



SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS

AUSTRALIAN PROVINCE NEWS UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2019

Dear Sisters,

Right from the very beginning of his Papacy Pope Francis has said that 'We are not living in our epoch of changes, but in a change of epoch'. Certainly that is evident in what is happening in our church on many levels. Pope Francis keeps reminding us that to be a truly Catholic Church we must break through our European boundaries and be truly universal. He is certainly leading the way.

The Synod of the Amazon has been a defining moment in this break through. It has aimed and demonstrated the absolute urgency of the teachings of "Laudato si" in calling each of us to respond actively to climate change now. And it has faced head on the issue that in the Amazon alone there are thousands of people who are deprived of the Eucharist because of the lack of ordained priests - so the question is, is it more important to have a celibate clergy or that all Catholics have access to the Eucharist? The proposal in the final document is a slight breakthrough! - 'To ordain men recognized by the community, who have a fruitful permanent diaconate, who can have a legally constituted and stable family'. It seems that 128 of the Synod Fathers voted for this and 41 against. This is at least a "breach" in the hard line stance... However, we have to wait to see what Pope Francis writes in the final document of the Synod...

One 'small' instance that we are living in a change of epoch!

On a level closer to home: thanks to each of you who have shared some important events in which you have been involved over recent months. As the end of the scholastic year approaches it is gratifying to be invited to be part of the Award Nights in the schools that have been a significant part of our history and who continue to nurture our missionary vision and spirit.

May advent be a time of blessing for each of us.

Maria Theresia

CLIMATE STRIKE - PERTH



Last Friday morning I found myself in the middle of a growing crowd in Forrest Place, in the centre of the Perth CBD. Just in front of me was the banner to which I gravitated - it read :

"ARRCC - Australian Religious Response to Climate Change"

and was surrounded by friends from the Uniting Church, Buddhists, Baha'I, Anglicans - and others.

Then Frances and Margaret (both RSJ) arrived with an even larger banner on which was painted:

"RELIGIOUS SISTERS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE"

By the time the march began, with the school students in the lead, heading along Hay Street, then down William Street towards Elisabeth Quay, we were six from four Congregations behind our banner - surrounded by people of all ages. Some of our friends from the Social Justice and Environment Office were also near us. The beautiful Spring sunshine of Perth made it all very enjoyable - but also poignantly emphasised the seriousness of this "Call to Action".



As we walked the bells of St Mary's Cathedral, St George's and the Uniting Church rang out.

Let's continue to listen, to speak, to support this ongoing movement!
Margaret Spain RNDM

2019 RECIPIENT OF THE SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS AWARD - VOCAL SOLO/DUET PRIMARY SECTION

Luka Babich - Year 5, with his shield. His good friend Kaden Griffin (also year 5) accompanied him on the guitar at the performance. At the awards night Luka was invited to sing the Australian National Anthem.

Luka is an extremely talented singer and is even part of his own Rock Band.





CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS SINCE THE SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS WENT TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA IN 1969



The four pioneer RNDMs who set out for the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea in 1969 were Sisters Mary Bernadette (Marion McLeod), Marie Lawlor, Mary Majella (Valerie Hogan) & Margaret Dorizzi.

The then Bishop Firmin Schmidt OFM Cap in his invitation to the Australian Province described in detail the aims of the missionary work in the Southern Highlands: "Our mission is located in one of the most primitive areas of PNG. The Southern Highlands was established only towards the end of 1950s. It would be a tremendous boost to our missionary work if you join us and staff Ialibu and Pangia along with the Capuchins and lay missionaries". During the intervening years from 1969 until the last sister left in 2011 the Sisters adapted their life style and apostolate to the changing needs of the local people. Initially the Sisters taught in schools but by 1972 some had moved into pastoral outreach and the training of local catechists.



Eighteen Sisters in all were assigned at various times to fulfil specific needs. In Wiliame two nursing sisters carried on the clinic and patrolled into the villages to attend to the pregnant women and the sick. In 1983 two sisters staffed the Xavier Institute of Missiology in Pt. Moresby and later a sister joined the staff of the major seminary. In 1986 three sisters went to work with the Capuchins at St Fidelis College in Madang. Other involvements of the Sisters were at Tari High School in the Hela

Province and the Pastoral Center in the Inga Province. Sister Marie Lawlor the longest serving RNDM sister in her latter years accompanied the Diocesan Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary in Kagua. In August 1996 we accepted the invitation to co-direct the newly established Diocesan Pastoral Centre. The residential centre offered short and long term courses in leadership training to a wide spectrum of people including doctors, nurses, catechist, teachers and catechists. Writing and illustrating various publications in Melanesian pidgin were an important part of the Centre's life.



On Mission Sunday fourteen of us (including two former lay missionaries) gathered in Melbourne to give thanks for our years of service in PNG, to relive experiences, tell stories, share photos and enjoy a meal together.



Thank you to our RNDM sisters from New Zealand, the British Isles and Ireland, Canada, Bangladesh and India who were part of PNG personnel.

Maureen Dwan RNDM

ANNUAL RETREAT

Shelley gave the annual CLC retreat held 6-8 September at St John of God Shoalwater. The theme was *Ignatian Spirituality in the life of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*. One of the highlights was Teilhard's *Mass on the World* celebrated at Point Peron. Another was night prayer around the fire-pit followed by contemplation of the stars - fires in the night sky.



October 21-25 was *Founders Week* at Sacred Heart Primary School Highgate. Shelley joined in the special whole school Mass. Fr Mark Payton, parish priest, had been to a recent basket ball match at the school. He was struck by three things: the role of the Leader/ Coach, the way the Team worked together and the way all their skills were put together for the one purpose - to win. In a refreshing way he likened these qualities to those of the early RNDM Five Founders and all the Sisters who followed them over the years. In the same way they brought Sacred Heart School to what it is today, with the goal of winning for all the students an excellent education for the sake of God's love made know in Jesus' Sacred Heart.

A delicious morning tea followed. Principal Tanya McGuire, whose grandmother was a boarder at Highgate in her early childhood, presented Shelley with boxes of bright flowers. These were for the Inglewood Sisters in gratitude for all that Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions had done over the School's 122 year story.



Shelley Barlow RNDM

PILGRIMAGE

In late September 13 Australian RNDM Partners in Mission - travelling with Sr Catherine Brabender and Sr Madeleine Barlow - went to France and England tracing the life journey of Euphrasie Barbier and the foundation of the Sisters of Our lady of the Missions.

They went as pilgrims to visit the "sacred sites" in the life story of Euphrasie Barbier and the founding days of the RNDM life. The main places visited were:

Caen, in Normandy France - place of Euphrasie's family life

Cuves in eastern France- her first steps in religious life and preparation for a life of mission

St Rambert - a beautiful RNDM retreat centre in the foothills of the Jura Mountain not far from the city of Lyon

Lyon - place of the foundation of the RNDM Congregation
Deal and Sturry (close to Canterbury)- RNDM communities established by Euphrasie in England.

London - were Euphrasie experienced mission to people living in extreme poverty in the city of London and also refined her understanding of her vocation to go on mission to women and children in remote parts of the world.

Coming together in Paris the pilgrims set out for Caen, on the Normandy coast - the place of Euphrasie's birth and family life where she lived until the age of 19. We visited the place of her birth, baptism and parish Church. Caen, her home, shaped her heart and mind. Her family, teachers, local church and communities enabled her to find meaning in life and nurtured her youthful desire to seek out a pathway that led her to commitment to international mission to the Pacific and Asia. At Sunday Mass in her parish Church of St Pierre, we were warmly welcomed by the community and given a place of honour around the sanctuary of the ancient Church.

Welcome! Wherever we went we enjoyed a privileged welcome. Usually this was the RNDM Sisters living in places where we not only learnt the life story of Euphrasie, but many pilgrims expressed the belief that *they met Euphrasie alive* in the Sisters. This happened many times but especially with the elderly RNDMs in England - particularly in Deal, Sturry and Wealdstone. Here we heard the stories of adventurous missionary women who spent long years in India, Kenya, Bangladesh, Senegal and Vietnam.



Sr Odile RNDM, Vietnamese Missionary to Senegal and now retired in France played the Magnificat on the Kora during Vespers in Lyon Chapel.

Pilgrim placing a rose on Euphrasie's grave in Sturry Chapel.





Wherever we went we were hosted with the warmth of friendship (as well as delicious food!). We even visited old graveyards in England and heard stories of many brave missionary women (told with deep affection and pleasure by the local Sisters. These women were inspiring and spoke of their commitment as educators wherever they were with vitality and deep pleasure.

Sr Veronica Kerins (formerly Sr Marie Bernard) Irish missionary to Katanning WA in 1980's took much joy in welcoming the pilgrims to Deal.



Another RNDM joy was to find younger RNDMs from Vietnam, Myanmar, and Bangladesh working alongside the older Sisters in France and England. Their zeal for mission was just as inspiring.

Carmel Linden, Perth with Sr Regina, Bangladesh on mission in the French Province in Charenton, Paris.

We were also welcomed with warmth by the people of Cuves, a very small village of only 16 families on the eastern side of France! The local Mayor opened the small chapel for us where the young Euphrasie would have prayed and also the community hall and the very old tiny parish church. This tiny isolated community are proud of their long history of pilgrimage and the growth of two religious congregations that started there - the English Servite Sisters and through them, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions.



As well as enjoying and reflecting on the RNDM story, the pilgrimage made time for all to visit local sites of historical and faith which were close to the places we visited. So while in Caen the group travelled to the D Day Beaches, and to Bayeux to see the tapestry of the story of William the Conqueror. In Lyon we extended the pilgrimage to explore the 1st Century Roman settlements and as well the place of martyrdom of the early Christians. Also in Lyon the pilgrims went to Mass in the Church of St Nizier which was the parish church of Pauline Jaricot, the young French woman who began the Propagation of the Faith movement to fund and pray for missionaries, as well as the parish where young Frederick Ozanam, founder of St Vincent de Paul Society, was married. The beautiful city of Lyon - old and new - was a treasure to explore.

In England we drove out to Hastings, enjoyed the old city and remembered the landing of William the Conqueror. There was time to explore Canterbury and to enjoy London.

As we travelled along together, we prayed for all RNDM Sisters and Partners in Mission. Sr Catherine told stories of mission today in various parts of the RNDM world. We feel confident that the Pilgrims who shared this journey learned not only to understand the story of Euphrasie Barbier, but also came to see how her story is still fresh for our Church today and active in mission to women and children in need in our world today.



Pilgrimage group in Lyon

Madeleine Barlow RNDM

MY TRIP TO CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

Last 18 September to 27 September I went to Central Australia on a trip along with 22 students and 3 other teachers from Sacred Heart Girls College Oakleigh, it was a ten day journey. Our journey comprised of Renmark, Port Augusta, Coober Pedy, Alice Springs, Kings Canyon and Uluru. We travelled by bus and stopped in different places for the night, some places we stayed for one and in other places for two nights. We slept in tents.

We visited the historical sites of Australia. Every place that I visited has its own beauty and uniqueness, some places are very green with many trees and wild life and other places are very barren. When I was travelling from Renmark to Port Augusta the fields, mile after mile were covered with canola blossom, they bloomed in yellow colour as if God has spread yellow carpets on them. In my mind I was praising the Lord all the time for his beautiful creation. On my way I also saw some wild life like a kangaroo, camels, emu, wallabies, rabbits and dingoes.



In Cooper Pedy we slept in an underground cave, it is an opal mining area. In summer the weather is extremely hot so the people here have made their houses underground to keep them cool from the heat. The sunset view from the top of the hill was outstanding and stunning. On this day even though the weather was freezing we still enjoyed the sunset view and the hot soup. This place is very deserted and there is a shortage of water. Water is imported from Port Augusta through huge pipes.

In Alice Springs, we visited the war memorial monument, first Telegraph Centre and the Reptile Centre. Here I have learned how the early settlers inherited the lands from the Aboriginal people. I have also seen the stolen generation houses and came to know how this place was named Alice Springs.



In Kings Canyon, we ventured early to the commencement of the rim walk to avoid the heat of the day. On this walk we viewed the so called "Lost City" and the "Garden of Eden" nestled in the bed of the Kings Creek below the walls of the Canyon.

In Uluru we stayed for two nights. On the first day we went to see Ayers Rock at sunset, the rock changes its colour with the sun light. The beauty of this rock is amazing which, words cannot describe, it's only a feeling. I enjoyed the beauty of the rock thoroughly. On the second day the highlight of this tour was the time spent at the Cultural Centre and the Uluru base walk. A local guide boarded the coach to provide an expert insight on the local Aboriginal Culture and traditions.

From the guide's explanation I learned much about their culture and came to realise how sacred Ayers Rock is for the "Anangu".



Every part of this rock has its own story. It is as sacred as a church. Since records began in 1950s, 37 people have died on Uluru by climbing the rock, most succumbing physical stress, including heat. The climbing is 348 metre ascent. The Anangu people consider the top to be a sacred men's site that should be off limits to outsiders and the people who died there, the blame goes to their tribes because they believe that they are responsible for their lives who comes to their land. They also believe that

the same amount of people should be killed from their tribes. Many people express that climbing this rock is amazing and it is a national heritage for all Australians. The Aboriginal people are the first people of this nation; everyone needs to respect their culture and feeling. This rock climbing is banned from 26 October 2019.

From this trip I learned much about their culture. I made a closer relationship with students and teachers.

With grateful heart and joy I returned to Melbourne from this trip on the 27 September by plane. It was an amazing, enriching trip for me which will be memorable for the whole of my life. I thank Chris and the leadership team of Sacred Heart Girls College for giving me such an opportunity.

Suchitra Rozario RNDM



NEWS CLIPS

GIBB RIVER

A few weeks back Frances Wilson phoned to sadly inform me that the school at Gibb River had closed. Difficulties within the community led to few families coming there so the school was no longer viable. When Frances and Margaret went there in 1991 we committed ourselves for ten years, and certainly the Sisters wholehearted giving of themselves resulted in some students continuing on to Secondary Education. Their presence and that of succeeding teachers made a difference to the lives of many in the community.

ST PAUL'S MT LAWLEY

This year St Paul's are celebrating their 90th Anniversary. The school began with Sr Natalie Ormond as a Montessori School, the only one in WA at the time, but after the war it reverted to a normal Primary School.

The current Principal, Mrs Joanna Noonan, who is retiring this year after 12 years in Leadership there, has fostered an ongoing link with us through invitations to lead PD days and to participate in school events. St Paul's has a partnership with our school in Kalyanpur, Central India.



THANK YOU

Yesterday, Wednesday 23rd October, marks six weeks since my "total knee reconstruction" and today is the first time I've felt happy to get out of bed and start the day with this 'Thank You' to all of you for your cards, phone calls and best wishes. Firstly, since Andrea will be typing this I wish to thank her and Julianne for their thoughtful gift, an ice pack which I use after my exercises, some 'Thank You' cards which I'd hoped to send to you individually and some Bio Oil to put on my knee to avoid scaring. (some trivia, "also used to eliminate stretch marks"....which I obviously don't need!)

The beautiful flowers sent from the Sisters in the East reached me while I was in rehab in Mt Lawley. After two days I was moved to a room with a five star view of the Swan River. One Sunday after the sisters came to visit they walked to the Maylands Jetty. Shell rang on her mobile and Marie Therese and stood and waved from the window. Though we couldn't see the whites of their eyes it was a fun thing to do!

This morning I read in 'The Tablet' that Pope Francis prays for three hours a day. That was the impetus I needed to get me out of bed plus the fact that my darling Dad used to say, "Veronica pray when you're well because when you're sick you can't pray" Speaking of the Tablet I also wish to thank Madeleine who tried to track down my friend Adrian Chiles while in England who writes for the Tablet....very back page.....mostly on sport but occasionally has a spiritual twist possibly because he is a convert. Watch this page!

Finally thank you to my sisters here, especially Marie Therese who have taken me to appointments cooked, shopped and generally do what sisters do....cared.

I miss not being able to take Linh and My Hang to Mass on Monday mornings or go for walks on weekends. They are so full of the "Joi de Vivre" it makes me feel young again.

Veronica Martin RNDM



We continue to hold in our prayers Simon Clifton very dear nephew of Tarcisius.

BIRTHDAYS & FEAST DAYS

November	24 th	Maureen Dwan	(B)
	26 th	Veronica Martin	(B)
	28 th	Catherine Brabender	(F)
December	21 st	My Hang Tran	(B)
January	10 th	Mary Kim Dung Vu	(B)
	29 th	Helena Brabender	(B)

