



SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF AUSTRALIA
 1838 - 2013
175 years
impelled by Christ's love

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Keep in touch

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...we marvel again at the survival of the Sisters of Charity in Australia and thank God for it.



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The first entrants to the Sisters of Charity in Australia

By Moira O'Sullivan rsc, Congregational Historian

It's not too far fetched to say that a troublesome American on board the *Francis Spaight* brought the Sisters of Charity their first recruit in Australia. Unlike most other missionary foundations, they were never to receive personnel from the mother country once they left Ireland.

Let Bishop Ullathorne tell the story. In his autobiography, written many years later,¹ Ullathorne described the group of volunteers for the Australian mission that he gathered in Europe and took on board, adding:

'To my surprise I also found on board a sister of one of the priests [Edmund Marum], niece to an Irish Bishop [Bishop of Ferns], a fine-looking girl but awkwardly placed and ignorant of the ways of the world.'

At that time, no respectable woman travelled alone, which may be what Ullathorne meant by saying that Brigit Marum was 'awkwardly placed': she was not with a husband or father. Unfortunately, there was an American on board, who, even though with his wife, took pleasure in embarrassing the women passengers. Ullathorne believed him responsible for persuading the captain to pay too much attention to Sr M. Lawrence Cater. Ullathorne allowed the sisters to talk to female passengers but to anyone else, 'only at table'.

This American 'cooked up' a claim – that the priest's sister had stolen some of his wife's silk stockings:

Although this innocent and well behaved girl had come without my knowledge..., yet her protection now required that I should henceforth take charge of her. I arranged this with her brother, and then found the American...the next morning at breakfast... there was an apology...After that, I put this young person in the care of the nuns and she joined their Order on reaching Sydney and became a valuable Religious.²

Apart from showing Ullathorne's tendency to take control, the passage gives information about Marum's appearance and connections. Pioneer Sisters had little time to keep records and so far no fact about her birthplace has surfaced, though seminary records may give her brother's, indicating at least, a country of origin.

Marum was to share all the hardships of the early sisters. There were not enough members to have a separate Novitiate. In any case, before later regulations came into force,

much of the training of early religious women was done 'on the job'. Marum had M. de Sales O'Brien as novice mistress and Cater took over when O'Brien was convalescing at Waverley in 1839. Once professed, on 18 October 1941, she was told to go to Van Diemen's land with M. M. John Cahill, though O'Brien summoned them back before the ship sailed because Father J. J. Therry did not remain on the ship with them to see them settled. This meant that Sr M. Augustine Marum was in the congregation with her twin sister, Sr M. Vincent, entered (but died on 19 October 1844, the day after pronouncing her vows).³

Father John Fitzpatrick was promised that the vestments Sr M. Vincent was making for him would be completed for him by someone else and sent to him.⁴ We can barely imagine the impact of her death on Sr M. Augustine, coping with the separation from her homeland and the hardships of the new country while grieving over her brother, Fr Richard Marum, who had died on 8 March that same year. Her other brother, Fr Edward Marum, was nowhere near.

Polding had told a colleague in England that limitations of money and space prevented more from entering that first year. Margaret O'Brien, who came to the convent on 11 January 1840, may have been one he spoke of. Like the Marums, O'Brien was to be the first of two Sisters who entered.



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Gregory spoke of the other, Maria Teresa, when she was dismissed by de Sales O'Brien from the Novitiate, as belonging to a very respectable family. Since her father died as a judge in New Zealand, they may have been financially secure immigrants. Margaret (Sr M. Joseph) O'Brien was known for a good singing voice, knowledge of church music and also for having known Mary Aikenhead in Dublin. After De Lacy went back to Ireland, M. M. Joseph headed the Sisters of Charity in Sydney and also St Vincent's Hospital. She was on excellent terms with Archbishop Polding. Her younger sister was to enter again, when M. Joseph was in charge, after de Sales went to Van Diemen's Land and helped dispense medicines.

Another pair of sisters consisted of Mary and Geraldine Gibbons, one of whom, Mary, Sr M. Ignatius, received the habit on 4 May 1840, at the same time as Margaret O'Brien. This was not the complete period required by the Constitutions, for the Sisters had to fit in with Polding's timetable. This variation was not easily understood in Ireland. Sr M. Ignatius was one of the two Sisters, with Augustine Marum, who died in 1853 when living at the House of the Good Shepherd. This shock of two deaths within a month may have been one factor in leading Polding to found a congregation specifically dedicated to work with repentant women (and first called Sisters of the Good Shepherd though now the Sisters of the Good Samaritan). This foundation was to be part of the life work of the second Gibbons sister, Geraldine, Sr M. Scholastica.

Like Sr M. John Baptist De Lacy and almost everyone who entered in Australia, these first Sisters depended on Polding's generosity in not requiring a dowry to support them when they entered. This put them in a debt of gratitude to him, for without his help, they would not have been able to live their calling to religious life. To the usual Catholic reverence for the clergy, they added affection from experiencing his kindness and personal interest in them.



Photo and sketch of St Mary's Convent at Parramatta.



Once De Lacy had set up the House of the Good Shepherd in the new premises from those used by Mrs Blake and Fr Farrelly, Scholastica was in charge there when De Lacy was caught up with fundraising and planning for St Vincent's Hospital, so she was the obvious choice for Novice Mistress when Polding decided to found an institute of apostolic Benedictine women to ensure that there would be sufficient Sisters available for the House of the Good Shepherd.

Scholastica was to train and lead these Sisters for many years, though Polding also appointed her Head Superior of the Sisters of Charity, allowing De Lacy to devote all her energies to the hospital. This system did not work well, so, when De Lacy left Sydney in 1859, Scholastica did not keep this role. From then on, apart from a brief period when she went to stay with Sr M. Francis Xavier Williams in Hobart, Scholastica lived with the Sisters of the Good Samaritan (renamed after Polding visited Rome). Apart from her duties with the Sisters, Scholastica was active in nursing the sick, especially sick priests and the sick boys at Lyndhurst,

the Benedictine College. She lived her life of charity until 15 October 1901.

An entrant in October 1840, Elizabeth Fisher, was of special interest to Polding, not only because she was English, but also because he may have been instrumental in bringing her into the Catholic faith. Sr M. Teresa's death on 14 January 1844 affected him so strongly that he mentioned it in letters to priests in Australia and England. We can imagine that the effect on those who lived with her as Sisters would have been equally strong. It was also a blow to the small Congregation.

Within the first two years, two outstanding Irishwomen, M. Joseph O'Brien and M. Scholastica Gibbons, who were to be anchors for two different religious institutes, had entered the group of pioneers. Other entrants lived shorter lives, either arriving with the seeds of consumption or developing weak health as a result of unsuitable lodgings, scant food and hard work in harsh conditions. When we see the number of early deaths, we marvel again at the survival of the Sisters of Charity in Australia and thank God for it.

¹ William Bernard Ullathorne, *From Cabin Boy to Archbishop: The Autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne*, printed from the original draft, with an introduction by Shane Leslie (Burns Oats, 1941)

² *ibid.*, 136

³ This information about the twin is from the Australian Sisters' archives and the information about the profession from M. M. Donovan Apostolate of Love.

⁴ This was for a priest who wrote to Brigit O'Sullivan on 26th October 1840 advising against girls becoming nuns, a letter kept in the Fr Therry papers. John O'Sullivan was Therry's Business Manager.

Congregational Artists

By the Archives Manager, Denise Corrigan, with assistance from Sr Jeannie Johnston and Sr Mary Frances Gould



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I wonder how many Sisters know that Sr Josephine Cannell made the profession rings for Sisters Laureen Dixon, Leonie Flynn, Linda Ferrington and Loretta Bani (below). She hand-polished and engraved them as well. Sr Josephine learned jewellery making at Collingwood Technical College and pottery at Essendon Lapidary Club in order to introduce lapidary/jewellery and pottery as electives in the Senior Art and Craft program at St Columba's College, Essendon.



Many of our Sisters have used their creative skills to teach the many young women they have come into contact with along the way. Other Sisters, like Sr M. Ursula Smith, were enlisted to use their photographic talents to record the works of the Congregation's social welfare and pastoral ministries in the 1970s. Sr M. St Gregory Maguire became very skilled at bark pictures under the tutelage of Sr Mary Frances Gould and sold these paintings to raise money for the missions. Others still use their talents to embolden the cause by painting many candles and banners for special occasions. It has always been the way.

At the laying of the foundation stone of St Patrick's Church in 1840, a procession of nearly 14,000 Catholics through the streets of Sydney was headed up by "three magnificent banners made by the Sisters of Charity which lent a degree of splendour to the procession." A description in the *Hobart Mercury* of some early needlework by the Sisters of Charity at the Catholic Bazaar in Campbell Town in 1881 reads: "...this stall possessed a large folding screen with beautiful patterns of cretonne"; a later entry in 1890 reads: "the church was exquisitely decorated by the Sisters of Charity".

One of the earliest works in the Archives collection *Jesus Carries His Cross* is by Sr M. Antonia Loughnan (admitted 1892 – died 1938), artist and musician. According to the Deceased Sisters' Biographies, Sr M. Antonia was "accomplished and cultured in every way." Sr M. Antonia was recorded in the *Annals* as painting china tea-cups and saucers with the Congregational Crest for Mother Francis McGuigan's 1914 Golden Jubilee, but unfortunately these have not survived.

The cushion pictured below right, was made by Sr M. Ludovic Mackel, 1926, for Mrs Connelly in "grateful recognition of the many acts of kindness to her at Croydon."

Sr M. Solanus St Julien (admitted 1918 – died 1947) was a graduate of Julian Ashton's art school. She taught art for many years at St Vincent's College. The plate pictured below left, was painted by a student in her class in 1938, Ms Betty Farmer.

Most Sisters would have seen the work of Sr M. Juliana Willmott, but whether they recognised it is another thing! She gave the Stations of the Cross in the St Vincent's Convent Chapel a much-needed new coat and varnish in the late 1940s. Also an artist and musician, (admitted 1922 – died 1980) she painted over 250 statues in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart.

Sr M. Baptist Whyte (admitted 1923 – died 1992) was prolific in her output for the Congregation. These included banners and candles. In the 1950s novices at Wahroonga were taught pottery, leatherwork, cane-work, and painting under the watchful and patient eye of Sr Baptist Whyte as part of an Arts and Crafts Summer School. According to the *Annals*, each afternoon everyone repaired to the lawn outside the dormitory where the trestle tables were erected, and there –

"... they pushed and pummelled at the clay and learnt the intricacies of moulding and the use of 'slip', whilst cane workers got off to a late start due the preliminaries of winding what looked like miles of cane."

Top: *Jesus Carries His Cross* by Sr M. Antonia Loughnan.

Left: Painted plate by Ms Betty Farmer.

Right: Embroidered cushion by Sr M. Ludovic Mackel.



A photograph of a beautiful painting on silk taffeta Sr M. Baptist presented to the Fijian Sisters: *Our Lady of Fiji* in 1958 (below), and a painting of a Queensland flame tree (right).



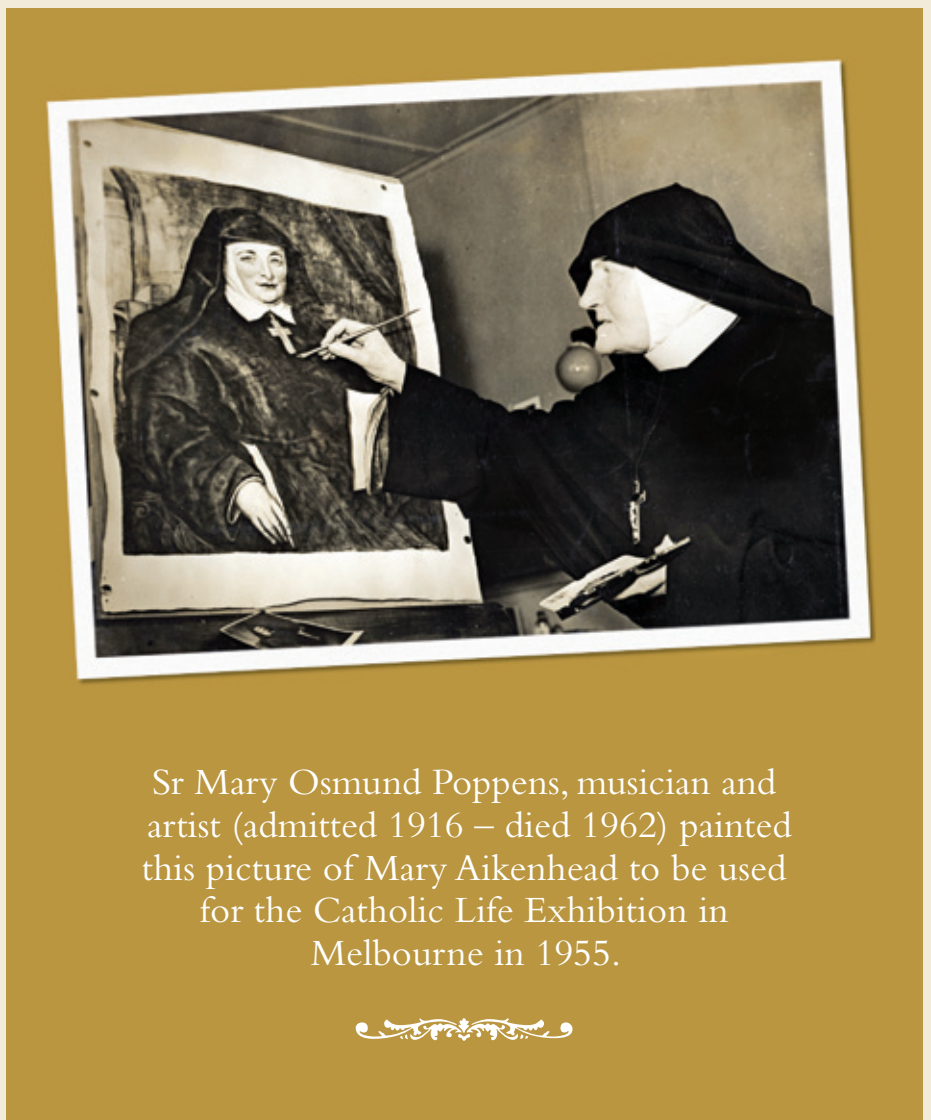
St Brigid's Nursing Home walls were also tastefully decorated with lovely scenes by Sr M. Baptist in the early 1950s, but unfortunately no pictures of this survive. She also decorated candles for the Congregation for special occasions. She designed the Ashgrove school badge, and the altar for the Hospice, Lismore and Hurstville convents.



Sr M. Baptist in her studio at the back of Bethania, c1977.

It was at St Vincent's College as an art teacher where her talents as an artist were truly nurtured and utilised for the benefit of the girls. The ex-students purchased her first pottery kiln.

[Continued page 06](#)



Sr Mary Osmund Poppens, musician and artist (admitted 1916 – died 1962) painted this picture of Mary Aikenhead to be used for the Catholic Life Exhibition in Melbourne in 1955.



Congregational Artists

Continued from page 05



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Sr M. Leonore Murphy (admitted 1937 – died 2012), over a period of nine months constructed, by hand, eleven dioramas showing the history of the Congregation for the *Catholic Life* Exhibition in 1955.

She was a teacher at St John's School, East Melbourne at the time. There were 295 figures in all, scaled to an adult size of four inches, all dressed by Sr M. Leonore. All the faces, moulded with intricate detail, were made from the wax used by dental technicians when making moulds for dentures. Glass beads were used for the eyes.

These dioramas were a joint effort of the Sisters. A newspaper clipping at the time explained that Sr M. Luigi [Sr Josephine Cannell] made the golden lettering for the Exhibition; the ship model was sent from Hobart by Mother M. Eulalia Murphy and was re-rigged by Sr M. Philip Maher; Sr M. Aloysia Weston and Sr Miriam Adair made the side rosary beads; and Sr M. Hedwige made three beautiful studies of Caritas Christi, Kew.

The dioramas were shown again at the Mary Aikenhead Centenary Exhibition at Mark Foys, Sydney in May and June 1958. Most recently the hospital diorama was displayed at the *Not Just Ned: A true history of the Irish in Australia* Exhibition at the National Museum in Canberra in 2011 (pictured above, inset).



The Archway, Montsalvat, Eltham. This watercolour, 1992, was painted specially for the Archives by Sr M. Leonore Murphy.

Sr Margaret Murphy [Sr M. Martha] (admitted 1928 – died 1998) is pictured above with a banner designed for her Golden Jubilee. She produced many beautifully illuminated blessings to hang in the convents. She even taught Sr Jeannie Johnston the finer details of calligraphy and the medieval art of illumination.



Sr Jeannie Johnston's designs for the Novitiate tabernacle and the sesqui-centenary logo are pictured above. The tabernacle was made up and in use at the chapel at Medley Avenue. Sr Jeannie is also skilled in ecclesiastical embroidery.

Of interest

A Protestant viewpoint about the early Sisters

Extract from the journal of Richard Hargrave who arrived in Sydney 1st April 1839 aged 22 or 23, not a Catholic but a church-goer. This was in a letter from Rev. J. Hargrave S. M., 15 September 1891.

The extract was an entry evidently written 20 April 1839.

'They have a Nunnery here in Parramatta containing four Sisters of Charity and one Novice. Last week, April 20th 1839, the Novice was admitted as a Nun, being the first who was made a Nun in this country, the other three having come from England or France. They all wear black veils & employ themselves in going about the town visiting the sick and proselyting [sic] in season & out of season and when they have got a number of persons who are willing to be confirmed, they tell the Bishop who confirms them & every year they have to give on a return to the Govt [sic] of the number of their flock & if they have increased [sic] their number, they have an increase [sic] of salary, although it is known that many of them are the worst of characters & by no means fit to be communicants, yet they do as well as others to count.

The people here are by no means good attendants at Church they let the women go, but the men are too busy thinking and settling their speculations to have time to go to church, & many of them I think get so into the habit, when up the country, of not attending church, that when they have the opportunity they will not avail themselves of it.'



Sr Margaret Lee, was another accomplished watercolourist in the Congregation who took up painting as a hobby. This picture was a gift done by Sr Margaret for Sr Sesarina's Silver Jubilee in 1995. She was also training to be a writer of Icons up to the time of her death in 2000.



Sr Emeric Underwood (admitted 1929 – died 1993), an exponent of Hardanger Embroidery, was another Sister whose work adorned the altar in several Convent Chapels.



Sr M. Felicia McCarthy (admitted 1945 – died 2007) was an oil painter and an exquisite embroiderer. Examples of her gold work and beautiful linen cut out work can be still found in several convent Chapels.



Sr M. Carmena Kelly also produced many beautifully designed monstrance covers for the Congregation (detail shown above).

There were and are many other accomplished artists in the Congregation too numerous to mention here. If you have a piece of work by a Sister of Charity in your convent, please forward a digital image to the Archives with as much detail as possible about the work and its history, so we make sure all Sisters are represented in the Collection.

Sisters of Charity Novitiate

Wahroonga



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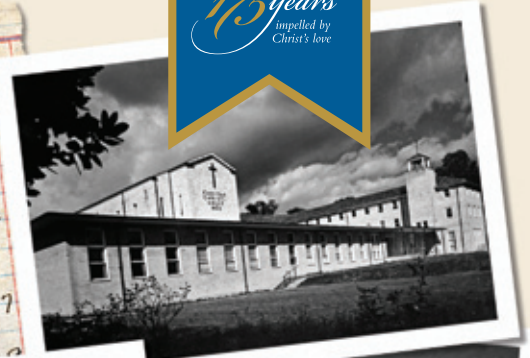
In the early days, the Sisters of Charity did not have a separate house for the Novitiate. However, from 1915-1952 all Novices were accommodated and trained in the Novitiate located in Bethania, Potts Point and were housed separately from the Convent in the original Tarmons house there. By the early 1950's, with the Congregation having increased to nearly 500 members, a search was made for a suitable site in a less populated suburb for the establishment of a new Novitiate. This proposal was intended to provide a location of quiet surroundings, with greater privacy, opportunities for recreational needs and room for future expansion.

A property in Junction Road, Wahroonga was purchased in 1951 for £25,000. There was an existing large house with art deco features, which the Sisters named 'Bethany'. The biggest room, which had previously been a billiard room, became a small Chapel. Once the new Novitiate was completed, Bethany was still used on ceremony days when the Bishop and Priests were given refreshments there. Professed Sisters also formed a community there. Already planted in the surrounding acres were substantial gardens, including various fruit trees and vegetables. As well, there was a cow, a calf and six sheep! The announcement of a move to Wahroonga generated much speculation among the Novices: *"what would we do in such a large rural acreage?"*

A description of one of the first visits of Novices from Bethania evokes the rural atmosphere: *"The drive up was a delight ... the smoke of the city gave place to the sweet aroma of eucalypts. The Professed Sisters greeted us at the gate and on the verandah Mother Edmund and Mother Benedicta were waiting to welcome us."* After visiting the little Chapel and exploring the grounds, a tennis match was held. That evening the Novices returned to Bethania with "Wahroonga blooms" to present to Our Lady.

By January 1953 the Novitiate had been transferred to Wahroonga. Whilst the new Novitiate was still under construction, the need for accommodation was so great

Receipt			
1954.			
Jan	5. Novices' Donations	10	10
	7. Novices' Donations St. Joseph's Lamp	8	9
	14. Novices' Donations	14	14
	22. Novices' Donations St. Joseph's Lamp	5	7
	23. Novices' Da - r:	2	2
Feb.	1. Sale of the Donation: In Novices' Don		
	11. Novices' Da		
	15. Novices' Da St. Joseph's		



"... the beautiful setting and environment cannot but help to direct the thoughts ... to God and the infinite beauty of His creation"

that temporary structures such as garages were used and portable buildings had to be erected. There was much activity – the statues of the Holy Infant of Prague, as well as Our Lady and St Joseph were safely transferred from Bethania. In early February, twelve new postulants arrived and the whole community was present at Mass. A further seven new postulants arrived in July. Delightful picnic days in the grounds, attending films and lectures, planting potatoes and even having to move sheep that were 'grazing' on the tennis court were just some of the other activities recorded.

The Foundation Stone was blessed by Cardinal Gilroy on ANZAC day, 25th April 1954. On a fine day, with a guard of honour of school children, members of the Theresian Club, nurses from St Vincent's and St Joseph's, together with Novices

and Postulants, a large group of people attended. In his speech, Cardinal Gilroy referred to the intrepid qualities of the ANZACs which were needed in marked degree by those called to serve Christ. He was greatly impressed by the "modern ideas in architecture ... space, air and light ... in a setting of severe simplicity" of the new Novitiate house.

Mother General at the time, Mother Alphonsus, had engaged the architect Tom O'Mahony to design and oversee construction of the new Novitiate. Over 40 years later, Tom O'Mahony recalled Mother General as an "admirable client, very clear about what was required in the new building." The new building was planned around the four sides of a quadrangle, from which the Chapel and the other sections of the building could be entered.

The quadrangle was designed with a cloistered walk on all sides, laid out as an enclosed garden. The official opening was conducted by His Excellency Most Reverend Romolo Carboni DD., Apostolic Delegate of the Holy See on November 28th 1954. His Excellency remarked that “this new house for the Novices is ideal for spiritual training ... the convenience of a modern building will do much to assist them ... and the beautiful setting and environment cannot but help to direct the thoughts ... to God and the infinite beauty of His creation.”

The new Novitiate was indeed modern; a graceful building of pale venetian red brick with a lofty belfry from which the Angelus could be heard to ring from several streets away. Parlours opened from either side of the entrance hall on the ground floor; and as well as the kitchen wing there were classrooms, music rooms, sewing and laundry rooms. Sunlight filled the large Novitiate room, the library and the breakfast room. Long plate glass doors led into the Chapel, with its Altar of plain sandstone and the crucifix from Bethania suspended at the rear of the sanctuary.



The Novitiate entrance – a quotation from St Paul to the Corinthians on the virtue of charity, engraved in stone.

Accommodation was provided for approximately 90 Sisters and Novices, each single room having the convenience of much appreciated hot and cold running water. Once the building was fully complete, in 1956, the first Mass in the Chapel was held on the Feast of the Epiphany and soon after, on 23rd January came the first ceremony of reception of novices and profession at Wahroonga.

Over the following 20 years, the original question of “what would we do in such a large rural acreage?” has been answered in many and varied ways.

In 1974 the Novitiate moved to St Thomas’ Convent, Lewisham and the Wahroonga property became the Caritas Christi Conference Centre.

Opposite page: Back: Novitiate receipt, sale of wool, sheep etc. Top and middle: The Novitiate and the quadrangle garden. Bottom: The Lady Chapel and altar. Bottom left: The dining room.

Photography: Max Dupain and Kerry Dundas.

Sisters of Charity visit

St. Catherine of Siena Parish Caroline Springs



On Sunday morning, 20th October, a mini-bus headed out of the city via Fitzroy and Parkville to Caroline Springs. The destination was St. Catherine of Siena Parish.

Between the mini bus and several cars, 30 Sisters of Charity came to see the new Parish church and the restored tabernacle formerly housed in the chapel of St. Vincent’s Hospital Convent, Fitzroy and, after several years in storage, donated by the Congregation to the Parish where Sr Denise Hannebery rsc has been in ministry for the last six years.

Denise greeted all the Sisters and introduced them to the Parish Priest, Fr. John Tollan. After attending the 10:30am Eucharist, the Parish community and Sisters shared morning tea together. This was followed by a guided tour of the liturgical space beginning with the sacred oils in the gathering space at the church entrance, moving through the baptismal area with a full-immersion font for infant baptism and removable floor panels to accommodate adult candidates, and on to the sanctuary with the processional cross, and altar with the tabernacle set behind.

Many of the Sisters remembered their times of private and communal prayer before the tabernacle in St. Vincent’s chapel over the years. They are very happy it has found a new home among the people of the St. Catherine of Siena community.



Above: Sr Denise Hannebery (second on right) and the Sisters of Charity who visited Caroline Springs. Top: Srs Bernadette Culhane and Helen Malone in front of the tabernacle.

Responding to people beyond our shores

Papua New Guinea

Sr Eileen Thynne rsc

In the early 60's Mother St Agnes was asked by Fr Mike Morrison SVD if a community of Sisters could be missioned to Bundi in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

Volunteers were called for and five Sisters were chosen – Carmelita (Eileen) Thynne, Mother Giovanni, Catherine Tierney, Sandra David and Kathleen Fanning. After much preparation we were farewelled in September and we stayed overnight with the Holy Spirit Sisters at Alexishaven and travelled to Bundi by Cessna on September 12.

Some children and the village chiefs all dressed in their finery, were waiting on the airstrip to welcome us. The children all looked alike when we first met them. They were all happy and keen to learn but not many girls came to school. At meal times two children would share the one plate of food, which was always mainly kau kau (sweet potato). Each afternoon they went to work in the gardens and came home with food. Before they moved into the new dormitory, three slept under one blanket. There were some lay missionaries working at Bundi and we formed a little community.

As the only surviving member of the original group, I wish to acknowledge their generosity and dedication. I found it a great privilege to minister to and work with the Bundi people, who were poor, but very happy.

Sr Gaye Reynolds rsc

What a privilege it was to go to PNG! I joined two of the foundation Sisters – Sandra David and Kathleen Fanning in Bundi, Madang in 1969. There were lay missionaries and Bundi teachers on staff too. After a year or two, Srs Marina and Ellen and I were on the Bundi Staff. The children were a pleasure to teach and keen to learn. They lived in villages which were long distances away. It may have taken them one or two days to walk to the Mission Station to begin the school Term as boarders.

The children were well behaved and played well together. As teachers, we never had to do playground duty! Their parents had instilled high values and principles into their children.



“I found it a great privilege to minister to and work with the Bundi people, who were poor but very happy.”

Sr Ellen O’Carrigan rsc

One of the first things I noticed when we changed planes at Port Moresby was the extraordinary heat which rushed to meet me – quite different to Sydney’s heat!

We spent the night in Madang then the next morning we boarded a small mission plane to fly into Bundi. I remember flying over a sea of mountains and then Gaye pointed out the Mission Station to me, situated on the top of one of the highland mountains. When Brother turned the plane to land on the narrow airstrip, I was sure we were going to crash but we survived that trip and many others!

Bundi was nestled up in a mountain area out of Madang. There were no roads in or out of Bundi, so travelling to and fro was in Cessna planes. Mail and supplies were delivered once or twice a month – depending on the weather. While the Bundi weather was perfect – pleasant days and cool nights, at times low clouds prevented planes from landing; hence our eagerness for clear, sunny days!

In going to PNG, I thought I would be the one giving, but in fact, I received so much from the people who had little but gave much and always feel richly blessed from my time in this beautiful country.

The first time I saw the school children was at Mass. All I could see was a sea of brown faces and curly hair, and I wondered how I would ever tell them apart! But when I got to know them, they were all very individual. As it was a boarding school, we were kept busy during the day and took the children for study in the evening. I taught Year 3 in those days. Sister Catherine, who was a School Inspector for the area, visited us from time to time.

When each Term ended, the children would wash their blankets at the creek and Gaye, Marina and I would clean the dormitories, collect the blankets when they dried, in readiness for the children's return after the holiday break.

I have happy memories of my time in Bundi.

Sr Marina Ward rsc

My life in PNG was varied, interesting and happy. I had never thought of working in another country and was surprised when the new Congregational Leader in 1973, Marion Corless, asked me whether I would consider going to PNG.

I taught in Bundi with Gaye and Ellen and at the end of 1975, the year of PNG's Independence, the Primary Schools were localised. The PNG teachers took over the roles of Principal and Senior teachers. We closed our convent at the end of 1975 and moved on to other ministries.

The people of PNG were beautiful, kind people. I still have a picture in my mind of a poor Bundi woman putting a live chook in Ellen's arms the day we flew out of Bundi!

In another edition of KIT, we will hear more from Sr Marina and the other ministries she undertook.

Opposite page: Top left: Srs Gaye and Marina with a little friend. Middle top left: The Preps bringing grass for the cows. Middle bottom left: The Sisters serve the children milk at Recess. Bottom left: The children gather at Assembly.

Top right: Gaye, Marina and Ellen ready for a helicopter ride. Middle top right: Sr Eileen Thynne, Kathleen Fanning, Giovanni Ackman, Catherine Tierney and Sandra David are welcomed by the village chiefs, 10 September 1963. Middle bottom right: Gaye and Barbara McGregor during Independence Day celebrations. Barbara was visiting at the time. Bottom right: Gaye outside the Convent building with some of the children.

The Sisters get social!

at the Auburn Get-Together

By Jean-Marie Brennan rsc

What a wonderful day many Sisters of Charity had in the Jack Lang Hall in Auburn at the function organised by Sister Kerry Barrass. It was held on the first Saturday in October. Kerry had invited the Sisters to the Social Get-together.

Any Sister who wished to sell any of their art/craft works or baking delights were encouraged to ask for a table with any monies received from sales going to their own pet charity or Kerry's, *The People of Warren* project for western New South Wales.

The day began with a moving prayer and then Kerry gave some background history to her link with the people of Warren, which began 22 years ago when she was at Trinity High School, Auburn. At that time she had asked the St Vincent de Paul head office at Lewisham which country town needed monetary assistance as some of the Years 10 and 11 Trinity High School students had raised some money for the farmers.

The St Vincent de Paul Society said that Warren was the place, and after contacting 'Vinnies' President, over the years since, Kerry has sent cheques raised through the support of many generous people. Thanks to the financial support of the Sisters of Charity Foundation, who provided petrol and motel costs, Kerry has been able to visit Warren each year for the past five years.

Three years ago Kerry connected with the Principal of the local Catholic School in Warren and has helped to provide iPod Touch computers for the children of farmers who did not have a computer at home.

Our gathering was a great day socially for all the Sisters, enhanced by the presence of two visiting Sisters of Charity from the Irish Congregation – Srs Mary and Agnes who are based in Scotland.



From top left: The 'social-ites': Srs St Jude and Maree Henderson; Margaret Fitzgerald, Kerry Barrass (Organiser) and one of our Scottish RSC visitors Sr Agnes. Middle: Jean Marie and Colleen Noonan; Kate Fitzpatrick. Front: Josephine Hodges and Margaret Valentine.

Remembering those who have gone before us

By Margaret Mines rsc

The Sisters of Charity in Brisbane took part in a Ritual of Remembrance at Nudgee Cemetery on the Feast of All Saints. This event was held as part of the 50 year celebration of CRAqld. We gathered with hundreds of other Religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests to remember and celebrate those who have influenced our lives with their love and service, and are buried here or elsewhere. Their mission and ours, continues into the future of the Church, the people of God.

We remembered the original inhabitants of this land (Nudgee is believed to mean 'the home of wild ducks'), and the names of all the Religious Congregations who have ministered in Queensland were read out. This was a real Litany of the Saints of the Present Day, together with the more traditional Litany of the Saints. Water was ritually blessed then we took some of this water and walked over to bless our graves. This reverent procession of holy water through the many graves moved in many different directions, as representatives of each Congregation moved from the central area to bless their holy places.

We prayed again after we re-gathered, received the final blessing, and with great spirit, sang the Salve Regina.



Finally we returned to our own grave sites to place sprigs of rosemary on each grave. We also placed a bunch of rosemary for the three Sisters buried at Lismore, and another bunch for the six Sisters buried at Toowoomba.

Thankfully, we were able to be seated during the ceremony, thanks to K. M. Smith, (prominent funeral directors in Brisbane!), who also provided cool water on a very hot and muggy afternoon.

Above: Scenes from the special day of remembrance.

Many of those present then moved over to enjoy a BBQ, good food and pleasant company at the nearby 'Happy Haven'. There was a trivia competition regarding the cemetery. Even with surreptitious negotiated cheating, we did not have too many right answers!

Sr Annette Cunliffe

Finalist for NSW Senior Australian of the Year

When Sr Annette Cunliffe heard of her nomination in the 2014 Senior Australian of the year in November, we were delighted to hear of her selection as one of the four NSW finalists for the honour.

On Monday evening, 18th November, we gathered at a reception for the finalists and their guests held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, which was compered by MC Adam Spencer of ABC radio. The finalists in the four categories of Local Hero, Young Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year and Australian

of the Year were introduced and presented with certificates by Premier Barry O'Farrell.

It was inspiring to hear the stories of nominees and we eagerly awaited the time to announce the winners, regretting the fact that there could only be one in each of the sections.

Although Annette did not win, her selection as a finalist is a wonderful recognition of her service of the poor and disadvantaged in the fields of education and leadership.

Award recipients, their friends and members of the council mingled after the ceremony.



Sr Annette receives her certificate from NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell.

It was a most enjoyable and informative evening. We were reminded that anyone is able to nominate someone in any of the four categories. Perhaps you have someone in mind for the 2015 Awards!