



# Keep in Touch

Sisters of Charity Newsletter - Partners in Mission

Vol.4 No.1 March 2003



## PAPAL HONOUR FOR

## Sister Marion Corless rsc

Congratulations to **Sister Marion Corless rsc** on receiving a Papal Honour (*Croce pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*) in recognition for her outstanding contribution to the Church. The presentation was made to Sister Marion by Cardinal Edward Clancy at a Mass to celebrate her special birthday.

Celebrations for Sister Marion's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday were a complete surprise to her until she was told on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, that she and her Community were that day attending a Mass in her honour at Sacred Heart Church, and were afterwards to join her family and friends for lunch in the Function Room of St Vincent's Clinic.

Concelebrants for the Mass were Cardinal Edward Clancy, Bishop David Cremin and Father Brian Egan. Archbishop George Pell who was unable to be at the Mass joined the gathering for the luncheon. In his homily Bishop Cremin spoke of Sister Marion's life, first as the daughter of Jack and Joanne Corless and older sister of Desmond. Her father was a well-known journalist and Des followed him in this profession.



At the age of ten, Sister Marion was sent to St Vincent's College, first as a day student and later as a boarder. After leaving, Sister Marion attended the University of Sydney and then entered the Sisters of Charity at the age of twenty.

Bishop Cremin emphasised Sister Marion's gifts of compassion, justice, intelligence and humour that meant she was destined for leadership. She served as Principal of many schools including St John's Auburn, Mt St Mary's Katoomba, Bethlehem College Ashfield and twice at St Vincent's College. Her gifts of Leadership were never more truly appreciated than when she spent twelve years as Superior General of the Congregation.

During the luncheon there was much reminiscing and stories told of Sister Marion's school days as well as of her vision for and contribution to the Congregation and the wider Church.

# Our Sisters in overseas mission



Sr Mathilde Harnischfeger



Sr Mary Francis Gould



Sr Dorothy Bayliss



Sr Christine Jorgensen



Sr Anne Crowley

## Welcome

**Sister Anne Crowley rsc** returned home from Zambia in January. Sister Anne has spent many years in Central Africa and prior to that in Asia working with refugees. This followed time as a missionary in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Sister Anne is currently enjoying some R&R and catching up with her family and friends.

**Sister Mary Francis Gould rsc** is also home after several years in Zambia and has recently completed a CPE course.

**Sister Mathilde Harnischfeger rsc** is home on leave from Nigeria, a homecoming that was saddened by the death of her sister a few days prior to her arrival. Sister Mathilde is initially spending time in Queensland with her family.

**Sister Christine Jorgensen rsc** is also enjoying a short break from her ministry in East Timor.

## Farewell

**Sister Dorothy Bayliss rsc** left last month to return to the missions after a sojourn back in Australia, part of which was spent in Brewarrina working with the indigenous peoples. She has gone this time to Nigeria, West Africa to minister in a very poor hospital. Previously Sister Dorothy spent several years ministering in Zambia in Central Africa.

## Editorial

*As the first edition of Keeping In Touch for 2003 goes to press we are entering into the Season of Lent. The old English word for spring was Lenten. So in keeping with that theme it is a time for renewal, personal and communal.*

*Pope John Paul II asked that Ash Wednesday be a Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace for as he says it is only by conversion of heart, penance and solidarity, that we will become true peacemakers, both in our own families and in the world. At this time we cannot ignore the tense international situation.*

*As we continue our journey through Lent may each of us continue to pray for true conversion*

*of heart and mind and for a peaceful solution to the hostilities in Iraq, North Korea and elsewhere. Let us entrust this endeavour of ours to Mary, Queen of Peace. May she lead us to the glory of Easter.*

*My congratulations to those Sisters who recently celebrated their Jubilee of Religious Profession. Also to Sister Marion Corless rsc who has received a Papal Honour.*

*Thank you to all who have sent in articles or snippets of information for inclusion this edition of KIT and I look forward to receiving many more for the June edition.*

*Naomi Wheeler ABC*

# Our Sisters in Education Ministry

## Columba's College Farewells

**Sister Josephine Cannell rsc** retired from the staff of St Columba's College at the end of 2002 after thirty years of service to the school. The College Principal, Ms Julie Ryan, hosted a Cocktail Party, to mark the occasion.

It was attended by staff, past and present, including former Principals, Board members, former students and community representatives.



Miss Linda's Dance Group portrayed Sister Josephine's years at the College in song and dance and she was presented with a patchwork quilt representing those years made by the students and staff.

Ms Ryan said it would be hard to think of life at the school without Sister Josephine as she was the longest serving member of the staff. In paying tribute to her, Ms Ryan said '*Sister Josephine is a model of quiet service with a strong sense of community.... more than being an institution at St Columba's, Sister Josephine has been a priceless treasure*'.

The Chairman of the College Board, Mr Kevin McCartney also made a presentation to Sister Josephine and thanked her for her many years of dedicated service to the College and the wider College community.

Sister Josephine's cakes are legendary amongst those of us who have attended Board seminars at the College.



**Sister Colleen Bell rsc** also retired from her position as Registrar at St Columba's College after a significant number of years. Sister Colleen is still maintaining her involvement at the College two days a week.

### St Columba's Governors' General

The College Principal, Ms Julie Ryan refers to **Sister Josephine Cannell rsc**, **Sister Colleen Bell rsc** and **Sister Marguerite Maloney rsc**, who retired in 2001 as the Governors' General of the College and ensures that no one else encroaches on their role. They are the Sisters of Charity ambassadors to the College.

# Our Congratulations to Golden Jubilarians ....

Sister Judith Peart rsc, Sister Rose Anne Croke rsc and Sister Patricia Mary Ryan rsc who celebrated their Golden Jubilee of Religious Profession on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

As Sister Mary Maguire rsc recalled at Sister Patricia Mary's celebration:

*"Had our celebration occurred 50 years ago or maybe even 40 years ago, the scene would have looked like this: - Sisters would be gathered at the Motherhouse Chapel at Potts Point - the jubilarians would have been together at the front of the Chapel, in full religious habits of course and on their heads would be a wreath of flowers. Had we gone back some years earlier- each would hold a shepherd's crook.*

*Awaiting them in the refectory would be chairs decorated in gold-flowers, on the wall in big gold lettering would be the words AD MULTOS ANNOS- wishing them many more years in God's service.*

*How times have changed! And how good it is for us all to be here together, witnessing so clearly to diversity in vocation and ministry and to unity as the pilgrim people of God".*



## Sister Patricia Mary Ryan rsc



On 30<sup>th</sup> November 2002 many Sisters of Charity, family and friends of Sister Patricia Mary gathered together at St Paul of the Cross Church at Dulwich Hill to celebrate her Golden Jubilee. The chief concelebrant for the occasion was Rev. Anthony Doherty. Members of Sister Patricia Mary's community and a number of her friends took an active part in the liturgy.

The theme of the liturgy was *"Call, Covenant and Commitment"*. Sister Mary Maguire, a member of Sister Patricia Mary's community gave a succinct, thoughtful and challenging reflection of the readings, chosen by Sister Patsy for the occasion. Sister Mary pointed out the three readings are prayers, which tell us the importance of prayer in Sister Patricia Mary's life.

In the second reading and Gospel: *"Paul is praying for Christians in Ephesus and Jesus' prayer is for his disciples to whom we belong"*.

In the first reading: *"Jeremiah and Yahweh (God) are talking to each other ... Yahweh has a special ministry for Jeremiah "prophet to the nations". God also has a special calling for each of us"*.

Sister Mary's reflection then went on to ask each of us to reflect on our own calling and our response to that calling.

Another of Sister Patricia Mary's community, Sister Clare Nolan rsc acted as M.C. at the Afternoon Tea, that followed in the Church Hall. A long-time colleague and friend of Sister Patricia Mary, Mr Bill Hyde proposed the toast. In doing so he recalled many of Sister Patricia Mary's gifts and her commitment as well as recounting many an amusing incident. Sister Patricia Mary's niece, Carole Ryan, spoke on behalf of the family and the Parish Priest, Rev Jacek Cichy PP, made a presentation on behalf of the Dulwich Hill Parish.



## Sister Judith Peart rsc

To celebrate her Golden Jubilee, Sister Judith Peart rsc chose the Parish Church of St Finbar's East Brighton where her long time friend, Father Heriot, is the Parish Priest. Father Heriot was the main Celebrant and was assisted by his brother, Father Leo Heriot SDB, and the Chaplain of Catholic Ladies' College, Father Peter Matheson P.P.

Sister Judith's community, her co Sister Patricia Mary Ryan rsc, and members of her family had special roles in the celebration of the Eucharist. In his homily, Father Heriot spoke of the ministries in which he had worked with Sister Judith, her religious commitment and loyalty to her Congregation and, highlighted the many ways in which, as a dedicated Sister of Charity, she touched the lives of so many in her work both in schools and parishes. He stressed her ability not only to make friends among the young students, their parents and parishioners but also her tireless selflessness and her ready willingness to assist and support them at all times.

Towards the end of the Eucharist, Sister Claire Nolan rsc, a Congregational Councillor, presented to Sister Judith the Papal Blessing.

Many members of her family, of the Congregation, and friends traveled from several States to Melbourne to celebrate with Sister Judith. Sister Judith's community, assisted by her niece and nephew, were responsible for the artistic decoration of the Parish Hall for Afternoon Tea while Sisters Eileen Browne rsc and Jennifer Fahey rsc joined her community in various other preparations for the celebration.

At the beginning of the Afternoon Tea, Sister Jennifer Fahey rsc, acting as M.C. briefly outlined the roles played by Sister Judith in her journey through a variety of ministries. Sister Libbey Byrne rsc spoke of her practical skills and in particular remembers Sister Judith for her hospitality.



Her niece, Louise Turner, demonstrated through brief anecdotal stories the family's appreciation of Sister Judith and thanked her for her ongoing interest, love, support and practical help offered them throughout the years.

Included in the 250 guests who enjoyed the delicious Afternoon Tea were her three brothers, her sister, many nieces and nephews, staff members from CLC, friends from former ministries and even friends from school days.

A "talking point" during the afternoon was the large cake made by Father Barry Gwillim and beautifully decorated by Sue O'Loughlin who worked with Sister Judith at the East Keilor parish.

In thanking her family, friends and religious sisters who had joined her for the celebration, Judith made special mention of Father Heriot, those who helped with the Liturgical celebration, and those in various roles who contributed so much to making her Golden Jubilee such a memorable occasion.

## Sister Rose Anne Croke rsc



Sister Rose Anne rsc marked the occasion with a Mass of Thanksgiving, celebrated by her cousin Father Garry

Reynolds SM, followed by an Afternoon Tea across the road at St Joseph's Villa. Sister Marina Ward rsc welcomed the guests who included Sister Rose Anne's three sisters as well as a large number relatives and friends, many of whom travelled long distances to be present for the celebration.

Father Garry, in his homily, emphasised Sister Rose Anne's great generosity and her faithful commitment as a Sister of Charity over the past fifty years. He spoke of the unselfish manner in which Sister Rose Anne had used her musical talents for the benefit of others, especially her contribution to enhancing liturgical celebrations.

A nephew Bill Clarke proposed the toast. He congratulated Sister Rose Anne on her 50 years as a Sister of Charity also spoke of the extended family's great affection for her.

# Our Congratulations to Diamond Jubilarians ....

Sister Natalie Pike rsc, and Sisters Kathleen Munce rsc  
who celebrated their Diamond Jubilee of Religious Profession on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

## Sister Natalie Pike rsc



On 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003, sixty years after her first Profession, **Sister Natalie Pike rsc** celebrated her Diamond Jubilee at a Eucharistic Celebration of Thanksgiving in St Joseph's Chapel, Auburn. It was Sister Natalie's wish to share this special Eucharist with her Ashfield community and her 'contemporary' Sisters of Charity, a great number of whom now live at St Joseph's Village.

The Celebrant was Father McMillan, the Chaplain to St Joseph's Village. Sister Jan O'Grady rsc warmly welcomed those present including Sisters Laureen Dixon rsc and Maureen Delaney rsc, Councillors, and the Sisters of Charity who live and work in Auburn. Sister Jan emphasised the total commitment of Sister Natalie to her ministry through all those sixty years and noted the deepening of that commitment with the passing of time and the changing of environment.

Father McMillan captured this theme of faithful commitment which was prayerfully and simply woven by him into the prayers of the Eucharist. Sister Natalie selected the hymns which were beautifully prepared in booklet form by Wendy Fothergill at the Congregational Offices. Three residents from St Joseph's Village, Sister Roseanne Croke rsc, Sister Brenda Jordan rsc, and Sister Philippine Humphreys rsc in their respective roles of organist, violinist and leader of the singing, helped to

make this Celebration so joyful prayerful and meaningful, in thanksgiving for the graces and blessings received by Sister Natalie throughout her journey of sixty years.

Towards the end of the Eucharistic Celebration, Sister Laureen Dixon rsc presented to Sister Natalie, the Papal Blessing bestowed upon her to mark sixty years of fidelity to her Religious Commitment.

The peaceful and happy atmosphere of the Eucharistic Celebration flowed over to the Morning Tea where the Sisters had the opportunity to offer their personal congratulations to Natalie who was delighted for the opportunity to thank all those who contributed to making her celebration such a happy experience.

In the words of one of the Sisters present: *"... it was a privilege to share in a celebration for such a milestone in Sister Natalie's life so characterized by simplicity and peace which reflect the life of Sister Natalie"*.

## Sister Kathleen Munce rsc



**Sister Kathleen Munce rsc** celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of her Religious Profession with a concelebrated Mass at Mt Olivet Convent on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2003 – sixty years to the day since she made her initial commitment as a Sister of Charity.

Father Bruce Clark and Father Frank Shortis, Carmelite Fathers from Coorparoo parish were the concelebrants and Brother Leo, Prior of the Carmelites attended also.

Sister Patricia Heenan rsc, on behalf of the Mt Olivet Community, welcomed the guests who included Sister Elizabeth Dodds rsc, Congregational Leader; Sister Margaret Beirne rsc and Sister Claire Nolan rsc, Congregational Councillors.

Many Sisters of Charity from the Queensland Region, as well as Loreto Sisters and special friends of Sister Kath's joined in the happy celebration.



Sister Elizabeth spoke with genuine appreciation of the life and witness of Sister Kath over sixty years, as did Father Bruce in his homily. The Mt Olivet Sisters were happy to welcome all the visitors to a leisurely afternoon tea in the beautiful Convent dining room.

## Irish Visitors



### Sister Thérèse Culhane rsc

an Irish Sister of Charity has been in Australia since last September, furthering her knowledge of mission and gaining new insights into the translation of mission into work practice in the Sisters of Charity Health Services.

During that time Sister Thérèse has spent time in each of the health facilities in the various States seeing how each one puts mission into practice.

In between these visits Sister Thérèse has been at the National Office at Bondi Junction where she has had the opportunity to consolidate and evaluate her knowledge and insights gained.

While the Monte Oliveto Community at Edgecliff has been Sister Therese's

home base during her time in Australia, Sister Thérèse has spent time in several of our other communities.

She has also had the opportunity to see some of our country's tourist attractions.



*Sr Anne Delaney, Sr Elizabeth Dodds & Sr Thérèse Culhane*

As wonderful as the places and facilities she has visited, and the insights she has gained are, Sister Thérèse says by far the greatest impact on her, during her stay with us, has been the people she has encountered along the way.

We too have enjoyed Sister Thérèse's visit with us. Her quick and delightful sense of humour has brightened many a gathering.

Sister Anne Delaney rsc, another Irish Sister of Charity from Airdrie in the English/Scottish Province made a brief visit to Australia in mid March. She was travelling with her brother and while in Sydney spent a few days with the Edgecliff community.

Many of us had the opportunity to meet Sister Anne at the St Patrick's Night celebrations at Edgecliff.

We look forward to welcoming Sister Nuala Groarke from Dublin who is due to arrive in Australia on 25<sup>th</sup> March for a four-week sojourn. Sister Nuala will be staying with the community at No. 1 Rockwall Crescent, Potts Point during her time here.

## ST PATRICK'S DAY CELEBRATIONS



The communities from Paddington, Bondi and Potts Point joined the Edgecliff community to celebrate St Patrick's Day. Following a short time of prayer those present enjoyed the evening meal together, during which there was much talking and laughter. This was followed by a sing along and entertainment by way of each one having to recite, sing or tell an Irish joke. A great night, thanks to Sister Patricia O'Loughlin rsc and her community at Monte Oliveto.

# Marycrest Retirement Centre and Lilian Cooper Nursing Home *Celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*



**Mother Magdalen Burke rsc**, the second Sister Administrator of Mt Olivet Hospital, conceived the vision of a Retirement Centre attached to the hospital. It fell to **Sister Julien Pearson rsc** who succeeded her, to bring this dream to completion. After many years of planning and construction, preparations were made for the opening of Marycrest Retirement Centre and Lilian Cooper Nursing Home to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1977. His Grace, Archbishop F.R. Rush, DD, was invited to bless the new building, and the Honourable Senator Margaret Guilfoyle, the then Minister for Social Security, to officially open it.

On Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2002, Marycrest and Lilian Cooper aged care facilities celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their opening.

All past Sisters, staff, volunteers and doctors were invited, as well as relatives of past and present residents.

A Jubilee Eucharist, celebrated by Bishop John Gerry DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane, was held at 10am in the Giovanni Chapel. Bishop John had actually attended the opening of the facilities in 1977. A choir from Mount St Michael's College at Ashgrove sang. During the Eucharist, a specially commissioned icon of Mary made of slumped glass, was blessed. This icon, together with a book of remembrance, recalls all residents who have died in the hostel and nursing home over the past twenty-five years.

An Open Day followed the Eucharist. It featured an exhibition

of the past 25 years of Marycrest and Lilian Cooper. Residents also demonstrated their skills in handcraft and displayed their arts and crafts. Following this, a light lunch was served in the Marycrest grounds. Sister Mary Goss rsc, the first superintendent of the facilities, together with some of the long-time residents cut the Jubilee cake. Attendance was very good, and all had a wonderful, joyous day.

Celebrations will continue into 2003. There will be a special function to honour the founding of the facilities by Sisters of Charity and their ongoing commitment to them. A fund-raising dinner is also planned, as well as a number of social functions for residents, staff and volunteers.

## **PRIVACY NOTICE**

The Sisters of Charity have a Privacy Policy detailing the handling of personal information pursuant to the Privacy Act 1988 and the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000.

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.

**Sister Maria Wheeler RSC** (02) 9367 1211

## **Keep in Touch (K.I.T.)**

Published by Sisters of Charity Congregational Office  
Level 1, 75 Grafton Street, Bondi Junction NSW 2002  
Phone: (02) 9367 1222 Fax: (02) 9367 1223  
Text should be supplied on disk or  
send email to [maria.wheeler@rscoffice.com](mailto:maria.wheeler@rscoffice.com)

## **CONTRIBUTOR**

*Sarah Ryan rsc*  
*Jennifer Fahey rsc*  
*Patricia Heenan rsc*  
*Patricia Mary Ryan rsc*  
*Judith Peart rsc*  
*Natalie Pike rsc*  
*Roseanne Croke rsc*  
*Julie Ryan*  
*Margaret Fitzgerald rsc*  
*Claudia Doyle rsc*  
*Philip Costigan*  
*Melinda Gutierrez*