



THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA

Keep in Touch

September 2007
Volume 8
Number 3

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

Commemorative Tasmanian Edition

160

years

*of continuous service and
dedicated ministry
by our Sisters*



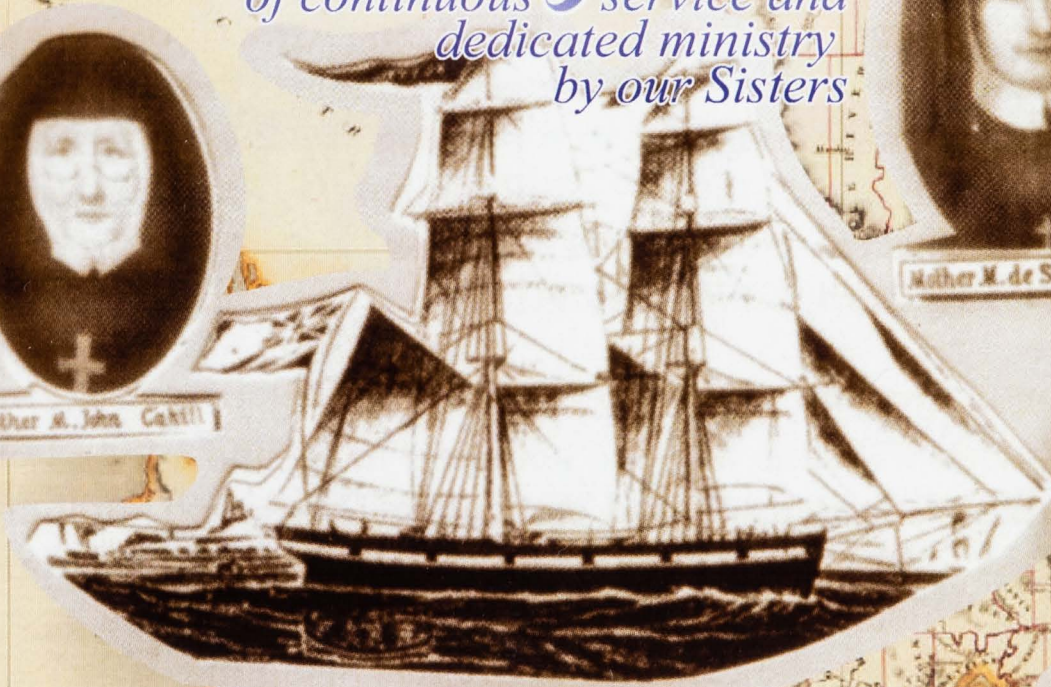
Mother M. John Cahill



Mother M. de Sales O'Brien



Mother M. Xavier Williams



VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

BY SIDNEY HALL.

English Miles 0 to 100

160 Year Celebration

Excerpt from Archbishop Doyle's Homily at the Mass celebrating the 160th Anniversary of Sisters of Charity in Tasmania on the 20th June, 2007.

"One hundred and sixty years ago today three Sisters of Charity sailed into Hobart to make a new start after an abortive attempt in Sydney. It was a very significant and courageous decision they made, to try again in Hobart rather than return to Ireland.

So much of the religious landscape of Tasmania and indeed the whole of Australia would have been different had they opted to return home. We are able to rejoice and be glad tonight for all that has followed the decision on their part.

They may not have been heavily into strategic plans, and themes for conferences, but they too were "Witnesses of Charity, and Builders of Peace." Not only are we thinking of the three founding Sisters, but of the many hundreds of Sisters of Charity who have followed in their footsteps in the intervening 160 years, here in Tasmania, and along the Eastern seaboard of Australia.

No doubt there were many moments in the lives of each of the Sisters when they needed to draw strength from the reading of the Prophet Jeremiah. The Sisters of Charity, along with the religious from other congregations, (and many are represented here tonight), and the priests of the Archdiocese, (also here tonight in good numbers) have been consecrated before birth, to carry out a mission in which the Lord has been "with us to protect us".

The vineyard, which was planted 160 years ago, has continued to grow and to mature. There have been times when pruning needed to occur. But the fruit is there to be seen, in the special apostolates of education, health and assistance to the poor, especially in the early times when wonderful assistance was offered to the women who were incarcerated in the Female Factory in South Hobart.

This continuity has occurred because the Gospel advice has been followed: "Make your home in me, as I make mine in you." It was because it was the work of the Lord, that we can look back this evening over 160 years of being "Witnesses of Charity and Builders of Peace".

Empowering people and changing lives has been the vocation of the Sisters of Charity, and for that we are grateful.

May it continue for many years to come."

On Wednesday 20th June 2007, the Sisters of Charity in Tasmania were joined by Archbishop Adrian Doyle, the Archbishop of Hobart, and 70 priests and religious from across Tasmania at a Eucharistic Celebration in St. Therese's Church, Moonah. The celebration marked the 160th anniversary of the arrival in Tasmania of Mother Mary John Cahill, Sister Mary de Sales O'Brien and Sister Mary Xavier Williams onboard the Louisa. Afterwards, the Sisters and their guests travelled to Newlands Reception Centre in MT Stuart for dinner, where our Congregational Leader Sister Elizabeth Dodds rsc welcomed guests and outlined the history of the ministries and presence of Sisters of Charity in Tasmania for over 160 years.



Archbishop Doyle and concelebrants



Sr Carmel Hall mss and Margaret Beirne rsc



Sr Phillip Cowmeadow rsj and Fr Gerard Glynn



Sr Mary Richards op, Barbara Brown Graham fcj and Fr Denis Allan



Sr Mary Noonan rsj and Fr Ted McCormack msc

Mount Carmel College

Sandy Bay

St Aloysius Catholic College

Kingston

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1. Grade 6 students welcoming the Sisters and Community to the Assembly

2. Junior Choir

3. Srs Ellen O'Carrigan, Grade 6 tour guides, Srs Maureen Heffernan rsc and Margaret Nabbs rsc

4. Srs Helen Clark rsc, Jean Montgomery rsc, Mary Maguire rsc and Suzette Clark rsc

5. Srs Colleen Jackson rsc, Patricia Mary Ryan rsc (back), Cathy Meese rsc with Grade 5 tour guides

6. An interested group of Preps listening to the visitors

Mount Carmel College evolved from St Joseph's School and College, which was founded on 23rd August 1847. On May 1st 1960 the Sisters of Charity commenced St Aloysius Primary School, which is becoming a College in 2009. Past rsc Principals and staff members accepted invitations from the present Principals Mrs Laurie Wolfe (Mount Carmel College) and Mrs Elaine Askey-Doran (St Aloysius Catholic College) to join both college communities for Assembly and classroom visits. Memories were revived and the wonderful hospitality of both Colleges was greatly appreciated and enjoyed.



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1. Past and present Principals Sr Eileen Kean rsc 1974-1982 and Mrs Laurie Wolfe 2004-
 2. L-R: Mary Walton, Madeline Green and Sally Atherton
 3. L-R: Katie Lock, Lily Fewster and Maggie Goldsmith, Year 5

4. L-R: Sr Deidre Hickey rsc, grade one teacher Miss Saricano and class
 5. Past Principals Sr Eileen Kean rsc 1974-1982 and Sr Elizabeth Dwyer 1971-1973
 6. Kinara Johnson Year 10 student, Mrs Di Buddle Year 10 Home Teacher and College Art Teacher and Congregational Leader Sr Elizabeth Dodds rsc

Visit to the Female Factory

Cascades, South Hobart

On the morning of Saturday 18th August a large number of Sisters of Charity, together with volunteers connected with the historic site, gathered at the former Female Factory at South Hobart. An impressive Guided Tour by Mr Alda Fabian was followed by a beautiful Prayer Service based on the themes "Standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me", and the presentation and framed documents acknowledging the ministry of our three Pioneer Sisters at the site. Sister Elizabeth Dodds rsc handed this gift to Mrs Shirley McCarron, for display in the Heritage Museum.



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1. We remember all those who have passed through this gate - Lest We Forget

2. Presentation of the recorded ministry of the three pioneer Sisters at the Female Factory, presented to Mrs Shirley McCarron, Programme Manager

3. Prayer service held at the Female Factory

4. The three pioneer Sisters are commemorated on candles

5. & 6. Sisters viewing the remains of the underground cells which housed the female convicts

Mass at St Joseph's, Hobart

“Welcome - Celebrating 160 Years”

August 18th, 2007

I warmly welcome each of you to this Eucharist, which celebrates our link to those remarkable people through 160 years of continuous service and dedicated ministry by our Sisters to the Church and indeed to the state of Tasmania.

I am delighted that so many Sisters of Charity have been able to travel here and gather for this weekend of celebrations. It is a true pilgrimage for us – in the journeying, in the remembering, in the thanksgiving and in the celebrating. In pilgrimage our steps are thoughtful and reflective so that we come to know and appreciate who we are more deeply.

Without individualising, I want to pay tribute to our sisters in and from Tasmania. Some of them have heard me use the term “Tassie Treasures”, and so they are. Urged on by the love of Christ they have always seen the face of God in each person to whom they have ministered. In the same way, each Sister of Charity strives to be the face of God in each personal encounter: whether in outreach, community or pastoral care, or in education, health and aged care.

As we prepare to celebrate I am reminded of how the liturgical documents describe the Eucharist as “... the source and summit... “ of who and what we are as followers of Christ. This evening I am conscious of another and deeper level of the meaning of those words’ source and summit.

Acknowledging and celebrating 160 years is a summit, a pinnacle. It’s such a high point. However from the summit you see so much more – so much more to be achieved, so many more people at the margins, so much need for the love of Christ. Let this Eucharist then become the nourishing source for our future ministries and partnerships.

***Elizabeth Dodds rsc
Congregational Leader
The Sisters of Charity of Australia***

Excerpt from Archbishop Doyle's Homily

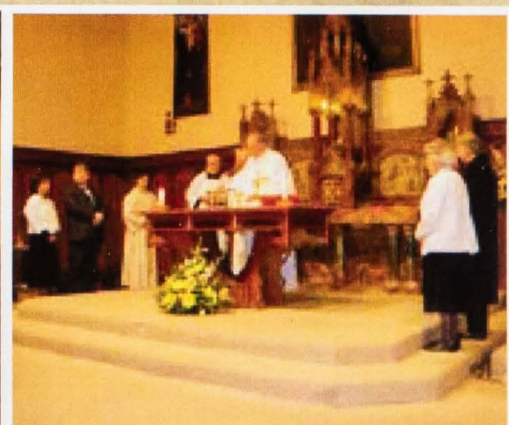
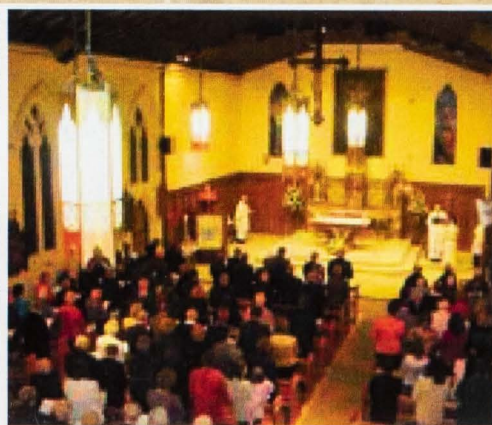
“On May 3rd 1844, the newly appointed first Bishop of Hobart, Robert Willson, came up from the port after arriving in Hobart the night before. The church was full, but in most part those present were convicts, who comprised the majority of his flock.

Only three years later, the three pioneer Sisters of Charity arrived here to begin the apostolate of their Congregation. The very first contribution of the Sisters was to provide support and assistance to the female convicts, followed by initiatives in education, health care, orphanages and counselling. They lived on this very site in the early days.

In this Church many young Tasmanian women took their vows as Sisters of Charity, starting with Mary Robertson, who joined the community as Sister Teresa in March, 1949. And it was from the residence at the rear of this Church that the Sisters went into the streets of Hobart to minister to the people, especially the poor, the sick, the disadvantaged and the uneducated.

It is fitting that we are here in this lovely Church, in these historic surroundings that would be so familiar to those early women. I think it would be reasonable to assume that the pioneer Sisters were very much women imbued with the spirit of the Beatitudes, and the message of St Paul's letter to the Corinthians about “higher gifts” and the importance of love as the top priority.”

A full report and more pictures from this Mass can be found in “The Tasmanian Catholic” Vol 3 Issue 4. Download the PDF from www.hobart.catholic.org.au



Excerpt from Archbishop Doyle's Address launching "To the Beckoning Shores"

Saturday 18 August 2007



"The past year or so has seen important anniversaries for several religious congregations of women in the Archdiocese of Hobart. As is usual at such times there is a strong emphasis on looking back at the journey of these congregations since their arrival in Tasmania.

The story Sister Josephine Cannell relates in "To the Beckoning Shores" has all the elements of drama, conflict, struggle and emotion of a modern-day reality TV show. The difference is that this book tells a story that is real. It is about real people, real women – women who devoted their lives and energy to the education and care of others.

It is to the enormous credit of every one of these women that they persevered in their mission, when many lesser people would have thrown in the towel. It is clear that they had heard God's call to them and were determined to answer the call fully, no matter what obstacles were placed before them.

Of course, one can focus too much on the negatives, the conflict and the turmoil in any story. But the story of the Sisters of Charity in Tasmania in "To the Beckoning Shores" is also a very joyful story – full of wonderful people, of great achievements and of happiness.

Two particular aspects are evident in the pages of this book. Firstly there is the great love and support they received over the years from the Catholics around Tasmania. Secondly, and most importantly for us here tonight, there are the Sisters of Charity themselves. The story of their time here in Tasmania is one that is woven in the very fabric of this island. It began with the arrival of Margaret Cahill, Catherine O'Brien and Eliza Williams in Hobart 160 years ago and it continues today with their Devonport-based Outreach.

I want to pay tribute to Sister Josephine Cannell for her hard work and dedication in researching and writing this book. She has done herself and her Sisters very proud indeed."

"To the Beckoning Shores"; \$20 plus postage and packing.

Available from Credo Books (03) 6223 6774 custservice@credotas.com.au

Cornelian Bay

The visiting Sisters and friends joined with the Tasmanian Sisters of Charity community at the Cornelian Bay Cemetery to honour the three Pioneer Sisters and eighteen other Sisters of Charity buried there. It was fitting that Sister Xavier William's great, great, great, grandniece Rosalie Robertson and her husband Wayne were part of the group as this formed a wonderful link with our past history. The Mass celebrated by Archbishop Doyle, commenced at the graveside with the Opening Rite and the Liturgy of the Word. The group proceeded in quiet prayer to the Crematorium Chapel where Mass continued. The weekend of great celebrations concluded with a delectable lunch enjoyed in the Chapel garden.



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1. Sisters gather for the Liturgy of the Word at the Pioneer Sisters' Graves at Cornelian Bay

2. Opening Rite at the graveside by Archbishop Doyle

3. Sisters praying at the graveside

4. Current and former Congregational Leaders: Srs Elizabeth Dodds rsc, Mary Maguire rsc and Helen Clarke rsc

5. L-R: Srs Catherine Meese rsc, Suzette Clark rsc, Lauren Dixon rsc, Maureen Heffernan rsc and Jean Montgomery rsc

6. Srs Anna Maria Parlevliet rsc, Judith Christy rsc and Anne Turner rsc

Sister Mary de Sales O'Brien



Mother Mary John Cahill



Sister Mary Xavier Williams



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