



Sisters of Charity
of Australia

Keep in Touch

KIT
MAGAZINE

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Inside this month

Welcome to the December 2019 edition of *Keep in Touch*, where there is much to celebrate and remember.

We recollect the lives and ministries of two of our Sisters, Val Green and Jean Montgomery and say farewell to our retreat centre, *Currajeen*, at Doreen.

We also have a look at two of the organisations developed by the Sisters of Charity, the Thesians and our Companions.



2019: A year of sadness and rewards

Every year is busy but this one seems to have been especially so. Both the highlights and the challenges have been numerous.

In the middle of the year, my time in Ireland and in Rome was a wonderful refreshment, providing connections and inspiration which have continued to resource our conversations and reflections ever since.

In June, the opening of the Heritage Centre and Archives was, in a very real sense, the fulfilment of our collective dream for our charism and ministry to be represented in one place, both to honour the past and to inform and inspire the future.

The opening itself was a celebration of the Congregation and of all those who have participated in our work or journeyed with us. The development of the Heritage Centre is a tribute also to the dedication of all those who worked to make it possible.

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2019: A year of sadness and rewards

From page 1

The task of moving the Archives from the St Vincent's College campus to the purpose-built facility within the Heritage Centre was the major achievement this year for the Archives staff. It was challenging, and difficult to manage, while continuing to provide an uninterrupted service to those seeking information. We are so very grateful for all that has been achieved.

This year has also brought sadness as we farewelled four of our Sisters – Colleen Bell, Val Jaeger Green, Jean Montgomery, and Mary Cooke.

They, like all of us, benefitted from the love and care of our nursing and support staff. Our team of administrative staff, health care co-ordinators, housekeepers and support co-ordinators do so much to enable us to remain independent, as they thoughtfully attend to our daily needs, providing advice and support and ensuring the provision of happy, safe homes for so many Sisters.

Our staff members allow us to extend hospitality, to exercise our individual ministries, and to care for each other. To see the compassion demonstrated every day by those who serve and support us is to see the face of Christ in our midst. We are very blessed.

Some of our Congregational staff have had the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Mary Aikenhead and the early Sisters this year. The pilgrimages are just part of the formation journey enhancing an understanding of the charism with which we are gifted.

Sisters of Charity Community Care finds itself in the middle of a difficult time as drought ravages the country. Emotional resources are stretched, communities under pressure and increasing isolation is exacerbating the feeling that the problems of



Phil Glendenning, Sr Ruth Durick and Sr Clare at the Twilight Gathering in September

rural and remote communities are poorly understood. Sisters of Charity Community Care helps to bridge that divide.

The Congregation has worked towards its entry to the National Redress Scheme. A comprehensive list of every site and every service ever operated by the Sisters of Charity has been compiled and submitted. As the National Redress Scheme has developed its operations, it has become more familiar with the Church's structure. That has resulted in the initial vision of a simple process becoming much more complex.

We will soon be "declared" as a participant in the Scheme but it will be at once the end of a year of difficult work by a number of members of our staff, together with our lawyers, and the beginning of a journey of dealing with any claims which might be submitted.

Simultaneously, we have been developing the policies we need to meet the Professional Standards to be implemented across the Church to meet our Safeguarding responsibilities. It will require a cultural change and commitment to safeguarding the vulnerable, including children,



Sr Clare with author and journalist, Greg Sheridan, at the Gathering

and every one of our Sisters and staff will be involved in 2020.

This year has also seen the roll out of the NBN, a process which some Sisters have endured rather than enjoyed, as we dealt with an essentially flawed broadband system. We are close, we hope, to the end of that journey.

By the grace of God, we have come through this year with love and gratitude for all we have been given.

At this very special time of year, on behalf of all the Sisters of Charity of Australia, I would like to wish you and your families a holy Christmas, and a happy New Year.

Clare Nolan rsc
Congregational Leader

Memories of *Currajeen* at Doreen

The Sisters left Doreen and their retreat centre, *Currajeen*, at the end of August. Before leaving, they gathered at Doreen, north-west of Melbourne, in a ritual of music, scripture, reflection, and sharing of memories – with the mixture of emotions that such occasions bring.

They were glad to be there to remember together sacred moments of their own journeys and rejoice in the vision of Sr Margaret Dwyer, and in her wisdom

and energy and dreams in initiating the opening of this sacred place which provided a spiritual oasis for many.

Sr Maureen Delaney reflected on her own ministries and time at *Currajeen*.

"I sit here today, looking out at the brown grass, and the many homes that have arisen in recent time. Previously I would have been looking at green pastures to the horizon.

"In the 10 years since I came to live and minister at Currajeen Retreat Centre at Doreen (26 km north-east from Melbourne's CBD), the landscape has changed.

Our roads have been widened. New roads now exist. Painted Hills Rd is almost beside us; there are traffic lights at its entrance into Bridge Inn Rd where we are located.

"What was then our Haven of Peace, the Currajeen Retreat centre, is still a haven of peace – but its surroundings are different.

"Many new families have come among us. We meet them in the supermarkets and in the churches – a rich mix of cultures – Indians, Sri Lankans, Filipinos, South Americans, Europeans from Malta, Italy, Spain, Austria, come to mind.



Sr Maureen Delaney

"It is all about people! Through my week, I walk with people from far and near, who come for support in their living, for a quiet prayer, for an answer to questions, seeking a greater openness to our loving God.

"The interfaith community is strong in our Municipality

of Whittlesea, as are ecumenical involvements. Both are represented in gatherings of Spirituality in the Pub. Currajeen people are present in both, as they were in the recent gathering from the Christian Churches on the World Day of Prayer.

"Our Faith Sharing Saturday mornings with the RSC Sisters of Melbourne have become significant for us across the years – a reflection time together and the shared company of lunch."

These are Sr Maureen's words describing changes she has noted since coming to *Currajeen* in 2009. She had been in Ireland on renewal.

Continued on page 4 →

Memories of *Currajeen* at Doreen

From page 3



En route back to her ministry in Launceston at the Emmanuel Pastoral and Spirituality Centre, Maureen visited her friend and mentor, Sr Margaret Dwyer, at *Currajeen*. Margaret had become the Vicar for Religious in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

In a conversation, Margaret asked: "Would you think about taking on this?"

"This" was the ministry of *Currajeen* ("Spring of Living Water") with its retreats, programs in spirituality, its spiritual directees, its outreach and welcome to all who come.

Sr Maureen, who had grown up in Melbourne, had attended St Columba's, a Sisters of Charity College in Essendon (she is a diehard Bombers' fan), had loved her time in Tasmania. But the prospect of returning home to Melbourne, closer to family and old friends, and continuing in the ministry she loved, meant that she made the move. She had come for a short visit, and stayed for more than ten years.

It was a ministry in which she thrived. Now in her 80th year, she is seeking to lighten her "load." The long retreats might cease, but her listening and presence with people continues as spiritual director, guide and gatherer of individuals.

Her Parish Priest, Fr Martin, has seen Sr Elizabeth Costigan and Sr Maureen accompanying retreatants to Mass across the years, and is aware of parishioners who went to *Currajeen* for advice, support, a quiet space and friendship. "Yours is a hidden ministry, Maureen," he said one day – words that delighted her with his awareness.

While the landscape of Doreen has changed, and its inhabitants, too, Sr Maureen's focus is as it has always been: "It is about the people. Always about people."



In February 2019, Maureen's pastoral skills were particularly needed. Early in the month the people of the area were remembering and commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Black Friday Fires.

The memorials of those days were magnificent and brought the community ever closer. And, there were those for whom it was too much to participate – yet they knew strong bonds through tragedy and support for one another. "I am a survivor, not a victim!" – memorable words.



Clockwise from top left:

Sr Clare with Sr Josephine Cannell;
Srs Helga Neidhart, Margaret Sapsford, and Elizabeth Costigan;
Srs Patricia Walker, Joan Stpleton, and Loretta Bani;
Sisters celebrate the farewell liturgy in these next two images; Sr Margaret Sapsford

She has had to draw on her own deep well of pastoral care and rich spiritual development to help those who have been clearly suffering. These are just other chapters in Sr Maureen's journey with the Sisters of Charity.

She was educated by the Sisters, and when she left school she worked with the Civil Aviation Authority. Like so many Sisters of Charity, she had considered a possible religious vocation while she was at school, but had decided when she entered the work force that was not her path.

And yet . . .

She entered in 1959, telling herself that in six months she would be home. However, she was soon involved in the Novitiate and in teacher training.

Her first appointment as a secondary teacher was at Bethlehem College Ashfield, followed by the role of science mistress at St Mary's Hurstville.

Later at St Mary's Liverpool she was in the science mistress role and then as religious education coordinator.

Years of teaching ministries followed.

In 1993 she went for renewal to the Jesuit Renewal centre in Ohio. From that time her ministries have been involved with retreats and spirituality and adult faith formation – apart from the time when she was a councillor for the Congregation from the end of 2002 until the end of 2008.

And that was when she came to *Currajeen's* then-green pastures, 10 years ago.

As she looks into the future, she sees her life more involved with parishioners of the local parishes and continuing to be with *Currajeen* people who seek to meet with her.

While Sr Maureen's physical capacity might be declining with the years, her spiritual gifts have never been more needed.

So that is where her focus lies in the future among the people of the area she has come to know and where she is known in the local scene of Christ the Light Parish, that enfolds Mernda, Doreen, Whittlesea and Kinglake.

Melbourne Companions 2019

Compiled by Sr Elizabeth Costigan



Our Melbourne group of Companions continues to be alive and well. We have 25 names on our list. Also eight Sisters of Charity occasionally come to the gatherings and provide wonderful support and encouragement to the Companions.

The group is composed of ex-students and staff members both past and present of our two colleges, St. Columba's Essendon and Catholic Ladies College, Eltham.

Our health services are well-represented both by present and past staff from St Vincent's Public and Private Hospitals. We have also welcomed parishioners from St Therese's Essendon who joined as a result of their association with the Sisters of Charity living in the Parish.

History

The idea of establishing RSC Companions arose at the 2002 Chapter of the Sisters of Charity and was approved at the 2008 Chapter. Sister Margaret Dwyer was asked to lead the ongoing development of the idea here in Melbourne.

She was helped by Sisters Margaret Laffan, and Elizabeth Costigan, and a group of colleagues from our health and education ministries. We worked in conjunction with the Sydney group through teleconferences and face to face meetings.

In August 2008, we gathered a group of co-workers/colleagues and asked them why they would be interested in becoming an RSC Companion. Some of the reasons they suggested were:

'The RSC charism inspires us and we want to be part of this when it is offered. RSC values resonate with our own Companions and would bring like-minded people together where our spirituality and personal values would be nurtured.'

During 2009, the following vision statement was composed:

'As RSC Companions, we are inspired by the spirit, dream, and life of Mary Aikenhead, foundress of the Sisters of charity, and the unfolding of this dream over two centuries.'

'We support one another by friendship, prayer and our endeavour to show Christ's compassion to all, ever aware of, and responsive to the changing needs of the times.'

Over the past 11 years, the Companions have met for four gatherings a year, on a Sunday afternoon 2.00-4.00.

We met at various venues especially at *Currajeen*, our retreat centre at Doreen. For the last couple of years, we have met at PACE, St Therese's, Essendon.

Each year we have a retreat day on one of the Sundays from 10.30-3.00. Lunch is provided for the participants.

Themes at the Gatherings

We have covered many themes over these 11 years including:

- The Mary Aikenhead Story
- Ignatian Spirituality
- St Paul, the man, the mission, the message, a DVD from Broken Bay Diocese – speakers included Fr Brendan Byrne SJ, Sister Michele Connolly RSJ and Father Richard Leonard SJ
- Praying with Pope Francis
- Pope Francis: Modelling the ministry of St Peter. A DVD presentation from the



Left: Deirdre O'Donnell, Elizabeth Costigan RSC, Shaun Dowling-Horgan
Above: Shaun Dowling-Horgan, Margaret Rankin, Elizabeth Costigan RSC, Deirdre O'Donnell

Broken Bay Diocese – speakers included Perth's Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, Sister Monica Cavanagh RSJ and Father Noel Connelly, a Columban Priest

- Pope Francis showing the new way of exercising the Papacy
- The Year of Mercy: Pope Francis Call
- Letters of Mary Aikenhead
- Mary Aikenhead as a communicator
- The Field Hospital – the Australian Army Nursing service
- 'The Round Table' – MAM Document. Each Companion has a copy of this document which is used as a basis for reflections
- Survey with companions led by Deirdre O'Donnell using the following questions:
 - What attracts you?
 - Scripture, Image or Story
 - How can the Spirit live on?
 - How could we bring these ideas into reality?

Guest speakers

Sisters Margaret Beirne, Linda Ferrington, and Elizabeth Dodds gave valuable input on Ignatian Spirituality and The Cause of Mary Aikenhead.

Sisters Margaret Dwyer RIP, Margaret Laffan RIP, Liz Costigan, Maryanne Confoy, Regina Millard with Shaun Dowling-Horgan, Deirdre O'Donnell, Margaret Rankin have all led reflections at our gatherings.

In 2018, Bernadette Mundy, the manager of Briar Terrace, together with Shaun Dowling-Horgan, a companion and a member of the pastoral care staff at St Vincent's public hospital, gave a wonderful PowerPoint presentation titled *Briar Terrace – the round table*. Bernadette took over the manager position of Briar Terrace from Sr Margaret Laffan, who was the founder of the facility.

On our retreat day in 2019, we welcomed four Year 11 students, with a staff member, from St Columba's College Essendon. These young women gave an inspiring reflection on the Lucan Gospel Understanding of Love.

At the October Gathering this year, Sr Regina Millard led us in a reflection on Presence.

Jubilees

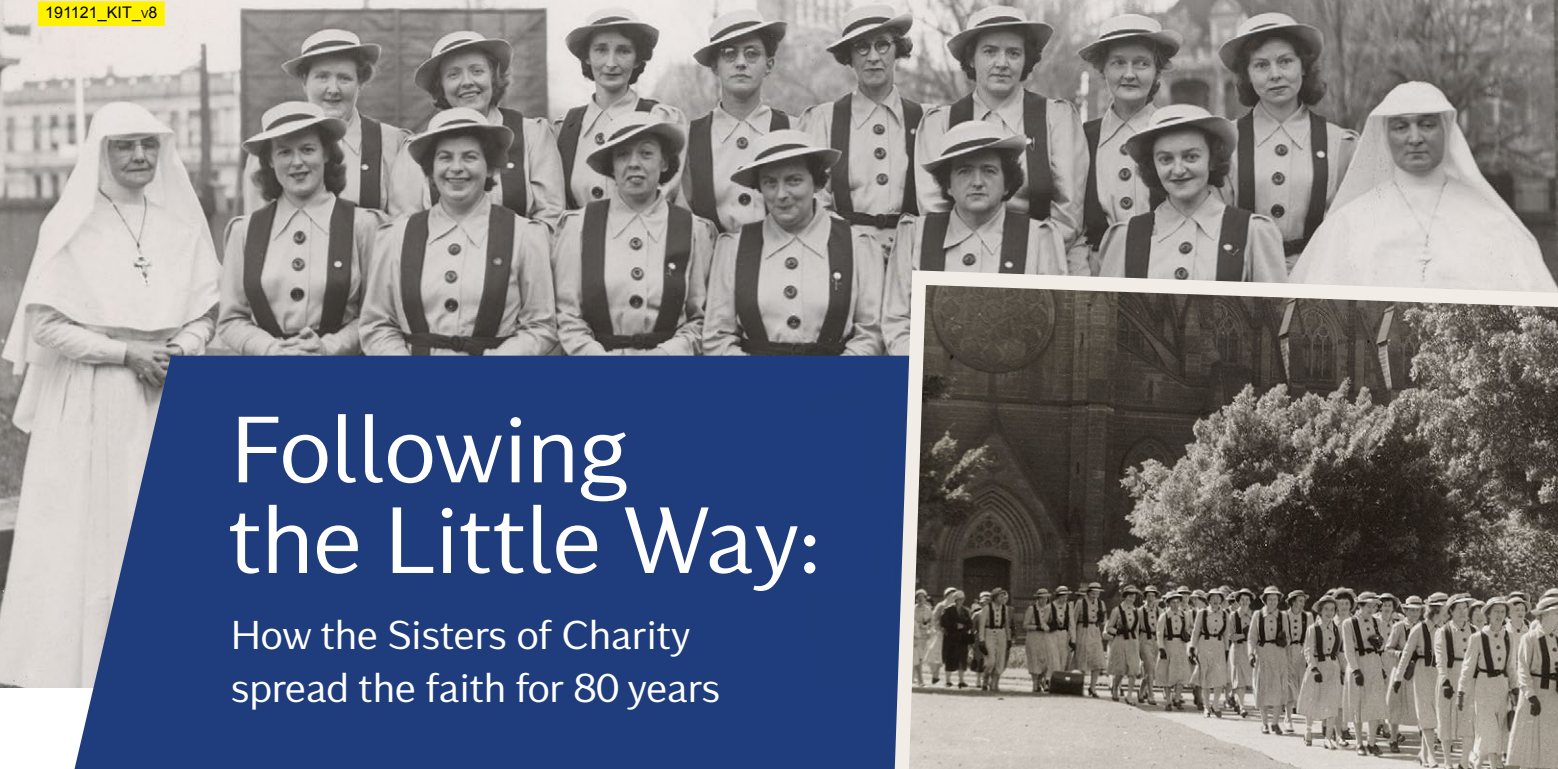
For the last four years in November, our Companions have joined with the Sisters for prayer and lunch as we celebrate the Sisters in Melbourne who have had a jubilee of their religious Profession during the year. In 2013, the Companions also participated in the liturgy when the Sisters celebrated 175 years.

Enquiries

Information about the Companions can be found on the Sisters of Charity website <https://www.sistersofcharity.org.au/?s=companions>

Also from Co-ordinators

- Elizabeth Costigan RSC at elizabeth.costigan@rscsisters.com.au
- Margaret Rankin margrankin@optusnet.com.au
- Shaun Dowling-Horgan shaun.dowling@svha.org.au



Following the Little Way:

How the Sisters of Charity spread the faith for 80 years



World War I was not yet over, and life for the poor and the marginalised in Sydney – in suburbs such as Darlinghurst – was difficult and harsh.

Some 50 per cent of Catholic children in these areas went to diocesan schools or those run by religious institutes.

The other 50 per cent? These were the children Sister of Charity Mary Therese (formerly Anna Cotter) wanted to bring into a loving embrace.

She had taken the name of St Therese after her profession, in honour of the French saint who proclaimed her vocation was "love." Sr M. Therese was to live her vocation fully, in love with God, poor people, and the young women and girls she attracted into the club. (Source: *Following the Little Way: Spreading the Faith 1918 – 1998* by Helena Farland).

Sr M. Therese was professed at the age of 36, and was sent to minister at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst. She was engaged in missionary work, visiting people in their homes. It was tough then, a place full of thugs and crooks, where impoverished families struggled to survive.

There were also, as Sr M. Therese noted in her little book, a collection of "Careless Catholics" among the families – some with nine children – needing to be clothed.



At the Sacred Heart Church in Darlinghurst, she set up her first club, preparing children for their first Communion, welcoming Catholics returning to the Church, and instructing others.

Its early years are barely remembered, but as time went on, the Club grew larger and stronger. Many Theresians discovered their vocations and entered religious orders.

Among the institutes and congregations they entered were the Brigidines, the Good Samaritans, the Daughters of Charity, the Little Company of Mary, the Josephites, and the Presentation Sisters.

But the largest group entered the Sisters of Charity of Australia – some 44 Teresians joined ~~before the congregation~~. Among those still in the RSCs are Srs Mary Frances Gould, Dawn Bang, Eileen Brown, and Margaret Valentine.

In the next edition of *KIT*, we discover another of the faith-sharing innovations of the Sisters of Charity – the volunteers known as VASCA.

This page, clockwise from left:

Sr Patrice Lohan and Sr Gerardus Sholl with Theresians in Melbourne, 1962;

The Theresian Club Sydney in Hyde Park after their Annual Communion Service at St Mary's Cathedral, October 6 1940;

Sr M. Patrice Lohan founder of the Theresian Club, Melbourne in 1929. All images from the Congregational Archives



Above, from left: Sr M. Therese Cotter. 5 January, 1920; Members of the Theresian Club, Sydney, 1918; The Theresian Club Sydney on the steps of St Mary's Cathedral for their Annual Communion, 19 October 1941



Above:
Theresian Club Sydney banner, 1930s-1940s;
Members of the Theresian Club outside Lisieux, Padstow, in Sydney, ca 1940s;
Lisieux, the Theresian Holiday Home for children from 1938 to 1964, which became an emergency shelter in the early 1960s;
A small pin badge from the Theresian Club Sydney

RSC Companions Sydney

"From our rich tradition of spirituality with which we Sisters of Charity have been blessed, how can we give back to you?" was the question we posed to the men and women invited to explore with us on August 24, 2008. It was the first meeting of what would become the Sydney-based Sisters of Charity Companions group.



There was much discussion about faith, church and the world **today** and how we are called to live in it all and points which led to the establishment of the group included:

- We need an identifiable community, not necessarily residential, but a more dynamic and supportive community which gathers to share, discern and pray together.
- Can the Sisters provide opportunities for spiritual and faith development which are not readily available for lay people? Could this also include educating us about the RSC charism and ministries?
- "Group mentoring" is an important consideration.
- "Time out" for full-time mothers and workers to pray and share experiences together.
- We need solidarity for today when so many things are fragmented. We need "links."
- We hope that there will not be too many formal meetings and that there will be time for social/friendship as well.

The minute-taker noted: It was interesting how most of those attending said, "See you again next time!"

The next times

During the 11 years since that first meeting, we have endeavoured to be faithful to our beginnings and also to adapt to the situations in which we have found ourselves.

The group has diminished through members' relocation, transport difficulties, and by the deaths of five precious members over the years. As in all things, however, new life emerges from sorrow in the form of new members who bring welcome life and energy to the group.

Together, we have explored the story of Mary Aikenhead, Ignatian spirituality, discernment, the early Sisters in Australia, the New Universe story, the writings of Richard Rohr OFM, Joan Chittister OSB, Daniel O'Leary, and Pope Francis to name but a few. We delight in sharing about the Church we all know and love and look for articles to inform us and spark discussion. Sometimes, it's hard to stop the discussion to remember to boil the kettle for afternoon tea... and speaking of afternoon tea, we have some wonderful cooks and never go hungry!

Because the two hours on a Sunday afternoon passes so quickly, we began in 2012 to gather one Saturday a year for a longer "retreat" or reflection day. Over the years it has grown to include an overnight stay at Shellharbour with the retreat, a themed dinner on the Saturday night followed by a movie in keeping with the theme. Sunday is a quiet morning and then, reluctantly, we head home.

In our own words...

The best way to begin to understand what being a Companion means, is through the words of the Companions themselves:

In 2012, they said being a Companion meant:

- Time to reflect
- Companionship
- Life giving
- Sharing and listening
- Goodness of the people
- Bond between us and trust
- Search for God
- Peace with God
- Wisdom of God within the group
- Place to share experiences – to listen, to speak
- Quiet time



Clockwise from top left: Pre-dinner drinks at 2019 retreat. Retreat 2018; Fay, Edith and Elena; Merrell, Rina and Kerry celebrate ten years; Pat and Laura; Rosetta and Rosa; Merrell and Trish; Kim, Rina and Kim; Retreat Shellharbour 2017; Liverpool meeting 2016

- Deep time
- Community of people to whom God is important
- Place where I am drawn to God in community
- Place of consolations

Life giving

- Place where worries and fears are put on hold & to trust in God
- Invitation to listen to and trust more deeply
- Listening to how God is speaking in the lives of others
- Awareness of God in everything – every event, every person
- Love everything life presents to you

- Feeling: peace at the glimmer of what could be like if I lived the above
- Frustration at my lack of belief in this
- “All is well, all will be well, all manner of things will be well”
- Mystery is like a well-wrapped parcel. We unfold the parcel gradually until we arrive at the gift. Mystery of God unfolds gradually

Faith Development

- Constantly questioning where I am at in my faith development. How do I see God?
- Now I am invited to learn to listen and be sensitive to the messages and signs that come from God

Atmosphere

- Sacred Space – people have become more comfortable in sharing some of their faith journey experiences.
- Sharing of spirituality opportunities, not always available in our church.
- Discernment process, making choices
- Feeling of “We’re all in this struggling Church together”
- People at different stages of faith development
- Invitation to continue sharing faith journey. I don’t know what particular direction?

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RSC Companions Sydney

From page 11

In 2015, members of the group wrote:

- I have seen trust of people grow within the group and feel very much part of it.
- The group has been very important and supportive for me. It is the only group where I can discuss my faith with people who share the same values. I feel really enriched by the sharing and the support in the group. It has also opened up my friendship with others in the group in a deeper more trusting way. Also we have lovely companionship over afternoon tea.
- Members thirst for more spirituality. Members are so grateful for the content of each meeting in the Sisters of Charity chapel at St Anne's Place, Liverpool.
- Companions have helped me have a broader look at what it means to be Catholic. To be "whole" not just holy.

This year, the members reflected on the Companions' 10-year anniversary:

- I really value the beautiful relationships that have developed among group members. We place great trust in each other and can talk openly without fear of judgement. Most importantly, however, is that we have become true companions to each other in difficult times and celebrate the good times with great joy.
- What we reflect on in our Companions group challenges me in a positive way. It helps me, with others, to consider the writings of both ancient and contemporary Catholic authors who stir the heart in life-giving and hopeful ways.
- In our common experience of Jesus and each other as companions on the journey, I often leave feeling a little more peaceful and hopeful that a positive, way forward for our messy church is possible

New members are always welcome. We meet at St Anne's Place, Liverpool approximately every six weeks. Dates for 2020 will be added to the website www.sistersofcharity.org.au

Enquiries can be directed to Kerry by email: kakenny@optusnet.com.au

RSC COMPANIONS PRAYER

May Mary Aikenhead's life journey have a positive impact on our lives.

Mary was a woman of vision, who founded the Sisters of Charity in Ireland.

May we discover the value and gift of community.

Mary was a woman of trust, who relied on Divine providence.

May we experience the inner calm of such reliance.

Mary was a woman of compassion, who visited prisons to offer a gentle presence.

May we be aware of, and responsive to those imprisoned by fear and loneliness about us.

Mary was a woman of the people, who walked the streets in the spirit of the Gospel

May we connect with others wherever we may be led.

Mary was a woman of innovation, who sought new ways to live out her life vocation.

May we have the courage to explore and embrace the adventure of life.

Mary was a woman of vulnerability, who continued to shine even when confined to a wheelchair for her last twenty-seven years.

May we draw on our resilience when challenged by our fragile humanity.

Mary was a woman of generosity, who sent the first five sisters to walk on Australian soil to minister to those in poverty, including convict women.

May we be guided by the spirit of selflessness and kindness in our every action.

Mary was a woman of faith, who allowed the love of Christ to urge her on.

May we feel the inner warmth of such a divine fire burning within.

May the legacy of Mary Aikenhead inspire us to follow her example of heartfelt commitment to those people on the margin of society; sensitivity to broken-hearted individuals; and, affirmation of the dignity within each person.

Shaun Dowling-Horgan

Words of remembrance

Sr Valerie Jaeger Green rsc

(December 1, 1932 – October 22, 2019)

**Our Lady Star of the Sea,
Miranda NSW
August 27, 2019**

Her personal motto:

"All to all for love of Thee."



Sr Valerie Jaeger Green

Sr Pauline Staunton remembers her great friend in this tribute.

"Everything starts with a sunrise, but it is what you do before it sets that is important."

Between sunrise and sunset, it was Val's intention to make every moment in life count, and she did. She also encouraged others to make life count. *"Don't waste it on the small stuff,"* she would often say.

An absolute for Val was the love she had for her family. There is little doubt that she carried that love into the ocean paradise or whatever we might call heaven.

Val was a strong woman with a faith built on and intertwined with deep spirituality, joy and creativity. She was nurtured daily by her deep love for each person and nature.

She was a woman of extraordinary determination and energy.

She was competitive, and a little impulsive. She could be stubborn, ingenious, and always looked for ways to engage people and make them feel special.

Prior to 1983, Val, a brilliant teacher, ministered at Potts Point, Cabramatta, and Paddington.



She was one of the founding members of Holy Trinity Convent and School in Curtin, ACT. She taught at Liverpool, Ashfield, Strathmore, Hurstville, Darlinghurst, Lewisham, and Auburn.

Val completed a childcare course, and through 1986 to 1989 completed a social welfare and a diversional therapy diploma. Skilfully, she ministered at Sacred Heart Hospice, Darlinghurst, and at St Joseph's, Auburn.

Val and I began working together at the Theresian Emergency Centre, Edgecliff. Our community included

Srs Agnes Mulquiney, Brendan O'Flaherty, both retired, Jane Frances Wall and Germanus McQuillan who were involved in Prison Ministry and of course Tim, our tiny guard dog.

Val and I had the care of 20 children, aged three to 16 in emergency accommodation. She excelled in this ministry. Children often arrived with only the clothes



they stood in. They were fitted out in perfect style giving each a sense of joy and self-worth. Her vision was such a lifesaver for many of the children who were emotionally fragile. Her energy and love for her ministry was inspirational.

Above, centre. From left:
Sr Leone Wittmack and Sr Valerie Green
SVH, Sydney;

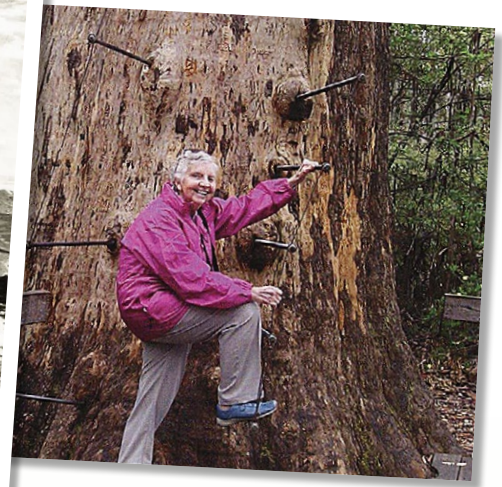
Sr Leonard O'Neill, Sr Valerie Green,
Sr Marion Corless and Mrs Margaret Proctor,
(nee Slavin), a pupil at Edgecliff when the
Sisters of Charity arrived in August, 1879.
26 Aug 1979

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Words of remembrance

Sr Valerie Jaeger Green rsc

From page 13



Val's enthusiasm was not always a happy trait for the children whom she took swimming to Ashfield on Sundays.

It went something like this: *"Sr Pauline, please don't let Sr Val take us swimming tomorrow, it is too cold."*

Me: *"Now Val, the children are not going swimming tomorrow."*

Val: *"Oh, if you don't let them go, they will be so disappointed!"*

Val's perfection in the pool and surf was well known. She was a champion in her youth and later a Masters Champion. She earned the title *"The Flying Nun."* She was always first off the blocks!

Val passed her Life Saving Diploma which that came in handy when she pulled three of our Sisters out of a rip at Shellharbour.

She swam, surfed, snow and water skied, took part in biathlons and triathlons, and was a volunteer at the 2000 Sydney Olympics

A new ministry emerged around this time. On what I had thought would be a quiet weekend at Huskisson, Sr Val went to see the parish priest of Nowra, convincing him that he needed a parish Sister in the Vincentia parish. A visit to three estate agents followed and a vacant flat found.

Val was very happy with her move to Vincentia with a flat of her own and surrounded by water. She loved her ministry in the Bay and Basin region of the parish and endeared herself to the parishioners there.

When it came time to retire from her ministry, Val moved into Stella Maris, Cronulla with a view of the Pacific. At that time, she wrote these words: *"The sea of my life has come alive... so near the ocean. The colours change daily and I have my own cathedral of God's creation."*

Above, from left:

Sr Valerie Green off to Swim Masters.
December, 1988;

Sr Valerie Green Swim Masters
2 December, 1988. Photography
by Quentin Jones (reprinted with
kind permission);

Sr Valerie Green with pigeon
ca 2013-ca 2018;

Sr Valerie Green.
Western Australia, 2011

Sr Jean Montgomery rsc

(March 11, 1936 – September 21, 2019)

**St John's Church, Auburn NSW
Tuesday, October 1, 2019**

Her personal motto:

**"Not my will but
thine be done."**



Sr Jean Montgomery,
Mid-Chapter Gathering, Parramatta 2005

To capture in brief all the aspects of Jean's life is a real challenge. There is no biography of Jean in book form... but there are many pages and chapters which lie in the hearts of each of us who loved Jean.

Jean was loved, nurtured, and formed by her beautiful parents, Hugh and Marjorie, who graced her with parental gifts which would be woven into the patterns and the colours of her life.

Both were English and from them she probably had that delightful humour which would see her through many difficulties and challenges.

She was a baby sister for Michael. They forged a sibling love which kept them close especially in their later years. Her early education was in the Blue Mountains, but she finished school at Bethlehem College, Ashfield. That was the seed bed for her desire to become a Sister of Charity. On July 2, 1953, Jean set out on her journey to Wahroonga, when she negotiated her way through the novitiate.

On the eve of our religious profession, after two and a half years, Jean and her little group were told that we "had no idea of what religious life was all about."

But because Jean had studied hard, she passed the leaving certificate and went on to train as a very competent, creative, well-loved and popular teacher.



Above, from left:
Srs Pauline Staunton, Catherine Ellis,
Cecilia Kinsella, Mary Kennedy,
Jean Montgomery on board the
Princess of Tasmania, 1967

With others in her group, she would take advantage of a window in their day and disappear into the spacious grounds. It was worth every one of the Paters and the Aves to get outside and make merry.

In her second year, she sat for the leaving certificate at Potts Point. Not long after the results came out, the novice mistress summoned Jean and said: "Your results were so bad that Mother General was absolutely floored."

Later, her pastoral presence in schools and parishes was gentle and welcome to many families whose problems were not easy to discuss except with Jean who listened compassionately and set them at ease with her smile.

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Words of remembrance

Sr Jean Montgomery rsc

From page 15

She mentored the Sisters of Charity Companions with spiritual depth and wisdom, and ministered in 21 of our schools and facilities

Jean's first appointment was at Liverpool. She was untrained, with 90 plus Year 2s, many with migrant backgrounds, and in a crowded church/school. Rain or shine, she often led the evacuation of children into the playground to accommodate a funeral.

She was a gifted storyteller and would tell the children a very important person was travelling to God in Heaven and the children had been specially chosen to wave them off. She was always able to make people feel appreciated and valued.

Jean was sent to Kingston in Tasmania, where life was ideal in a small country school and convent overlooking the Derwent. The community was an excellent fit for Jean.

Life was obviously too good for her there. She was asked to move to the orphanage, Aikenhead House, in Hobart. This appointment teaching at St Joseph's was devastating to Jean.

She was often sleep-deprived, up nightly with the three to five-year-olds who were upset and fretting.

This part of gentle Jean's journey is important. Because of her empathy, and the way she excelled in practical day to day psychology, wisdom, and cunning, prison ministry was added to Jean's ministry.

It was a highly charged ministry of care and she became a champion of justice and compassion. Doing justice was never far from her thinking and acting. She has surely carried these wonderful traits into Heaven.

Jean through her life and illness gave us an example of how to live and how to die with faith, acceptance, and to ensure it was the other who was cared for.

Sr Pauline Staunton rsc



Above: Sr Jean Montgomery at Megiar, PNG, ca 1971

Below, from left: Srs Genevieve Walsh and Jean Montgomery, St John's Park Convent, 1984



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