



Sisters of Charity
of Australia

Keep in Touch

KIT
MAGAZINE

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Inside this month

Welcome to the December 2018 edition of *Keep in Touch*, where we celebrate more milestones for, and ministries of, the Congregation this year.

Among our stories you will find the activities surrounding the book launch on our Patronal Feast Day, and the blessing of the Caritas Christi Courtyard at St Vincent's College, Potts Point in Sydney.

And we remember the extraordinary story of Sr Marie Sophie Werder, a Swiss-born, New Zealand-trained nurse who served in several military hospitals in Britain during World War I before arriving in Australia to become a Sister of Charity.



The year in review

As the end of the year approaches, and we await Christmas, it is a good time to reflect on the past year.

It's been busy! The main focus for 2018 was the Congregational Gathering in June, a faith-filled and energising week which 66 of our Sisters attended in Sydney, but in which more participated remotely. For many, it was a time to reconnect with each other, and the Congregation, as we focussed on what is of primary importance to all of us as apostolic, religious women in today's world – the poor, the marginalised, our connectedness – and how we live the joy of the Gospel through our charism.

Two of the Sisters attended international conferences in Rome this year; Sr Annette Cunliffe at the Anglophone Safeguarding Conference 2018; and Sr Colleen Jackson at the Forum on Human Trafficking. Sr Suzette Clark finished up her term on UNANIMA, an international non-government organisation (NGO) advocating on behalf of women and children (particularly those living in poverty), immigrants and refugees, and the environment. She reflects on her time on UNANIMA in this issue. Srs Anne Taylor and Leone Wittmack both accompanied groups to holy sites in Italy.

Continued on page 2 →

The year in review

From page 1

We had the great joy also on our Patronal Feast Day in August of launching a new book, *Ministry of Love: The Story of the Sisters of Charity*. The book, written by Danielle Achikian, is a handsome and detailed account which brings up to date the story of the Sisters' ministries. If you would like a copy of the book, please let us know (details on page 14) and you will be sent one.

From the Archives, another unexpected story from the Congregation's past... Marie Sophie Werder was born in 1880 in a village in Switzerland, educated by Benedictine Sisters, and following the death of her father, emigrated to New Zealand. Then there was World War I, and after that Australia, where she joined the Congregation. It is a really unexpected and gripping aspect of the history of the Sisters.

We farewelled seven of our Sisters this year – Srs Nola Riley, Marie Haren, Joan Jurd, Patricia Nunan, Geraldine McGowan, Marita Sweeney, and Eileen Duffy. Their lives were celebrated and recorded in *Keep in Touch* during the year.

Please enjoy this edition of KIT and thank you to all who contributed.

On behalf of all of us – the Sisters and staff – I wish you and your families a happy and Holy Christmas, and a wonderful New Year.

Sr Clare Nolan
Congregational Leader

Sr Francis McGuigan Wing opens

On November 1, the new wing of St Vincent's Private Hospital, Sydney was opened. Also unveiled at the same event was a portrait of one of the hospital's major benefactors and a life-long friend of the Sisters of Charity, Mrs Ros Packer.

Guests at the opening of the Sr Francis McGuigan Wing saw Sisters of Charity of Australia Congregational Leader, Sr Clare Nolan, and Chair of the Trustees of the St Vincent's Curran Foundation, Charles Curran, unveil the life-size portrait of Ros Packer.

The portrait (above right), painted by 2001 Archibald Prize winner Nicholas Harding and commissioned by the St Vincent's Curran Foundation, recognises Mrs Packer, patron of the Friends of St Vincent's Private Hospital, for her enduring support.

"It's a marvellous portrait which shows Mrs Packer's strength and compassion," said Sr Clare.



How long has Mrs Packer been connected to St Vincent's Private? It's been 45 years since Sister Clare and Ros Packer met, after her late husband, media magnate Kerry Packer, introduced the two and encouraged his wife to become involved with the hospital.

Sr Clare said daughter Gretel was so proud of her mother on the night, and of the contribution she has made over decades to the hospital.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne celebrates 125th anniversary

Another milestone for Sister of Charity of Australia, Sr Josephine Cannell ... a cover girl at 100!

St Vincent's Public Hospital Melbourne turned 125 and celebrated with a Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral. The liturgy booklet was a handsome production, with heavy, glossy covers. And on the cover... our own Sr Jo and one of the hospital's youngest nurses, Chelsea.

It was a wonderful commemoration of the original vision and the continuing ministries of the Sisters for more than a century.

St Vincent's Public Hospital is an integral part of the fabric of Melbourne, and continues with Mary Aikenhead Ministries and St Vincent's Health Australia to make a difference every day to the people taken care of there by its dedicated and highly professional staff.



Update: The Mary Aikenhead Project



The Cause for Mary Aikenhead's canonisation can hardly be described as rushed. It began in 1858, some 50 years after her death, when the Australian Congregation of the Sisters of Charity wrote to the Irish Sisters asking for the preliminary steps to be taken. The following years, Sydney's Cardinal Patrick Moran wrote to the Irish Superior General undertaking to have the Cause introduced in Rome.

A Postulator and a Vice-Postulator were appointed and the formal process began in 1911. Forward another 10 years and the introduction of the Cause of Mary Aikenhead was signed by Pope Benedict XVI. She was then declared a Servant of God.

In 2015, Mary Aikenhead was declared Venerable – one step closer to sainthood. "The activity around the Cause comes in waves," said Sr Elizabeth Dodds, who has been working with the Office of the Cause of Mary Aikenhead since around 2010 and is the Contact Sister for the Cause in Australia.

Sometimes, when the Church is focussed on a great challenge, there is no time for anything else, she said. "That's what happened when the Pope was in Ireland for the World Meeting of Families 2018 during August," she said. "The clerical sex abuse scandal meant there was no room for other matters."

The Sisters of Charity had been hoping at least for a Papal mention for the three Venerable Irish women who sent members of their Congregations to minister in Australia: Apart from Mary Aikenhead, there is Nano Nagle, foundress of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin (declared Venerable in 2013) and Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, Venerable since 1990.

There was no mention of them at all, and that was disappointing. But... "Our Sisters already consider Mary Aikenhead a saint," said Sr Elizabeth, who was a driving force behind The Mary Aikenhead Project.

The key is the strategic vision of the Project. It reads:

Our vision is to make the mission of God more widely known through the life, spirituality and charism of Mary Aikenhead and to keep alive her inspirational spirit throughout the world.

The vision is going extremely well, Sr Elizabeth reports, as more and more RSC Companions share the love of Christ and of the poor, and disseminate Mary Aikenhead's spirituality internationally.

The goals of the Project are:

- To map initiatives which give effect to Mary Aikenhead's charism especially in countries where the RSC Congregations minister or propose to minister.
- To make Mary Aikenhead's love of Christ and of the poor known throughout the world and relevant for this century.
- To endeavour to ignite passion for the poor among our families, friends, lay colleagues and all associated with us.
- To work towards the establishment of different programmes within the Mary Aikenhead Project.

The fifth of the five goals of the project is the process for the canonisation itself. From the bottom of a trough between waves, however, Sr Elizabeth will not speculate on when that might actually happen.

And there is so much to do already with the first four.

Sr Suzette Clark

reflects on her time with UNANIMA



Sr Pat Kenny (our first board member) and Sr Suzette Clark



We have now been a member of UNANIMA International for eight years, partnering with our sister Congregation, the Religious Sisters of Charity.

Sr Pat Kenny (then of the English Province) was the inaugural board member, then I took on that role after four years and now Sr Pereka Nyirenda (Zambian Region) will be the board member from 2019.

As I reflect on our eight years with UNANIMA International, I see it as a call and a ministry for both our Congregations:

We have seen a star in the north and it has led us to this space.

Variation on Matthew 2:2

One Spirit One Mission One Hope

Founded in 2002, its name begins with "UN" to represent the United Nations, and the "ANIMA" is from the Latin word for feminine "spirit" or "life principle", indicating that the organisation is bringing the feminine spirit to the UN, and (as it brings to mind the word, "unanimous") that it represents a group acting with one heart and mind and spirit.

Advocating on behalf of women and children (particularly those living in poverty), immigrants and refugees, and the environment, UNANIMA has NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) status and is connected with the United Nations through special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Because of this status, UNANIMA can influence UN debate

by proposing items for the draft agenda, submitting written statements, and making oral presentations at various UN functions.

On the ground, UNANIMA's unique membership consists of 21 Congregations of Catholic Sisters whose 22,000 members work in over 80 countries. UNANIMA brings the voices, concerns and experiences of these women at the grassroots to the United Nations.

Earlier this year, Sr Colleen Jackson did an internship with UNANIMA. Her comment echoes my experience at this time:

"This United Nations experience has broadened and expanded my understanding of the complex nature of poverty, human suffering, and sustainable development, and the global efforts required to create equity, justice and human rights for all."

Highlights

One highlight of belonging to UNANIMA International has been the annual Woman of Courage Award. The honour is bestowed upon a woman who has taken a stance for justice despite significant obstacles, tremendous grief, or threats to her personal safety.



The UNANIMA Board



UI Chair, Sr Fran Gorsuch cbs (left) and Executive Director Jean Quinn (right)

The 2018 recipient of this award is María Elena Herrera Magdaleno. María lives with the tragedy of having lost four children to enforced disappearances in the fallout of the Mexican War Against Drug Trafficking, which was organised in 2006 in order to fight drug cartels but unleashed a wave of violence, insecurity, and human trafficking.

Through this deep pain, María Herrera Magdaleno has transformed herself from a victim to a seeker of missing persons, a human rights defender, a promoter of unity and mutual support among groups of families seeking a loved one who disappeared in Mexico.

Together with her husband and remaining children, Maria has created the association *Familiares en búsqueda María Herrera* (Relatives in Search), which aims to "organise, embrace, strengthen and empower people [whol] share the pain of the disappearance of loved ones. She has become a symbol of peaceful and tenacious resistance

whose presence gives security and comfort to other mothers who suffer the same pain."

The 2019 Woman of Courage Award will go to Mary McAleese, a former President of Ireland now advocating for justice, equality, inclusion, anti-sectarianism and reconciliation in our Church.

In her letter of acceptance, Mary said: "Where do I start to say thank you for this powerful affirmation and from such a wonderful group which represents so many generous and giving women who walk in the footsteps of Christ. I am beyond thrilled that they see in what I have done and am doing a vindication of their values and vision, His values, His vision."

Once again, Mary's words echo my experience: the deep awareness of so many women throughout our world walking in the footsteps of Christ and extending his values and vision.

Another highlight has been UNANIMA's focus on women and children. For many years UNANIMA conducted its *Stop the Demand* campaign, aimed at raising awareness about

human trafficking especially for sexual gratification.

All Congregations in UNANIMA now have the eradication of trafficking of persons as a priority and many are members of coalitions such as ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking of Humans).

At a recent Board Meeting, we made the decision to develop a new campaign. Next year, UNANIMA will research the issue of homelessness of women and children, looking towards advocating for a UN definition of homelessness and a United Nations special rapporteur for homelessness, and raising awareness of this world-wide injustice.

This space of UNANIMA International provides the opportunity for us to walk with so many others into a tomorrow where our God awaits us and provides for us.

Go on now as steadily as you can, relying on the Divine assistance and fear not.

Mary Aikenhead

Sr Margaret Guy

Ministering with Jesuit Refugee Service

“I need foodbank.”

“I would like to have English lessons.”

“I am going to be homeless.”

“Can you help me get a job?”

“I need help with this form.”



These are the typical needs expressed by people seeking asylum who come to our Jesuit Refugee Service, writes Sr Margaret Guy rsc. This is her story:

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. Begun by Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ, JRS has been supporting refugees and people seeking asylum globally since 1980.

In Australia, JRS provides casework support, financial assistance, temporary accommodation, legal support (through RACS), foodbank, English classes and other social support activities through the Arrupe project.

Parramatta is my place of ministry – my role being Arrupe Place Volunteer Coordinator, collaborating with the other Volunteer Coordinator at the main office.

I coordinate the recruitment, training, supervision and support of volunteers. This includes responding to enquiries regarding volunteering, organising the volunteer induction, and ongoing training and volunteer events. I try to keep in touch with all the volunteers at Parramatta, responding to their skills, needs and availability re the monthly roster. As a team member, I share in many of the roles offering hospitality and accompaniment to our clients.

At Parramatta, caseworkers work tirelessly to respond to the typical needs expressed above, listening to people's stories, making referrals and giving small amounts of

financial assistance. However, we would not be able to do the work that we do without many committed volunteers who work alongside our Director, Manager and staff.

Volunteers offer invaluable assistance: Providing hospitality and reception at our two drop-in spaces in Parramatta, providing accompaniment support through home visits, cooking meals for house meetings at our men's shelter in Kings Cross, teaching English, assisting with the playgroup and English program for mums and bubs, organising men's nights and excursions, shopping for and distributing foodbank, helping with resumé writing, job searching and contributing to other social programs.

Margaret Guy rsc

This story first appeared on the Diocese of Broken Bay website and is reprinted with thanks.



**To become a volunteer with JRS,
visit the organisation website:**

www.jrs.org.au/get-involved/volunteer/#tabgarb=tab1



From the Alps to the Antipodes:

Uncovering the story of Sr Marie Sophie Werder

Recently, the Congregational Archives had the opportunity to collaborate with an overseas cultural institution in uncovering the story of a Sister of Charity of Australia, Sr Marie Sophie Werder.

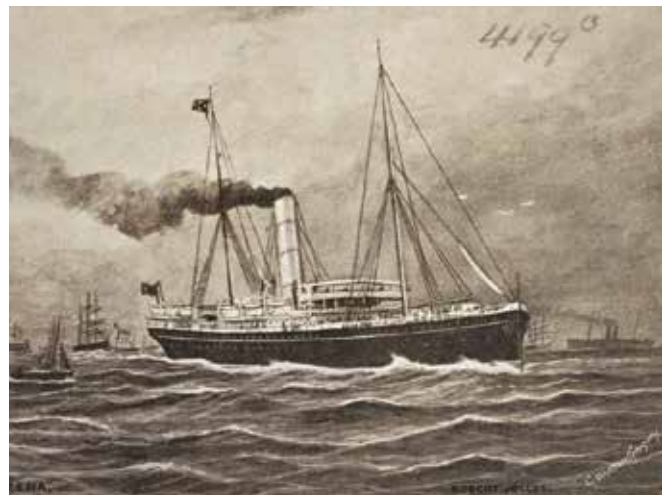
This collaboration was initiated by a request from Hutt City Libraries, New Zealand, for access to the obituary of Sr Marie. The information was to be used as part of a heritage project at the Library celebrating 125 years of women's suffrage and sharing the stories of women who had a connection to Lower Hutt.

While the obituary provided a general overview of Sr Marie's life, it contained little detail of her 46 years prior to entering the Congregation. However, it revealed interesting facts including her birthplace, work as a civilian nurse at war hospitals in the UK during World War I, and ownership of a private maternity hospital in Lower Hutt, NZ.

This information raised more questions than it answered, prompting further research by the Archives to better understand the story of Sr Marie and how she came to become a Sister of Charity.

Who was Sr Marie Sophie Werder?

Anna Maria Werder was born on February 7, 1880 in the village of Oberwil, Cham in the Swiss Canton of Zug. She was educated by Benedictine Sisters, most likely at the nearby Kloster Heiligkreuz (Holy Cross Monastery).



Painting of SS Wimmera by Charles Dickson Gregory

Following the death of her father, she sold the family home and emigrated to New Zealand, arriving in Wellington aboard the *Wimmera* on August 8, 1907. Her decision was no doubt influenced by the earlier migration of her two brothers, who had settled and farmed in the Taranaki region on the North Island.

In December, 1913 Marie completed her nursing studies at Wellington Hospital and was employed there as a senior nurse. She resigned from this position barely a year later following the outbreak of war "with the intention of joining the nursing division at the front."

Continued on page 8 →



QUEENS G.I. WARD 211.
GRAYLINGWELL MILITARY HOSPITAL.



Images above, left to right:
Marie Werder Nurses (Marie Werder far right);
the SS Ulimaroa; Passenger list from the Ulimaroa;
Graylingwell Military Hospital, Chichester;
Certificate of Origin (front); Certificate
of Naturalisation (behind); Marie Werder Ward,
Graylingwell Military Hospital, Chichester.

Questions Remain

While the above research has added further to our understanding of Sr Marie's story, there are some questions that will remain a mystery.

What motivated Sr Marie to enter religious life? Why did Sr Marie choose to join the Sisters of Charity over other Congregations already ministering in NZ such as the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of Compassion or the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart?

How did she come to know the Sisters of Charity given they did not have any foundations in NZ? Did she come into contact with them during her initial journey from Switzerland to NZ?

Although we have been unable to answer these questions, it is clear that Sr Marie was a woman of great strength, courage and determination.

Although the Congregational Archives is rich in information, collaboration with other organisations and individuals greatly assists in research such as this.

We would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of Jeffrey Russell at Hutt City Libraries and Marie Dwyer, the Werder family historian for providing both information and photographs of Marie Werder.

For more information and photographs visit the Hutt City Library: <https://heritage.huttcitylibraries.co.nz/2018/08/14/suffrage-125-marie-werder/>

From contemporary reports, it appears that Marie and St Winifred's provided a vital service to the community of Lower Hutt, but there was consternation caused by rumours that she had returned her licence to the Health Department in late 1924. Whilst Sr Marie had refuted earlier rumours, it is clear that she had been considering the matter as by July 10, 1925 she had sold the hospital and was bound for Sydney, aboard the *Ulimaroa*.

Sydney and the Sisters of Charity

On January 6, 1926, at the age of 46, Marie Werder entered the Religious Sisters of Charity. Sr Marie Sophie was professed on August 4, 1928 and made her final vows on August 4, 1931. Initially appointed to nursing duties at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, she spent most of her religious life ministering at Sacred Heart Hospice, Darlinghurst.

In her final years she was appointed as the Infirmarian of St Vincent's Convent, Potts Point, treating both Sisters and students. Sr Marie Sophie Werder died on June 1, 1967 at the age of 87 and was buried in Rookwood Cemetery, Sydney.



Above, left: Sr Clare Nolan at the courtyard blessing Above, right: Sr Jacinta Fong, centre.

Anne Fry

The Principal of St Vincent's College, Potts Point, spoke at the blessing of the Caritas Christi Courtyard

When I was a child, a very long time ago, the Feast of the Assumption was a rather mystical and bewildering day. It was full of pious rituals and stylised images of what appeared to be statues of the Virgin Mary hovering rather precariously over the world. As a child none of this made much sense as I could not find a point of personal connection and despite probing and praying I could not move past that passive, perfect plaster-like figure of Mary until I understood that as just a "construct – it was a construct based on a male narrative of female perfection and represented a very under-developed theology (mine and those who continued to find order and purpose in the depiction of Mary as passive and obedient).

I am so pleased that as we gather today to celebrate the great feast, that we have come to know Mary as the feisty, spirited, courageous, joyful woman who chose to go to the margins of her society; a woman of great capacity to nurture, love and care; a woman who showed fidelity, faith and generosity; a woman who educated, healed and advocated for her companions and community; a woman whose humanity allowed her divinity to be revealed; a woman who understood the signs of her times and responded prophetically. A woman who I can encourage young women to be like, and in who I see glimpses of the women who have and continue to fill my life with love and wisdom.

It is indeed no surprise then that this day is the Patronal Feast of the Sisters of Charity as so many of the attributes of Mary that are revealed to us in

scripture and interpreted through contemporary and inclusive perspectives of theology, are those that have allowed the Sisters of Charity to come to be among the most recognised and revered Religious Congregations in Australia.

Like Mary who was impelled by the love of Christ (as mother and disciple), the Sisters of Charity have been impelled by this same source of creation to live with commitment to community, and vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and service to the poor. During 180 years of service to Australia, they have chosen to identify with those at the margins, they have stood courageously against Church and civil structures that limited their freedom to respond to the prophetic signs of their times; they have educated, healed and advocated; their witness to the Gospel has inspired generations of lay Australian women and men to join them in the pursuit of justice.

We are immensely proud of our deep roots that continue to seek nourishment in the foundations established upon the arrival of the Sisters in Sydney Cove in 1838. When the boatsmen rowed the first Sisters ashore and offered them that simple but profound benediction of "God Bless You Ladies", they could not possibly have known what a "force of nature" they were unloading! This simple gesture of transport was the beginning of long collaboration that has always been a characteristic of the Sisters and is of course today expressed through Mary Aikenhead Ministries.



Above, left: Sr Colleen Noonan and Sr Maureen Walters.
 Middle (from left): Sr Suzette Clark, Sr Cate O'Brien, Sr Margaret Beirne and Mrs Anne Fry Above right: Sr Margaret Beirne.

On this day set aside for the dedication of Mary we are delighted to be able to dedicate our beautiful new courtyard to you, the Sisters of Charity, who have found and continue to find such consolation and inspiration in Mary's love for Christ. In doing so we link the past, present and future endeavours of those who will gather in this space with your great ministry in Australia.

It will be a space of celebration, recreation and exploration and commemoration. It will be a place of story telling and your story will be one we will always tell with pride and joy. In the same way, the love of Christ has impelled you, it is my hope and prayer that the entire community of St Vincent's College will have a daily act of consciousness when in the courtyard, and be reminded that CARITAS CHRISTI asks we be people of generous spirits, hopeful, respectful, just and committed to the service of the poor. Thank you for the honour of using this name and I acknowledge the role of the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries, represented here today by Sr Linda Ferrington and Mr David Alcock. They entered into careful discernment during the selection of the name and unanimously agreed that in this 180th year it was indeed fitting the motto of the Sisters should be enshrined here in the College – literally into stone and given great prominence.

Later in today's ceremony, Sr Clare Nolan will bless the courtyard and all who will enjoy its ambience. On behalf of the St Vincent's Community we thank her for this great honour and also the blessing she

bestows upon us through the companionship of Sr Anne Taylor (our College Companion), Sr Mary Francis Gould (Chapel Sacristan) and Sr Elizabeth Dodds (College Board member).

Since 1858, when the first school opened on this very site, Sisters of Charity have served this community and we delight in having these three Sisters with us in active ministry. They stand upon the shoulders of those who have gone before them and they in turn will leave behind them what others will build upon. We have an unbroken link to the first Sisters and we are deeply grateful for the connection they represent between the Sisters and the College.

On behalf of the College, I would like to present to Sr Clare a cross (see photo Page 1) made out of timber that grew in the very ground where the CARITAS CHRISTI courtyard now stands. The beautiful Camphor Laurel tree was greatly admired as a feature of the grounds and the timber was harvested for recycling as furniture and fittings for the College. The most beautiful of the timber was selected by our recently retired Grounds Manager, Mr Michael Bouchard to make this small gift to commemorate your 180th anniversary. Please accept this small cross as a sign of our enduring and evolving relationship.

With joyful hearts, we ask that every Sister here presently stands so we can show our appreciation to you, as Sr Clare accepts this gift.

Thank you and God Bless.

Sr Clare Nolan

remembers the path to the creation of Ministry of Love

In 2013, the Sisters of Charity celebrated 175 years in Australia. As Chair of the 175 years celebration Committee, I approached our historian Sr Moira O'Sullivan RSC and had a yarn around "is this the time to continue our story beyond *Apostolate of Love*?"

Moira, in her wisdom, felt a coffee table book would fit at that time so she was commissioned to take on the project which would memorialise the 175 years celebration of the arrival of the Sisters of Charity to Australian soil and serving Australia impelled always by the love of Christ.

This memorialisation was achieved by a collection of Sister's stories about their current ministries of love, including the expansion of our charism and mission through Mary Aikenhead Ministries (MAM).

The title of that book was *Sisters of Charity of Australia 175 Years Serving in Australia, Impelled by Christ's love*.

Then came, from the Sisters around Chapter time 2014, "What about a book now?" Sr Suzette Clark took up the challenge to carry this forward and contacted author Danielle Achikian to talk about starting work on a new book.



Sr Margaret Beirne with Congregational Leader, Sr Clare Nolan



The author Danielle Achikian and the book committee

Both Suzette and Danielle had worked on projects before, so the writing journey began. Danielle spoke to many Sisters about it and did a lot of reading and reflecting on the sisters and their ministries.

For Danielle, the challenges now were:

- Covering the story in 30,000 words, and
- What to leave in, what to take out.

The layout of the book has been carefully thought out. Each chapter begins with a relevant quote from Mary Aikenhead and ends with a quote from a Sister today. Each chapter begins with an "in brief" of 100 words as a summary of the chapter and a context. A 200-word summary of the ministry being talked about to give the reader a background to the ministry.

To support the content, Danielle uses old photos and the final chapter is made up of images capturing the Sisters in ministry today. It is surely a work of love and we are excited to be part of it.



Sisters moving on to the digital continent

The Congregational Gathering was live-streamed to the Sisters unable to attend, and that was very well-received.

For the launch of *Ministry of Love: The Story of the Sisters of Charity*, it was decided to record the event, and then post it to the Sisters' YouTube platform. You will find it here –

<https://youtu.be/PDcg92bEk7M>



The author Danielle Achikian

Before the official words of "launching," love has the final word. *Apostolate of Love* was a title so aptly chosen and continues now through this new title, *Ministry of Love*.

The word apostolate is from the Greek word *apostello* meaning "to send forth."

Scripturally, the word ministry means being charged with the pastoral care of the community.

"People must think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God." (1 Cor 4:1-2)

And what can we say of love? Mary Aikenhead heard Fr Peter Kenny SJ preach on St Paul's words "The love of Christ urges us" and she felt the words to be "divinely energetic."

They were engraved on the seal of the Congregation and are being lived out to this day by its members.

God's love is planted inside all of us. Women of love, sent forth, to live and share the joy of the Gospel with all.

"So, faith, hope and love remain, but the greatest of these is love."

(1 Cor 13:13)

Windows

– then and now

Anne Fry responded to Sr Clare:

Thank you for honouring St Vincent's College by selecting from all your various and highly successful ministries, our 'place' to launch your wonderful new history, *Ministry of Love: The Story of the Sisters of Charity*. While you are celebrating your 180th anniversary, we are celebrating that for 160 of those 180 years, St Vincent's College has been a community where your ministry of love has been expressed as holistic Catholic education. Initially a co-educational primary school, but much more recognised as a day and boarding school for girls, St Vincent's College has flourished through "different times, but same spirit" from 1858.

When the school first started to operate in 1858, Abraham Lincoln was President of America, Queen Victoria sat on the English throne, NSW was still a penal colony, Charles Darwin had not published his theory of evolution, Alexander Graham Bell had not made the first telephone ring and the Edison light bulb had not yet shone light into the darkness! Women around the world could not vote or stand for parliament, inheritance laws were severely weighted in favour of men and women's participation in the formal workforce was extremely limited.

It was into this world that came the formidable talents of Sisters William, Cahill, De Lacy, Cater and O'Brien. With the generosity of spirit of the Irish Sisters of Charity behind them, these five Sisters started an educational enterprise that has continued to respond to the signs of the times! And what different times they have been!

I want to use the metaphor of windows to describe some of those changes. Firstly because the views



Anne Fry, Principal of St Vincent's College

from these particular windows are stunning – day or night. To gaze from these windows takes me to sublime places and secondly we are in a library launching a book – a history book. Good authors like Danielle Achikian allow us to look in the windows of the past and again enjoy "the views" of a different kind of people and times.

From this vantage point high on the Rockwall of Sydney, the early Sisters would have looked over Woolloomooloo Cove full of sailing ships, rural activity and early settlement. We now look at a bustling harbour, a city skyline unimagined by those who first settled here. At other times from that vantage point, staff and students would have been paralysed by fear looking out as navies from around the world gathered before battle and indeed the war came right to us with the sinking of the *Kuttabul* at Garden Island. Other changes from these windows would have been the remarkable development of the Harbour Bridge emerging to forever change the city of Sydney. You might enjoy seeing the photos of this momentous journey on the walls of the library.

Continued on page 14 →

Windows

– then and now

From page 13

Windows of the Convent and College have also overlooked activities of a rather more colourful nature. Many a tale has been told of gangsters, bootleggers, brothel owners, drug dealers sharing the streets and lanes around the college. Now we have much more sanitised views from the windows of respectable domestic and commercial establishments. I am not so naïve though as to suggest that all that looks so benign is indeed benign as crime has moved like everything else to the virtual world.

Windows overlooking Tusculum Lane would have seen the hospitality and compassion of the Sisters as they cared for the desperate during the height of the depression. Students would have seen the respect shown and the care provided to those who came to the convent for food and conversation.

Windows from the Boarding school must have been looked out longingly by the 1960's girls who were almost within touching range of the Beatles as they stayed at the hotel on the corner



Congregational Leader, Sr Clare Nolan and Principal, Anne Fry

of Rockwall and Macleay. They would have also been used forlornly for the long last goodbye to parents, or with anticipation of parents or visitors. One of the great changes we have witnessed has been the almost universal provision of quality education for girls across the state.

But at different times in the school's history it would have been necessary for families who valued a Catholic education for their daughter, to send her to board at a tender age of 5 or 6.

Windows looking in and out of the school would have given visibility as the first electric lights appeared, as cars replaced buggies, buses replaced trams, and those looking in our windows now would see chalk boards now replaced with ever increasingly sophisticated and mobile devices that connect us to the world.

The changes have been profound, but the spirit of Vinnies has remained the same. The girls call the spirit 'Vinnies spirit' – that infectious, joyful spirit that touches everyone who spends time here.



Would you like a copy of Ministry of Love?

If you would like to receive a copy of the latest book from the Sisters, *Ministry of Love: The Story of the Sisters of Charity*, email James – james.griffiths@rscoffice.com

Please make sure you include your full postal address in your email.



I know and the girls will come to know it is the work of the holy spirit ... It sustains the community and it has been nourished by the ministry of love commenced by the Sisters and now under the stewardship of Mary Aikenhead Ministries. I know how indebted I am to the tireless work of the early Sisters and all the Sisters who have given of their time and talent, to the students of the College since 1858.

Today we treasure your story so well captured in the oral and written histories of the Congregation. Your history launched today will be a treasure chest for us to explore during book week next week – the theme of which is "Find Your Treasure".

We have much to treasure in your witness, your friendship and your ongoing connection with St Vincent's College.

I conclude by congratulating you on your 180th Anniversary and look forward to again immersing myself in the extraordinary story of your *Ministry of Love* in Australia.

Thank you for coming back to this special place to celebrate with us today.

We remember

Sr Eileen Duffy rsc

(8 September 1920 – 22 October 2018)

Words of Remembrance

All Hallows Church, Balwyn
Friday, October 26, 2018



Sr Eileen Duffy rsc

It is my privilege, on behalf of all Sisters of Charity, to write these words of remembrance about Sr Eileen Duffy – 98 years of age and in the 72nd year of her Religious Profession as a Sister of Charity.

It was in January 2016 that we celebrated Eileen's Platinum Jubilee. She was a wonderful Sister of Charity, impelled by the love of Christ, and an example of faithful love to us all.

Eileen was a strong and courageous woman especially with the physical challenges that lay before her.

Failing eyesight led Eileen to retire from teaching. She then very quickly completed a course to enable her to be of assistance to blind people. Eileen was associated with the Villa Maria Society and St Paul's School for the blind for many years.

With only pinpoint vision in one eye, she was not deterred – she was where the people were, reaching out to them and spreading God's loving kindness to all.

It was a common and lovely sight to see Eileen and her sister, Mary Veronica, walking arm in arm. Mary Veronica and her sister, Joan, were always there to lead her, guide her and shield her from harm. They were her eyes. How Eileen must have missed Mary Veronica's presence with her when Mary Veronica died in 2014.



Sr Mary Veronica Duffy and her sister, Sr Eileen Duffy (front) cutting a cake in celebration of Sr Eileen's Golden Jubilee, Caritas Christi Hospice Convent, Kew (14 January 1996)

We are all saddened by the loss of Eileen but we are grateful at the same time for her long commitment to education and her sincere and genuine interest in all the people who surrounded her.

Continued on page 16 →

We remember

Sr Eileen Duffy rsc

From page 15

Eileen lived her life with love and her prayerfulness was evident to all. She was always there to pray for those who were sick and their loved ones.

Eileen relied on our Congregational News sheets put out twice weekly to inform her of those requiring prayer for various needs in their lives.

She loved her God, her Congregation, her family and friends. Through years of challenging ill-health, she was an inspiration to many.

One of our Sisters who cared for Eileen over many years and rang her regularly, received a message from Eileen to phone. This Sister has a sister who is very ill and she believes that Eileen phoned to ask for the last time "how is your sister?" and say "I am praying for her." Another Sister leaving Eileen after a visit with her was asked "how is your brother?" Again, Eileen said: "I am praying for him." She was true to her ministry of prayer for others to the end.



There have been messages of condolence and the Principal of CLC Eltham reminded us of the lovely picture in the foyer and boardroom of the move to CLC from East Melbourne in 1971 and how involved Eileen was. She is still held in high esteem at the College.

We love you, Eileen, and we will miss you – as those who know and love you will miss you and your beautiful qualities of prayerfulness, and hospitality towards all.

Your deep and lasting devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus inspired us all. A true daughter of our Foundress Mary Aikenhead.

Pope Francis says: "Faithful discipleship is grace and love in action."

Image above right (left to right):
Sr Eileen Duffy, Sr Mary Kennedy, Sr Maria Therese Hess, Sr Mary Leo Jones and Sr Christina Welsford, celebrating the 35th anniversary of their profession (14 January 1946), St Vincent's Hospital Convent, Fitzroy (14 January 1996)

Image above left (left to right):
Sr Eileen Duffy and Sr Mary Kennedy celebrating their Golden Jubilee together, Caritas Christi Hospice Convent, Kew (7 November 1995)

To this you have been faithful, Eileen. Your motto "*Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee,*" was reflected in your life.

May you now enjoy the place prepared for you. May those who have gone before you welcome you to your Eternal Home.

Sr Clare Nolan
Congregational Leader



Sisters of Charity
of Australia

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