



Keep in Touch

Sisters of Charity Newsletter - Partners in Mission

Vol. 2 No. 2 June 2001

After two and a half years of planning, the Official Opening of the Exhibition *Sisters of Charity, 1838-2001* took place on Friday, 29th June at the Australian Museum, College Street, Sydney.

The Exhibition Poster invited the public to “see photos, artifacts and gain a fascinating insight into the story of the Sisters of Charity in Australia”. The many displays focus on the development of the ministries of the Sisters, their influence on the culture of Australia and the impact that changes in the Church and in society has had on the spirituality and lifestyle of the Sisters.



Sr. Annette Cunliffe, RSC (Congregational Leader)

Sisters of Charity 1838 - 2001

The major divisions of the Exhibition focus on the Initial Formation of the Sisters during Postulancy and Novitiate; the traditional ministries of Education, Health Care, Prison Visitation and Overseas Missions. Some Sisters have shared their personal recollections of their call to Religious Life, Entrance Day and Novitiate experience. One change of lifestyle that is represented is the change in mode of dress since 1838.

The various styles of Habits and a Wedding Dress, such as that worn by those about to enter the Novitiate are displayed as well as images of the Sisters wearing clothes of their personal choice, appropriate for their ministry today.

The section on Education presents the transition from traditional methods to the modern system with emphasis on technology. A school desk with lift top is included along with photographs of Sisters involved in education in Science, Music, Art, Drama and Sport. Comments from interviews with the Sisters give insights into the Sisters' perceptions of their Ministry.

Acknowledgement is made of the support of the Ex-students Associations particularly through tributes paid by Sisters to their teachers and Debutante photographs.

Some works of Art done by Sisters who were distinguished Art Teachers are on display.

The developments in Medicine and Nursing are presented in the Health Care Section. Here again, Sisters involved in this Ministry give descriptions of the changes in Patient Care and Staff Ministry and the importance of collaboration with lay colleagues. Artifacts displayed include a Hospital bed, Nurses' Uniforms, Graduation Certificates and a fine tapestry worked by a Sister of Charity at St Vincent's Maternity Hospital, Melbourne, who did her needlework while waiting for the birth of each baby.

Visitation of Prisons was the first formal ministry undertaken by the Sisters and has continued since 1839. Many photographs and reflections from Sisters, letters from former prisoners and the original manuscript of drawings by the bush ranger, Captain Starlight, who received visits from the Sisters in Darlinghurst Gaol are presented in the Prison Ministry section.

The Australian Mission of the Pioneer Sisters in 1838 was the first overseas mission of the Sisters of Charity and from Australia the Sisters have formed Mission Teams since 1957.

Artifacts on display include items made by people of Fiji, New Guinea and Thailand and given to the Sisters. Here again photographs and panels with personal accounts of Mission Ministry are presented.

A powerful message of the Exhibition is that the Sisters of Charity have survived in Australia because they have adapted to the changing requirements of modern society. The message is conveyed by means of a continuous video, produced in 1999, in which Sisters and their colleagues explain with confidence the link between Mary Aikenhead's founding Vision and the Mission in the world today, but even more powerfully by the presence of Sisters as volunteers at the Museum to welcome visitors and answer their questions.

Table books, produced by individual Sisters describing their Ministries and published books written by Sisters on history and spirituality are available for perusal by visitors. An updated edition of the book, *Sisters of Charity 1838 to 2001* as well as CDs and a cassette of recorded hymns are offered for purchase.

The atmosphere created at the Exhibition is one of peace. This is achieved by the playing of recordings of Gregorian chants, a choir of Sisters, and a subdued but very distinctive Convent bell. Recordings of interviews with Sisters are also presented.

Live performances by schools and other choirs connected with the Sisters of Charity are well received. A programme of lectures given by Sisters on topics of history and ministry is to be presented during September. Many hundreds of visitors have come to the Exhibition. Some students, ex students, past and present staff, members of other religious Orders, former Sisters, former orphanage residents, families and friends of Sisters have been attracted to the Museum specifically for this Exhibition. Their entries in the Visitor's Book refer to the nostalgia and many memories, mostly positive, generated by the various displays.

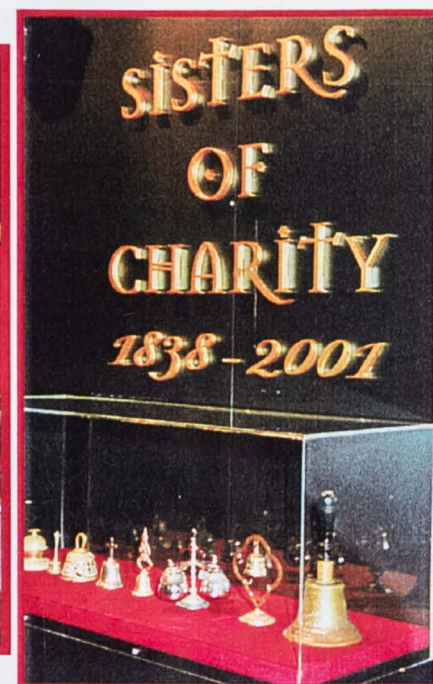
Other visitors (of all ages and from many countries) have included the Exhibition in their Tour of the Museum. In many cases, people have been drawn by the sound of the bell as they move past en route to other Galleries. Their comments have shown their genuine interest, appreciation of the high standard of the presentation and all that is implied in the description of many young people whose comment was simply "Cool".

***The Exhibition will close on Sunday,
14th October.***



RSC Exhibition

Opening Night at the
Australian Museum



Acknowledgement must be given to the enthusiasm, interest and support that has been given constantly by the Staff of the Australian Museum. All those involved in the Preparation and Presentation of the Exhibition have been most appreciative of their co operation and assistance.

There is no doubt that the staging of the Exhibition, *Sisters of Charity, 1838 - 2001* has been a most worthwhile project, that has fulfilled the purpose outlined by the Steering Committee, highlighting an extraordinary contribution to the lives of many people in Australia and beyond made by a small but committed group of women for whom the motto 'Caritas Christi urget nos' remains as relevant today as it was when the first Sisters were welcomed to Sydney Cove in 1838.

Sr Angela Burke RSC

**Sisters of Charity 1838-2001
Exhibition at the Australian Museum**

A New Call A New Mission

Mrs Narelle Mullins, the former principal of Mt St Michael's College Ashgrove has been appointed the inaugural director of mission for the St Vincent de Paul Society in Brisbane. A recent article in The Catholic Leader said 'her appointment, at the time when she was looking beyond her career in Catholic education towards an active community service role, had been God's call'.



We wish you well in your new role, Narelle.

Narelle said she has seen many changes in the catholic education system in the past 30 years but believed strongly in its benefits and sees their potential as the seedbed for the prophets of the future. Her contact with youth will continue in her new role. In the position of director of mission Narelle will also be overseeing youth direction both in schools and post school with spiritual support.

Charity Day at All Saints College Liverpool

The Principal, Robyn Glover, at All Saints Catholic College Liverpool writes:

"We hold our Feast Day, Charity Day, on or close to the Feast of the Assumption on 15th August. Each year we have a particular theme to focus on for the day.

This year we were celebrating our diversity. So we had an international flavour to our morning Eucharistic Liturgy, with a number of students in national dress.

After morning tea the girls were divided into groups and did two workshops from the wide list of activities".



The list included such activities as:

- *writing of their stories... the stories will be bound into a "Federation Book"*
- *making of Memorabilia*
- *planning for People scape project as part of Centenary of Federation display in Canberra at the end of the year*
- *Jazz, Indian, Greek, Irish, Vietnamese, Lebanese dancing.*
- *aboriginal painting*
- *aboriginal smoking ceremony*
- *aboriginal story telling*
- *sign language*
- *singing & dancing in Italian*



During lunch we had a coin line competition between houses to raise funds for a person in need in the community. We always have a talent quest after lunch so the girls have a chance to entertain us all then.



Golden Jubilarians

Sister Bernardine Fennessy

celebrated her Jubilee with a Mass celebrated by Father Victor in the community Chapel at the convent in Robinson Street, Moonee Ponds.

At Bernardine's request the celebration was low key, with her sister Mary, and the Congregational Leader, Sister Annette Cunliffe joining the Moonee Ponds Community for the Mass. Sister Annette, the Congregational Leader, presented Bernardine with a Papal Blessing at the end of Mass.

Those present then enjoyed a special dinner to mark the occasion. There was the opportunity during the evening to thank Bernardine for her years of faithful commitment and generosity as a Sister of Charity.



Sister Judith Clark

celebrated her Jubilee on Sunday 26th August at St Ambrose Church Concord West where she is the Parish Sister.

The Principal Celebrant was the Parish Priest, Father David Vaughan and the homilist was Father Maurice Sullivan CM. Fathers Bernard Scott CM and O'Reilly CM were also concelebrants. Sister Annette presented a Papal Blessing to Judith at the end of the Mass.

Her brother Brian and his family travelled from the central coast and two Presentation Sisters came from Brisbane to join with a large number of Sisters of Charity, friends and parishioners who gathered to celebrate the occasion with Judith.

During the afternoon tea several spoke in gratitude of Judith's faithful commitment, generosity and friendship. Her care for the young, the old and the needy were a hallmark of her life of dedication. As one person commented Judith never failed to respond to a request for help.





Golden Jubilarians

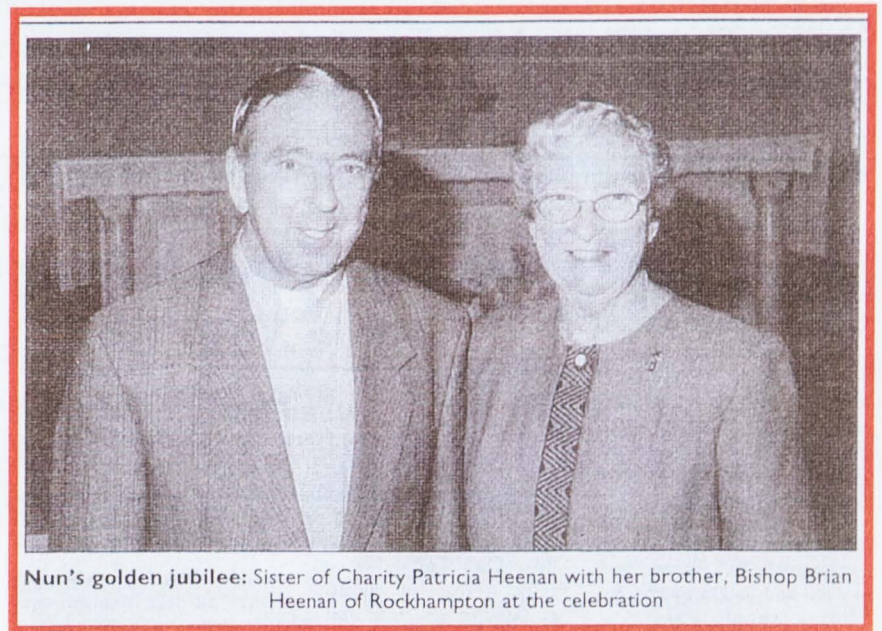
Sister Patricia Heenan

To celebrate her Golden Jubilee, Sister Patricia Heenan returned to her home Parish of St Finbarr, Ashgrove, a church very dear to herself and her family.

The main concelebrant of the Thanksgiving mass was her brother, Bishop Brian Heenan of Rockhampton, assisted by Priest friends, while each member of the Heenan family had a special role in the celebration.

In his homily, Brian spoke of the family's delight in having Patricia home in Brisbane at last, for of those fifty years, well over forty had been spent far away.

At the end of the Mass a Papal Blessing was presented to Patricia by Sister Annette Cunliffe, the Congregational Leader.



Nun's golden jubilee: Sister of Charity Patricia Heenan with her brother, Bishop Brian Heenan of Rockhampton at the celebration

Family and friends from around Australia and from Zambia as well as from Europe travelled to Brisbane to celebrate with Patricia.

During the luncheon that followed the Mass, tributes were paid to Patricia, mentioning her skills in Education, her thirteen years in Zambia and her current ministries of weekend Parish Mission talks, and Hospital Chaplaincy. Patricia's life as a Sister of Charity has been one of dedication and faithful service through which she has touched the lives of so many people in Australia and Zambia. As Bishop Brian said "Thank you for allowing us to come together to honour our God of unconditional love and to acknowledge that he has done great things through you"

Patricia in thanking her family, friends and religious sisters who had joined her for the celebrations made special mention of Sister Patricia Coyle for her role in making the celebration such a memorable occasion.



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Diamond Jubilarians

Sister M. Grata Kelly

Due to ill health, celebrated her Diamond Jubilee of Profession very quietly with a special Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the occasion. Her sister, Sister M Carmena RSC and Sister Christine joined Grata for the Mass.

Sister Mary Goss



who has been associated with Marycrest and Mt Olivet over many years, chose the beautiful Chapel there for the Eucharistic Celebration of her Diamond Jubilee of Religious Profession.



Many of Mary's friends, staff and Marycrest residents joined in the Mass of Thanksgiving for her long life of faithful service, and the large crowd, a tribute to Mary's friendliness.

The Liturgical celebration was enhanced by beautiful music and singing, one of the soloists being Elizabeth Griffith, and what a delight it was to hear her lovely voice again!



Afterwards the guests enjoyed the refreshments and speeches in the Board Room.

Mary responded, expressing her appreciation to those present for their support and in particular thanked Sister Patricia Coyle for all she did to make the Jubilee celebration such a memorable occasion.

Congratulations to our Golden & Diamond Jubilarians!

VALE

As this edition goes to print we are saddened to hear of the death of Sister Myrna Lynch RSC. A tribute to Myrna will appear in the next edition of KIT.

MOUNT CARMEL COLLEGE

Continues to Open the Doors of Science & Technology to Girls

Mount Carmel College, Sandy Bay, has successfully completed a major building program of additions and refurbishment of two Science laboratories and Year 10 classrooms. On Tuesday 31st July at 2.00pm the Official Blessing and Opening of the refurbishments took place.



The Archbishop of Hobart the Most Rev. Adrian L. Doyle and Senator Brian Gibson, a grandparent of a Mount Carmel primary student, officiated.

In a \$330,000 development the science laboratories have been totally refurbished into areas which are stimulating and safe learning environments.

The new classrooms have been renovated and furnished with state of the art furniture and fittings and the adjoining verandah and terraced area provides a welcoming and attractive entrance to the College. A new statue sculpted in bronze by Stephen Walker has been placed in the entrance-way and was unveiled at the opening.



This statue has captured in a most beautiful way the unique bond between mother and child and takes pride of place amidst the new surroundings.

PARTNERS IN MISSION

Medley Avenue, Liverpool

On 25th July we met at Medley Avenue to share our life-giving experiences since the last meeting. A wide range of encounters and events had been life giving for the six people who ventured out, despite an unpleasant evening weatherwise.

A sharing on a piece from Joyce Rupp entitled "Don't Scare the Doug" followed. It put us in touch with the mystery of the present moment and gave plenty to think about and reflect upon.

Our next meeting is scheduled for 22nd August.

Celebration of Caritas Christi

Foundation Day and Staff Recognition Day

On Monday 25th June 2001, Caritas Christi staff took "Time Out" to celebrate the 63rd Anniversary of Foundation Day and to acknowledge the service and loyalty of staff members. Approximately 90 staff members, volunteers and visitors participated in the celebration, which also included many members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity.

Unfortunately many other invitees were unable to attend due to the Catholic Health Conference being held in Brisbane. A message from Sister Eileen Thynne congratulating staff and apologising for her absence was read.

Executive Director, Jan Bassett-Smith delivered an opening address which was followed by Margie Bradbeer, Team Leader of the Pastoral Care, relating in poetry the beginnings of Caritas Christi. Several very credible "actors" appropriately dressed, played the roles of Sister M Chrysostom Lalor, Superior, Sister M Cyril Ettinger, Sister M Audeon Poulton, and Sister M Agnes Toohey, the first Caritas Christi community.

They were supported in the story by several *well-groomed residents of Kew* who generously donated financial resources, including Mr John Wren whilst *other residents of Kew protested with banners* about germs being introduced into the local community. Lastly, the first patient arrived on a stretcher but passed on shortly after.

The light-hearted story telling was acclaimed by all present and especially enjoyed by members of the Congregation. (See poem attached, and letter of Appreciation from The Sisters.)

A short ritual symbolising the Mission of Caritas Christi was then undertaken, with lighting of a candle reaffirming the commitment to the Values of the Sisters of Charity Health Service.

Presentation of Certificates and Badges recognising the service of 44 staff members for ten years, fifteen years and twenty years were presented. Each person was congratulated and acclaimed by those present.

September 2001



Caritas Christi Hospice



Representatives of Sponsors from Safeway Kew, ANPAS Pty Ltd (donation to the Library) and LePine Funeral Services (awarding a scholarship to support a member of staff to undertake postgraduate studies) were officially acknowledged.

Lively conversation and fun followed with a delicious afternoon tea, prepared in the main by the management team, bringing closure to a most successful event. Immediate feedback of the event was very positive.

My thanks for making the day so special in particular go to Janette Wilson, Heather Pisani, Joan Gasparini, Bernadette Shanahan, Margie Bradbeer, and the staff who superbly acted the roles of the 4 Sisters, Kew residents, the benefactors, and the patient. This happy event was sponsored by SCHS and Caritas Christi Palliative and Aged Care Programs.

Jan Bassett-Smith

K.I.T.

The Story of

Caritas Christi

There were once four Sisters of Charity
Who saw with amazing clarity
The need for a place, to die with grace,
In comfort and with no disparity.

Their names- if I haven't lost 'em-
Were Sisters Audeon and Chrysostom,
Sisters Agnes Gertrude and Cyril Ettinger too,
Our Founders-let's all drink a to'st to 'em.

They searched day and night
Till they came on a sight
That seemed to them all just ideal.
On one side the Park, on the other the 'Arch'
(bishop)
But they'd have to launch an Appeal.

With high expectations
They asked for donations,
Some came but it wasn't enough.
Still their faith was unmoved
That their dream would be proved
Even though the going was tough.

They worked and they prayed
And were never afraid
That they wouldn't find shillings and pence.
'Twas a pretty safe bet
That their needs would be met
By the Bank of Divine Providence.

Now the people of Kew
Were all in a stew
When they heard of the plan that was hatching.
Values would fall
With this hospice for all
And who knew if the germs might be catching.

But the Sisters persistence
Overcame all resistance
So Caritas Christi began,
And on June 24 they opened the door
To their first patient-a very sick man.

With great love and care
They looked after him there
Until one week later he died.
But he was at peace when respirations did cease
With the Sisters, of course, by his side.

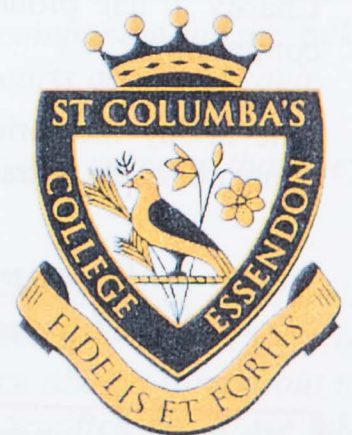
So we continue the mission
Of those Sisters of vision
And remember with thanks all it cost them
Sisters Audeon Poulton, Agnes Gertrude,
Sister Cyril and Sister Chrysostom.

ST COLUMBA'S COLLEGE

Blessing and Opening of New Buildings

The new buildings at St Columba's were blessed by Archbishop Sir Frank Little, an old boy of the College, and opened by Sister Annette Cunliffe, the Congregational Leader on Sunday 22nd July 2001.

The ceremony commenced with a welcome by the original owners of the land in the courtyard, followed by the blessing prayers and the official opening in the hall. While the Archbishop was out blessing the various sections of the building the Columba singers and dancers entertained the guests in presenting the story of the College with a very creative presentation.



Congratulation to

BETHLEHEM COLLEGE ASHFIELD

as you celebrate 120 years of girls' education

Bethlehem- A Pearl of Great Price

On Friday 7th July the annual Bethlehem Day was held in conjunction with the College's 120th birthday celebrations. Among the invited guests were the NSW Governor Professor Marie Bashir AC, Bishop David Cremin, Sr Annette Cunliffe RSC, Sr Linda Ferrington RSC and several Sisters of Charity including three past Principals. Also present were several representatives from the Catholic Education Office.



The theme of the paraliturgy was "Students are like Pearls. From small beginnings they develop into something beautiful". This was beautifully expressed in liturgical dance.

Another aspect of the paraliturgy was the expression of gratitude to the Sisters of Charity. Following the morning tea in the College hall the occasion was marked by Professor Bashir planting and the cutting of the 120th birthday cake by Sr Annette Cunliffe.

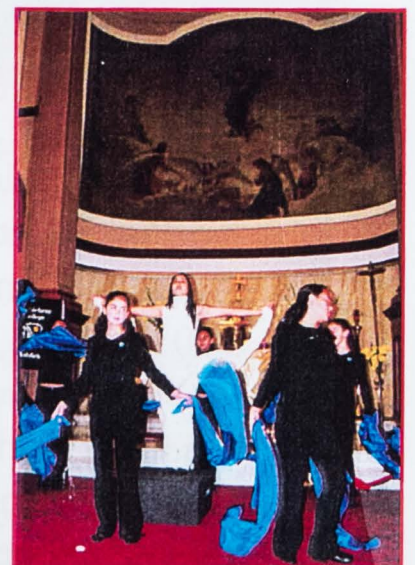
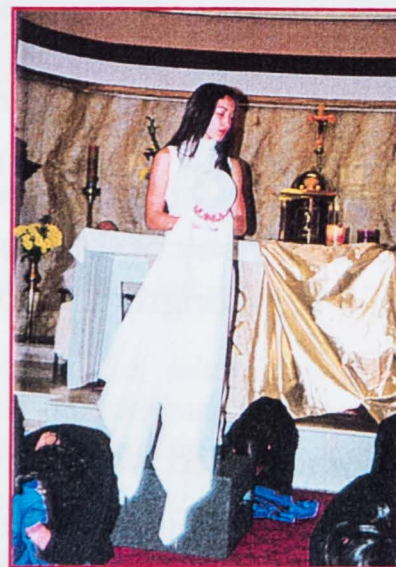


With the formalities over it was time for the girls to enjoy the day. The Home Science students had baked 850 small cakes and iced them with mauve icing. These were set out to form the figures 120 before being enjoyed by the students.

As an ex-student but more importantly as a Sister of Charity I felt proud to be part of the Bethlehem community.

One of my memories of Bethlehem day will be the banner over the entrance which read:

***"Happy 120th Birthday.
Thank you Sisters of Charity"***



As Sisters of Charity we have every reason to feel pride and satisfaction in Bethlehem in the 21st Century. Bethlehem is truly "A Pearl of Great Price".

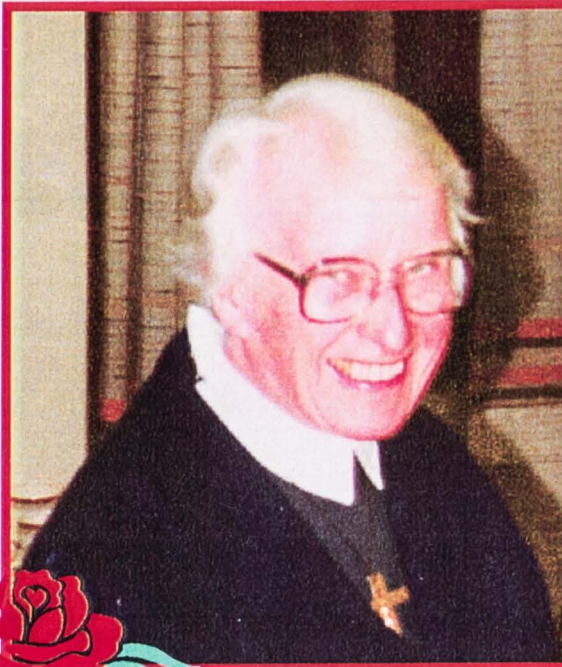
Sr Aileen Thomas RSC

Vale - Sister M. Rosalia Puckeridge, RSC

Sister M Rosalia Puckeridge RSC

died on 23rd July 2001 at St Mary's Villa Nursing Home at Concord where she had been a resident for six years.

Kathleen Puckeridge was born on 1st September 1909 at Lewisham. She was one of four children born to Edward and Ellen Puckeridge. Her sister, Sister Marie Camillus RSC and brothers Edward and Joe predeceased her.

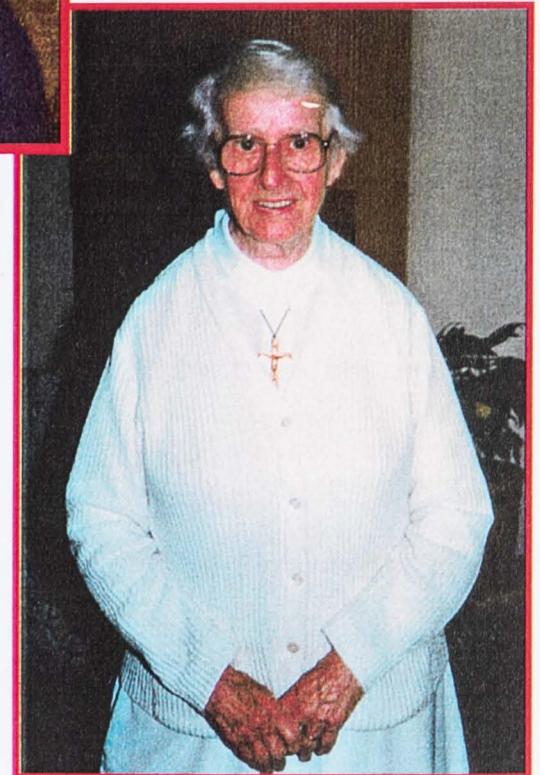


Kathleen was educated at St Thomas' School Lewisham and on leaving school entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of Charity in February 1928 and was professed on 4th August 1930.



Rosie as she was affectionately known commenced her teaching career at St Mary's School, Concord as novice in 1930. Five years at New Norfolk, a year in Melbourne and then back to Hobart followed this for a year before returning to Concord. Other appointments followed at CLC Melbourne, St Aloysius Kingston and various NSW schools.

She held the position of Principal in five of the schools. Rosie was a dedicated teacher who took her responsibilities very seriously. Those who lived in community with her at Liverpool in the 1960's will remember the famous Coca Cola projects that her students completed. So successful were the students in winning TV's for the school, Coca Cola had to limit the number of times the same school could win the competition.



In January 1979 Rosie retired from classroom teaching and returned to her beloved Lewisham to be involved in Pastoral Ministry in the Parish where she remained till she retired in 1992.

In her Eulogy Sister Linda Ferrington paid tribute to Rosie's journey as a Sister of Charity and in particular her time at Lewisham: "Rosie loved and served the people with great generosity. She was a constant visitor to family homes and to those in nursing homes offering them her support. She was legendry for her walking the streets on visitation and was well known in the local community. Many a time the community would receive a phone call to say Rosie had fallen and was in casualty. Rosie was a true companion for the sick, lonely and isolated through thousands of hours of visiting and was a treasure in the hearts of many people.'

She had strong bonds with her own family and took a great interest in all the joys and sorrows that they experienced. Her nieces and nephews were a source of joy and pride to her.

It was appropriate that Father Terry Bell was chief concelebrant at Rosie's Requiem mass at St Mary's Concord. She had played a significant role in 'training' him when he was appointed Parish Priest of Lewisham. They drove many miles together each week visiting the sick. The distance always turned out to be longer than Rosie had said because she couldn't work out the one way streets. So often did Rosie talk about how wonderful Father Terry was that the community affectionately dubbed him 'Father Wonderful'.

Sister M. Rosalia Puckeridge, RSC

1st September 1909 → 23rd July 2001

September 2001

K.I.T.

Vale - Sister M. St. Gregory Maguire, RSC



Sister Mary St Gregory died on 21st July 2001 at the age of 96. In her eulogy Sister Genevieve Walsh traced the story of her life. The following is an extract from that eulogy.

Estella Grace Maguire, one of six children, was born on 24th April 1905. Her primary schooling was at Blackfriars Practice School. She graduated from sixth class at age 9 and won a bursary to Fort Street Girls High, only the second bursary ever awarded at that time, and completed her studies with distinction.

Grace had an exceptional gift for using her hands. When only 13 she was making stage clothes for J.C. Williamson's Theatre.

With the advent of movies there was little work in the Theatre and on leaving school she worked as a milliner and tailor in a number of factories. By the time she was 29 she had been able to finance her brother through his trade and helped him and his wife establish a business in Hay.

This very talented young woman with a great sense of humour turned down several offers of marriage. She had for many years wanted to be a nun but felt she would not be accepted because of her public school education. This changed when she talked to an MSC priest who encouraged her to observe the work of the Sisters of Charity at the Hospice and among the poor. So impressed was she that she was determined to join them.

At the age of 34 Grace entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity taking the name, St. Gregory and was professed in 1942.

St Gregory was a brilliant and extraordinarily gifted teacher who continued teaching until she retired at age 90. Many a child who found school difficult or who was slow in learning to read, had their life turned around when they 'came under her spell' and under her expert tutelage. Her reward was the gleam that appeared in their eyes and the parent's undying gratitude for the gift of learning she awakened in them. When she spoke of children she spoke with great love, reverence and dignity. She had the enviable ability of bringing out the best in each one, of advancing their academic ability and teaching them practical and attractive crafts. Her craft lessons are legendary.

Many a young Sister of Charity was taught the art of teacher in St Gregory's classroom. One Sister recalls giving a lesson with St. Gregory sitting at the back of the room. When the young sister had finished the lesson in super quick time she looked to the back of the room to see Sister St. Gregory holding up a sign that said "Start again from the beginning".

St Gregory was a woman of style and fashion who took great pride in her appearance and loved to show off a new outfit. She loved fun and nonsense, dressing up in concerts and performing comedy or satire, which she continued to do at St. Joseph's Village until the last year. Her poetry, sacred, humorous and 'profane' is well known.

A dedicated religious Grace Maguire was an inspiration to all who knew her. The fruits of her life of prayer and her devotion to Mary were evident in her conversation and her writings. She was greatly gifted by God and she in turn gifted others spiritually and materially.



Sister M. St. Gregory Maguire, RSC

24th April 1905 → 21st July 2001

September 2001

K.I.T.

Editorial

My congratulations to our two Diamond Jubilarians, Sisters Mary Goss and Grata Kelly and the three Golden Jubilarians, Sisters Bernardine Hennessy, Patricia Heenan and Judith Clark.

In a recent weekly newsletter to the School Community at Liverpool, the Principal, Robyn Glover suggested that to grow they needed to set more goals as challenges for themselves. She went on to list prominent people in history who were not satisfied to stand still and because of this achieved greatness- Socrates: Beethoven, his teacher called him a hopeless composer; Louisa May Alcott, author of Little Women had been encouraged to seek work as a servant; Louis Pasteur was only a mediocre pupil in undergraduate studies.

As I reflected on the dedication and service of these Jubilarians and on the lives of our two recently deceased sisters, Sister St Gregory Maguire and Sister Rosalia Puckeridge I was struck by what these women have achieved in their lives. They have not stood still, they set goals and met the challenges with great generosity and God has achieved greatness through them.

The celebrations of Bethlehem College's 120 years of girls' education and the opening of the extensions at St Columba's and Mount Carmel Colleges are also reminders of what can be achieved if goals are set and action taken to achieve those goals.

Included with this edition of KIT is the first Annual Report for the Sisters of Charity Foundation Limited. I hope that you will take the time to read the report and perhaps to pass it on to friends.

May we too not stand still in our service of the Lord.

Maria Wheeler, RSC