



Keep in Touch

Sisters of Charity Newsletter - Partners in Mission

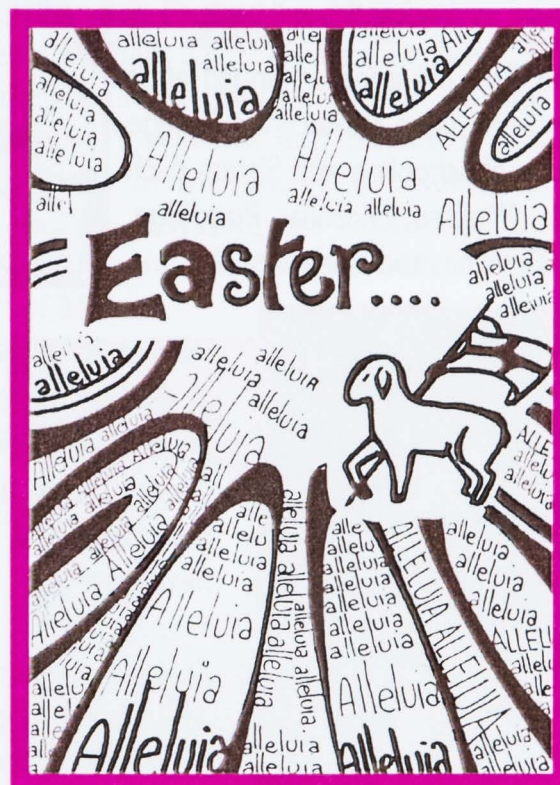
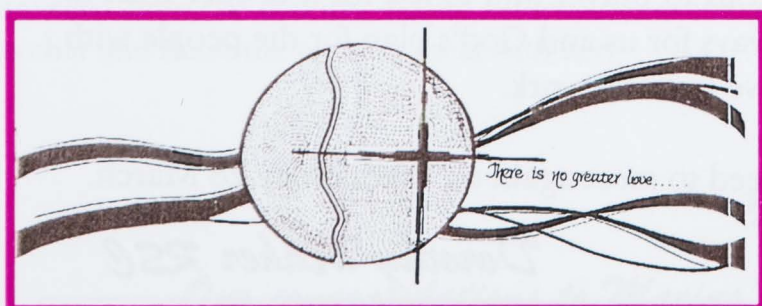
Vol. 2 No. 1 March 2001

Editorial

As its name suggests K.I.T. is a way of keeping members of the wider Charity family in touch with each other and with the various events or activities that our members are engaged in. If you have a story or an article that you could share with us I would love to hear from you. If you are shy about writing the article yourself just jot down the main points and send them to me or alternatively call me on the phone.

There will be four issues of K.I.T. this year, March, June, September and December. I need to have the material by the first week of the month of publication.

This issue will reach you as Lent is drawing to a close and we are moving towards the joyous season of Easter.



During this time we will once again commemorate and re-enact some of the central mysteries of our faith. This is an appropriate time to reflect not only on the events of the life of Jesus but also on how they relate to our own lives.

May the Risen Lord inspire and encourage you in living out your baptismal commitment.

*A joyous Easter to all,
Maria Wheeler RSC*

A Wonderful Teacher.

Sister Mildred Carroll

Vocations to the Religious Life are a mystery but Eileen Carroll's call to religious life was a foregone conclusion, you might say. Beginning school at the age of four Eileen met many Sisters of Charity on her journey through primary and secondary school. She always remembered with gratitude and affection the influence of these sisters, beginning with Sister Paschal Noble at St Columkill's at Woolloomooloo. This influence continued at St Mary's Concord and later St Vincent's College in her final years of schooling with Sisters such as Marcellina, Winifred, Rosalia Puckridge, Adrian, Peter, Dympna, and Maria Joseph.



and Bethlehem College Ashfield where she became known as a wonderful teacher of Latin, English and History. She loved every minute of her teaching career. Later as Principal at St Columba's and then St Vincent's she was responsible for extensive building projects.

Sister Mildred or "Millie" as she was affectionately known is remembered not so much for what she did but for what she was to many. To all those who called on her for help or advice she was always available and no matter what her own demands were she gave you her undivided attention. She was selfless in her kindness to others and many of her pupils still remember her influence on them.

She was a teacher to the end-when she went to Hurstville in her latter years she taught Catechetics at Hurstville Boys' High School.



Here at St Vincent's her vocation was fostered and at the end of her final year Mother Canice Bruton, Superior General, told young Eileen she was an answer to her novena to Our Lady of Lourdes for postulants and accepted her as a postulant the next year.

So Eileen began her teacher training at the age of 16. After her profession she taught in primary schools in Sydney and Hobart. Having completed her degree, by studying at night, Sister Mildred taught in secondary schools at St Columba's College Essendon, St Vincent's College Potts Point

Jean Marie Brennan RSC

PARTNERS IN MISSION – LIVERPOOL

On Wednesday 21 February at 5.30pm, eleven of us gathered at Medley Avenue to reflect on our life experience and to share. We were pleased to welcome two newcomers to the group.

Our reflection centered around a story called The Butterfly, and the place of struggle and difficulties in our lives, and how God uses these to strengthen us and make us better able to be the persons we are created to become.

We were all able to identify and see in a deeper way that the struggles were "what we needed", although we admitted that we were not so clear about their need at the time we were coping with them.

This led us to prayer and to ask for a deeper trust in God's ways for us and God's plan for the people with whom we live and work.

We agreed to meet again on Wednesday 28 March.

Dorothy Maher RSC

Jubilarians - 160 years of commitment

Three Sisters of Charity celebrated Jubilees of Profession in January. Sr Marius Lucas her Diamond Jubilee and Srs Mary Cooke and Eileen Terrill celebrated their Golden Jubilee.

Diamond Jubilee



Sr Marius Lucas celebrated her Diamond Jubilee at Caritas Christi Hostel, Kew on Saturday 27 January with her family and friends. The day commenced with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by the Chaplain Fr Leonard SJ from Campion House with a very dear and long time friend of Sr Marius, Fr Phillip Crosby of "Pencilling Prisoner" fame as co-celebrant and her grand niece, Rebecca Reid leading the singing. During the Mass Marius, looking very composed and smart in a cream suit renewed her vows in a very clear voice. Sr Annette Cunliffe, the Congregational Leader, presented Marius with a Papal Blessing at the end of Mass.



Following the Mass, her family, friends and a number of Sisters of Charity joined Sr Marius for lunch. Marius is one of a large family from the Western District of Victoria and it was a real "Lucas" day with the younger family members moving tables and chairs after Mass and proceeding to wait on the guests. There was much chatter and recalling of memories and laughter during the afternoon before the cutting of Jubilee cake and a toast proposed by Marius' nephew, Peter Meade. Lining up the Lucas clan for a family photo proved quite a challenge.

Many of Marius' relatives, many of whom had travelled from the country, stayed on into the evening to chat and share the evening meal with her.

Golden Jubilees

Sr Eileen Terrill's (Aina) celebrations commenced with a Mass of Thanksgiving at the parish church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deepdene on Sunday 28 January. The principal celebrant was Fr Campion Murray OFM with Fr Andrew Fennessy as co-celebrant and Eileen's nephew Matthew as altar boy. Sr Leonore painted the beautiful Jubilee candle on the altar. A number of sister's relatives and Sisters of Charity were actively involved in the liturgy as readers, Eucharistic ministers and in providing the music and singing. Sr Annette Cunliffe presented Eileen with a Papal Blessing at the end of Mass.



After Mass over 160 of Eileen's relatives, friends, Sisters of Charity and former nursing staff adjointed to the Parish hall for refreshments. Many of the guests had travelled from interstate and country Victoria to celebrate with Eileen. Her brother, John, acted as MC during the afternoon and several people spoke including her sister, Anne Pattison, niece Cathy McGowan, brother-in-law Paul McGowan and Robyn Brown a former St Vincent's Sydney nurse. All spoke very fondly of Eileen's commitment and dedication as well as the love and kindness she has brought to her relationships in the family and to her ministry.

Sr Mary Cooke (Mercedes) chose to have a private celebration to mark her Golden Jubilee. Bishop David Cremin celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving for Mary and she had a low key community celebration at Bexley.



Our congratulations to Marius, Eileen and Mary and we thank them for their years of dedicated service as Sisters of Charity.

Congratulations

Sr Christine Jorgensen RSC

who was one of fourteen Caritas Australian volunteers honoured with a Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal for their assistance to the people of East Timor "amidst intensely difficult and dangerous conditions" in 1999.

Chris is still working in East Timor.

Sr Jean Marie Brennan RSC

who received an Australia Day City of Liverpool Heritage Award of Officer of the Order of Liverpool for Services to the Community, especially teaching English to migrants.



Jean Marie is pictured receiving her Award from the Mayor George Paciullo.

In the background are the official Australia Day Ambassadors, twins Geoff and James Stewart who won bronze medals in rowing at the Olympic Games.

Ms Bridget Tracey

Director of Nursing at St Vincent's Private Hospital, Sydney received an AM in the Australia Day Honours for her service to nursing. Bridget has had a long association with the Sisters of Charity having trained at St Vincent's Melbourne.

Dr Draga Popovic

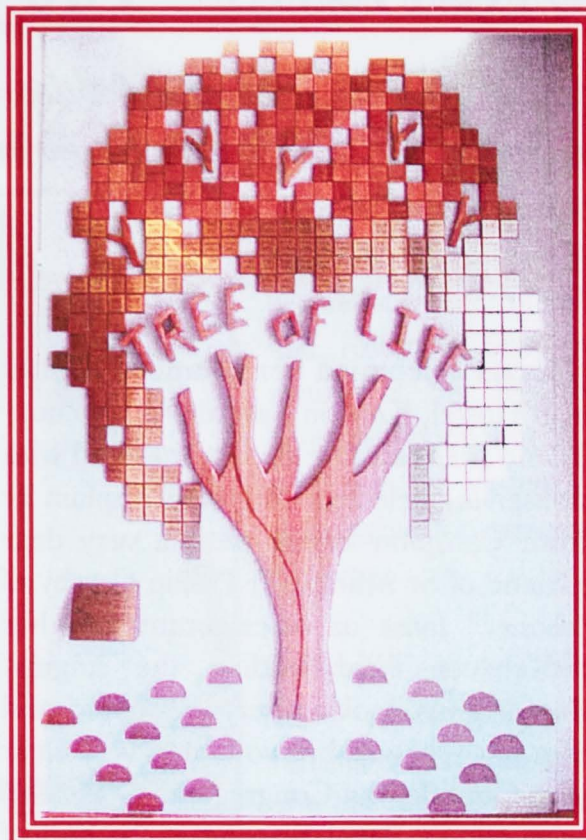
Director of Clinical Services at St Joseph's Hospital Auburn received AM in the Australia Day Honours. The award recognised Dr Popovic, or Poppy as she is known, for her contributions to the medical administration. Dr Popovic has held her post for 27 years.

Congratulations to the following recipients in the Order of Australia Honours list, associated with the Sisters of Charity Health Service or other related organisations:

- Professor Wayne Morrison, AM - St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne
- Mr Laurence Freedman, AM - St Vincent's Hospital Sydney (Benefactor)
- Professor John Niland, AO - University of New South Wales
- Professor John de Burgh Norman, AO - St Vincents & Mater Health Sydney
- Professor Con Michael, AM, AO - St John of God Health Care

A Tribute to

VOLUNTEERS



As part of the celebrations for the International Year of Volunteers, St Vincent's Hospital Launceston unveiled "The Tree of Life" to pay tribute to the many volunteers and benefactors who have made valuable contributions to the Hospital over the past 57 years.

When the Sisters of Charity were invited to purchase St Margaret's Hospital in 1942, a seed was planted which, 57 years on, is now firmly entrenched in the hearts and minds of the people of Northern Tasmania.

The concept for "The Tree of Life" came from Sr Christine Henry RSC, Director of Mission and it is carved from Tasmanian Oak and was erected by the St Vincent's Maintenance Department.

The names of all the volunteers and benefactors dating back to 1944 are inscribed on the Tree and all were invited to attend the unveiling at a special Thanksgiving Prayer Service.

Rose Mary Luttrell

Keep In Touch (K.I.T.)

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Joan Russell (nee Millea) recalls some memories and photographs of her two aunts, Srs Clare Joseph RSC and Berchmans RSC

Memories of Some Nuns: my Father's Sisters

Sr Clare Joseph (baptismal name was Julia), born 5 July 1877 in Carlton, Melbourne, entered the Sisters of Charity on 2 July 1900 and died 3 February 1968. Her sister, **Sister Berchmans**, (baptised Helena) born 29 November 1882 in Carlton, entered the S.O.C. 22 January 1904 and died 23 July 1975.

Their parents were Robert and Bridget Millea (nee Keegan).

Sr Berchmans (known to our family as Auntie Lena) was a very gentle person; quiet but a good listener. She was just the opposite to her older sister (known to us as Auntie Clare) who was a volatile character, had a good singing voice and a tremendous sense of humour, but, I must say laughed before she finished her jokes or stories. She was a very strong character who loved people and was a fine looking woman. Because Auntie Lena was teaching at St Columba's Convent Essendon, we saw her during holiday time and she enjoyed bringing a few nuns to our home where my mother always put on a special meal. In those days the nuns ate alone and we joined them afterwards. My father wondered for years where his Corona cigars went. It was not until years later when he was at home that she asked him for a bundle, which she said she always tied with a white ribbon and presented them to Jo the gardener. I remember my father saying, "Jo wouldn't know the difference between a cigar and a cigarette". But at least it let Mum off the hook.

Auntie Lena (Sister Berchmans) was with me at St Vincent's Hospital for each baby with relics and medals and quite often ate my meal. She always seemed hungry. She always had her ear to the wireless. She loved "footy" as she called it. She loved the aroma of a cigar and went upstairs at the convent, cut the cigar in three pieces and lit them then blew them out, little knowing the nuns downstairs were racing to lock doors etc. thinking some male was lurking about.

Auntie Lena's last days were spent at Caritas Christi Hospice. I visited her often and one day she asked me if I was married. I said, "I'm living in sin if I'm not with six littlies"! Everybody loved her because she was so gentle.



She was in her 90's. Her favourite saying was "when my ship comes into port", and at her requiem the priest said "...her ship has come in, Sister Berchmans has reached her port". She taught three generations including Archbishop Little.

Auntie Clare was a nursing sister at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney. She nursed members of the underworld and would tell many stories.



(One philanthropist left a very large sum to the hospital). She was elderly when she made her first flight to Melbourne. She rushed up to the pilot and asked him would the vibrations continue. He said, "pray to God they do Sister, if they don't were down"! She continued to pray on her Rosary beads. My husband, Les, just loved visiting her in Sydney and he was there many times for Commonwealth Hostels. He found her so entertaining.



Auntie Clare, April '53 Diamond Jubilee

My parents promised they would go to Sydney should she reach her Golden Jubilee (50 years a nun). That unfortunately coincided with the birth of my first baby, Christine (b. 17 April 1953). No need to say they were in touch constantly and were thrilled with the news and came straight to see us in hospital from the airport.

Auntie Clare was a great source of strength when my father died in 1959. My father always said Jo (Sr Clare Joseph) was a tomboy but always knew what she wanted.

Sr Clare was in her 90's when she died. A great tribute was paid to her at her Mass in Sydney. It was written up in the papers.

Women's World Day of Prayer

*Extract from a Reflection on the readings, given by
Sister Dorothy Maher RSC
at All Saints Church, Liverpool*

2 March 2001



...There are stories of great heroism when a fire is destroying a home and a Mother or a Father will risk everything, will not even feel intense heat, in their desire to save their child.

I think that, that was something of what the Canaanite woman was experiencing in the reading we have just heard. I think Queen Esther also was experiencing a call to action, and both women thought nothing of the consequences that might befall them- they were driven to action, to risk their own lives-a great energy carried them, impelled them, left them no other choice.

The Canaanite woman was a foreigner, someone not accepted and here she was not only coming into Jesus' presence, but she was shouting at him... and he took no notice. Not so his disciples- they were embarrassed. And that was the only reason they pleaded with Jesus was to do something was so that she and go away. Jesus however treats her call to action, in an interesting way. He tells her that she doesn't belong to his people and therefore she shouldn't be bothering him- does this sound a bit harsh to you? Many of us would have given up at that point, but the call to act is strong in this woman- she dares to kneel at his feet-, and plead LORD HELP ME!

Again he tests her with, " It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house dogs". Instead of being insulted, she remains focussed on her cause and retorts in kind, " Ah yes, but even the dogs can eat the scraps that fall under the plain text". Its like she is saying 'I wont give up, I know you are the only one who can help me and my child ... and I am not going away until you really hear me. And Jesus rewards her great faith. Her daughter is cured at that moment.

What great courage this woman had. Similarly, Queen Esther- she knew that to go into the King's presence without being summoned was inviting instant death... but she dared to do this for the sake of her people.

The other evening on the TV- the ABC's Fabulous Women program, they featured Janis Joplin, and I couldn't help remarking on her incredible energy and drive. At the same time I couldn't help lamenting that that energy was so inwardly, so destructively and selfishly directed- what a wasted talent and life how different it could have been! How in contrast to the two women of our readings- Esther and the Canaanite mother.

To someone like Mother Teresa who showed a similar energy, fearlessness, courage and drive, but who was so outwardly and other directed that she is an inspiration to millions of people far beyond her own land and lifetime.

There is this energy, this spirit within each of us, and it can be used selfishly and destructively OR, it can be used for good and for others, FOR LIFE. Daily, as women, we struggle to harness our God given gifts and energy so that we may be life givers, love givers, nurturers – these are the gifts of the very nature of our womanhood.

Our prayer today reminds us to focus on THE LIFEGIVER, our gifting God. Let the daring, the courage, the faith, the outward focus of Queen Esther and the Canaanite woman inspire us to reach into our own inner strength and giftedness and to really, truly, live from that centre so that our very lives and our actions will be those of peacemakers and co-creators of a better world.



My East Timor Experience

In 1999 I was given the opportunity to stand in solidarity with the people of East Timor for two months prior to the referendum. This visit was part of Caritas Australia's effort to support East Timor. The experience of being with the Timorese people as they courageously opted for independence amidst much oppression was a profound time for me and I returned in April 2000 to work in health care.

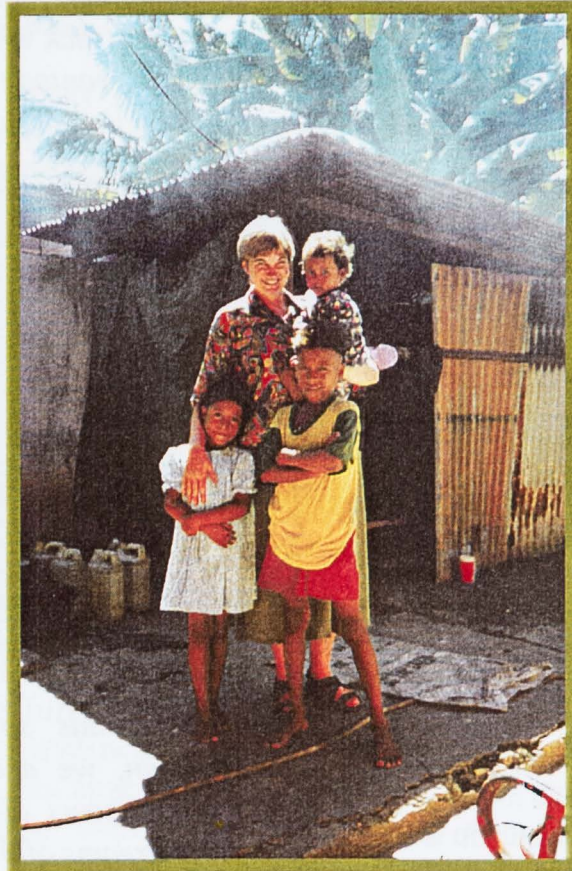
East Timor has 13 districts and these are divided into sub-districts and my role has been the co-ordination of a sub-district of East Timor.

I work with eleven East Timor staff and we are responsible for the health care of about 8,000 people in Railaco which extends well into the mountains so to cover this area.

In Railaco itself there is a large clinic and this is open all day. We conduct mobile clinics almost every day, so we divide the staff and set off each day for the mountain villages.

Clinics are set up in burnt out buildings or little bamboo huts where many people come each day. As well as conducting clinics we run education programs in the village schools and have just commenced a course for traditional midwives.

Working alongside the East Timorese is exciting especially as they begin to realise their own gifts and potentials and assume leadership.



Whilst we offer a service that is clinically and development based, daily we encounter simple problems that make me acutely aware of the hardships most people encounter.

Many children have skin diseases and can be given all sorts of creams but the main thing that is needed is simply water and soap for washing.

Christine Jorgensen RSC

We are currently in the wet season, and last week I treated a little toddler with pneumonia and was able to give antibiotics.

As we were leaving the mountain village the heavens opened and then I saw the little tot dripping wet and struggling to walk with mum as she tried to shield the baby and other children. At least we could drive them to a point near their house, but with no umbrella and little in the way of clothing or food it is an uphill battle to maintain a good health status.

There are so many things still needed in this country and yet there is a freedom and happiness that was not present in 1999.

In the small mountain villages we are given a small meal at the end of our clinics, usually corn and fried bananas, and more often than not I am given vegetables or fruit to take home. The generosity of these people in the mountains is overwhelming.

I feel very privileged to be in East Timor, it is a gift being able to share in the journey of the East Timor people as they reclaim their country.

Partnerships Training & Education- An Opportunity for Victoria

Mrs Carmel McCarthy, an ex-student from St Columba's College and a former Director of the Board of the College has written to say she read with interest about the program being offered in Toowoomba. She went on to say that her Institute, the Kangaroo Batman would be happy to be involved in a similar program with any of the Congregation's facilities in Victoria.

Anyone interested in pursuing the matter please contact the K.I.T. office for Carmel's number.

Reconciliation Ceremony at Caritas Hospice

On a hot afternoon in December, members of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry joined Caritas Christi staff, patients, families and Sisters of Charity for a ceremony of Reconciliation in the front garden of Caritas Christi Hospice, Kew. The participants gathered under the shade of the apple tree and shared in the dedication of a specially placed rock bearing a plaque acknowledging the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land on which the Hospice stands.

Janette Wilson, a member of the Sisters of Charity Advocacy Network and the organiser of the event, welcomed participants to Caritas, and introduced Vicky Walker, Co-ordinator of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. Vicky welcomed everyone to the land and spoke of the importance of the placement of the rock where all that visit Caritas can

see it and think about its significance. Following Vicky's invitation to enter more deeply into the Spirit of the land, Betty Walker, an Aboriginal elder, conducted a cleansing ceremony. Carrying water in a carved wooden bowl and using a twig of gum leaves; Betty sprinkled water over the Rock and blessed it with the following words...

Great Creator Spirit, in every age you have provided us with life-giving water. May this water take away all wrong thoughts within us, and the land around us, and give everyone who passes by this Rock of Peace only a good and proper spirit.

Anita Ferguson, Mission Director for the Sisters of Charity Health Service then spoke of the blessing of the Rock and the ceremony of Reconciliation as bringing together three visions or dreams...

If we cast our minds back to 1938, the dream of Sr Patrice Lohan and Chrysostom Lalor was realized with the opening of Caritas Christi as a hospice for the dying. Over the years this has continued to be a place of healing and respite...

Next we step back 100 years to 1838 and the vision and dreams that were alive in the heart of M. Mary Aikenhead as she farewelled the first five Sisters of Charity to come to this land.

She sent with them a crucifix with a black figure anticipating that their work would bring them in contact with Aboriginal people.

Before coming here today I went over to the lookout which is on the track which runs through the park beside us. From this vantage point one can see much of the Yarra Bend section of the valley.

It is not hard to imagine life here in 1838 prior to the expansion of Melbourne village. Even today there is sufficient bushland to enable one to picture Aboriginal clans moving about, fires burning and people calling to each other... What were the hopes and dreams of these people?

Somehow in this small ceremony, this gesture of reconciliation, we are seeking to bring together the vision and dreams of the Wurundjeri people and the vision and dreams of the Sisters of Charity.

This is a sacred place, a place of peace and healing invested with the love of the Sisters of Charity who have cared for so many here. In paying respect to the traditional owners we affirm that two dreams have become one ...

Janette Wilson



Sisters of Charity Education Council

Mt St Michael's College

Ms Narelle Mullins will complete her Principalship at Mt St Michael's College at the end of Semester 1 2001. The Board is currently undertaking the selection process and hopes to make an appointment by the end of May.

Narelle is in her eighth year at MSM and has made an outstanding contribution to the development of the College, the education of young women and by her fidelity to the mission and philosophy of the Sisters of Charity.

We welcome the appointment of the following Directors to College Board:

- *Mr Christopher Harkin*
- *Mr Michael Johnston*

St Columba's College

St Columba's is in the midst of a major redevelopment project. The Mary Aikenhead Building will be opened on the 22 July – a fitting opportunity to celebrate this achievement and recognise that it is only possible because of the significant leadership of the College over many years.

We welcome Ms Deirdre O'Donnell as the Chairman of the College Board and offer her our continued support. We also welcome the appointment of the following Directors to College Board:

- *Sr Catherine O'Brien RSC*
- *Mrs Pauline Morris*
- *Mr Michael O'Brien*
- *Mr Charles Scerri*

Catholic Ladies College

On Thursday 22 February, Mrs Margaret McKenna was officially installed as the Principal of Catholic Ladies College by Sister Annette. This celebration also provided an excellent opportunity for the College community to celebrate the numerous leadership roles that the students are actively engaged in at CLC.

We also welcome the appointment of the following Director to College Board:

- *Mr Keith Wilkinson*

St Vincent's College

St Vincent's is in the midst of reviewing the Masterplan for the College site and significant maintenance was attended to during the holidays.

We welcome Mr Peter Hennessy as the new Chairman of the College Board and the return of Sr Maria Wheeler to St Vincent's as a Director.

We also welcome the appointment of the following Directors to College Board:

- *Mrs Ann Parker*
- *Mr Richard Harpham*
- *Mr Patrick Doyle*

Sisters of Charity Education Council

The SCEC 2001 Formation Seminar for Board members and senior executive will be held at St Vincent's College, Potts Point, 13 to the 15 July.

A New Face

We welcome **Mr Roger Brown** who joined the Congregational Bursar's Office as Manager, Finance and Administration last December.

Roger is pictured here with his wife Gemma



Sisters of Charity Foundation

The Victorian Launch of the Sisters of Charity Foundation will take place on Monday 26 March.

A group of "Friends of the Foundation" in Sydney met recently to plan how the profile of the Foundation might be raised and to gather suggestion for functions.

The Foundation is currently providing funding in Victoria to the Aboriginal Awareness Project, an Outreach Grief Services Project and has guaranteed to meet any shortfall in operating costs for Community Care.

Last year a grant from the Foundation enabled a Sisters of Charity Group looking into Homelessness in Melbourne to commission a research project and report on the homeless in order to identify gaps in the provision of services.

Other projects being funded by the Foundation include a palliative care education and training program for AIDS/HIV health care workers in a very poor district in Manila. Currently there is no palliative care in the Philippines for these people.

The Foundation funds Outreach Tasmania that provides counselling and support for those experiencing grief, loss or trauma as well as education and training related to grief and trauma.

The cost of purchase of Bibles and the printing and postage of religious education programs for Sister Karen Varker to use with the teachers in the village schools in the Diocese of Gizo in the Solomon Islands has been covered by a Foundation Grant.

For further information contact

The Sisters of Charity Foundation Limited

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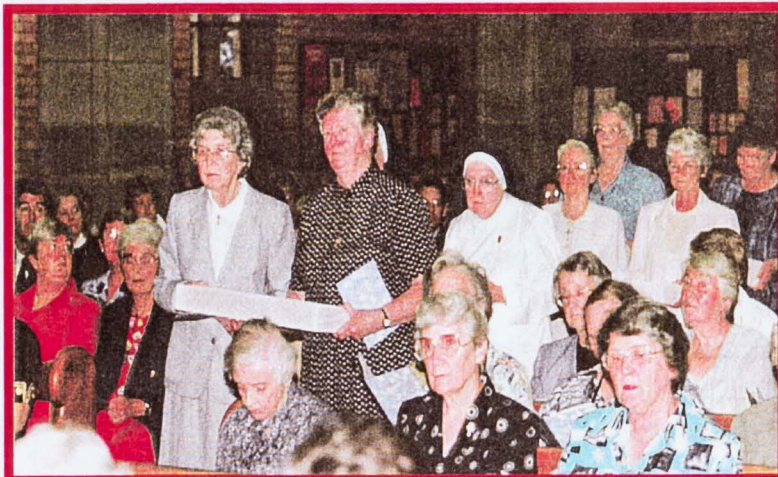
Contributors:

- * *Sr Jean Marie Brennan RSC*
- * *Sr Patricia Grantham RSC*
- * *Sr Christine Jorgensen RSC*
- * *Ms Rose Mary Luttrell*
- * *Sr Dorothy Maher RSC*
- * *Sr Eileen Terrill RSC*
- * *Sr Virginia Wilkinson RSC*
- * *Ms Janette Wilson*

ST VINCENTS & MATER HEALTH, SYDNEY

*Another step in the journey to integrated
Catholic health care*

*On Wednesday 7 February, a liturgical event at
St Mary's Church North Sydney celebrated
another step in our Sisters of Charity journey as
part of the integration of Catholic health and
aged care in Australia.*



The SV&MHS merger became operative on 1 January 2001. This merger was formally celebrated at St Mary's Church North Sydney on 7 February with a liturgy led by Bishop Cremin and culminating in the Commissioning Ceremony for Directors, Chief Executive Officer and Executives.



A significant feature of the celebration was the participation of Sisters and staff of the two merging entities, St Vincent's Campus and Mater Hospital who, during the First Reading (ICor 3:10-14,16) placed stones upon the sanctuary as a symbol of the foundation being laid for others to build upon.