veering unceremoniously to the side on which they would hang... and later, where to store them?

Maybe the solution for the latter lies somewhere around the time when God 'sends His calling card' and the 'folding up of my earthly tent' is close... pin them to me... push me out somewhere off Bondi Beach and allow the ocean and God's marine creatures do the rest.



Pauline is presented with medals (above) from Rev Rod Moore, Coordinator of Chaplaincy and Mr Mark Wilson Assistant Commissioner Corrective Services New South Wales.

Another aspect of the early cultural mixing in the Sisters of Charity

by Moira O'Sullivan rsc, Congregational Historian

It is hoped that a later issue of *KIT* will feature a summary of the vicissitudes of the convent at Edgecliff since its beginning in 1879. M. M. Francis McGuigan was the enterprising Superior General who moved out into the suburbs with new foundations, Caroline Chisholm's daughter-in-law was its first superior and the convent site was chosen by Fr Angelo Ambrosoli PIME. Here is a brief sketch of the cultured Italian who was M. M. Francis McGuigan's brother-in-law, while his brother, a teacher at St Vincent's College, became one of her business agents.

The first part is taken from the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* consulted at the Catholic Institute Strathfield (23/10/2007). The remainder is a recollection of what was said by Claude's widow (and second wife), my mother and senior Sisters, now dead.



Mother M. Francis McGuigan, Superior General

Giulio Anivitti (1850-1881)

Anivitti was a painter and art teacher, born in Rome. He went to Brisbane with Achille Simonetti, a sculptor in 1871. Anivitti went to Sydney in 1874, and was the first instructor in painting and drawing at the Art Training School, which opened on 18 May 1875. In 1875 Anivitti won a gold medal for his portrait of Charles Badham, which now hangs in the great hall of Sydney University. There is a pencil sketch of Anivitti by Frank Mahony in the Mitchell. Anivitti also painted for the university and produced portraits of W. H. Hovell, Canon Allwood and Archbishop Polding. The painting by Anivitti of Rev. W. B. Clarke is in the Royal Society of NSW.

On 25 July 1877 Anivitti married Ellen, daughter of John McGuigan, a Monaro grazier. In 1879 he returned to Rome and died on 2 July 1881. He had two children.

After Giulio Anivitti died, his widow, Ellen, received a papal dispensation to marry his brother. Because her husband, when sick, wanted to return to Italy to die, Ellen and the two small children were left there without help. When they returned to Australia, Linda (or Lydia)¹ and Claude were pupils at St Vincent's College. According to my mother, Linda used to be sent to M. Francis McGuigan, her aunt, for chastisement, but came back instead with a handful of sweets. My mother also called the step-father the dancing master, but this may be a mistake, as it is possible that he was also an artist. His son Claude definitely had an interest in art because he used to hunt in stalls for works of art. At one time, in Paris, Claude found on a stall, the portrait of a mistress of Charles II which his second wife donated to Greenwich, London, to hang near that of the king. History does not relate if the Naval Museum put it there.

Mrs Anivitti (Claude's second wife) gave Sr Moira O'Sullivan a painting by his sister, Linda, obviously an Italian village scene. The intention was that it go to Linda's old school, St Vincent's College, but Sr Margaret Beirne, then principal, suggested that it be kept for the new library. The painting, which would have been a wonderful link to a great superior general, was lost in the 1994 Edgecliff fire. Obviously M. M. Francis' best memento is the way in which she helped the congregation of the Sisters of Charity to look beyond St Vincent's to fill other, newer needs.

¹ S. M. Claudia Doyle rsc could not find a record of the births.

St Catherine of Siena Parish Retreat Days at Brimbank Park

by Denise Hannebery rsc

On Wednesday 15th and Saturday 18th October, parishioners gathered at 9.30am Mass at St Catherine of Siena's new Parish Church, at Caroline Springs. At the conclusion of the Mass Father John Tollan gave all the participants a special blessing, before they departed for Brimbank Park.

This year, because the Sisters of Charity have been celebrating 175 years in Australia, the theme of the day was:

*God called the Sisters of Charity to Australia
God called you and me to Caroline Springs
How are you inspired and challenged by these first five 'Walking Nuns'?*

David Haas' Hymn: *Come Journey with Me* was sung after Bruce Stephens' DVD on the First Five Sisters of Charity was viewed. Reflection followed on how five Sisters of Charity became 500+ by 1956 and now 149, with an average age of 78 years. The DVD also introduced five Sisters of Charity currently sharing their gifts for and with others.

One "Walking Sister of Charity, Sister Denise Hannebery," was called by God to Caroline Springs more than seven years ago and is joined now by more than 1,000 parishioners, all striving to live out St Paul's words to the Romans: 12:9-16:

"Love each other as brothers and sisters should, and have a profound respect for each other.

Work for the Lord with untiring effort and with great earnestness of spirit.

If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying.

If any of the saints are in need you must share with them; and you should make hospitality your special care. Bless those who persecute you: never curse them, bless them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow.

Treat everyone with equal kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor."

There was prayerful discussion on these challenging words and all Retreatants left Brimbank singing Monica Brown's hymn: "Joyful Messenger – God's favour rests upon us all, God's glory will be our joy!"



Top to bottom

Reflecting on the walk around the grounds;
Sr Denise (on right) walking with Retreatants;
Receiving a blessing from Fr John;
Enthusiastic Retreatants.

Waves of Transition

a Governance Journey

by Laureen Dixon rsc

In our Congregational records and archives there is much detail and extensive documentation about some of the changes in governance and ministry over the years.

This snapshot will put a lens on the past 30 years, during which our Congregation has undertaken some extraordinary changes. I am indebted to Mary Maguire, Helen Clarke, Annette Cunliffe, Elizabeth Dodds and Clare Nolan each of whom spent time with me in sharing some recollections. The enduring theme from these conversations was that each leader, with her council, built upon the work of the previous council and, even though not always easy, the belief that this was right for the mission to continue and grow filled them with courage and trust. Each successive group was responsive, engaging and faithful to our call to serve the poor.

Norm 4 from our Constitutions reminds us:

As Sisters of Charity, we follow the inspiration of Mother Mary Aikenhead who believed that “no great work was ever done for God except by persons of prayer.” She saw her consecration to God as the way to bring his love to the poor and needy of her time, and we, as members of her Congregation, develop our specific spirituality through our mission to care for the poor.

As religious belonging to an apostolic institute of pontifical right, our fundamental norm is a following of Christ as proposed by the Gospel and as presented to us in our Constitutions and traditions, which are based on the spirituality of St Ignatius. These encourage us to be obedient to the Spirit in our response to God, to learn our common heritage, to share a common aim, and to be united in heart and mind.

In the 1980s the Congregation set up a Congregational Health Service Directorate to explore the way ahead. It focussed on the articulation of a Health Care philosophy, a Mission Statement and the education of all in the Health Service in mission, tradition and the philosophy of the Health Care Services. From 1986-1990 alternative administration structures were explored and new governance structures developed.

The call of the gospel and each one's baptismal imperative invited us into a sea of possibility, challenge, excitement and risk taking. And not just us! All who share the journey with us are also invited into the discovery of where the journey under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit is leading us.

Our Congregation has been so blessed, throughout our history, by the wonderful women and men who have travelled with us, embraced and enriched all our undertakings for the Greater Glory of God. This sense of collaboration and partnership is a hallmark of who we are and in this year of celebration we acknowledge that gift with deep gratitude.

What follows are some significant “markers” with a few points to highlight each (this is in no way exhaustive, merely a snapshot):

■ The Church, Congregational life and the world prior to Vatican 2.

The numbers within the Congregation were large, therefore we were able to support the Church's mission and respond to invitations from Bishops from many places throughout Australia. This strength and identity was attractive to some considering religious life. Life was “ordered”! However, society was changing and some values and establishments were being challenged.

■ The Call and Our Response to Vatican 2

Our Congregation heeded the call and invitation of the Holy Spirit and the Council. Some externals changed e.g., the habit, but our fundamental call to mission and a life of service and dedication to God remained.

For the good of the Church, institutes must seek after a genuine understanding of their original spirit, so that they will preserve it faithfully when deciding on adaptations, will purify their religious life from alien elements, and will free it from what is obsolete (Perfectae Caritatis, #15, Renewal of Religious Life).

This call gave further impetus to the commitment of the Congregation in recognizing the leadership capacity of those men and women in ministry with us. A post Vatican II reality was that our membership, which had peaked at over 500 in the late 1960s, began to decline.

Left to right

The Sisters of Charity Health Services Management Team: Sisters Claire Nolan, Margaret Lee, Christine Madden, Patricia Grantham and Maria Cunningham.

Courtesy of Archives at St Vincent's Campus Archives, Darlinghurst.



■ Congregational Ministries prior to Incorporation

The Education and Health ministries of the Congregation had Sisters appointed to the leadership roles. The reality was changing. Local Area health boards were becoming a feature, funding from government sources was flowing into facilities, to name but two. With changes and adaptations, some of our convents were required to allow expansion and developments to happen. The rich mix of gifted people continued to ensure that our spirit, our commitment and diverse ways of serving the poor were enhanced. With different talents and skills, challenges and changes were inevitable.

■ Incorporation and some of the Challenges

Some facilities had advisory boards, which provided good advice, but they had no authority and often they were unaware of other similar facilities in our tradition. The journey to and subsequent Incorporation process was not always easy, but it was taken with trust in Divine Providence. Accountabilities were increasing, especially in relation to Government funding, society was changing, litigation was increasing. Formation for board directors became a key focus. Roles, such as directors of Mission, became more and more important. A variety of skills was needed for all boards across the health and education ministries. A new richness was becoming evident. The role of sisters was moving from direct key responsibility to being a presence and pastorally supporting mission and its initiatives.

■ The Establishment of Mary Aikenhead Ministries

In the Petition sent to Rome requesting the establishment of Mary Aikenhead Ministries (December 2007), we read:

our sisters and colleagues have been committed to working together to ensure that our mission, which is the mission of the Church, is vital, responsive, courageous and always reaching out with the love and tenderness of Christ.

And

The articulation of that vision has brought us to this step of the evolutionary journey wherein our sisters and lay collaborators are inspired and ready to commit to this new step.

Since the transfer to Mary Aikenhead Ministries on July 1, 2009, the Trustees have reported to the Congregation and to Rome in a formal capacity each year. We rejoice that the ministries are continuing to grow and flourish and that new leaders are being called forth to make the love of Christ known in the world.

■ Sisters of Charity Foundation and Sisters of Charity Community Care Ltd

The Congregation has retained two of the Companies of which it is the Member: Sisters of Charity Foundation and Sisters of Charity Community Care. Each of these companies continues, in spirit and action, the work and some ministries of the Congregation in very 'hands on' ways in serving the poor. Each of these companies was established early in 2000 and we have been blessed in the ways in which they have grown and changed in responding to the needs of the people whom they serve. We have been blessed in those who have been leading these companies, the directors on the boards and the supporters and networks with which they are associated.

Under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have been led faithfully through the past 175 years. The past 30 have seen extraordinary changes, but the fidelity to God and God's people has been primary. We have much for which to be grateful!

Farewell to Regina Millard

from Melbourne City Mission Palliative Care

by Colleen Strotton Allied Care Clinical Coordinator

Regina joined our office some 10 years ago as the Spiritual Care Worker. I thought I knew what a Spiritual Care Worker was all about – little did I know that Regina's kindness, experience and wisdom went above and beyond expectations. Regina cared beautifully for our clients. But that was not all – our Wednesday mornings took on a new beginning, instead of just walking into the meeting and getting down to business we entered a sacred space with the little table set with flowers and candles and music gently calling us to gather. What a wise woman we had in our midst! Regina always had the time to listen, of which Nurses and Allied Care staff took full advantage. Regina taught us the importance of Ritual – be it simple or more elaborate. Her expertise helped change my practice and my life as I began to incorporate Ritual into the everyday.

Where had this woman come from? I was curious and over the years heard some of that rich journey. I will give you a snapshot of that journey. Regina began her working life as a Nurse completing her training at St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst, Sydney. She was professed as a Sister of Charity in 1967 which marked the beginning of her life-long passion for education. Being a member of the Sisters of Charity is the framework from which Regina works. Five Sisters of Charity arrived on Australian Shores in 1838 and began working with the female convicts at the Female Factory in Parramatta in Sydney. Their vision grew and they ministered to the homeless, opening schools, and hospitals while continuing to work in the prisons.

Above left: Sr Regina and the Francis Spaight cake.

Above right: Special tributes for Sr Regina.



“Regina reminds us of why we do what we do and bringing everything back to the spirit.”

The foundation for Regina's ministry was nursing and, as often happens in religious life, she developed other skills and moved around the country – initially to Toowoomba on the Darling Downs where she became a Nurse Educator (I am sure you have all experienced the teacher in her when she is in charge of the meetings). She returned to Sydney to St Joseph's Hospital in Auburn, initially in Nursing Education. A new Palliative Care Unit was about to be opened at St Joseph's and Regina educated those who would staff this Unit. So we are not the first or the last to benefit from her skills. She then went on to be the Pastoral Carer in that Palliative Care Unit and Hospice Day Care Centre. This was 1989 and Regina has worked in Spiritual Care ever since. She moved from St Joseph's to work in the community as a member of the Sisters of Charity Outreach, Darlinghurst, offering Pastoral Care to women and families and facilitating groups within the schools, offering help to children experiencing grief. She moved back into Hospice work at the Sacred Heart Hospice, Darlinghurst.

Fortunately for us, Regina moved to Victoria. She began work at the Caritas Christi & Order of Malta Hospice Home Care Service in Kew. With another colleague, Regina set up and became Chair of the *Victorian Pastoral Carers in Palliative Care Special Interest Group* which, in 2001 was taken up, and is now sponsored by Palliative Care Victoria. Regina continued in Pastoral Care at Caritas Christi Hospice Kew, as well as working in Community Palliative Care with Eastern Palliative Care (Inner team) Kew.

One day, Anne Oakley, our then Manager, announced that we were getting our very own Spiritual Care Worker (no advertising in those days!) and Regina joined our team – we were the lucky ones! I know I speak for the Team in saying that we will miss her presence around the office. As she was such a good role model and educator, her work here will carry on. As one of our Nurses so aptly put it – “Regina reminds us of why we do what we do and bringing everything back to the spirit.”

Obituaries

We remember each deceased Sister with love and pray for her.



Sr Mary Kennedy rsc

Sr Mary died on 20 October 2014

Mary Josephine Kennedy was born in Haberfield NSW, the third child of Mildred and John Kennedy. Her two brothers predeceased her. Mary attended St Vincent's School, Ashfield, Santa Sabina and St Joseph's Enfield.

On 2nd July, 1943, she entered the Novitiate and was professed on 14th January 1946. Following studies to prepare her as a teacher, she began Infants teaching at Lewisham and Hurstville before being assigned to Aikenhead House in Hobart for 3 years.

Mary was known as a hard worker, a "doer" and a "goer" with a good sense of humour. Some said that to keep up with her, one needed to have "running shoes" on! Mary had other appointments teaching at Cabramatta and in Child Care at Tarroona and Edgecliff as well as Family Welfare at Shellharbour. She was also appointed local Superior at Potts Point. Finally, Mary undertook Parish Ministry at Moorebank, Sandy Bay and Clifton Hill before retiring to Mononia in 2002, where her generous help continued.

Mary's family was very special to her. She kept in close contact with her sister Sheila (in Sydney) and Kathleen (in Melbourne) as well as her nieces and nephew. They were able to attend her Vigil and funeral.

In 2012, Mary moved to St Catherine's Balwyn where she busied herself helping in the Chapel and taking part in activities. A few weeks before she died, Mary's health began to fail and she died peacefully on 20th October 2014 aged 96. We give thanks to God for her good life.



Sr M. Victoire Pearce rsc AM

Sr Victoire died on 14 November 2014

Eileen Marguerite Pearce was born on 21st February 1915, the only daughter and elder child of Harry and Josephine Pearce and sister of Harry. Victoire's father contracted TB during the WW1 and the family moved to Junee for his health's sake. Sadly her father died in 1922. The family returned to Sydney in the late 1920s. During the Depression, Victoire worked at Farmer Brothers and trained as a beautician.

At the same time, Victoire joined the Theresian Club based at St Vincent's Hospital, working with young children in the very poor inner suburbs of Sydney. In February 1946, she entered the Sisters of Charity and was professed on 6 August 1948. She had been drawn to join the Order because of our fourth vow – service of the poor.

The most important work of her life began when Victoire trained as a nurse at St Vincent's with special studies in palliative care. She remained at the Hospice for 30 years and was a strong advocate of the "Quality of Life" program for the dying, introducing music therapy and entertainment, including Bingo and "happy hour". In all her initiatives, Mother Dorothea Devine supported her.

Victoire's niece and nephew were very proud of their aunt, describing her as a quintessential woman of the twentieth century who came to count the poor as friends. We, her sisters, remember Victoire with pride, a person who exuded happiness. Her focus in life was to do all she could to help others. After her long life of 99 years, she died on 14th November 2014.



Sr Brenda Jordan rsc

Sr Brenda died on 15 November 2014

Margaret Mary Jordan was the youngest of the five daughters of Thomas and Alice Jordan. The family moved to Wentworth Falls and Brenda received her education at St Canice's and Mt St Mary's Katoomba. Brenda did special studies in Music and, throughout her life, was a gifted musician, violinist and flautist.

On 2nd July, 1941, Brenda entered the Novitiate and because of the war, spent some of her Novitiate at Villers Bret in Katoomba. She was professed on 29th January, 1944. This year, 2014, Brenda celebrated the 70th Anniversary of her Religious Profession.

Brenda's ministry was as music teacher in schools at Potts Point, Coorparoo, Concord, Auburn, Ashfield and Sandy Bay. In 1980 she began a new ministry of Family Support with Centacare at Sandy Bay and continued this ministry at Leura for 18 years. During this time, she also cared for her ageing sisters.

At the mention of Brenda's name, people's faces would light up with joy. She was a gentle, gracious lady who was a cause of fun and laughter. Stories abounded about her two special friends at Ashfield – Fella the dog and Bloggs the cat and 'Brenda the driver' – who would get hopelessly lost, but regardless of where she was, would just keep going until she came to Marrickville and then she knew the way home!

After her generous life of service, Brenda retired to St Joseph's Village Auburn in September 2002. She died peacefully on 15th November 2014 aged 90.

Farewell to Sr Maria Wheeler rsc

by Leo Walsh on behalf of Scone Parish Pastoral Council

St Mary's Parish Scone, together with St Joseph's Parish Murrurundi have been so blessed to have had the services of Sr Maria Wheeler as Pastoral Associate for the past eight years. Sr Maria has embodied the vision and ideals of her Religious Congregation in her dedicated work of service in the Upper Hunter. The motto of the sisters sums up Sr Maria's approach to her work. There is a depth of spirituality and a genuineness of commitment to service that is very obvious to everyone who has worked with Sr Maria.

Traditionally, the Sisters of Charity have expressed their service of the poor through prisons, hospitals and schools. However, as Australia has changed, the needs of the poor have changed and the Sisters have moved increasingly into parishes as Pastoral Associates, giving special attention to supporting people in rural areas who often miss out on many of the structures and resources available in city areas.

Sr Maria has undoubtedly found personal rewards in moving closer to her childhood home and family in Merriwa, in sharing her love of horses in the Horse capital of Australia and of demonstrating her cooking skills in what sometimes seems the cake and slice capital of the Hunter!

The Sisters of Charity are proud to be one of the female religious congregations which bases its 'contemplation in action' spirituality on that of Ignatius Loyola and his Jesuits. Sr Maria is a bit like St Ignatius who, despite the effects of his old war wounds, was determined to keep working, seeing himself as a draft horse staying firmly tethered to Christ's plough. She is also like the Jesuits' co-founder, Francis Xavier, who left the familiar world of Europe and his fellow Jesuits to serve for eleven years in India and Japan, keeping in touch with his community only through letters, a shared spirituality and prayer.



We are glad that Sr Maria gave up mixing with the high flyers of the church in the city and saw it as her role to serve in Scone and Murrurundi. For the past eight years, Sr Maria has been the quiet backbone of the Church in the Upper Hunter. Her work as Pastoral Associate in two parishes, has included: Teaching Catechetics in the State schools; organising Sacramental programs; training altar servers; working with the Young Mothers' Group; taking Communion to the sick in their homes; organising and leading funerals; working with the Caring Team; conducting Sunday liturgies when the priest is away; Pastoral Care Worker at St Mary's School; organising a wide range of support activities for the elderly; hosting e-Conference events through Broken Bay Institute; Communion services at Moonan; looking after the sacristy; serving on the Finance Committee; wide range of secretarial, hospitality and administrative duties; serving officially as Parish Administrator for six months after Fr John Woods became ill.

Top right: Sr Maria (seated on right) with some friends.

Top left: Picnic in grounds to farewell Sr Maria.

Bottom: Parishioners gather with Sr Maria (seated second on left).

It is important to note that Sr Maria has never been on the payroll of Scone Parish, apart from her time as Pastoral Care Worker at St Mary's where funding came from another source. The Sisters of Charity have supported Sr Maria's position financially as part of their service of the poor in an agreement with the Diocese and the Sisters of Charity. We are grateful to the Sisters and to Sr Maria in particular, for the privilege we have had in benefiting from the many graces that have flowed from the presence and hard work of Sr Maria in our Parishes. Today's Mass is offered in thanksgiving for the time that Sr Maria has spent with us. As a Parish, we thank Sr Maria for her many contributions and pray that God will continue to bless her vocation.



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