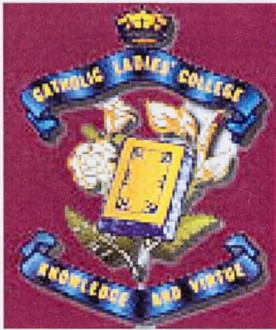




Keep in Touch

Sisters of Charity Newsletter-Partners in Mission
Vol.3 No.3 September 2002



Founder's Day Celebrations

Catholic Ladies College at Eltham had a wonderful Centenary Founder's Day celebration on 15th August.

A number of special guests including Sr Linda Ferrington, former principals Sr Una McAllister and Ms Patricia Ryan, the Principal of St Columba's College, Ms Julie Ryan and several Sisters of Charity and former students joined the CLC staff and students for the occasion.

Highlights of the celebrations were Ms Maria Forde singing about the CLC story and the students from St Columba's College dancing the Mary Aikenhead story.

The following is the Founder's Day Prayer read at the beginning of the celebration.

*Jesus, you are the Friend of this community.
You sustained the brave and generous women
who founded the Sisters of Charity and who gave
up so much to serve others. We celebrate today
those founded our school. Their example has
graced us with special gifts!*

*Humanity to help us see the dignity in every person.
Wisdom and Intelligence to encourage our love of learning.
Generosity to reach out with patience and openness to those who need us.
Spirit of Joy and Harmony to live day by day in community.
Courage to accept Mary Aikenhead's greatest challenge—to be willing
to question the wrongs we see even it means standing up to authority.
Faith to live up to her motto "For the love of Christ urges us on".*

*We give thanks for these wonderful women who have given us Roots
to draw on and Horizons to reach for. AMEN*



Sisters of Charity for Peace & Justice



The Sisters of Charity for Peace and Justice banner was held aloft by Sister Maureen Delaney and her friends, seen here at a recent rally in Launceston's City Park. The protest rally had a two-fold purpose. It was to protest against the Federal Government's Pacific solution and detention policies and to call on the State Government to declare Tasmania a safe haven for refugees.

MESSAGE OF WELCOME: Maureen Delaney, Cecily and Diny Van Ganns, Margaret Cousins, Dorelle Ashford and Claire and Michael Jansen, all of Launceston, at the City Park protest.

Sister M. Finnian McMahon RIP

A woman of adventure and courage

Sister Finnian died on 16th July at the age of 93. She was born Agnes McMahon in Kilnaboy, County Clare Ireland on 9th November 1908. Her parents were farmers and she was one of eight children and she was educated first at the local school at Tubber and later at the Convent of Mercy Ennis.

The name Finnian means 'diligent one' and as Sr Leone Wittmack said in her Eulogy at Sr Finnian's Mass of Christian Burial, it is linked to Psalm 119: *'Blessed are those who keep His testimonies and who seek Him with their whole heart'*. It was therefore appropriate that on her Clothing Day as a Sister of Charity Agnes McMahon was given the name Finnian and that she chose the motto 'Doing all things to the Glory of God'. She lived her 68 years as a religious diligently faithful to that motto.

Prior to coming to Australia she had begun her nursing career in England, gaining her Preliminary State Certificate for England and Wales. Having been told by an Aunt there were plenty of nursing jobs available in Australia she came to Sydney at the age of 22 and completed her Nurses Education Certificate for New South Wales. A short time later she entered the Sisters of Charity and was professed on 21st August 1934. A very courageous step, for in those days there was no prospect of her ever returning to Ireland or seeing her family again. To her great delight and that of her family circumstances changed some thirty years later and she was given the opportunity to go home to visit her family.

Sr Finnian's first appointment was to St Vincent's Fitzroy, a hospital she returned to on several occasions during her long and distinguished nursing career, during which she continued to update her qualifications.

In 1978 she undertook a Pastoral Care Course after which she worked in pastoral care at St Vincent's Fitzroy and then at St Vincent's Toowoomba.

Following her retirement in 1987 she continued to live at Toowoomba until such time as her health needs demanded that she move first to Marycrest as resident and then to Lillian Cooper at Kangaroo Point.

Sr Finnian had a lifelong love of learning and in addition to her professional qualification completed a Diploma in Theology, trained as a catechist and studied Italian.

She had a graciousness about her that always made people feel welcome and endeared her to them. A woman of style, Sr Finnian took great pride in her appearance. It was therefore no surprise that she looked the part when she took her place on the catwalk at a fundraising Fashion Parade at Toowoomba a few years ago. Along with her single-mindedness she had a wicked Irish sense of humour and was not above bending the rules, for instance, keeping her bird, Clark Gable, in her ward.

Her life was an inspiration to all who knew and loved her.



Sister M. de Ricci Beeden RIP

Sister de Ricci died on the 2nd June 2002 at Caritas Christi Hospice and Father Malcolm Crawford, who had known De Ricci and her sister, Sister Dorothy when they lived at Essendon and had been taught by their brothers, celebrated her funeral Mass at Sacred Heart Church Kew.

Benedicta Agnes was born at Fitzroy, the fifth of six children to Helena and Henry Beeden on 14th October 1913.

After finishing her Leaving Certificate at Catholic Ladies College she followed in the footsteps of her sister, Veronica (Sister M Dorothy) and entered the Sisters of Charity Novitiate on 24th May 1931 taking the name de Ricci when she was clothed. Sister de Ricci was professed on 13th January 1934.

Sister de Ricci was a respected infants and primary teacher in Melbourne where she taught from 1936 till her retirement in 1980. During those years she prepared many hundreds of young people for their First Communion so it was fitting that she died on the feast of Corpus Christi. Many of her former students remained in contact with de Ricci and were present at her Requiem.

Following her retirement Sister de Ricci continued to live in community at Essendon until she moved to Caritas Christi Hostel in 1996. For the past six years she was a resident at Villa Madonna Nursing home. She had regained her sight following cataract surgery some years ago and with the help of her hearing aid there wasn't too much that Sister de Ricci missed.

Sister de Ricci often worried about her younger sister, Mary, so she would have been happy to welcome Mary who died ten days after her. Mary was buried from the Caritas Christi Chapel.



Sister Eileen Terrill RIP

Dying from Motor Neurone Disease was a cruel fate for someone who was so well known professionally for her speed, vitality and efficiency at work that she was dubbed 'the white flash' in reference to her white nursing habit and her apparent ability to 'be everywhere at once'.

Sister Eileen Terrill who died on 7th June 2002 aged 73, was regarded by those who worked with her and were nursed by her as a kind, generous, warm-hearted and courageous nursing nun who showed the world the true meaning of Charity in her daily life. In February this year Sister Eileen was diagnosed with an aggressive form of Motor Neurone Disease. True to her strong character she met this final challenge with courageous acceptance and no complaints.

Sister Eileen Terrill was born on 2nd August 1928, the fourth of ten children of Nell and Jack Terrill who had a successful farming property outside Rutherglen, in North-East Victoria. She was educated at the local Presentation convent followed by boarding at Melbourne's Genazzano College.

In July 1948, aged twenty years, Sister Eileen made the decision to join the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity in Sydney and was professed in January 1951. With characteristic single-mindedness and determination, she then embarked on her outstanding nursing career starting with four year's training at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney. Over the next eighteen years Eileen gained many post-graduate certificates and awards. These included a Midwifery Course, a Diploma in Ward and Department Management from the College of Nursing and a Cardio-thoracic nursing certificate. In 1968, she received the honour of being admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing, Australia. Typical of her humble and self-effacing ways, not many, even within her family, knew of these outstanding achievements.

In 1955 she began nursing at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne as Sister-in-Charge of Surgical, Medical and Casualty Departments and later as Deputy Director of Nursing. In 1969 she returned to St Vincent's, Sydney for the next eleven years as Nurse Educator for the Cardio-thoracic nursing certificate course and then as Assistant Director of Nursing for the Cardio-thoracic Unit. Her final posting was at Mount Olivet Hospital, Brisbane where she started the Palliative Home Care Department. Here she was appointed Superior of the Convent for three years and served for a time as Deputy Sister Administrator. Throughout her brilliant nursing career she gained wide recognition for her excellent level of patient care and her ability to build high staff morale.

Sister Eileen's deep spirituality was often demonstrated in practical and non-judgemental ways. She welcomed the changes in the Church after Vatican II. In keeping with her ever-inquiring mind, she was always seeking opportunities to deepen her knowledge and understanding of her faith. In 1978, she completed a three-year part-time Diploma in Christian Spirituality and in 1986 she completed a Diploma in Contemporary Theology and Religious Renewal.

Sister Eileen finally retired in 1992 to Balwyn, where she remained very active in the community. She carried on her life's work of caring for others, always on the look out for someone needing help, especially the sick and the elderly. She sat on the board of the Caritas Christi Hospice and on her retirement, the chairman praised her for her "Wisdom, clarity of thought and commitment." She also devoted much time developing loving relationships with her extended family, especially her many nieces and nephews and her many friends.

Even though a humble woman, Sister Eileen had a positive influence for goodness on all those privileged to know her. She excelled in every sphere - as a nursing nun, a sister, a daughter and an aunt.

Such was Sister Eileen's faith and her acceptance of her final illness that she was able to prepare her own funeral liturgy before the disease progressed to a stage that hindered her speech and movement. She wrote the following messages which were placed on the front and back cover of the Mass booklet:

"When the day comes for me to return to my creator I would like you to come together in Easter fashion to celebrate what I have experienced as a miracle of wonder, mystery and love- my life. I do not deny your tears of silence and separation.

I experience them too in my moments alone. But you do me no service in my faith in the risen Lord if you fail to rejoice with me over what my life has come to be. We are Easter people, and our song is ALLELUIA! "

And on the back of the booklet:

"To all those who do things for me before and after I die I wish to say 'THAK YOU', I will be interceding for you before the throne of God".

Eileen RSC

Adapted in part from an obituary written for her by her sisters Anne Pattison, Margaret Chalmers and niece Veronica McGowan.

Our congratulations to

Sisters Marie Bourke, Kathleen Kennedy, Gemma Martin and Philippine Humphreys who celebrated their Diamond Jubilee of Profession on 27th August and Sisters Patricia O'Loughlin, Margaret Dwyer, Margaret O'Brien and Cecilia Kinsella who celebrated their Golden Jubilee of Profession on 4th August and thank them for their faithfulness to the mission and charism of the Congregation.

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations



Sr Kathleen Kennedy & Sr Gemma Martin

Sr Gemma Martin marked this significant milestone with a Mass and small celebration with her Community at Moonee Ponds.

Sr Kathleen Kennedy chose a low-key celebration with her community at Taroona.

Sr Marie Bourke and Sr Philippine Humphreys, who both reside at St Joseph's Village Auburn, were joined by the Residents at St Joseph's and a few close friends for a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by the Chaplain, Father John McMillan SM, followed by morning tea at the Village on the day.

While the formal celebrations were low key a number of the Jubilarians' friends ensured that the occasion was a good excuse to enjoy coffee outings and special lunches around the time of the jubilees.



Sr Philippine Humphreys



Sr Marie Bourke

Golden Jubilee Celebrations

Golden Jubilee Celebrations were held in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. Sr Annette Cunliffe, Congregational Leader, was present at each of the celebrations and presented a Papal Blessing to each of the jubilarians at the end of the Mass of Thanksgiving.

Golden Jubilee Celebrations



Left to right: Sr Patricia O'Loughlin, Sr Margaret Dwyer, Father Peter McGrath OFM, Sr Margaret O'Brien, Sr Cecilia Kinsella

On Saturday 27th August, **Sr Patricia O'Loughlin** was joined by her fellow jubilarians, a large number of Sisters, family and friends including a former member of the group, Gabriella Dalton, for a Mass of Thanksgiving at St Francis Church Paddington celebrated by Father Peter McGrath OFM. It was fitting that Sr Patricia chose St Francis for this special occasion, as it was the same Church in which she was baptised and received the other sacraments.

Following the Mass the guests moved to the adjoining hall for a delightful afternoon tea and the cutting of the cake. Sr Patricia's niece, Pamela McKay, proposed the toast and spoke very movingly about Sr Patricia's ministerial commitment over the past 50 years, her importance to each member of her family and their love for her. Sr Patricia responded, thanking her family and friends who had supported and encouraged her over the years.

Sr Margaret O'Brien's celebrations were held on the day itself at Mt Olivet, Kangaroo Point where Sr Margaret ministered for a number of years. Her cousin, Father John Newman from Atherton, was the chief celebrant at the Mass of Thanksgiving in the convent Chapel. Other concelebrants included Fr John Drury SJ. Joining Sr Margaret's family and friends from Queensland for the celebrations were a number of sisters and friends who travelled from interstate. Sr Margaret's eldest brother, Des, proposed the toast and congratulated Sr Margaret on behalf of all present.

Sr Margaret's 'little' celebrations have continued over several weeks. The final one was a dinner for the religious in the Burleigh Heads Parish, hosted by the Parish Priest, Fr Patrick Molony.

Sr Cecilia Kinsella attended the celebrations for her fellow jubilarians but chose to have a very low key celebration for herself with her community at Cabramatta.

Sr Margaret Dwyer's brother Bill, a Jesuit working in India, just made it home in time to be chief concelebrant at a Mass of Thanksgiving in the local parish church of St Joseph's Merinda. His plane from India arrived at 12.00, giving him just enough time to make it to Doreen for a quick shower before the Mass.

Other concelebrants were Fathers Paul Goonan SSP, Phil Crotty JJ and Steele Hartmann OSCO, who gave an inspiring homily. The grand nieces and nephews carried up the offertory gifts and received a special blessing from Bill as he accepted the gifts. Claire Malone, a niece, and her friend Naomi played Gabriel's Oboe from the Mission on the flute after communion.

The celebrations continued back at 'Currajeen'. Bernard Malone, Sr Margaret's nephew, spoke on behalf of the family, congratulating Sr Margaret and proposing the toast. His brother, Peter had written a poem, "Jubilee Woman" which was read. One could also trace Sr Margaret's history from babyhood in pictures on the "Horror Board" that the family had put together for the occasion.



Mt St Michael's

Farewells Sister Kathleen

The Principal, Ms Alison Terry wrote in the June Bulletin: "in the pastoral life of our community, we sadly farewelled Sr Kath Munce who has been our resident Sister of Charity on campus for many years. We thank her for her wonderful contribution to the Mt St Michael's community, which cannot be measured. We will miss her loving presence; however our prayers go with her".

In the same Bulletin Mrs Ann Morgan who has worked alongside Sr Kath for many years wrote: "With twinges of sadness we said farewell to our dear friend Sr Kath who has moved from the Ashgrove convent to the community of sisters at Mt Olivet, Kangaroo Point. She will be greatly missed..... We are very conscious that Sr Kath's departure will leave a gap in our College community. Sr Kath has been an incredible support in terms of her presence. Her gentle humour, genuine care, concern and of course her constant willingness to pray for us has been a wonderful asset to Mt St Michael's community over many years. Her life is a powerful witness of commitment and the love of God. The challenge of keeping the vision of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity alive is particularly pertinent at a moment such as this. It is the relationship shared with someone like Sr Kath that is an encouragement to continue the dream, to work hard for what another has given her life to. No doubt it was like that for Jesus' disciples. His relationship with those he loved moved them to continue the dream of the reign of God."

MARION SCHOOL *Horsley Park*

Celebrating Twenty Years

As part of the twenty-year celebration a new Information and Technology Room was blessed and opened by Fr Jude Pirota, the Parish Priest of Horsley Park, on 5th May 2002.



During his address Fr Jude reflected on Marion's beginnings:

"Twenty years ago, the Parishioners at Our Lady of Victories, Horsley Park, had a dream that one day their children too would be able to attend a Catholic Primary School within their own Parish. The Parishioners shared this dream with their Parish Priest, Fr Philip Gambin MSSP, who in turn invited the Sisters of Charity to help him establish the new school. This dream became a reality on 24th January 1982, through the continuous support and good will of many parishioners.

Sr Catherine O'Brien RSC was the founding Principal. Today twenty years later, we gather to give thanks for all that has been done in the past, celebrate the present and look forward towards the future, full of hope.

May we, students, parents, staff, clergy and parish community never take for granted the gifts God gives us. Let us seize the day and continue to move forward and live, in Jesus, our life to the full.

May the Spirit of God be the source of life for Marion School, its motivation and its heart."

Keep in Touch (K.I.T.)

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The FAMILY and the CONGREGATION celebrate 80th Birthday of Sister Mary Ryan RSC

The Sisters of Charity have always used celebrations as catalysts for personal reflections to enable them to deepen their insights and importance of the various feasts, jubilees and birthdays. Such was the reason for a celebration on 3rd June 2002 when Sr Mary Ryan RSC celebrated her 80th birthday at Caritas, Kew. Sr Mary anticipated this date with great joy, was making her plans six months prior to the day and was overwhelmed with the actual parties.

It was also regarded as a significant occasion by her family - her two brothers Stan and Joe, sister-in-law Phyllis and sister, Sr Sarah RSC, traveled to Melbourne to celebrate with her.

To accommodate everyone, the celebrations were spread over two days - Afternoon Tea and then Lunch on the following day.



Left to right: Frances (Lynch); her sister-in-law, Phyllis Ryan; and brothers, Stan & Joe Ryan

For both celebrations, the atmosphere was joyful and happy.

The staff, with the help of the family, prepared the parties. The community spirit was evident as the staff and Sisters prepared the delicious refreshments. Sisters Mary Gabrielle Clarke RSC and Anna Parlevliet RSC were particularly generous in the giving of their time and energies.

The family were very appreciative of and impressed by the presence of the Sisters in Community, the number of Sisters of Charity from neighbouring communities and Mary's close friends. A long-time friend, Frances O'Callaghan, made and decorated the birthday cake. In her expression of 'thank you' to all who had taken part in the celebrations, Mary's great joy, obvious enjoyment and sincere and radiant happiness were very evident.



In the words of
St Therese of Lisieux
"Love only counts - it is
all that matters".

Mary's two brothers and sister would never be able to find words to express adequately their thanks and gratitude for the genuine and wonderful care that has been given to Sr Mary over a period of twelve years. They were grateful for the warm welcome and the opportunity to give thanks for 80 years of life for Sr Mary; for the present care given so genuinely and meaningfully to her.

Editorial

A jubilee is a time of rejoicing, not only for the jubilant, but, indeed for the whole Congregation and for the wider Church. We congratulate and thank all those Sisters who have celebrated jubilees in August and who have collectively given 440 years of dedicated and committed service as Sisters of Charity. It is particularly worthy of our recognition when long-term commitment is not the norm in today's society.

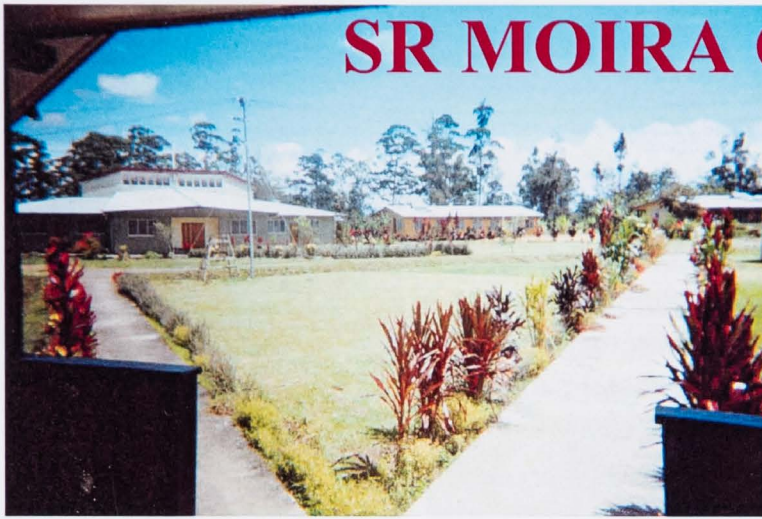
This edition of KIT also contains accounts of the lives of the three Sisters who have died in recent months, Sisters Eileen Terrill, de Ricci Beeden and Finnian McMahon. Our prayers and sympathy go to their communities and their families.

My thanks to those colleagues who have written their reflections on their participation in the recent Leadership Immersion Tour of Ireland for inclusion in KIT. Also to the sisters and colleagues who have contributed items of interest. Please keep the articles coming.

At the end of September the Sisters will be gathering for our General Chapter. Please keep us in your prayers during this time of discernment as we reflect on the future directions and elect our Congregational Leader and Council for the next six years.

My special thanks to Melinda Gutierrez for her generosity and expertise in scanning photos and completing the layout of KIT.

Maria Wheeler RSC



SR MOIRA O'SULLIVAN

in Papua New Guinea

Moira spent several months earlier this year teaching seminarians at the Good Shepherd College, Fatima and hopes to return there again later in the year.

The isolation is almost complete for the women on the staff and there was not one opportunity for her to visit a shop or a Post Office during her months there. Mail did not get through in either direction due to the collapse of the bridge between Lae and Hagen and the shortage of fuel. Contact via email is very limited and depends on the electricity and phone being in operation and the demands on the computer.

A view from the Library entrance – you might like to show your friends our Chapel, and the gum trees!

Who thought teaching was difficult in Australia?

The postal address is Banz, a village one and a half hours walk, however the risk of gangs holding you up makes the trip too risky. Besides, the fact that there is a Post Office there doesn't mean there are always stamps available.

Moira says that teaching Biblical Studies to the seminarians is a struggle with their lack of knowledge of English, ancient and unsuitable books in the library and added to these difficulties the need to save face by not asking questions in class.

During her time back in Sydney, Moira is busy packing up books of her own and purchasing new books to send to Good Shepherd College. The Sisters of Charity Foundation is assisting Moira with the cost of purchasing books and the postage through a grant.



A display of the things I brought back from Port Moresby

PRIVACY STATEMENT

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Those receiving this Newsletter have their names on our database.

The list is not used for any other purpose and will not be given to another organisation.

If anyone would like to have his/her name removed from the list please let me know.

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