



Keep in Touch



A newsletter for Sisters of Charity, their families and friends, and supporters of our Congregation.

December 2005

Volume 6 No. 3

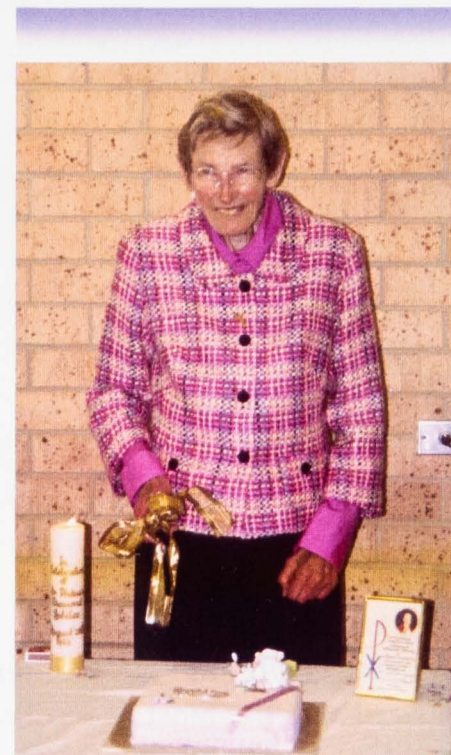
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Diamond Jubilee

On Saturday 27th August 2005 Sister Padua Hughes celebrated sixty years of Religious Profession as a Sister of Charity in St Joseph's Church Edgecliff and afterwards in the Parish Centre. Franciscan Fathers Mel Cotter, Peter McGrath and Brian Lester concelebrated the Eucharist and Dr Tom Connolly, a friend of Padua's was Acolyte.

Padua's sister Gwen and her husband John Moore were present and took part in the Offertory Procession. Some of Sister's friends were Special Ministers of the Eucharist. Sister Lauren Dixon, representing Sister Elizabeth Dodds, presented Padua with a Papal Blessing. **More Jubilee stories on page 2**



For Your Diary:

Sisters Jubilee Celebrations
January and February

Congregational Leader and Council Meetings:

6th February – 10th February

7th March – Teleconference

Friday 3rd February – 7:30pm -
Annual Mass for Religious, Families and Friends at St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne. Celebrant: Archbishop Denis Hart, DD

St Vincent's Health Melbourne opening the "Health Year" – Mass celebrated by Archbishop Hart at 11am at St Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday 29th February

Sisters of Charity Health Service – National Board Retreat 9th & 10th March



Sponsorship

Which way forward?

The Congregation is exploring different models of Sponsorship to ensure the Mission and Values of the Sisters of Charity continue in the years ahead. Excerpts from a new Sponsorship video appear on page 4.

Bush Letters

Even though many areas have received much-needed rain, some parts of rural Australia are still suffering. Read how even a small donation can make a world of difference. Page 3





Golden Jubilee Celebrations



Sister Marina Ward

Marina celebrated her Golden Jubilee as a Sister of Charity on the feast of the Transfiguration, 6th August 2005. The Jubilee Mass was celebrated in St John of God Parish Church, Auburn. Father John McMillan SM was the main celebrant, assisted by Fathers Ray Farrell and Mark Spora, parish priests of Auburn and South Auburn respectively.

Marina's co-jubilarians, Margaret Nabbs and Deirdre Hickey were an important part of the celebration and the three jubilarians welcomed friends who had commenced the journey with them in 1953.



Four generations of Marina's family were present on this happy day as well as many Sisters of Charity, friends from Marina's school days, teaching days and friends from her Health Care Apostolate.

Sister Deirdre Hickey

Deirdre chose to have a low-key celebration with her local community.

Sister Margaret Nabbs

Margaret writes: 'On Saturday 30th July, after many months of preparation, of liturgy etc I celebrated my Golden Jubilee at All Saints Church, Fitzroy.

My booklet reflected my life as a Sister of Charity, it included a parable of my life and a poem which expressed what is important to me. The various ministries: teaching, pastoral care in parish and hospitals, working with the homeless, Teams of Our Lady, ecumenism and hospitality were celebrated. The guests were people involved with me in these ministries.

It was a great privilege to have my brother, Bruce down from the Solomon Islands. Bruce celebrated his 50th Anniversary as a Marist Brother on 10th July. As well as having Deirdre and Marina join me it was also a great joy to have Margaret Jess & Maureen Porteous (Sheahan) present.



On the morning of the Jubilee I visited the graves of Brigid, Maria Genevieve and Catherine along with my parent's grave at the Melbourne General Cemetery.

I thank God, my family, my many friends and the Congregation for being able to share my giftedness and the love He has lavished on me'.

Letters to and from the Bush

Letter from Sister Kerry Anne Barrass to Peter Barry, Narromine-Bourke Regional President.

I am enclosing these cheques, donations from the Sisters at our Gathering. We had a great raffle and auction: you should have heard the noise level of 120 nuns! (It was hard to control). But here are the results; everyone was very generous and happy to share. So I'm very glad to share with the farmers and those in the country. God is so good to us, and it is good to share! God Bless and many thanks for all you do.

Letter from the Press Family to Sister Kerry Anne Barrass

Dulan, Lightning Ridge, NSW

Dear Sister Kerry and all the Sisters

This is just a little note to thank you all so much for the generous donation of \$400 you gave to our family. The fact that you were thinking of us really made the \$400 special. The money was spent on buying second hand tyres for our farm vehicle.

We have been drought-declared for so long but over the last couple of weeks God has sent some lovely rain.

I have asked our Blessed Lady to bless you and all the Sisters always.

I thank you very much. God Bless. The Press Family.

Letter from the Peter Berry to Sister Kerry Anne Barrass

Hello Kerry,

How are you going? This is just to advise the distribution of your charitable donation. In summary there were four landholders' wives at Lightning

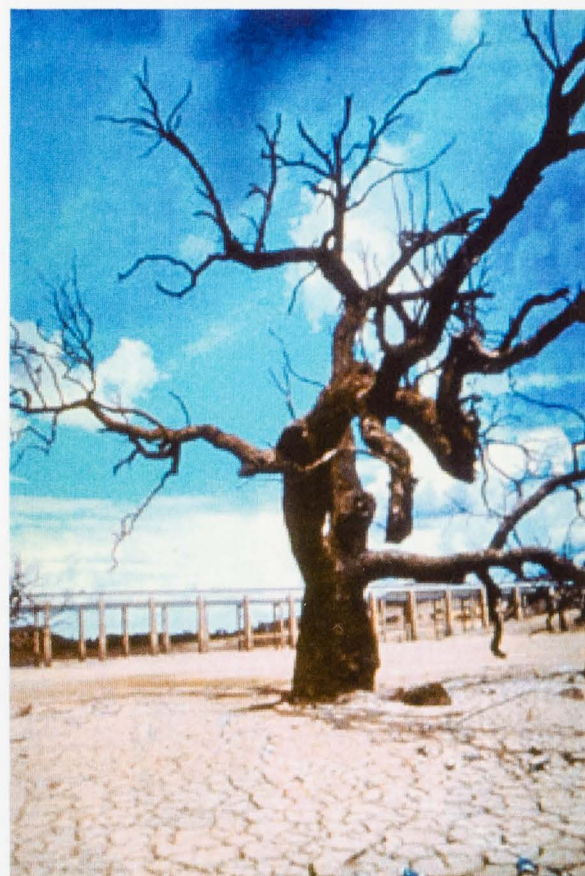
Ridge, one at Brewarrina and one at Bourke.

Another recipient was a lady who lived in Bourke and has cancer of the face who needed petrol to travel to Sydney for treatment and with the price of fuel these days we thought it was a very good way to allocate some of your money.

Hope this is all agreeable to the donors. It certainly was a very nice surprise for those on the receiving end. It would have brought a moment of happiness to them all.

Trust this now finds you in tip top health, thank you to all the donors.

God bless the good work. Regards, Peter Berry.



Sponsorship

In April this year, the Congregation conducted a seminar focussing on Sponsorship models.

What is Sponsorship? What are some of the organisational, legal and canonical dimensions?

A DVD video has been produced from the event, and here are short excerpts from that program. If you would like to view the DVD, please contact James Griffiths at the Congregational Office. Details are on last page of KIT.



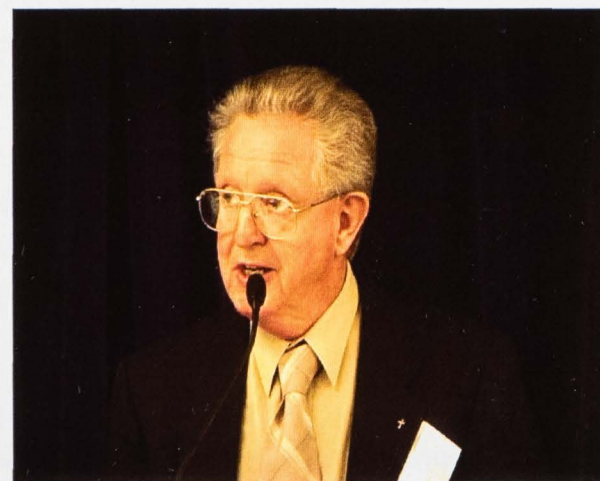
Kerry Brettel *Facilitator*

I have been the chair of the ad-hoc governance committee since September last year and that small committee has really struggled to understand what this whole business of sponsorship is about and many of those people sitting around that table have years and years of experience. So if it is any consolation to you we have worked very hard to try and understand ourselves, and we are aware that for some people here this new term is going to provoke lots of questions.



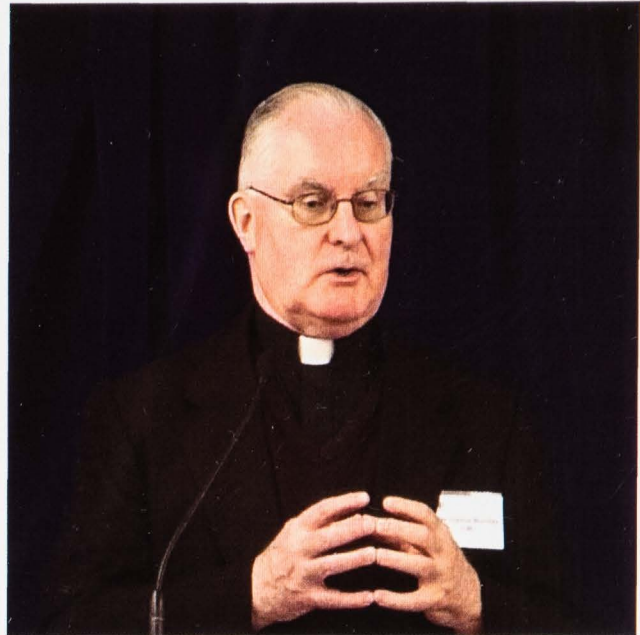
Sister Elizabeth Dodds *Congregational Leader*

The year 2004 and the next few years would demand fresh responses to healing, educating and serving in the name of Jesus and in the name of the Church. In my address in 2004, I asked who would be our future sponsors or trustees of our ministries? And posed some reasons as to why as a religious institute or congregation, we need to consider new forms of sponsorship. I reiterate those questions and reasons once again. The canonical definition of sponsorship is the canonical stewardship of a ministry that is carried on in the name of the church. To date, our ad-hoc governance group has accepted, as do we that the word sponsorship simply means this, the way to guarantee or ensure that the mission of Christ continues within the church through particular ministries, in light of rapidly changing circumstances in society and in the church.



Gerald Arbuckle *Cultural Anthropologist*

The meaning of sponsorship is to be found rather clearly expressed in the scriptures..... What we primarily mean by sponsorship is ensuring and guaranteeing the story of the compassionate Jesus continues in the contemporary world. And for this to happen, in the incident recorded in the scriptures, people with the right qualities had to be selected to aid the poorer section of the Christian community and at the same time they had to be officially assigned their tasks by the apostles, who represented the official institutional church, as it was then developing. This they did, the dilemmas were resolved and the vision of the heed-ing Jesus continued. The sponsorship in action over the centuries, how has this happened? What form did it take? You may notice that there are two giant statues in St. Peter's Square. One is of the apostle St. Peter, with both arms at his side but his right hand is slightly elevated and deliberately pointing to St. Peter's Basilica. The other statue is of his companion St. Paul, the great missionary apostle but his right hand is not pointing to St. Peter's, it is pointing firmly well beyond the square and well beyond Rome itself. St. Peter traditionally represents the authority or the government structures of the church, the Pope and the bishops of the church. As the successors of the apostles, their tasks are to maintain order and unity in the church based on sound doctrine. So St. Peter's right hand is firmly and very symbolically pointing down to the giant Basilica which represents the Pope and bishops around the world. St. Paul however, represents the missionary side of the church. All those people who over the centuries have creatively identified the gaps between the gospels with its insistence on justice, compassion and mercy and particular concern for people who are poor on the one hand, and reality of life on the other. These people have identified the gaps and have creatively build bridges of justice, compassion and mercy across these gaps. They represent what we call the prophetic side of the church as opposed to the governance side of the church. St. Paul's successors down through the ages have been people like St. Vincent de Paul in the 17th century, who devoted his life to the relief of poverty in France. Mother Mary Aikenhead and her sisters in the 19th century, blessed Mary McKillop in similar times here in Australia. All are famous for imaginatively responding to the most neglected needs of their times.



Francis Morrissey *Canon Lawyer*

From a law point of view, sponsorship is also going to entail accountability and the responsibility for something... If I am opening a college, university hospital or health care centre and I want to put the cross over it, who is going to have a say over what the cross means? Or is it just simply a nice sign? And so these sponsorship roles will be in that line of accountability for the use of the name... Sponsorship of a health care ministry, is a formal relationship between an authorized catholic organization and a legally formed system, whether it be a hospital, clinic, nursing home or other institution, entered into for the sake of promoting and sustaining Christ's healing ministry to people in need.

*Concluding comments from the
Congregational Leadership Team: {excerpts}*

Sister Elizabeth Dodds:

Somebody asked a question, 'are we being led or are we being asked to discern?' I hope that we are being led. We are being led by the spirit and by the very fact that you are in collaborative ministry with us, part of that is for us to be in a discerning relationship, so it is a bit of both. However, it is our wish to lead... Our sisters have been on this journey for many decades, the words change the purpose does not.... We may appear to be aged and frail, but we have energy for mission and Charism... the call of Christ is pure and

scary Gospel, it is pretty scary today sitting in the group listening to all the questions and all the implications of those questions, but we will do it together.



Sister Maureen Delaney *CLT*

I am very aware of our focus on mission, and I heard Frank yesterday refer to the scripture quote: 'Seek ye first the kingdom and all else will follow.' And I firmly believe that. I am aware of being in the prophetic arm, the prophetic wing and the challenge that that is and the challenge of this moment that is the opportune moment. This time is ripe for now. And so we need to go forward with a very clear vision. I was very moved by the way we all in partnership moved around together, that was a wonderful moment that said so much. We are not alone; we are very much together carrying on the ministry, carrying on the mission of Jesus.



Sister Lauren Dixon *CLT*

This is a transition time, and we are invited to keep the transition moving. That I think is our challenge with you. The fact that this is an ecclesiological challenge, that is it is a church challenge and you are the church and we are the church with you, is something that I find very exciting and something I would like to be able to respond to. It is bigger than our congregation and that is what I think I would like to keep my focus on.... The non-negotiable element of mis-

sion is strong for me and I sense from the energy in the room that it is strong for each of you also. The notion of education is perhaps one of the current challenges that our sisters of charity in leadership need to do. To be educating, mentoring, encouraging and empowering and that is a mutual journey. We have a responsibility in that, but we receive as well as we give. Three arms of a possible PJP being health, education and community care will need to be further considered and dialogue entered into.



Sister Margaret Beirne *CLT*

Gerry spoke of Peter and Paul representing the institutional and prophetic wings of the church, my reflections on it was that they were two very, very human beings. Peter managed to fall flat on his face even before the death and resurrection of Jesus, let alone what happened after he took over the leadership of the early church of Jerusalem. And many of the Corinthians thought that Paul was a pint sized bore and did not hesitate to tell him so and caused Paul a huge degree of hurt as we can read in the letters to the Corinthians. So we have two people, two fallible human beings and that is a huge comfort to us. Ultimately it is about one to one conversations and using opportunities to do that graciously as one can in that sort of situation, but to continue the conversation between us, and between the two wings of the prophetic and the institutional arms of the church. We wish often we had the time to engage in prophetic visioning and discernment, and did not tend to get bogged down in a whole lot of other stuff. This seems to me as we learn from the stories of Acts, this is the golden opportunity to do just that.



Good Shepherd Seminary, Fatima, PNG

Sister Moira O'Sullivan forwarded these photos of the Seminarians 'art work in progress'.

She writes that the seminarians asked if they could put a mural of the Good Shepherd on the end wall of the new computer building.

{right} Ben Gomingo, a second year student from the Mt Hagen Archdiocese, begins the background mountains.



New Pathways with Sister Elizabeth Dodds

A Christmas Message

Greetings to all Sisters, our families and friends of the Congregation - 2005 has been another eventful year. In April, directors and leaders from our health and aged care, education, community care services joined with the Congregational Leadership Team and advisors to discuss models of sponsorship that may be adopted as we consider the future for our Congregation and our facilities. I encourage you to view the highlights DVD that we have produced so you may gain an insight into some of the challenges of our next major "sea-crossing".

2005 will be remembered as the year we said farewell to St Vincent's Hospital Launceston. I would like to thank the many Sisters, directors, staff and volunteers who have been a part of our 61 year presence in Launceston and northern Tasmania. We have transferred ownership of the hospital to the Sisters of Little Company of Mary Health Care and I trust that they will faithfully continue our good work.

In July, our Gathering at Parramatta and the Hills District brought together 115 sisters, with another 83 joining us as prayer partners. The four days of discussion, celebration, prayer and reflection proved valuable to all who attended. Two events from the Gathering will remain in the hearts of many Sisters: the unveiling of an historic marker commemorating the work of our first five Sisters at the Female Factory, and the Eucharistic celebration held at St Patrick's Cathedral, where the contribution of our Congregation to the Parramatta diocese was recognised in the official book of memory. Thank you to all who joined with us at this time.



We remember with love and hold in prayer the Sisters who have died this year: Sisters Claire Nolan, Dolores Bruton, M Consolata (Maure) Cornell, M Catherine Ellis, Irene Mary Buckley and Marian Corless.

On behalf of the Congregation I thank each of you who has so generously supported our mission within the Church during 2005. I wish you every blessing, peace and joy as we celebrate Christmas and look forward to the New Year, 2006.

Yours faithfully in J.C.,

Elizabeth Dodds, rsc

Congregational Leader

*Published by Sisters of Charity Congregational Office
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