

Volume 5

The Associates Newsletter

Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition

September Edition 2009



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

St Emílie de Vialar

Sister Jeanette writes

Dear All

Celebrating St Emilie

The gathering of Sisters and Associates held at Our Lady of Fatima Parish on the 21 June 2009 to celebrate the Feast of St Emilie de Vialar proved to be a great success. Some eighty people gathered for the Mass in the Church and during the light luncheon that followed in the Parish Centre, there was much chatting and catching up to be done; many exclaiming that they “*were too busy talking to eat much*”.

A special thank you to all involved organising and making this day such a joyous and memorable occasion for everyone. A special thank you to Fr Francis Ughanza, Parish Priest of Palmyra, both for his inspiring words on St Emilie and making the Parish facilities available for our celebration.

(see photos on page 6)

International Commission for the Associate Movement in our Congregation

Sr Gemma’s important and informative report on the Meeting of this Commission held in Rome gives a brief outline of the purpose of the meeting, and significant outcomes needed for the future development of our Associates.

Sister concludes her report with an invitation to Associates who may be interested in an in-depth study of St Emilie to contact her with their expression of interest. Sister’s contact details are at the end of her report.

St Emilie de Vialar - A Woman on a Mission

Glen Stevenson’s article gives us a glimpse of the Missionary spirit of Emilie and the many and wide spread Foundations made by Emilie during her lifetime. In 24 years, 37 houses had been established in 15 countries.

Our Deepest Sympathy *On behalf of all, I take this opportunity to express our deepest sympathy and prayerful support to our Editor Regina Barnett on the death of her much loved mother Jozefa Sochacki on the 24th August 2009, the 153rd anniversary of the death of St Emilie.*

Report from Sister Gemma . . .

Meeting in Rome of the International Commission for the Associate Movement in our Congregation

Following the General Chapter of our Congregation held in 2007, an International Commission was set up for the promotion of the Lay Associate Movement within the Congregation . In May 2009, I attended a meeting , in Rome, of this International Commission . The members of the Commission are Sr Janet Arrowsmith (England), Sr Eugenie Ghirlando (Malta), Sr Mona (Lebanon/Syria) and myself. Within the next month, three Associate members, nominated by the Provinces, will be added to this Commission.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the current situation of the Associate Movement and to promote the development of this Movement throughout the Congregation. From this meeting there emerged a Report to the General Council which highlighted important outcomes which needed to be put in place to clarify an understanding of what it means to be an Associate member of our Congregation and to establish a satisfactory mode of operation of the Associate Movement in the future.

The most significant of these outcomes for the future development and growth of our Associate are:

The recognition of the importance of the Associate Movement to the Congregation and the decision, at the level of the Superior General and her Council, to encourage the growth and expansion of this movement to those Provinces not already involved.

Assisting the Associate Members to deepen their response to the call of Christ in their daily lives and to come to a clearer understanding of their role within the Church today. The significant dimension in all of this is that it is lived within the charism and spirit of St Emilie de Vialar.

Promotion of interaction between the Sisters and Associate members of different provinces of the Congregation. For us here in Australia it means developing links with the countries of Asia where our sisters are carrying out their mission – Myanmar, India, Thailand and the Philippines. Contact between Associates in these countries will be developed.

The production of a booklet - ***A Way of Life: Lay Members of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition*** - outlining the Associate Movement and the way it operates within the Congregation.

(continued overleaf)

Encouraging the Associate Members to take on greater responsibility for the organisation and growth of this Movement at the local levels.

At present, we have one group of Associates who are participating in an in-depth study of the life and spirit of St Emilie and its relevance to their lives as Associates. Any other Associates who are interested in commencing another group/s for this purpose, should contact me and suitable times can be arranged for us to meet either during the day or in the evening.

Sister Gemma Grant

62 Lefroy Road, Beaconsfield WA 6162

Phone: 9335 1576

St Emilie's Parish Canning Vale

*Did you
know that?*

- The fast growing Catholic Parish of Canning Vale in Western Australia has St Emilie de Vialar as its patron.
- On the 19 April 2000, 43 people attended the first Mass in the Parish. Now three Masses are celebrated every weekend in the undercroft area of the Parish School with an accumulative attendance of over 500 people.
- On the 21 June 2009 Fr Robert Carillo and the Parishioners and School community were delighted to welcome Archbishop Barry Hickey and Monsignor Brian O'Loughlin to officiate at the "groundbreaking" ceremony for the new St Emilie de Vialar Parish Church. The new church is to cater for 600 people with overflow areas providing additional capacity.

"Groundbreaking" Ceremony



*From left: Fr Robert Carillo
Archbishop Barry Hickey
and Mgr Brian O'Loughlin*



*Sr Margaret Mary SJA
(Pastoral Worker) with
Fr Robert Carillo*

Celebrating the Feast of St Emilie de Vialar on 21 June 2009



Some of the Congregation



Sr Monica with a group of friends

Associates and the Sisters enjoying a chat over the luncheon



Dear All

As I sit at my desk writing to you all, I look out the window on this lovely, sunny Spring afternoon listening to the birds chirping in the trees and enjoying the beauty of God's creation. I marvel at the wonder He has given us, not only in nature but in humankind - one of those being Sister Mary Steele.

As you know, my beloved mother recently passed away and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Sister Mary of Albany, who visited Mum at home on many occasions and just two days prior to her death, not only bringing her Holy Communion but praying for her and with her. I and my siblings know this brought our mother great comfort and peace, and we thank Sr Mary for her kindness and support.

Mum always looked forward to Sister Mary's visits and after the formalities, enjoyed her conversation over a cup of tea and biscuits.

I would also like to thank all Sisters and Associates who sent the family cards and heartfelt condolences on our sad loss, and those who attended her final farewell. Mum had the most beautiful Requiem Mass I have ever attended and we followed her requests, one being that Father Hugh Galloway, long time family friend, officiate at her funeral. When it was confirmed that Fr Hugh would be present, Mum gave a little smile and with her eyes, expressed great comfort, joy and peace. She was at rest and at peace with the world, and ready to go to meet her God.

On another note, I would like to sincerely thank all Sisters and Associates who have written in with various articles and small messages of appreciation and news in our column, 'Our Associates Write'. Keep them coming in.

Another thank you must be extended to all who contributed to the Mass and luncheon celebrating the Feast of St Emilie de Vialar on the 21 June 2009.

Finally, thank you to Wendy Cronin who submitted articles on the life of St Emilie and to Glen Stevenson on her first of many article which will be published in this newsletter, the first printed in this issue.

If any Associates have some news or items of interest you think may be suitable for inclusion in the Associates Newsletters and would like to share them with us, please send them to me via email to rbarnett@corpus.wa.edu.au

Pictures/photographs accompanying your article are most welcome.

Thank you and God Bless you all.



From the Editor

Regina Barnett

St Emilie de Vialar - A Woman on a Mission

When St Emilie de Vialar founded the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition in 1832, she achieved a lifelong ambition to serve God in this way. In her words: *"...I left my father's house to found, in my own town (Gaillac, France), the Institute that I believed to be for the greater glory of God and the bringing of relief to the poor."*(1)

From a draft report on the early beginnings of the Congregation describing her aims for the Institute: *"...She sought to write in it all the different works of charity which were to be found scattered in the various Religious Orders, and whose particular spirit would be a deep spiritual life joined to that unalterable gentleness which always inspires that charity."* This was later described as follows: *"The vocation for Emilie de Vialar and her Institute had for its principal aim infidel nations and missionary lands."*(2)

The first of these nations was Algeria when, in 1835, Mother Emilie and three Sisters accepted an invitation to direct a hospital in the plain of Mitidja outside Algiers. Emilie's brother, Baron Augustin de Vialar, who lived in Algiers, arranged the journey and provided accommodation and funds for their mission there. A cholera epidemic changed their plans and they were asked to serve in the civil hospital in town.

Following the end of the epidemic, Mother Emilie was keen to expand services to those provided by the Mother House in France i.e. to the sick in their homes, to the prisons, to the education of the children, and by running an infirmary. So here began her great work in 'the infidel nations'. It is such an impressive record of expansion that followed and the story needs to be told in detail sometime.

The energy with which Mother Emilie set about establishing her houses was inspiring to the Sisters then as it is today. She was a veritable whirlwind taking off on numerous boat trips to distant lands to establish new houses – Tunisia next in 1840, then Italy in 1842, Cyprus in 1844, Malta in 1845, Syria and Greece in 1846, Burma in 1847, Jerusalem in Palestine in 1849 (I have been told that this Order brought the first religious Sisters to the Holy Land), Armenia and Crete in 1852, and our very own Australia in 1855. Mother Emilie did not undertake the long journey to Australia as she was in poor health and had many calls on her time at home. She entrusted the mission to four Sisters – Sister Julie Cabagniol, Sister Lucie Fieuzet, Sister Emilie Petit and Sister Zoe de Chamouin.

The following year, 1856, Mother Emilie died. Consider that in 24 years, she had established 37 houses in 15 countries.

(continued on next page)

This was a mammoth achievement. The Congregation continued to grow pursuing St Emilie's commitment to foreign lands and by the end of the 19th century, there were 87 houses and a further four countries – Bulgaria, Lebanon, Turkey and Central Africa.

(to be continued)

by Glen Stevenson (Brindley)

"Account of her Interior Life"
"Souvenirs & Documents"

***Contents of an email I received from a former student of
Sister Emmanuel . . .***

Dear Regina

You won't know me. I attended St Joseph's Fremantle from 1944-1954 (I think). I was so very upset when I heard the very sad news about that wonderful woman Sr. Emmanuel. I have written a Eulogy re my thoughts on her. I would appreciate it very much if you felt that you could put it in the next newsletter. As you read it you will see how much she meant to me.

In the last newsletter you mentioned if we had some news that may be of interest to be suitable for inclusion. I am also adding a snippet which your readers may find of interest. See below.

In September 2008, three ex-pupils from St Joseph's met in Dublin Ireland and spent 13 wonderful days together touring the South of Eire. We were celebrating our 70th Birthdays. We were Margaret EGAN nee SWEENEY, Norma Day and myself Ruth WARNER nee SYMONDS. The bonds that we formed all those years ago are still so very strong even though I am the one living in another country. We keep in constant touch by phone.

It was quite hair raising at times for those little country roads are so narrow. I am a Genealogist and the other two girls (we are still all very young at heart) very kindly dropped me off in DOON where I had a most wonderful day with the Parish Priest Fr. RYAN looking over old Parish Records that showed my HOURIGAN family. Of course we had to go to the Irish Pubs which were a plenty in every little town. The hospitality was superb. Everyone so friendly and very helpful. I had flown in from Liverpool where I had been participating in the World Firefighter Games for New Zealand. Yes, my husband is an ex Fireman. The other two had flown in from Rome. From there I flew home to Perth to spend time with family and friends. What a wonderful way to celebrate our momentous year.

Hoping you will agree to all of this. Get back to me if there are any problems.

Kind regards, Ruth Warner nee Symonds.

(Tribute to Sr Emmanuel is overleaf)

Ruth's tribute to Sister Emmanuel Salomone



It is with great sadness that I pen this eulogy of a woman who played such an important part in my life. She was an inspiration with her patience and tolerance regarding her teaching of French. At times I must have frustrated her so much, for I was certainly not one of her successful students. I can remember arriving at school one morning and was told that Sister Emmanuel wished to see me. With dread, I went to her room thinking I was in trouble over perhaps unfinished homework. To my dismay she gave me a speech to read out in French and then to translate it into English. Thankfully I was able to complete the task to her satisfaction. She then told me I was to go off and practise the speech for I was to welcome the Reverend Mother, head of our convent in Marseille, France. This was an honour that I have cherished all my life.

Sister Emmanuel was not only my teacher, she was also 'my friend'. Each time I have returned home to Perth, if I have not managed to see her I have at least spoken to her over the telephone.

I remember one time I visited her, with my husband Dennis, in the 70's she commented on my dark hair. I told her it now came out of a bottle'. She replied, "*Perhaps that is what I now need*". Bless her. This was the first time I had ever seen her without the full habit that we were so used to seeing our dear nuns dressed in. Such a shock, but when you think of it, far more sensible than before. Her lovely hands stand out in my mind and that voice, so very soft and beautiful. I will miss her dearly.

When my daughter, Julie Anne, died at aged 14, Sister Emmanuel sent me a most beautiful poem called '*A child of God*'. I have used this poem over the years when friends have lost a young child. I know it has been of comfort to them as it was to me.

I have so much to thank Sister Emmanuel for. When I was hitch hiking in France in 1962 it certainly was a great help being able to use my French. Again in 2000 whilst participating in the World Fire-fighter Games in Mantes-la-Jolie, France, it came to the fore. Certainly not good grammatically, but well enough for me to make myself understood.

I will miss her Christmas card each year. She was my last contact with my wonderful and happy childhood at St Joseph's College, Fremantle.

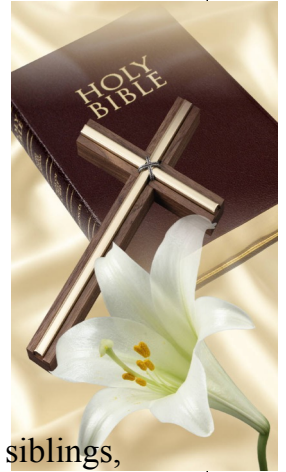
Rest in Peace Sister Emmanuel, you have earned the respect and love of all your students.

With love and affection
Ruth Warner nee Symonds
Papamoa Beach, New Zealand.

**Our deceased Sisters, Associates,
Relatives and Friends**

“Eternal Rest Grant to them O Lord”

Joan Perham	Sister of Sr Irene, Beryl, Brian and Paul.
Nell O’Connell	Sister of Sr Sheila (deceased).
Sheila Kirby	Sister of Sr Monica, Kath, Genevieve, Joe, Margaret and Ita.
Jozefa Sochacki	Mother of Regina Barnett, (editor) and her siblings, Irene, Helen, Stan and Veronica.
Ida Cant	Mother of Lynette, Diane and Cheryl.
Athol Gibson	Husband of Patricia (nee Porteous).



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

Albany’s Final Farewell

As you may have learned a number of weeks ago
The Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition
are leaving Albany after 131 years of faithful service to the
community of Albany and surrounding districts.

Our next edition of The Associates Newsletter
will pay special tribute to the Sisters
acknowledging all they have done in
the footsteps of their Foundress,
St Emilie de Vialar

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

