



THE SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF AUSTRALIA



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Footsteps towards Freedom

Reflection of the unpacking of the first statue

They came in their thousands, shiploads of impoverished women from the industrial cities of Ireland and England. Most had been convicted as thieves, and faced the minimum sentence of seven years transportation for stealing a few small moveable items of everyday life – a dress, a cheese, teaspoons, a loaf of bread, a watch, gingham cloth, a shawl, a few shillings and pence.

In January 1892 the new Female Factory at Cascades was ready to receive its first boatload of prisoners, and in the early hours of a summer's dawn, one hundred women bringing with them 24 children disembarked from the 'Harmony' and walked through the streets of the waking town to enter a high-walled compound. Over the next quarter century, thousands of convict women would make that journey from the docks of Hobart Town to the Cascades Female Factory.

Footsteps towards Freedom is a project of a small group interested in the history of the Female Factory and they have commissioned Rowan Gillespie to sculpture three female figures and one child. These women and children were the foundation of the new colonies that formed the country of Tasmania. They are the roots of Hobart community and only now acknowledging its convict history. The blanket of amnesia spread by fear of the 'convict stain' has been replaced in recent years by a widespread enthusiasm for combing the archives in search of true stories of family history, and a delight in discovering a convict ancestor. A once maligned and shamed convict heritage has become a mark of distinction, and the sculpture will give public expression to the new community pride.



The first statue: 'Mother and Child'.

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Footsteps towards Freedom

Reflection of the unpacking of the first statue

from page 01

Rowan Gillespie is an Irish bronze casting sculptor of international renown. His singular method involves taking a work through from conception to creation, entirely unassisted in his purpose-built foundry in Dublin. We met with Rowan Gillespie to discuss the sculpture of an eight year old boy that we, the Sisters of Charity, are sponsoring. Our founding Sisters John Cahill, de Sales O'Brien and Xavier Williams commenced their ministry at the Female factory and Queen's Orphanage when they arrived in Hobart in 1847. Listening to Rowan discussing how he would create the sculpture, the statue of an eight year old boy, we learnt that the mother and child did not know that on arrival in Van Diemen's Land that they would be separated – the mother to the Female Factory and the little boy to the Queen's Orphanage. The sculpture of the little boy will stand on a square plinth inscribed with the names of all the boys in the Orphanage. Also on the sides of the plinth are the names of the three pioneer Sisters of Charity and a summary of our history in Tasmania.

We were at the unpacking of the first statue that Rowan Gillespie has sculptured. The couple who sponsored this statue wanted the woman to be carrying a baby. As you can see (on page 1) it is beautiful. Rowan interviewed a young woman with a baby who had in her family history, 'convicts.' That woman was at the unpacking with her child. All statues will be nameless and represent the many families with convict heritage. There are two more statues from the Female factory to be sculptured as well as the eight year old boy. It is hoped that the statues will be completed in April 2017.

The *Footsteps towards Freedom* art installation will be positioned at the new Macquarie Wharf 1. This location has a great significance as the development is located across Hunter Island which was the disembarking point in the early 1800's for women and children to begin a life of punishment, separation and alienation, different from everything that was familiar to them.

I would like to acknowledge the Project Team who has brought this story to the public. The team is an independent body with incorporated status and is entirely voluntary with no administrative costs. The project team consists of: John Kelly, Professor Lucy Frost, Jo Lyngcoln and Carole Edwards.

by Cathy Meese rsc



Taking their first steps on dry land after months at sea, none could know what the future would bring, what sort of lives they would find for themselves, and make for themselves, in Van Diemen's Land. One thing was sure: they were leaving the known world of Industrial Britain behind, and for many, that was probably not a bad thing. If they were fortunate, their years under sentence would not be long, and this morning's walk through Hobart Town would be their first footsteps towards freedom.

Top (left to right): Moira Sullivan rsc, Rowan Gillespie, Professor Lucy Frost, Clare Nolan rsc, Catherine Meese rsc, Anne Turner rsc.

Middle: Names of all the boys in the Orphanage inscribed on the square plinth at the foot of the statue.

Bottom (left to right): With the Sculpture – Srs Clare Nolan, Congregational Leader, Anne Turner, Moira O'Sullivan, Cathy Meese (at back), next to Rowan Gillespie, Sculptor and Dianne Snowdon.

A day in the life of...

...an elderly Congregational Historian

by Sr Moira O'Sullivan rsc

Imagine the scene: someone who has been taught to list tomorrow's jobs the previous night dutifully doing so, then, as instructed, prioritising them in the morning.

The first task is to shift a chronological list from the top of the pile, then to take the book lying open there to be used for talks to one of our convents, and place it on the floor where it will be easily seen. Next is to check that the list written on the back of an envelope is still wanted for yet another job, a talk to a school staff on the charism of the Sisters of Charity.

That scrap is half-covering a full page of notes which was supposed to be the basis of some couple of talks on religious life to be given in the month following. The open folder underneath those is waiting for a search through the Freeman's Journal to get information on M. M. Joseph and S. M. Veronica O'Brien a Sister has asked for. On another table there is a volume marking the spot reached in another search, this time for references to the Sisters in Vatican documents. And then the email should be checked, to see what else is wanted.

At times the Sisters of Charity Archivist might want an explanation of some canonical point, and this gets complicated, since the Code has been radically changed twice since we were founded.



Sr Moira O'Sullivan rsc

Even the minutiae of religious life puzzle non-religious, like rules of silence and the term superior, puzzle non-religious. Equally, I need to visit the archives to get information from their records or their book. Other visitors may be our own Sisters wanting information on people like M. M. Scholastica Gibbons or other early Sisters, or to ratify their own research ideas, like two or three recently. Even a parishioner asked the date of death of her father's aunt, a Sister of Charity. Another Sister heard a talk on Caroline Chisholm and wanted to know if she met our Sisters.

One question that a member of the Australian Catholic Historical Society asks is why and how Sisters left the Congregation in the 1970s, and the effect their leaving had on us. That was after a talk, and it was only after answering that I recalled that, in the audience, there was not only the sister of a former sister but also at least one former priest.

On the other side, there is the excitement when a Sister finds an unknown link to an early story. Sister De Lacy's Annals tell about an aboriginal child Bishop Polding left with the Sisters at Parramatta. Sr Leone Wittmack found her grave and descendants near the original Moreton Bay settlement.

That's a sample of what lands on my desk. Is it any wonder that a cry has gone out for as many Sisters as possible to take an interest in our story? It's too vast for one person.

A genuine experience of community life

by Jean Marie Brennan rsc

I would like to share with all our Sisters the deeply moving and grace-filled morning the Berala Community experienced recently at a Mass and 'Anointing of the Sick' for Carol Pedersen.

Firstly, we were privileged to have Genny Walsh's brother, Kevin, as our Celebrant.

Father Kevin, knowing us so well, was able to unite us within a Litany of Repentance, which moved us into an individual and collective 'review of life'. The atmosphere he created, led us to genuinely express our sinfulness individually, and receive Absolution.

Through the Liturgy of the Word, and fortified by the Lord's message, we gracefully moved into the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick for each one of us, and climaxed in the celebration of the Eucharist.



Left to right: Fr Kevin Walsh Pat (Carol's friend), Sr Gaye Reynolds, Sr Carol Pedersen, Sr Karen Nguyen and Sr Marina Ward.

For me it was one of the most genuine experiences of what our Community Life is meant to be, a gathering of women supporting each other in good times and some tough "not so good times" with the help of God's grace.

I am sure, too, that Carol's long-time friend from the 'sixties', Pat, (also present with us) was strengthened at a time of sadness for her, too.

The Story Continues

Sisters of Charity Ministry to the Indigenous People

When Mary Aikenhead, foundress of the Sisters of Charity, sent the first five Sisters to Australia in 1838, she gave them a black crucifix to remind them of the original owners of the land and with this gesture the relationship between the ministries of the Sisters and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders began.

The painting depicts the five Sisters sent by Mary Aikenhead being welcomed by a Gadigal family onto their land. The Sisters are compassionately looking over the baby and offering their professional service, as they are trained in excellence in Western health. It shows great integrity for the Sisters to have travelled such a long way from their home to offer support to the Gadigal people. They come as an act of justice for the Gadigal people as they realise the devastating effects of colonisation.

The many symbols on the painting represent the spirituality and way of life of the Gadigal people and the Eora nation. Some of these symbols still remain etched into the natural rock formations of the Sydney basin. The painting shows the start of an extended warm welcome to the Sisters and to St Vincent's health onto Gadigal land.

The Sisters of Charity have always gone out to meet those in need of care face to face. They respect the dignity of each person they meet by listening to their stories. Working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been a feature of the way St Vincent's has delivered healthcare in the community. In return, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to teach St Vincent's staff about their culture and how to work with them in the provision of safe, high quality care. Through this partnership we both continue to work towards reconciliation. St Vincent's Health Australia is proud to continue the tradition of health and aged care established by Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity; a tradition grounded in love of Christ and Service of the Poor.

Below: *Welcome* (20 December 2012) painted by Charles Madden. Presented by St Vincent's Health Australia to the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Australia to mark 175 years of service to the Australian Community.



The Little Aboriginal Girl

Wyneeaba Murriaba

by Delene Cuddihy, Regional Archivist – Shared Services Division, St Vincent's Health Australia, Queensland

At the time of the first European settlement in Queensland in 1824, the traditional Aboriginal people of Moreton Bay (the Quandamooka) had a culture and an economy that was one of the strongest and richest in the whole of Australia.

After arriving in Australia on 31 December 1838, the Sisters of Charity arrived in Queensland in 1920 when they came to establish St Vincent's Hospital in Toowoomba.

But the paths of the Sisters of Charity and the Quandamooka people had crossed 80 years earlier, at the time of the establishment of the first Catholic Mission to the Aboriginal people on Stradbroke Island, one of the islands in Moreton Bay.

In the book *The Foundation of the Catholic Church in Queensland* by Fr Denis Martin, it is documented that in 1843, Archbishop Polding took three Aboriginal children (2 boys and 1 girl) from Stradbroke Island back to Sydney with him and placed the little girl with the Sisters of Charity at Parramatta.

Intrigued by this story and knowing that the little girl had been returned to Stradbroke Island after only a few months with the Sisters of Charity, I decided to follow up to see if I could ascertain the identity of the little girl and if so, what had happened to her once she was returned to the Island.

As an archivist, I knew that a great information and communication disaster occurred at the time of first settlement in Australia. Indigenous societies were disrupted by penal and colonial activity and by the policy of removing Indigenous people from their traditional lands. As a consequence, the continuity of many Indigenous family histories was lost. However, they can sometimes be re-created using the records of the colonial administration and other written sources aligned with oral history stories passed down through the generations of Indigenous families.

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Below: Wyneeaba as a young woman

From the Sisters of Charity Archives

Sister Baptist de Lacy referred to this Mission in her Annals (1840-1857). She wrote that on 9 March, 1843, the Rev. Doctor Polding returned to the Colony after an absence of two years, during which time, His Holiness, the Pope, elevated him to the position of Archbishop and created him a Count of the Holy Roman Empire. A few weeks later, Archbishop Polding went to Moreton Bay to open the Mission there for the conversion of the Aborigines to Christianity and he remained there for two months. He left four Passionist Missionary Priests who had travelled to New South Wales with him, specifically, to work with the Aborigines at Moreton Bay. During his stay at Moreton Bay, Archbishop Polding earned the confidence of the Aborigines, who entrusted three of their children to be instructed and educated. They were two boys of about 9 years, one of whom was the son of a Chief, the other an orphan. The third was a little girl of 10 years, who was also of "royal extraction". Sister M. Baptist recorded that the little girl was placed under the care of the Sisters of Charity. Sister described her as being of a quick and lively character, of a most affectionate disposition and after a few weeks' residence she became very dear to the Sisters, who looked forward to preparing her for the Sacrament of Baptism. Sister M. Baptist went on to write that the Reverend Mother received instructions from Archbishop Polding to send the child the next morning to Sydney to be returned to her parents. Sister M. Baptist attributed that sad development to the malicious falsehoods of a Moreton Bay Pilot (apparently, a man of ill repute) who had persuaded the Aboriginal people that the Europeans only wanted the children so that their people could be destroyed.



The Little Aboriginal Girl

Wyneeaba Murriaba

Continued from page 05

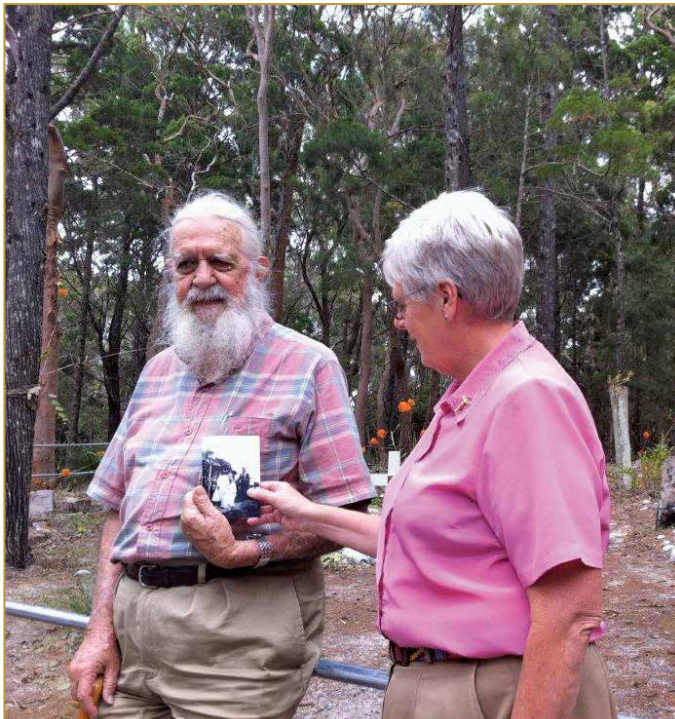
Additionally I knew that the Quandamooka people were one of the few traditional people in Queensland who had been able to maintain continuous occupation on their traditional lands. Their Elders could recount their Creation Legends which told of their love and care for country and community. And so I decided that the best course of action would be to approach the Elders of Stradbroke Island to see if they had any oral history about this little girl.

I was directed to Uncle Bob Anderson, a respected Elder of the Quandamooka and a committed peace and community activist, and upon hearing the story I related, he said – “I think that young girl was my great grandmother Sydney Rollands (nee Wyneeaba Murriaba). The family story was that she was called Sydney as she had travelled to Sydney for something to do with the Catholic Church but the family never knew just when that was, or for what purpose.”

Uncle Bob and I checked the known details of her life as are documented in his autobiography *History Life and Times of Robert Anderson, Gheebelum, Ngugi, Mulgumpin*.

Wyneeaba was born approx 1829 on Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) into an unprecedented era of hostilities and social havoc. Moreton Bay had been chosen for a penal colony for recidivist convicts in 1824. It was infamous for its harsh treatment and excessive use of the lash. The violence extended to the Indigenous people, with a massacre of a large number of Ngugi people by military soldiers in 1832. The surviving Ngugi people including the young Wyneeaba were removed to Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island).

Below: Uncle Bob and Sr Leone Wittmack.

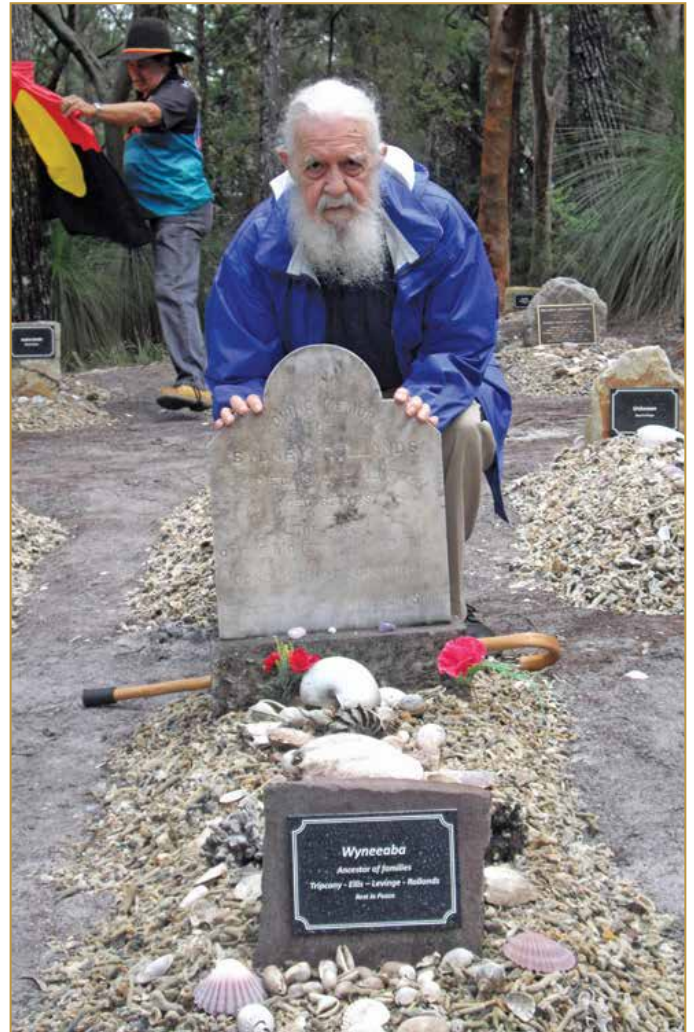


In 1839, when Wyneeaba was a young girl, convicts and the military were withdrawn from Brisbane and the area was opened up for “free settlement”. The convict women from Moreton Bay had been sent to the Female Factory in Parramatta a little earlier and some of them would have been there when the Sisters of Charity began their work there in February 1839.

In 1843, Archbishop Polding arrived on Stradbroke Island with four Passionist Priests to establish a Catholic Mission. Wyneeaba would have been 13 or 14 approximately. Several photographs of Wyneeaba, taken as an adult, show her as an elegant, serene and dignified woman who obviously had an amazing capacity to endure. She was a respected Elder on Stradbroke and passed away in 1917.

From out of the ashes of the terrible onslaught of the clash of two civilisations that occurred in the early days of Australia, only rarely does a story emerge that speaks of endurance and commitment to community, dignity and respect.

Below: Uncle Bob at the Wyneeaba's grave.



History made

during Mary Aikenhead Ministries Pilgrimage

by Fr Darryl Mackie

During the recent Pilgrimage to Ireland and almost 178 years since Mary Aikenhead sent a black crucifix with the five pioneer Sisters, the current Superior of the Religious Sisters of Charity in Ireland, Sr Mary Christian rsc met with Pauline Deweerdt, (Aboriginal), and Darlene Dreise (Torres Strait Islander). Both Pauline and Darlene are key staff driving the St Vincent's Health Australia's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) as part of its contribution to Closing the Gap.

To mark the occasion, Darlene presented a cross which was designed and made by her people in the Torres Strait Island. Pauline presented a sand/shell sculpture of the Harbour Bridge made by one of the elders of her people. As this very moving ceremony took place both Pauline and Darlene spoke about their symbols and their gratitude for the ministry of the Sisters of Charity in contributing to better health care for their people. The local Sisters like the pilgrims were certainly touched and inspired by this historical occasion, and it was evident that Mary Aikenhead's vision was being fulfilled.



Darlene's words when presenting the crucifix to Mary Christian

On Sunday the 3rd April I had the privilege of presenting Sr Mary Christian, Congregational Leader of the Religious Sisters of Charity of Ireland, with a hand crafted wooden cross from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School which has campuses on both Thursday Island and Hammond Island in the Torres Strait. This cross was made and painted by a Torres Strait Islander artist, and featured iconic symbols of both Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal culture. Included amongst these are the iconic colours representing the two Indigenous cultures of Australia, the Dhari (headdress) worn by Torres Strait Islanders during ceremonial dance celebrations and the sun, giver of life to our Aboriginal people.

The presentation of this cross was only made possible through the efforts of Mrs Sharon County, School Principal who shared with my enthusiasm for the presentation of this item which had held the gaze of many Torres Strait Islander school students. Sharon was instrumental in organising for the cross to be sent to me in time for the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage was an opportunity to be still and reflect upon the thoughts that Mary Aikenhead may have had as she prepared her first five sisters for their sea crossing to this continent. Archival records tell us that she was aware that this land was inhabited prior to colonisation – her inclusion of a black crucifix as a symbolic gesture of solidarity with and respect for the mainland Aboriginal people of this land set the tone for the respectful and authentic relationships that MAM continues to prioritise and support today.

To stand before Sr Mary Christian, Sr Helen and several other Sisters of Charity and our fellow pilgrims following an evening of wonderful hospitality was a moment in time I will always treasure as I recalled the words of my dear friend Sr Tarcisius Donovan rsc who told me at our first meeting, "our Sisters came to this land to serve your people, and now you have come to lead us...the circle is complete."

*by Darlene Dreise, Mission Executive –
St Vincent's Private Hospital Toowoomba*

The pilgrimage was an opportunity to be still and reflect upon the thoughts that Mary Aikenhead may have had as she prepared her first five sisters for their sea crossing to this continent.

'Bridging the Gap'

A talk by Pauline Deweerd

by Pauline Deweerd, Director of Aboriginal Services,
St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney

My name is Pauline Deweerd and I am a Gadigal girl. I was born in Sydney but was raised in the far South Coast of New South Wales, which is the Eastern side of Australia. I am very closely connected to the beach, the sea water. I am a *turtle* by totem. Many people in the Public and Private Hospitals in Sydney know that I am a *turtle*, when you come into my office, all you see are turtles, I am a 'turtle girl' and am very close in being connected to the sea.

Growing up – my gift to the Sisters

This morning I woke up and I was homesick as this is my fifth day in Ireland and I thought I can't go on, but I went into the heritage building today and it's made me go on. It is making me very strong because of what Mary Aikenhead did. I am going to go back and continue that with my people, with St Vincent's Health Australia, because I know that I can do that, because a woman inspired me today and I felt that woman in the room when I was upstairs. I had to walk out, it was so spiritual, because we are very spiritual people, the Torres Strait Islander people and the Aboriginal people of Australia.

We are connected to land, we are connected to the sea and we are very close to our elders and that lady up there is an elder and I am very close to my elders and I am inspired by my elders through the exact same way as you are inspired by Mary Aikenhead.

I have lost many Aboriginal people over the years and I live up to my elders as you live up to Mary Aikenhead and that woman inspired me today. It just reminded me of the elders of Australia and one of the things growing up as a little girl on the beaches we had to survive and the only way we could survive was through our artwork.



– our elders taught us to make things and our they made a lot of shell work and turned them into artwork.

As children, our job was to go out and collect shells and to collect sand but we made things – our elders taught us to make things and they made a lot of shell work and turned them into artwork. They made bridges, they made jewellery boxes, they made little slippers and what we had to do was to sell these products in order to feed us.

These shell works, because we are so closely connected to the sea, have always been close and very passionate for me and I thought when Sr Helen and Father Darryl said "you are going to present a gift to a special lady in Ireland," I thought "what am I going to present?" I could have presented the best artwork in Australia to you but what I wanted was something that was connected to me and what I am going to present is a piece of artwork that was done by my elders. It's not new! It's been in the artworks; it's been in the National Galleries and I actually took it out of the National Gallery to bring it over to Ireland.

It was done by one of my aunties who is almost 80 and when I asked her, can I take this over to Ireland, she said my baby girl you can take that to Ireland as long as you get a photo and you tell them it is artwork and done by your people.

So, I know all 27 people have heard this story from Sister Helen about this bridge and you have to open this gift of the bridge and show it to my 27 friends that have come on this pilgrimage with me because they are all waiting to see it as well. There is a piece of my soil, a piece of my sand and a piece of my heart, that is in the Sydney Harbour Bridge that I am presenting to you in Ireland today.

Top: Pauline Deweerd and Sr Mary Christian rsc (Founding Congregational Leader).

Left: Pauline Deweerd and Darlene Dreise in Mary Aikenhead's room.

Right: Pauline, Sr Mary and Darlene with the 'Shell Harbour Bridge' and crucifix gifts.

It looked like a plan... it sounded like a plan...

by Sr Pauline Staunton rsc

...it was a plan set in motion by Sr Kerry Barrass.

All six, Ellen, Edith, Mark, Jennifer, Virginia and Pauline set off on Friday morning 29th April to meet Kerry and to enjoy a weekend at Shellharbour for "the mature of age". Ellen and Edith were our shoppers ...Kerry produced soup and casseroles... thus we feasted like "royalty"! We arrived in time to throw our "rucksacks" in a favoured bedroom...had lunch together chatting like there was no tomorrow!

Rest...relaxation and rumpus in varying degrees filled the remainder of Friday!

Saturday found a couple of car loads heading for Berry...sights...sounds and scenery as we found just the spot for morning tea...scones bigger than one could jump over and robust discussions that may have had the locals wondering!

Late on Saturday we were blessed by the presence of Fr Stephen Varney who is assistant Priest at Shell and who is also an ex-student of St Canice's Katoomba during Virginia's Principalship. We had Eucharist together in the perfect setting for 'Thanksgiving'...followed by yet another "feast" and time to chat.

It wouldn't be a gathering unless there was some prayerful reflections and feedback on how "The Plan" was for each of us...this too was a graced time...just listening to and enjoying each other's company. A 'PLAN B' at another time for those who may be interested sounds good!!

Top left: Shellharbour beach.

Top middle: Srs Ellen, Edith Kerry, Jennifer and Virginia (standing); Sr Mark (seated).

Top right: Srs Jennifer and Virginia.

Bottom left: Srs Mark, Jennifer and Virginia with Sisters in background preparing the meal.

Bottom right: Srs Pauline and Mark.



Buckingham Palace

A visit with a difference

by Sr Anthea Groves rsc

A private tour of Buckingham Palace was organised for me after the Mary Aikenhead Pilgrimage. Jacinta Boland rsc, Pauline Deweerd and myself set off on the 13th April to meet Jack Cooper, Equerry to Prince Andrew, at 10am Gate A. Three hours later we had walked from one end to the other visiting all the significant rooms, the famous balcony and the famous Art works. There were over 1000 clocks with two full time minders. We saw where the famous garden parties are held. Jack organised morning tea for us.

The rooms and corridors adorned with gold trim, beautifully kept but old. It felt special to see this very private side of Palace life.

Then we were treated to seeing the Changing of the Guards from the Palace steps – very regal and colourful.

We were given tickets to the Queen's Private Art Gallery. You would need a day to really appreciate what we were seeing.

After the visit we, (Jacinta and I, returned to Acton Convent and “collapsed.” Finery off, shoes off and a cup of tea! This lasted a half an hour because the Duchess of York, (Sarah) rang and wanted to meet me. I said I could see her on Friday. She had gifts for me and said she would send them out in a taxi. What a taxi – a sleek black Range Rover with her aboard. So for an hour a very surprised Jacinta and I entertained Sarah. She was a very special, simple guest, very spiritual and loved hearing about what we both did. She left me to go and find Pauline before she left for Australia.

What an extraordinary day! This day was organised by Jane Ferguson Sarah's sister who works at St Vincent's Hospital.

Below left: Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, with Sr Jacinta Boland.

Below right: Sarah with Sr Anthea Groves.

Bottom: Pauline Deweerd in London.



Words of remembrance

We remember Sr Dorothy Maher rsc with love and pray for her

by Sr Clare Nolan rsc, Congregational Leader

Sr Dorothy died 25th May

As Congregational Leader I offer these Words of Remembrance about Dorothy on behalf of all Sisters of Charity who today will be joined with us in love and prayer.

Let us imagine for a minute. Imagine 140 Sisters of Charity standing here with me. I give each of them a blank piece of paper and I ask them to write one word that describes Dorothy. Having heard from many of our Sisters about cards received from Dorothy, and last words said after visiting her, there was a common theme of response: "just love one another;"

"I love you and thank you;" The final message to all of us was **Love**. So it is my belief that most of those 140 Sisters would have written the word **Love** on their paper.

Dorothy's motto to guide her life was chosen from her beloved St Paul to the Ephesians: **'To Love as Christ Loves'**. She was impelled daily by the love of Christ. This was her life as a Sister of Charity and faithful to the end.

Dorothy's parents Margaret and Joseph, her brothers Brian and Kevin and all the family that followed by the two Pats marrying Brian and Kevin and their children, they **all** meant so much to Dorothy. Whilst Dorothy and I were in ministry together I remember how interested she was in her family. Weekly she would go to Pat and Brian's and we would be informed of the latest. I remember her visits to her darling Dad and her 'Brown Joey' Aunty, Bernard. Dorothy always made time to visit them. She loved them so much.

Dorothy was diagnosed with Lupus when we were serving on the Leadership Team. She came on holidays with me to Moreton Island, Queensland, where my family have a holiday home. Yes, it was January and yes, it was very hot. This is where the 'butterfly rash' of Lupus appeared on her face. I think she blamed the Nolans for that disease!!

Yes, family and friends meant a lot and over this last part of Dorothy's illness she remained connected to them all. Dorothy's brother Brian and Sister-in Law Pat arrived in Melbourne last week. He and Pat decided to call into the Hospice before setting up in the Motel, the delight on Dorothy's face, to see Brian and then have an opportunity to talk about the family, was a blessing. They were so grateful they did this as this conversation was their last with Dorothy. So the family was complete around her – Brian, Kevin, the two Pats and her nieces – as she took her leave from us on Wednesday afternoon and went Home. Her work on earth was completed and God's purpose for her fulfilled.

Dorothy's ministry to begin with was in education. She studied diligently and had her BA's and Diploma of Education from Melbourne University, Counselling, Theological studies and finally Spiritual Direction. Always with serving others in mind as she discerned her path of ministry.

Dorothy was Formation Director with our Sisters for some time; she was Spiritual Director in her own right and also in Parishes on invitation. Dorothy was a good listener and a prayerful woman.



January 2015 Dorothy's health began to deteriorate greatly.

Dorothy's community of Sisters of Charity wrapped her around with love. She was worried being home would be too much for Sr Joan, her main carer. She appreciated the care and skill of our Health Care Coordinator, Liz Reid, who did so much to make her life as comfortable as possible. She appreciated the special meals Kate Luxford made for her, the visits of family and friends and Sr Pam going weekly to do things that needed to be done and have conversation together. She appreciated the skill and compassion of all who cared for her physical/medical needs and all on the St Vincent's Team, St Catherine's and finally Caritas Christi. Her final words to me were "It's right for me to be here at Caritas."

Sisters have shared with me that Dot, (as we called her), was always a lady; very hospitable; always on for an in-depth conversation; adult to adult was always her way with others. Now as you know, no one is perfect! We are mere mortals! When Dorothy served with us on the Leadership Team, Mary Maguire was the Congregational Leader. Una McAllister, Christine Madden and myself were Councillors. To Una, Dorothy could do no wrong. Miss Maher from CLC! I used to say to Una, "Una, you let Dorothy get away with blue murder." Una would just smile and Dorothy got away with it! Other times e.g., if Dot was needed the cry would go up "Where is Dorothy?" Oh well, the car is out Dot must be out. She was pedantic about a few things that drove us crazy such as the tea towels to hang a certain way and to be washed each day. Dorothy loved being on the Committee of Major Superiors. Not the rest of us. We found every excuse not to go.

Thank you Dorothy for all you have been to us. In the words of Sr Marian Ambrosio, IDP writing on the apostolic life of women religious:

"Our place as women religious, is not there where we live, or where we work; our place is where we love, where we witness."

Thank you Dorothy for showing us how to love and how to witness as Sisters of Charity.

And finally, from the poem you loved, *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge* by Wordsworth:

*"...Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock or hill;
Never saw I, never felt, calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God, the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!"*

May your mighty heart of love now lie still in peace.

We will miss you Dot.



Pilgrimage to Ireland

25 March-11 April 2016

by Sr Angela Burke rsc

Easter 2016 was a great time to be in Dublin. When Cate O'Brien and I arrived in the evening of Easter Monday, the city still buzzed and clanged recalling the celebration of the Centenary of the Easter Uprising. Banners, parades, speeches, Church services and exhibitions recounted the stories of extraordinary courage, dedication and passion. But the Uprising was not just the domain of men. Women stood beside the Rebels, nursed them and accompanied them on their last steps to the gallows.

A few days later, a celebration, different but somewhat related of an event, which occurred just over a hundred years earlier took place when twenty seven pilgrims, sixteen women and eleven men gathered to reflect on the courage, dedication and passion of a group of women under the leadership of Mary Aikenhead, who have challenged the values of society and the Church since 1815,

The journey began at the Heritage Centre at Harold's Cross. This gave the background for the whole pilgrimage – the Opening Eucharist in the Chapel dominated by the statue of Jesus washing the disciple's feet, the Founding story told through delightful dioramas, the sense of presence of Mary Aikenhead at her office desk and in the bedroom where she died and the presentation of the contemporary story, which now extends to Australia, Zambia, Nigeria and the United States.

The same pattern established by the Sisters could be observed at each visit of the Pilgrimage – the beginnings were small, the desire to serve the poor was passionate and the trust in Divine Providence prevailed in all situations. Whether it was Our Lady's Hospice, Harold's Cross, St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin, Marymount University Hospital and Hospice, Cork, or the, St Vincent's School, Cork, the Focus Ireland Project for the Homeless established by Sr Stan Kennedy, who also set up a most attractive and peaceful garden open to anyone who needs some space away from their daily cares and problems; also the ongoing success of the Foxford Woollen Mills – in each place the mission and values of the Sisters are respected and the management

and staff are very conscious that they have a responsibility to be faithful to the charism of Mary Aikenhead into the future.

The historic sites connected with Mary Aikenhead and the Australian mission which we visited were the port of Dun Laoghaire, formerly Kingstown, Dublin where the Pioneer Sisters departed for Sydney, the Cobh Harbour, where the convict ships departed for New South Wales; we recalled Mother John Cahill wrote that she longed to go with them in her letter of Application for the Australian Mission; the many places in Cork – St Anne's Church, Shandon Bells where Mary Aikenhead was baptised, Eason's Hill where she lived with Mammy Rourke for six years, the South Chapel, where she was much moved by a Sermon on Dives and Lazarus and the house in Rutland Street from which she left for her House of Formation, Bar Convent, York.

We enjoyed traditional Sisters of Charity hospitality in each place; at Sandymount, Dublin we were part of what has been described as an historic event. After a dinner, so beautifully prepared by the Leadership Team lead by Masterchef, Sr Mary Christian, we made a very special presentation. This event may be seen on youtu.be/TenO4b6SuGU

Mary Aikenhead's devotion to Mary whom she described as 'our ever-Blessed dear Mother the Glorious Virgin' was acknowledged at a visit to Knock Cathedral and the seeds of faith which were sown in the sixth century by St Kevin were recalled at Glendalough. Sr Patricia Lenihan, who was in Zambia on the night we visited Sandymount travelled to Glendalough to give a presentation and her insights on Mary Aikenhead and Service of the Poor. It was from here that we said our thanks and goodbyes on the morning of 11 April.

Special mention must be made of the constant effort of Sr Helen Clarke and Fr Darryl Mackie who planned so carefully with attention to detail so that we could relax and focus on each exercise of the Pilgrimage. Of the many highlights of the Pilgrimage, for me the calibre of the group was the stand-out. These inspiring people who are at the top of their fields as health professionals,

administrators, educators, business leaders, lawyers and managers had generously devoted so much time and energy in pursuit of a very different healing and learning, a business which relies on Divine Providence, the law of love and an option for the poor. The mission and values of the Sisters of Charity are in very good hands.

The length of time for the presence of the Sisters of Charity in our ministries would seem to be limited, but I am sure that the charism of Mary Aikenhead will remain and influential leaders such as I met on the Pilgrimage will ensure that. I express my sincere thanks to the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, the Leadership Team, Bursar and all those who made it possible for me to participate in this wonderful, grace-filled experience.



Above (left to right): Srs Anthea Groves, Helen Clarke, Cate O'Brien and Angela standing outside the house where Mary Aikenhead had lived with Mrs O'Rourke.

Top left: Srs Cate and Angela at Dun Laoghaire Harbour.



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