

Volume 3

The Associates Newsletter

Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition

December Edition 2008



*“Go, and with what you have
do all the good you can”*

St Emílie de Vialar

Sister Jeanette writes

As this last edition of the Associate Newsletter for the year goes to print the 2008 calendar year is swiftly coming to a close. The Season of Advent has already heralded the beginning of a new Liturgical Year and the Christmas Season draws near. For us Christmas is a very special feast as it marks the beginning of our Congregation and St Emilie's strong attraction to the Incarnation – see Wendy's article "Why remember Emilie on Christmas Day?"

Since the last newsletter:

- The Emilie Group have been reflecting recently on their journey together to date and are looking at ideas and suggestions as to the way forward for the group.
- The Albany Associates have been reflecting on the legacy the first four Sisters left us and looking at how they can take up the challenge of living out that legacy in their lives, Church and communities in the present time.
- On the international scene, we share with you Sr Renee's experience of her recent visit to our Sisters' on mission in Haiti following the recent cyclones there. Sr Renee is a member of the General Council in Rome.

Reflecting back over the past year we thank God for the many blessings received and express our gratitude and thanks to all who have been in touch with us during the year, and for your generous support of our various missions. We are sincerely grateful and remember you each day in our prayers.

A special thanks to all who have been involved in planning and organising the various Associate events during the year, especially the interim committee members, our Newsletter editor, coordinators, and presenters, and all who have contributed articles for the Newsletter. As we look towards planning and organising together the various Associate events and activities for the coming year, may we take to heart Emilie's words:

*"I count on God for the present as for the future;
Like me, count on the Lord's support;
I have not the least fear"* (St Emilie de Vialar)

I myself have enjoyed the privilege of being part of the various Associates gatherings in the Metropolitan area and Albany throughout the year, and missed catching up with our Victorian Associates. I look forward to meeting up with you all and being part of the Associate activities again next year.

Wishing you and all your loved ones the love, joy and peace of this special time of Christmas

Remember....

*Whatever the time or season,
Whatever you need or hope for –
He is the still, small, eternal voice
That speaks within your heart...
for ...
His love goes on forever.*

Why remember Emilie on Christmas Day?

On Christmas night 1832 at the age of 35 Emilie secretly left her Fathers home. With three companions she moved into a large house in Gaillac to begin her Congregation.

Emilies father disapproved of her religious plans. He had found several admirable suitors for her, but she politely refused each.



After her mother's death Emilie stayed at a convent school in Paris for two years. Her spiritual life began to blossom. She made her first communion at that time.

At fifteen her father took her home to Gaillac. She became his companion at social outings. Parties, balls, dinners, fashion, jewellery and friends were all available to her. She was caught up in a social whirl. Her piety slipped away. She stopped attending the sacraments.

A mission in her parish when she was eighteen brought her life back into focus. Emilie turned again to God and her life began to change. By the age of 19 she was sure that God had a special work for her to do. What exactly it was remained a mystery. She waited and grew closer to God.

Slowly her conviction grew that she was to found a congregation of women to serve the poor in whatever way was needed. Later her zeal for missionary work developed.

Fifteen long years she waited patiently for God to make His will clear to her. She held a sure knowledge that God dwelt within her. While continuing her family duties she also tended to the many destitute in Gaillac, giving them soup and medicines.

Finally Emilie had her sign when in July 1832 her maternal grandfather died leaving her a large inheritance. This allowed her to buy the house for her first convent.

Leaving her father was extraordinarily hard for Emilie. She left a loving letter promising to come daily to tend to his needs better than before. He would be well cared for by her brother and his wife. Her consolation lay in her strong belief that this work was God's will for her.

From Wendy Cronin

From the Editor

With my first year up as Editor of this Newsletter I would like to express my sincere thanks to Sister Jeanette for her encouragement and support thus far and look forward to continuing on in 2009. This position has been a wonderful opportunity whereby I have formed relationships with other Associates and Sisters through their email contact, and this in itself has been a gift.

With the very special Feast coming up of the birth of Christ on Christmas Day, bringing with it many special blessings of hope, peace, love and joy, I thought a Christmas Prayer might be the way for me to wish you all 'A very Holy, Happy and Safe Christmas, and Good Health for the coming Year'.

A Christmas Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the One whose Spirit glorified a little town; and whose Spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the One for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the One who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the One who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe in the One whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought wrong-doers back to Him, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God. I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of Himself. I believe in Jesus, the Son of the Living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world, and all its' peoples.

Regina Barnett



“My time in Haiti” by Sister Renee Quadros

Dear Friends

I am just back from Haiti and I would like to share with you my experience of being in Gonaives, Haiti after these destructive cyclones Hanna and Ike of September 2008. I reached Haiti on the 2 October and found all our four Sisters Margaret, Anna, Balendina and Rita in good form in spite of the terrible shock they had experienced and the continuous inconveniences and challenges they have to face as a result of this situation.



This is the picture of our Centre St. Joseph as I saw it now.



Our village and the road leading to our house.



This is our compound and our vehicle as it is now. Seeing is believing and I could never have imagined if I had not seen it with my own eyes, the present situation of the whole city.



(Above) The Sisters climbed through this hole up to the terrace when the water entered the top floor of the house on the night of 1 September 2008. Sister Anna already on the roof is helping the other Sisters. The picture on the right shows water almost covering the roofs of the entire area.

The Sisters are still with the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny and they will not be able to move to our house till Christmas. While I was there we saw a number of houses thinking it would be better to rent a house instead of remaining with another Community. But in the present situation it is not possible to get a proper and safe house, therefore, we decided on another alternative. Now that the school and the Centre needs to be cleaned the Sisters will have to be on the spot, therefore, we could clean a room upstairs and do our simple cooking and remain the whole day, and in the evening we could only go to Cluny to sleep. We requested the Sisters and they were very agreeable and good. I do not know how to express the goodness of those Sisters, their welcome to our Sisters is unconditional and they are treated and looked after so well as if we were their own. We owe a lot to these Sisters.

The Religious of Gonaives and Port-au-Prince: I saw and experienced a fond affection by all these Religious for our Sisters who are very much appreciated for their work and the way they mix with all the Religious around. The Catholic Religious Haiti (CRH) called on our Sisters and have offered valuable financial assistance for restoration works. I met the Bishop of Gonaives with the whole community of Sisters and he said the Centre St. Joseph is the pride of his diocese today; he was full of praise for the Sisters. All are ready to help our Sisters in different ways and this is the beauty of being part of a larger family the Church.

The Centre: The School which gives complete free education to over 800 children right now in two shifts cannot be started till January. The Sisters are reflecting on the possibility of beginning the classes for bigger children sometime later in November.

(continued overleaf)

The first thing they wish to begin is the Midday Meal Programme for the people since the people really need food at this moment but we can begin it only after the cleaning is done partially. The water distribution project too since clean drinking water is an absolute need at this moment. The Nutritional Centre, Sewing centre too can be started only beginning of next year.

The Relief Work: A lot of new heavy vehicles have come to clean the roads and do relief works from USA and Cuba. There are a big number of organizations that have come from different countries to help Haiti. They are all lay persons but it is worth seeing their commitment and compassion for these people of God who are really in need. They are the first ones who had the courage to dirty their feet in the deep slush to reach out to the people. The Sisters of Mother Theresa and our Congregation are working directly for relief works with the help of all these organizations. Our Sisters are making cards and distributing to the people in centers for the food collection, etc and the Charity Sisters are distributing the food day by day to over 600 persons with the help of the volunteers. For me it was a wonderful opportunity to see and witness all this.

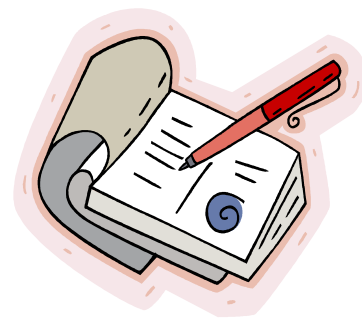
We have been blessed by the help we have received through many people in Haiti and abroad. A number of Volunteers university students from Port-au-prince have come to help our roads, compound etc through different religious organizations, CRS has given us a lot of food materials to distribute to the workers and also tools for work, boots, gloves, etc etc. The organization “Food for the Poor” too has given a lot of help. And these contacts are very useful for the sustainability of the centre in the future.

The Sisters are very grateful to the Congregation, Province of India, and Sisters in different provinces that have expressed their concern and care for them through different ways. Right now they cannot contact much through email since no facility is there in Gonaives. The UN Force offered the Sisters the opportunity to come and use the internet when they need which they do only when it is absolutely necessary. Thank God.

Then there is the big question that we need to reflect, ‘should we have it in the same place or should we move to a higher place close by, since the frequency of the Cyclones are increasing year by year’?

These are only a few things that I am sharing with you from the wealth of experience I have had.

Our Associates Write ...



Dear Regina

Many thanks for the August Associates Newsletter. It's great to get news of old friends. My best wishes go to Sister Concepta in her retirement.
Regards

Peg Woodward (O'Flaherty)

Dear Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition

Thank you ever so much for faithfully sending me the Associate Newsletter. It is good to be still in touch with our good nuns.

From birth and living next door to the Convent in Mandalay (Burma) I have been a Josephite, graduated from St Joseph's and have been a Teacher there for over 25 years!

Only two months ago I lost my husband 'Peter Clive White' – a good, devout Catholic. Please pray for him. Also, my Dad's only sister was a nun from St Joseph of the Apparition in Moulmein. Her name was Sister Emelie Bacon, (we called her Auntie Maudy). She passed away in the 1950's – a great music teacher and very jolly – and I inherited a bit of her talent and sang at one of your inaugural shows with Betty Johnson (nee Alexander).

Sending a small contribution by Sr Noeline.

One of my ex-pupils Sr Marie Therese Khine is Superior in the Philippines, I believe.

Thank you dear Sisters. Do pray for me and my son, Clive. We are at a loss without Peter. God's blessings to all.

In J.M.J.

Marina White

Dear Jeanette

Congratulations on becoming Associate Liaison Person, although I have not been able to attend many Associate Meetings I do enjoy receiving the Associates Newsletters. My thanks for sending them to me.

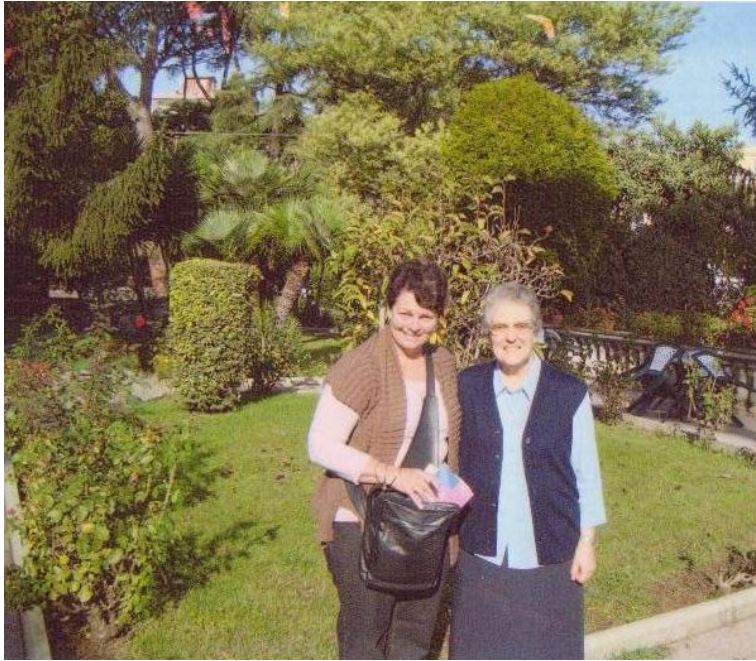
It is always great reading about the happenings of my old school and brings back many happy memories of the years I spent at St. Joseph's.

I was sad to read of the passing of Sister Damian. I did not know that she had been suffering ill health, the last time I saw her was at the Funeral Mass for Dolores Bailey. I spoke with her and she seemed to be in good health.

May I offer my Sympathy and Prayers to you all.

Once again congratulations to you and to Regina Barnett and my sincere thanks to Sister Concepta for her wonderful work over the past years. May God bless you all.

Maureen Stubbs (James)



*Associates
keep on writing*

Sister Angela Basile and Peta Sharp (nee Spinks) at St Emlie de Viarlar's residence in Rome, October 2008.

Thank you for our Newsletter and meetings with Associates in Albany. Christmas Blessings to all and look forward to continued meetings. God Bless and thank you.

Hope Sharp

(Hope Sharp, mother of Peta sent in the above photograph)

In September, I received an email from Patricia Emond (nee Croll)

Patricia, together with another school mate Janice Collins (nee Jones) were organising a 50th reunion on behalf of St Joseph's College, Fremantle for all students from Years 10-12 (1958 and those who joined or left the group at anytime). This was held on 15 November 2008 at Charisma Café, Hislop Road, Attadale.

Although I knew her message would not reach our next edition advertising this as a 'coming event', I think it's important to acknowledge correspondence received to keep you fully informed of former students' contacts.

Patricia, writes in part: "Regina, I was looking out for you at the St Emilie's Feast Day get-to-gether at Holy Family Church, Como in June so I could make a donation towards the cost of the Newsletter I will catch up with you at one of the functions. Thank you sincerely."

I think this email from Patricia indicates to us that there are so many former students taught by the good Sisters who are proud and thankful of their formative educational years, and cherish each and every moment of them.

Unfortunately I did miss the Feast Day as I had to travel to Albany to visit my mother who was in hospital at the time, thus missed meeting Patricia.

Regina Barnett - Editor

Albany Associate News

Our last meeting for the year was held on Sunday 16 November 2008. Eighteen members attended with three apologies. Our attendance number included two new members. Sr. Mary had once again created a thoughtful and contemplative setting. Our subject followed on from our last meeting by following the beginnings of the mission of the “First Four” Sisters, Sr Julie Cabagniol, Sr Lucie Fieuzet, Sr Zoe de Chamouin and Sr Emilie Petit first in Fremantle then Srs Julie and Zoe in Albany. The faith, courage and devotion of these women filled us with admiration and thanks for the legacy they left us. The music played during the accounts of the various works were, ‘*The Galilee Song*’, ‘*Wherever You Go*’, and ‘*Remain In My Love*’, which seemed appropriate to their mission. Our plans for next year are being discussed as to how we can take up the challenge of living out the legacy we have as Associates in our lives, Church and communities in the present time.

During our meeting we received the news that one of our Associates, John Hunter had just passed away at the local hospital. John has been a pillar of this community in Albany and will be sadly missed. John and his wife Pat, who died in 2007, certainly lived out “*Go and with what you have and will receive do all the good you can*”. We send our condolences to the Hunter family and keep them in our prayers.

We wish all our Sisters and Associates and Holy and Happy Christmas.

Betty Tulloch

Coordinator - Albany Associates

Our deceased Sisters, Associates, Relatives and Friends

“Eternal Rest Grant to them O Lord”

John Hunter

Husband of Patricia (Pat) (dec'd)

Peter Clive White

Husband of Marina White, father of Clive

Doreen Carey

Wife of Pat Carey (dec'd), sister in-law of
Sister Alma Carey and Father Paul Carey

Jack Docherty

Dorothy Cummins

Betty Goodwin

Margaret Swallow

*We pray for all our sick Sisters, Associates, relatives and friends,
and for all who have asked our prayers at this time.*



*It's
not the gift
under the tree but the
Gift that hung upon the tree
that is the true Gift
of
Christmas*

A Christmas Prayer

*Good and loving God,
help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the wise men.*

*Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every
greeting.*

*Deliver us from sadness, ill health, loneliness and sorrow by the
blessings which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear
hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Your children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful
thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.*

Amen.