



Keep in Touch

Sisters of Charity Newsletter – Partners in Mission

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New Project

House of Hospitality - at Castlemaine

This project is a partnership between Sisters of Charity community care, Melbourne and the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) to provide accommodation for families visiting loved ones in the nearby Loddon and Tarrengower Prisons.

The distance of these prisons from Melbourne has meant many families have not been able to visit fathers or mothers in these prisons due to the high cost of travel and accommodation. The House of Hospitality will provide overnight accommodation and support for these families and enable them to visit their loved ones twice over a weekend.

The proposal for this project emanated from discussions held between VACRO and the Sisters of Charity after the Sisters of Charity Foundation funded report on homelessness that identified women exiting prison as being in special need.



Srs Maria Cunningham (left) and Kate Fitzpatrick standing outside the House of Hospitality in Castlemaine

Sisters Maria Cunningham and Kate Fitzpatrick took up residence in the newly established House of Hospitality, known as Blake House at Castlemaine in September 2003.

The first family to go to the House of Hospitality as 'guests' was a mother with two little girls and the grandmother on the weekend of 17th October. Every weekend since there have been similar 'guests' utilising the facility. All 'guests' must apply through VACRO to stay with Maria and Kate.

Since taking up residence at Castlemaine, Maria and Kate have become involved in the life of the parish and in a number of other areas of the local community.

Thank You

As we come to the end of another year, it is fitting that I acknowledge the contribution of a number of people who have assisted me during the year with the publication of Keeping in Touch.

I thank those sisters and colleagues who have sent in items of interest for inclusion in KIT.

To Sisters Sarah Ryan, Jennifer Fahey, Claudia Doyle, Anne Crowley and Ms Wendy Fothergill your assistance in proof reading has been much appreciated.

In particular I wish to express my gratitude to Ms Melinda Gutierrez who has provided invaluable support in preparing K.I.T. for publication, for the most part undertaking this work in her own time at home.

Maria Wheeler RSC

*May Peace and Joy
be with you at Christmas*



A Christmas Message

Each Christmas God Renews His Promise To Us

Long, long ago in a land far away,
There came the dawn
of the first Christmas day,
And each year we see the promise reborn
That God gave the world
on that first Christmas morn.
For the silent stars in the timeless skies
And the wonderment
in a small child's eyes,
The Christmas songs the carolers sing,
The tidings of joy
that the Christmas bells ring
Remind us again of that still, silent night
When the heavens shone
with a wondrous light,
And the angels sang of peace on earth
And told men of
The Christ Child's birth-
For Christmas is more than a beautiful story,
It's the promise of life
and eternal glory.

So my special prayer and Christmas wish for you is:

Let Christmas
come
Gently with the gift of hope,
Prayerfully with the gift of
PEACE
joyfully with the
gift of life.

Maria Wheeler RSC
Editor

Sister Mary Rosita Corrigan

18.2.1918- 1.11.2003



Sister Rosita died in Auburn District Hospital on Saturday 1st November 2003 and Sister Ellen O’Carrigan delivered the following Eulogy at her Requiem Mass in St John’s Church Auburn.

‘Margaret was the fourth of eight children of Scottish parents Francis and Louise Corrigan. She was brought up in Newtown and was educated at St Joseph’s there.

After some years in the workforce she became a Theresian and through this contact with the Sisters of Charity she decided to join them. Margaret entered the Sisters of Charity on 2nd February 1945. She received the religious habit as Sister M. Rosita on 7th August 1945. After her profession on 22nd August 1947, she was appointed to the position of Portress at St Vincent’s Potts Point, remaining there till 1959. In that quite demanding position, in a large community, Sister Rosita was remarkable for her cheerful hospitality and the warm welcome she extended to all visitors. Part of her duty was looking after the priests who in those days celebrated daily Mass in the convent Chapel. Over the years she brought that same gentleness and perfection of detail to all the ministries entrusted to her. Whether with the children at Aikenhead House, Hobart, as laundry supervisor at Potts Point, or finally in her long years as receptionist at St Joseph’s Hospital Auburn, where she was a compassionate presence to all who came.

Sister Rosita had many interests- she loved cooking, was keenly interested in sport particularly cricket and racing, enjoyed doing jigsaws, and was a skilful knitter. She had a gift for floral arrangement especially showing this talent in the decoration of the Chapel.

Sister Rosita and her family were very close. They met every month and had a family celebration of Christmas on Boxing Day each year. Rosita was particularly devoted to her brother Father Frank, first parish priest of Bass Hill, who died some twenty years ago. The naming of the parish hall in his honour gives evidence of the high regard in which his parishioners held him. Rosita was happy and proud to be at this dedication ceremony.

All who lived with Rosita must have been impressed by her faithfulness to Mass, which she attended daily, despite years of poor health. She was most prayerful, had a great love of Our Lady and a special devotion to the Rosary. She loved her retreats at Douglas Park, where she liked to spend Holy Week and celebrate Easter. This year’s retreat, her last, followed closely on a period in hospital.

Though there must be sadness in parting, we can be confident that Sister Rosita has been warmly welcomed by the God she served so devotedly’.

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L to R: Lois Spencer, Bev Wilson, Jackie Potter

Farewell

Three longer time staff members are retiring from St Vincent’s College. Jackie Potter and Beverley Wilson are retiring at the end of this year and Lois Spencer will retire in the New Year. These three ladies have contributed in excess of 90 years of dedicated service to the College and we wish them a well deserved long, healthy and happy retirement.

Melbourne Vocation Expo 2003

Sister Jeanne Marie Brennan shares her experiences at the Expo.

On the 17th October this year an 'Exhibition of Catholic Life' was held in the beautiful Royal Exhibition building in Nicholson Street, Carlton, as part of the Melbourne *Hearts on Fire Vocations Congress*.

There were 115 exhibitors in the Exhibition Building attractively displaying information on Melbourne deaneries through Pastoral associates, Youth Ministries, Serra international and Religious Orders of all shapes, sizes and colours. As well there were various performances and presentations during the course of the day.

The Sisters of Charity participated in the event with both displaying photos of our various ministries and some of our history. Here at Liverpool we had, had an exciting time labelling and filling sample bags to hand to school girls and young women that might visit the exhibition. The sample bags contained prayer cards, pockets calendars, a short history of the Sisters of Charity in Australia and a Sisters of Charity pen and fridge magnet. Various school children visited the exhibition during the day and some of the young men who visited the exhibition very quickly indicated that they had a sister or a girl friend and therefore were entitled to a sample bag too!



Response from the general public was disappointing although any of the sisters who visited or stayed for a time 'on duty' were delighted when various young women indicated they had been taught at Sisters of Charity schools or trained at our hospitals. An elderly Christian Brother was ready to talk to us for hours on our early history in Sydney and Tasmania.

We were very warmly embraced by any Holy Spirit Sisters we met which I (being from Sydney) found touching. They obviously feel a sense of belonging with us because of our cooperative venture in Brisbane.

I found the experience an interesting one and would say it indicated clearly the Catholic Church in Australia is alive and well. The variety of exhibitors clearly indicating there is room for all different shapes, colours and sizes to live together in harmony.

Sister Mary Rosita Corrigan

There are two stories that demonstrate the effect that Sister Rosita had on those with whom she came in contact.

On the night before she died in Auburn hospital a member of staff when she went off duty went and sat with Rosita who at that stage was unconscious. This staff member who was an African, then spent several hours singing softly to Rosita, in her native tongue.

The other story is of a person who was being interviewed for a position at St Joseph's Hospital. A member of the interview panel asked the applicant what it was that attracted her to apply for the position, to which she answered 'the presence of that sister who is always in the hospital foyer and greets all who come to the hospital'.

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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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Keep in Touch (K.I.T.)

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