



THE SISTERS OF CHARITY  
OF AUSTRALIA

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Keep in touch

# “...in the land of tomorrow morning’s breakfast.”

## Celebrating 200 Years – Religious Sisters of Charity

The early dawn of January 20, 2015 took on a special significance for RSCs in Sydney, Shellharbour, Melbourne and Brisbane as they gathered in groups to celebrate via direct webcast from St Patrick’s Church, Ringsend, Dublin, the launch of a year of celebrations commemorating 200 years of the founding of the Religious Sisters of Charity in Ireland. Last year we celebrated our 175 years in Australia, this year it is a global celebration embracing the entire family of the Sisters of Charity in Ireland, England, Scotland, Nigeria, Zambia, Malawi, California and Australia.

Ringsend was chosen as the place for the launch of this year of celebration because it was a part of Dublin that was very dear to the heart of Mary Aikenhead and to the members of our Sister Congregation. It was at Ringsend where Mary Aikenhead opened a small hospital for the victims of the Cholera Epidemic that was raging in Ireland in 1815.

Sister Patricia Lenihan, a member of the Irish Leadership Team, had very kindly sent Clare a copy of the Mass Text which was distributed throughout the Congregation to enable all of us to have full and active participation in this special Eucharistic celebration. On our part Sister Elizabeth Dodds had prepared a beautiful special Prayer for the Australian Sisters to use as part of their celebrations if they wished.

For weeks prior to this day, preparations had been underway to ensure that as many Sisters as possible would be able to watch the special webcast from Ireland. Computers and Projectors were checked and in some cases rooms were booked including a Board Room at one of our facilities. All was in readiness for the great occasion. An Internet search discovered that while St Patrick’s, Ringsend had the technological facilities for webcasting, it was the practice of the Parish not to archive any webcasts. This meant that viewing had to be direct or not at all. There would be no delayed webcast available on St Patrick’s Parish website. Phone calls were made between Ireland and our techno wizard, Bruce Stephens, to have a back-up plan in place whereby Bruce would record the celebratory launch and make it available on YouTube for all those Sisters who for various reasons could not make the direct webcast and also as a permanent record for our Sister Congregation.

The Community at Leinster Street, Paddington started off the Australian Celebrations with a Mary Aikenhead Birthday Celebration on January 19 using the special Prayer prepared and led by Sister Elizabeth Dodds followed by a joyful birthday party in honour of our Foundress. The next morning they joined in the direct celebrations from Ringsend.

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*Above: Sisters gather at Mt Olivet to watch webcast*



*Below: Liturgy at Paddington*

# “...in the land of tomorrow morning’s breakfast.”

## Celebrating 200 Years – Religious Sisters of Charity

From page 1

At 40 West Street, Darlinghurst, Bruce Stephens helped set up the computer and projector the night before so that it would be all systems go for the 6.00am direct webcast. Their next door neighbours from The Terraces, Sisters Clare Nolan and Deirdre Hickey, had been invited to join them for the early morning webcast. However, even the best laid plans of mice and men can go astray, there was a hiccup at the beginning of the webcast which necessitated a hurried phone call to Bruce Stephens. All was resolved and the place resounded with the enthusiastic responses and exuberant singing of the hymns. The conversation at breakfast was equally lively and joyful.

Down at Shellharbour on the south coast of NSW where she was holidaying, Margaret Guy rose early to connect her Wi-Fi and to have her iPad open at the Mass text so that she could join with the other RSCs in Australia and around the world as they celebrated this great occasion.

For the Sisters in Brisbane at Mt Olivet Convent, it seemed as if the days of 1st Call had returned as they rose at 4.15am for the 5.00am webcast in the Board Room of St Vincent’s Hospital, Kangaroo Point. Thankfully, Natalie Piper, Executive Assistant to the CEO of St Vincent’s Hospital, was there before them to check out the Board Room and to make sure that everything was just right. When the Sisters entered the room they were faced with the full screen view of the darkened interior of St Patrick’s Church, Ringsend, so everything was working. Natalie welcomed each Sister with a cup of tea or coffee so the early morning rising was softened a little. Matthew Kearney, Director of Pastoral Services at St Vincent’s Brisbane joined them for the webcast and Cheryle Royle, the CEO of St Vincent’s Hospital, also joined the Sisters for their grand feast day style breakfast of ricotta pancakes with caramelised bananas and maple syrup and/or honey, Scrambled eggs with bacon and tomatoes, fresh tropical fruits with plain yoghurt which followed the Prayer that had been prepared by Elizabeth Dodds.



*We felt thankful and privileged to be part of the Sisters of Charity story and celebrations.*

The liturgy from Ireland was warm, inclusive and welcoming. There was no doubt that it was a Parish Family celebration as opposed to a Cathedral Solemnity. The informality of the extra special touches added by the Parish Priest, Father Ivan Tonge gave us a strong sense of being included in the celebration as participants instead of being mere observers gathered around a TV screen in a far-off country. For those Sisters who had worked with our Irish Sisters in Africa, Ireland and the UK there was the special joy of being able to identify their friends and companions. Seeing the Australian flag carried in procession at the beginning of Mass with the Irish, English, Scottish, Nigerian, Zambian, Malawian and United States Flags reinforced our sense of belonging to the Global Family of the Religious Sisters of Charity. The welcome extended to “our Sisters in Australia” by both Mary Christian, the Superior General of our Sister Congregation and by Sister Anne Currie, the Organiser of the Ringsend Liturgical Celebration was warm and genuinely sincere.

The readings illustrating characteristics of Mary Aikenhead were powerful and as for the Irish Dancers dancing in the Gifts at the Offertory Procession, for a number of Sisters it revived memories of their own Irish dancing childhood, dressed in green satin skirts, cloaks and scarves. The Liturgical Dance to “Let Me be your Servant’ was exquisite in its simplicity and reverence. At this Mass the closing song was especially composed for the celebration of the 200 Years of Service of the Poor impelled by the love of Christ. It was a great hit and we look forward to receiving the music.

*We look forward to continuing the celebrations of this Bicentenary Year of the Founding of our Congregation and strengthening our links with the global community of the Sisters of Charity as united by the love of Christ as our impelling force we strive to build up the kingdom of God on earth.*

by Sr Jean Johnston rsc

*Top left: Celebrations at Paddington*

*Below left: Mt Olivet, Srs Judith and Mathilde*

*Top right: Sacred Space, Chapel Paddington*

# Life in Care – not the end of the world!

by Joan McKenna



Making the move into a care facility is not the end of life as we know it. Early last year I had a few health issues, which were age related, other than the stroke. I was asking much more from my carers, Srs Mary Gabriel and Anna, so I took some time of respite at St Catherine's Aged Care Facility. While there, a permanent place became available. After deep consideration, I decided to accept it. I haven't regretted it.

It has meant an adjustment, but, life goes on. I am sure I do more exercise classes than I have done for quite a while. When the inevitable health issues crop up, there is a nurse available to attend to it. I can go out to appointments or choose to go to the doctors, podiatrist etc., who provide in-house services. With the use of a taxi, I can still go to Bowls and Stroke Group and my other groups to meet up with people. Then, there are the many activities provided by the Lifestyle staff here, which I can choose to join in or not. So, life is still full and enjoyable.

Mary Gabriel, who now needs to use a taxi also, gets me to the pool every week or so. Here, she keeps an eye on me as I do exercises, practise my floating and make attempts at dog paddle. Once I learn to close my mouth when I submerge, I am sure that I will be able to swim under water! The pool experience was useful in my recent holiday with Mary Gabriel at Chelsea, which was wonderful. I'm already looking forward to next summer.

I am sure that this has given me the energy to undertake training to be a peer mentor for other stroke survivors. This is part of the Program, *Life after Stroke*, piloted by St Vincent's with Inner Eastern Health and local Rotarians. We hope to be encouragers for stroke survivors, who are not so far down the track as we are. I'm fortunate to have friends, like Mary Gabriel and Anna, and, to be able to use a taxi.

[Life goes on apace!](#)

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## Year of consecrated life

Pope Francis, during the 82nd General Assembly of the Union of Superior Generals of religious orders, November 2013, announced that the year 2015 would be dedicated to consecrated life, and specifically its mission and identity. It began on the 30 November 2014, first Sunday of Advent, and will conclude 16 February 2016, the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life.

The aims of the year are to look to the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion and to embrace the future with hope! Pope Francis told the Superiors General:



Religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way." This is the priority that is needed right now: "to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth..."

As we celebrate this year all Sisters, and in particular those highlighted on the following pages, who have been on the journey for many years witness the consecrated life as Sisters of Charity.

Catholic Religious Australia, (CRA) have created this logo to mark the year of Consecrated Life.

*"I'm counting on you to wake up the world, since the distinctive sign of consecrated life is prophecy. Religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way."*

# Diamond Jubilarians

## Sr Geraldine McGowan rsc

### Celebrating 60 Years of Religious Profession

On January 14th in the beautiful Chapel of the Little Sisters of the Poor at Randwick, we celebrated Sr Geraldine's Diamond Jubilee with a Mass celebrated by Fr Gerard Kelly – a long time friend of Sr Geraldine.

Some of the Little Sisters of the Poor, along with a group of Sisters of Charity and relatives and friends of Sr Geraldine were present. In his homily, Fr Gerard spoke of Geraldine's 60 years of commitment to Religious Life, the many ministries she was involved in – teaching, catechetics, parish work and Outreach, and her wealth of spirituality gained over those years. He also spoke of Sr Geraldine's many years of illness.

Sr Geraldine had the pleasure of renewing her vows during the Mass. Before the final prayers our Congregational Leader,

Sr Clare Nolan spoke and then presented Sr Geraldine with a Papal Blessing (see below) and spoke of Sr Geraldine's 60 years of commitment to her various ministries and especially her constant love for people and her loving kindness and availability at all times.

At the conclusion of the Mass we were all invited downstairs to a beautiful Afternoon Tea, prepared by the Little Sisters. Being able to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee with Sisters, family and friends was a wonderful and very happy experience for Sr Geraldine. It was very evident during the Mass and Afternoon Tea, just how much the Little Sisters love Sr Geraldine.

They call her their 'miracle'! Sr Geraldine has improved so much under their care.

She expressed her sincere thanks to all present in her short speech after cutting the cake. Sr Clare, also, thanked the Sisters for their wonderful care of Sr Geraldine.

by Jean Montgomery rsc



#### Words from Sr Clare Nolan, Congregational Leader spoken at the time of presenting the Papal Blessing:

Dear Geraldine!

Over 60 years Geraldine you have touched many lives from all walks of life. You were always there for people. You are a very selfless person and your prayerfulness is something that has been felt by all of us. You always took an active interest in Church matters and involved yourself wherever you could in the life of the Church.

I think about the ministries you have been engaged in over these years – primary school teaching, Motor Mission work, Parish ministry and Sisters of Charity Outreach. We saw you reaching out to families in need, going the extra mile, being a very present listening ear, faithful, and a great friend and supporter of priests. We know you saw this as a particular mission in itself, like St Therese of Liseux who proclaimed she came to Carmel to save souls and "above all to pray for priests."

Your love of the poor and needy and your faithfulness to God and his poor has just shone through you Geraldine in your day-to-day ministry. It continues to shine now and this time you are on the receiving end of the love and care you gave to so many over 60 years. For me, it's a miracle seeing you here with the Little Sisters of the Poor, loved, secure cared for and involved in the life and mission at St Josephs. How can we adequately express our thanks to all who care for you – Sisters, staff, Volunteers, family and friends.

Top to bottom:

Diamond Jubilarian Sr Geraldine  
Geraldine reading her vows

A group at the afternoon tea  
prepared by the Little Sisters

Papal Blessing with Sister Clare

# Sr Marie Haren rsc

## Celebrating 60 Years of Religious Profession

Something very wonderful occurred on Saturday 7th February! Marie Haren's 60th Anniversary of Profession was celebrated in a small, family, community gathering in St Joseph's Church and hall, Edgecliff.

Fr Paul, one of the wonderful Franciscans in our Paddington/Edgecliff Parish, celebrated the Mass and contributed so much to the solemnity and joy of the occasion. He had spent time combining the beautifully chosen hymns on to a CD and spoke to Marie of the treasure she is to all those with whom she comes in contact. He stressed the value of her life and reiterated the theme of 'treasure' throughout the Mass.

The well chosen readings and hymns spoke so much of who Marie is and the faithfulness of her 60 years as a Sister of Charity. As Clare presented the Papal Blessing (see right) she spoke of Marie's long list of achievements in the health field and of the ever widening influence she has and on the thousands of staff members who have benefited from her management, her professionalism and her prayerfulness.

The small parish hall was beautifully decorated by Rose with vases of delicate pink and white rosebuds. Rose had also arranged the many congratulatory cards and messages on display boards for all to enjoy.

The highlight of the occasion was the presence of eight Haren family members who had flown from Brisbane to share the day and catch up on all things family. Marie's nephew had even made, and carried on the plane, the beautiful Jubilee cake.

A delicious "High Tea" was served. It was tastefully presented and enjoyed by all.

Geraldine McGowan, Co-Jubilarian, attended, accompanied by a Little Sister of the Poor from Randwick. Also present were the Sydney 2015 Golden Jubilarians, Angela and Edith. Andreas and Ysanne, regular carers of Marie, joined us and were delighted to be there. The Paddington and Edgecliff Communities as well as Marie's own community, made up the group.

We congratulate Marie whilst thanking her for who she is and the "Treasure" she is as a much loved member of our Congregation.

Virginia Wilkinson rsc

*Dearest Marie!*

*What a great occasion we are celebrating with you today! 60 years of Religious Profession as a Sister of Charity! What a "diamond" indeed! All of us here are united with all Sisters of Charity throughout Australia when I say to you, with Mary, "Magnificat!"*

*At this wonderful time of celebration for the Congregation, I have been reflecting on each Diamond Jubilarian celebrating with you – Margaret Laffan, Denise McCarthy, Geraldine McGowan, and Nonie Riley celebrating in Heaven. You are the women who have inspired us by your faithfulness and encouraged us on our journey as Sisters of Charity, to live with joy the vocation and mission of love we share.*

*You, Marie, were the nurturing nurse first, then Administrator par excellence, always up to date with models of care, Planning and Development, Research, Leadership in Health. Delivery of Pastoral Care, Education of staff were central to your ministry. Always questioning how we could do things better, how can we keep up to date with patterns of care, new treatments that were changing so quickly and at the same time show respect for our patients, families and staff who were the centre of your care as an Administrator.*

*How do we continue to practice the healing ministry of Christ from the small country Hospital like St Vincents Toowoomba (where many of us RSC's ministered beside you, saw you in action and received mentoring and future direction through your interest and love), to our major Teaching Hospitals with all their complexities.*

*I am overwhelmed when I think of the thousands of men and women around Australia working in their fields of care who have been the recipients of Marie's leadership in health! You gave your heart and soul to furthering the healing ministry of Christ. We, your Sisters, applaud you! Mary Aikenhead applauds you! Marie's prayerfulness was always evident.*



Above left: Diamond Jubilarian Sr Marie

Above right: Srs group reading vows together

Below right: Sr Clare with Marie re-Papal blessing

# Golden Jubilarians

## Srs Edith King rsc and Angela Burke rsc

### Celebrating 50 Years of Religious Profession

Fifty years ago the movie of 'The Sound of Music' was released; it was the story of a young girl who became a governess and made a difference in the lives of a family through music. She was encouraged to go back to basics (Let's start at the very beginning) to climb mountains and to remind the world of the beauty of simple things like Edelweiss

Also fifty years ago, on 15th January 1965, Edith King and Angela Burke made their First Profession of Vows in the Novitiate Chapel, Wahroonga. On 14th February 2015, almost fifty Sisters, the Jubilarians' family, friends and colleagues gathered in the Congregational Chapel, Potts Point to celebrate with Edith and Angela, the music of those fifty years.

For some of those years, Edith was a teacher and Angela taught others to sing.

They both sang many Do Re Mi songs, which "brought them back to 'Do'" for constant new beginnings; they had climbed many mountains and looked at the view from the top of each mountain, sometimes wonderful, even spectacular, at other times, views covered by clouds and mist. Along the way they were sometimes guided by wise and holy women, who reminded them that while Jesus was their first love, 'the love of others is holy too.' They were also encouraged to have recourse to Jesus whenever they wondered 'How do you solve a problem like - ?'

The Jubilee Eucharist was offered by Reverend Phil Linder, a friend and colleague of both Edith and Angela from their Liverpool days. In his homily, Phil focussed on the example of commitment and service and added some personal recollections. Our Leader, Clare Nolan prepared an enthusiastic and detailed welcome and showed the same thoroughness with the prayer and presentation of Papal Blessings at the end of the Eucharist. Council members, Margaret Beirne and Suzette Clark also attended.

#### Top to bottom:

Golden Jubilarians Srs Edith and Angela with Congregational Leader, Clare Nolan

The recessional

St Vincent's College Ex students

The Chapel was 'alive with the sound of music.' Some members of the Choir of St Patrick's Church in the Rocks were joined by four Sisters of Charity – Maureen Heffernan, Deirdre Hickey, Colleen Noonan and Jan O'Grady, also Maree Whybourne, formerly from St Vincent's Private Hospital. Darren Emerson, Angela's good friend and colleague came from Melbourne to accompany the singers. The Congregation joined in making a very joyful sound.

Anne Keane (Humphreys), one of the Candle Bearers was also one of the group who made First Profession fifty years ago; she later heeded the advice to 'find the life you were born to live.'

The First Reading, Romans, 8; 35-39 'Who can separate us from the love of God?...' read by Angela's friend, Cecily Gwynne, was chosen as it was the theme of their Profession Retreat.

After the Prayers of Intercession, offered by Judith Clark, Edith and Angela made a public Renewal of Vows and followed this with a symbolic offering of the bread and wine.

At the conclusion of the Eucharist, after an enthusiastic singing of 'The Charity of Christ Urges Us,' the procession withdrew from the Chapel.



The Eucharist was followed by Afternoon Tea in the Boarders' Dining Room which had graciously been vacated so that the kitchen and dining room were available for our exclusive use.

The décor and catering were expertly arranged by an extraordinary caterer and friend, Paula Burnett; gold and white roses for each table were provided by Jennifer Fahey, who was the MC for the occasion.

After the speeches and acknowledgements came the cutting of the Jubilee cake, which was made and decorated by Janet Peadar, Virginia Wilkinson's niece.

The whole event was recorded by our very creative photographers, Margaret Fitzgerald and Genevieve Walsh.

And so it was 'Song long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye!' For us, the memories will bloom and grow forever.

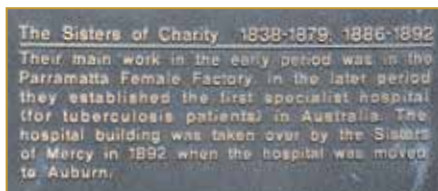
by Angela Burke rsc



# Parramatta Pilgrimage

Staff from St Joseph's Hospital and Village as well as colleagues from St Vincent's Campus attended the Pilgrimage to Parramatta organised annually by St Joseph's Hospital Mission Department. Srs Anne Taylor, Genny Walsh and Margaret Fitzgerald also participated.

The Pilgrimage was conducted by Mrs Judith Dunn, local historian and member of the *Friends of the Parramatta Female Factory*, together with Sr Anne, who shared the story of the first five Sisters.



The pilgrimage traced the history of those early convict days and in particular where our first five Sisters of Charity, founded by Mary Aikenhead in Dublin in 1815 for the service of the poor, began their Australian mission at the Female Factory and the Catholic Orphan School next door.

We were able to enter the blue gates at the Wall (below right) into what was part of the factory and is now used as a maintenance workshop for Cumberland hospital. The plaque commemorating the work of the Sisters with the female convicts is located on the outer wall (above).



On 2 July 1866 the Sisters opened St Joseph's Consumptive Hospital in their former convent as a branch hospital of St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney. Within the grounds of the Sisters of Mercy College is the plaque naming the hospital on that site. On 7 September 1892 St Joseph's Hospital and Sanatorium transferred to Auburn where it is today. The Pilgrim group gathered back at Auburn in the afternoon to reflect on the experience.

All were inspired by the importance of preserving this historical site and were greatly appreciative of the shared insights gained into our heritage, and, finally, being able to 'touch the wall... feel the story!'

To find out more about the historical sites, including a reference to the Sisters of Charity please visit:

[www.parramattafemalefactories.wordpress.com/parramatta-female-factory-fleet-street/](http://www.parramattafemalefactories.wordpress.com/parramatta-female-factory-fleet-street/)

If you would like to sign a petition in support of preserving this site please visit:

[www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/savethefemalefactory](http://www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/savethefemalefactory)



# Some of the many ways Sisters come together...

*'Take all due care of your own health and that of others, and may our Heavenly Father give His own Blessing.'*

Sayings of Mary Aikenhead, 6th December 1854

During any year the Sisters gather together on many occasions. To name a few, it could be for Community meetings, Prayer groups, Eucharistic celebrations, State meetings, Interest groups, Spirituality sessions, Retreats, Ministry groups, Conferences, Congregational meetings, Jubilees and yes, funerals for the death of a Sister, Family member, friend or Colleague...

Then there are the Social gatherings, specifically for Sisters to come together to relax and socialise with each other! In NSW Sr Kerry Barrass has been organising such gatherings for the Sisters over the years. Sisters are invited to a monthly lunch gathering at Dooley's Catholic Club at Lidcombe, for those who are able come along, to share a meal around the table, talk and enjoy each other's company. The number of Sisters free to come varies from month to month. Then, usually bi-annually, Kerry organises a Gathering at the Jack Lang Auditorium at St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn. Here Sisters are invited for a Fun, Social day and those who are gifted in creating crafts, cards etc., to sell their wares to raise money for those in need. The next one is 18th April. Research has shown that socialising with others reduces stress and improves quality of life. It builds constructive and positive relationships.

When Sisters are holidaying at Shellharbour in January, towards the end of their time there, Kerry also organises a breakfast gathering at the local Country Kitchen café for both groups from the 4 units, if they'd like to attend. We're told that socialising has so many benefits and has a strong influence on our health and happiness. Laughter is the best medicine and you certainly do a lot of that when Kerry is around!

Thank you, Kerry!

Right: Breakfast group, January 2015

Below: Organiser, Sr Kerry



*'Every sincere wish and prayer for health and every blessing to yourself and each one around you.'*

Everyday Wisdom of Mary Aikenhead

*'Take all due care of your own health and that of others, and may our Heavenly Father give His own Blessing.'*

M.A. 6th December 1854



# Renewal of vows

## Karen Nguyen rsc

by Sr Mary Frances Gould

On 5th February 2015, Sr Karen Nguyen renewed her vows as a Sister of Charity during Mass at St Vincent's Chapel, Potts Point.

The quiet reverence as the Mass began within the chapel was a striking contrast to the activity outside – the jarring noise of the heavy construction equipment and laughter of students as they went to classes – highlighting the profound meaning of this renewal of vows ceremony.



The celebrant of the Mass was Fr Paul Crowley – Parish Priest of Concord. (Sr Karen, while living in the Concord community, was actively involved in the Concord Parish; her contribution in this parish was obviously greatly appreciated!)

The Sisters who participated in this special Mass and renewal of vows ceremony were Sr Karen's community and some who have played a significant supportive role in her journey as a Sister of Charity, including Sr Clare Nolan (Congregational Leader who received Sr Karen's vows), Sr Deirdre Hickey (Director of Sisters in Temporary Commitment) and Sr Suzette Clarke (Congregational Councillor).



The choice of St Vincent's Chapel was apt. God alone would know how many have prayed in this chapel since its opening in 1902. Its beauty and sacred history is so much part of the Australian Congregation's heritage. A replica of the original Sisters of Charity chapel in Milltown, Dublin, St Vincent's chapel was also a wonderful reminder of our links with our Founding Congregation.



Sr Karen, like hundreds of Australian Sisters of Charity before her, pronounced her vows and solemnly signed them at the altar during the Offertory... in a spirit of great joy and faith.

To say that this was a joyous occasion for all present is an understatement! Sr Karen, especially, radiated joy throughout the Mass and at the celebration which followed – light refreshments at a nearby cafe. No doubt, underlying that joy, was a lively hope and great confidence – for Karen and for her Congregation – that “the One Who has begun this work in her will see it to its fruition”.



*“Thanks to His ever blessed grace, our vocation is to live for others and for futurity.”  
MMA – 19th April, 1844.*

*Top to bottom:*

Karen with Sr Clare, Congregational Leader

The group of Sisters, with Fr Paul, in Chapel

Karen with Fr Paul Crowley, Parish Priest of Concord

Karen reading vows

Karen signing the vows

Karen with Sr Genny Walsh, Community member

# Jesuit Refugee Services

Arrupe Place, 4 Victoria Place, Parramatta

by Sr Margaret Guy rsc

In January 2015 the JRS Shelter Project that was initially set up for accommodation in 2007 at St Canice's, Elizabeth Bay expanded to provide a drop-in service to asylum seekers living in Western Sydney, where the majority of asylum seekers in NSW live. The centre is open Monday – Thursday for general services with Fridays being reserved for free legal services provided by one of our partners in this project, RACS (Refugee Advice & Casework Service).

Clients are able to access:

- casework services;
- general information and referrals;
- advocacy support;
- home visiting services;
- free legal assistance provided by RACS;
- financial and material assistance, and
- social support activities.

In a short while these services will expand to include English classes; health and medical support and advice through partnership with St Vincent's Health; employment support; food support; and other services yet to be determined.

This drop-in service to asylum seekers is Arrupe Place which is Coolock Cottage, leased by the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta to JRS for its services. It is right next to the Sisters of Mercy Congregation Centre Offices in Victoria Road.

Arrupe Place is open to anyone seeking asylum, but the level of support provided will be based on an assessment of an individual's needs, vulnerabilities, existing links to support services, and our capacity to assist at that time. We also intend Arrupe Place to be a centre that provides hospitality to anyone who walks through its doors, with plans to have an open invitation to anyone who is there after midday to share a meal with us.

*Above (top to bottom):*

Angela Burke rsc (Volunteer), Margaret Guy rsc (Volunteer Coordinator), Maeve Brown (Shelter Project Coordinator). *Photo courtesy of Catholic Outlook*  
Maeve Brown (Shelter Project Coordinator), Aloysius Mowe SJ (Director JRS), Angela Gallard (Case worker), Elsa Loekito SSpS (Volunteer), Angela Burke rsc (Volunteer)



*Arrupe Place is open to anyone seeking asylum.*

Our Director, Fr Aloysius Mowe, SJ says we have received a number of very generous donations but is looking for partnership pledges of financial support over a two year period to cover the shortfall in the conservative estimated budget of \$500,000 per year. He says "We have already become aware that the needs of the asylum seekers who are coming to our door are far in excess of what we can provide if we stick to our budgeted costs of \$500,000.

## **Arrupe Place update – February 27**

We have been open to clients since 28 January, so one month! Maeve Brown is Shelter Project Co-ordinator. Quite a number of referrals for the 4 case workers have been made but we have not had very many "drop-ins" yet. However we have plenty of committed volunteers whose roles offer reception, hospitality/accompaniment, home visiting and English teaching. Home visiting and English classes are starting in March as we now have a number of referrals for same. Also beginning in March is a men's group fortnightly, (launching with a soccer match and BBQ), a mothers' and children's play group and a food bank day weekly when we will also offer lunch.

As well as offering appointments with RACS on Fridays, Arrupe Place hosts regular RACS information days in different languages (Farsi so far and Tamil next).

Among the volunteers from many diverse professional backgrounds are 3 Sisters of Charity, Angela Burke, Maureen Heffernan and Colleen Noonan, as well as 3 Good Samaritan Sisters, 2 Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, a Franciscan Sister and a Vincentian priest. We have already closed applications for our next volunteer training day.

I again quote Fr Aloysius. "I have been greatly inspired and consoled by Pope Francis's letter for the Year of Consecrated Life, in which he asks religious "to work concretely in welcoming refugees" and calls on us to "re-purpose" our properties, streamline our structures, and adjust our apostolic drives to new needs." So in conclusion, quite a number of Religious Congregations, including the Sisters of Charity, are responding to this call.

# We DWCS!

by Sr Christine Henry

**D**owns & West Community Support has joined the online social media networking community, Facebook.

“We’re a forward-thinking group and we have seen how Facebook bridges geographic divides, how powerful it is in spreading awareness of issues and how much a part of living it is for city and bush,” said coordinator Sr Christine Henry.

“We see FB as a way to reinforce our awareness raising, care and pastoral support: a supplement but never a replacement.”

DWCS, a ministry of the Sisters of Charity Community Care, has worked with Queensland farming families since early 2007, providing encouragement and practical assistance to people in rural and remote Queensland severely affected by climatic changes or matters beyond their control.

The Facebook page will provide timely news, volunteer call-outs and event updates, complementing our revamped website.

LIKE ‘Downs & West Community Support’ on Facebook and check out thought-provoking features at its website:

[www.downsandwestcommunitysupport.org](http://www.downsandwestcommunitysupport.org)



## Obituary

We remember Sister Joyce Ginn with love and pray for her.



### Sr Joyce Ginn rsc

Sr Joyce died on 12 February 2015

**S**r Joyce Ginn was born on 26th June 1935 at Atherton, Queensland and died at Corpus Christi, Clayton on 12 February, 2015. Joy had two brothers and a sister. A brother is with us today, but unfortunately her sister is too unwell and unable to attend.

After completing her schooling Joyce trained as a general nurse at Orange Base Hospital where she graduated. In fact she kept in contact with many friends from Orange.

In July 1960 Joyce entered the Sisters of Charity at Wahroonga and was professed in July 1963.

During her nursing career she worked in operating theatres at St Vincent’s Hospitals, Darlinghurst and Fitzroy, where she was highly thought of.

In 1985 Joyce was missioned to Caritas Christi Hospice, Kew as Director of Nursing and then Administrator. In these positions she was highly respected. Her concern for staff, visitors, patients and relatives was outstanding. She was a good listener. Many of her colleagues are here to farewell her today.

After completing her ministry at Caritas Christi Hospice Joyce retired to 21 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy and was a volunteer in Pastoral Care at St Vincent’s, Fitzroy.

In 2006 Joyce moved to Corpus Christi Age Care, Clayton where she continued a ministry and was loved by staff and residents. Joyce had a great devotion to the rosary and organised Rosary at 4.00pm every day until she was unable to do so.

After a fall Joyce experienced a very difficult time – the staff were always most attentive and have a great love and respect for her. They said she was very special.

She was generous in every way. Joyce was definite was committed and dedicated to the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity in every way.

John Riley, Operations Manager/Director of Nursing, Caritas Christi Hospice wrote:

*“I would like you all to join me in quiet appreciation of Joy’s commitment and dedication to Caritas and those she cared for. She will be remembered fondly.”*

Thank you, Joyce. I am pleased to have shared time with you. May you rest in peace.

[Words of Remembrance by Sr Eileen Thynne at Joyce’s Funeral Celebration of Life](#)

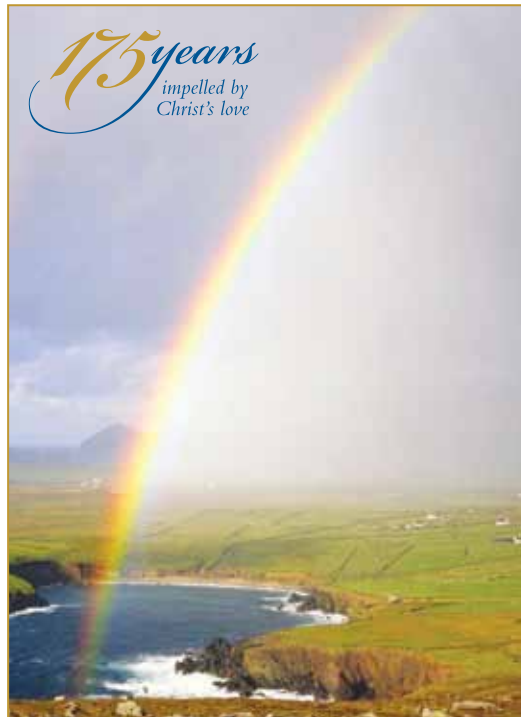
# A reflection on the colours of the rainbow and the Sisters story

by Sr Jean Johnston rsc

The colours of the Rainbow represent the enormous faith the **first five women Religious** to set foot in Australia had in the love, care and goodness of a Provident God as they weathered not only the long journey that brought them to Australia but the many trials and hardships and difficulties that marked their ministry for the past 176 years in Australia.

The rainbow also represents the flourishing of their Ministry which was nourished by a strong belief in Divine Providence. It reminds us of the Covenant that God made with Noah – that always God would be with us. God will never abandon us.

The rainbow also acknowledges our work with those special people at Kings Cross... We have been an active presence in Kings Cross for almost 176 years. Our cutting edge ministry for victims of HIV Aids, the Injecting Rooms coupled with our work amongst the hidden faces of King's Cross – the marginalised of our society, the homeless, the abandoned poor, those in the grip of addiction, the sex-workers, disaffected youth –



to these people for almost 176 years we have been a rainbow of hope, justice, mercy and the human face of a God who cares.

The Arc of the Rainbow stretches from one horizon to the other, so the love of Christ which impels each RSC, sends her on mission to the margins of society.

The rainbow always appears in the sky after a storm. To give us hope and remind us of the ever present love of our God... God is always with us. God never changes... God is love.

Yahweh said to Abraham "Count the stars if you can, so shall your descendants be on the face of the earth..." The many lives we have touched over the 176 years of ministry are as countless as the stars in the Universe.

"Those who instruct others to justice and mercy shall shine as the stars in the heavens for all eternity. "These stars are also for every RSC living and dead and for all our colleagues, benefactors and volunteers who have shared in our Ministry over the past 176 years".

*The Arc of the Rainbow stretches from one horizon to the other, so the love of Christ which impels each RSC, sends her on mission to the margins of society.*



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