

Associate Newsletter
June 2005
Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition



*"The Lord has kept alive within me that fire which
has long burned in my heart."
(St Emilie de Vialar)*

*"I see day after day the help of the Lord accompanying me everywhere"
(St Emilie de Vialar 1845)*



Since our last Newsletter we have certainly been very active in our **JOURNEY**, as you will read in the following pages.

As we work and walk towards our Celebrations, I have often reflected on our first four Sisters. What could their thoughts have been as they approached land? Who were they to minister to? How would they make themselves understood, as they only spoke French. I guess these and many other thoughts probably went through their minds, and yet whatever their questions, their doubts, their **FAITH** in their foundress St Emilie was stronger than all of that, for they realized and believed their Mission was to "give glory to God for the good of their neighbour." That's why we are here today.

Giving thanks and praise to God.

Let us be united in prayer as we together Celebrate the Journey of the Sisters over the past 150 years.

*Sister Angela Basile
Provincial Superior*

Echoes from the Past (Conclusion)

1910

January Our poor Sister Michael had to have a second operation as an abscess had formed on the brain. Then the poor child had intense suffering. As her time for profession was up, and knowing that there was no hope of recovery she was allowed to make her Vows on her death bed. Her delight on receiving her cross was unbounded. Her words were *"How lovely to die now and go to Heaven."* Her words in answer to Father Wheeler when he told her that she must be resigned to God's Holy Will were, *"If it's God's will I would rather die."* She was perfectly conscious and died a most beautiful death during Mass on January 3rd

15 March Sister Matilda left by R.M.S. Ophir for Burma feeling very lonely after spending so many years in West Australia.

8th May New church opened by Bishop Gibney at North Fremantle to be called St Anne's. The opening sermon by Rev Father Clune C.ss.R. The collection taken up amounted to seventy seven pounds.

7th June His Lordship Doctor Gibney visited our convent and schools. We were privileged having his last visit as Bishop. He resigned his See the same afternoon.

June The Sisters visited the Prison – also the Public Hospital – giving good advice to the inmates of the former and words of kindness and sympathy to the latter.

13th June Electric light installed. We find it a vast improvement to the kerosene oil.

25th June One of our pupils passed the Music Exam gaining her letters L.C.M. The sisters visited the Hospital and the Old Women's Home today.

9th November Lady Edeline Strickland and the Governor opened a Bazaar in the Victoria Hall today in aid of the convent. There was a large attendance. The Bazaar is to continue for ten days. We all hope a good sum will be realized. The ladies spared neither time nor trouble to bring everything to a successful issue.



Welcome to New Associates

We extend a warm welcome to our new Associates. We pray that you will receive many graces from St Emilie for your commitment to the Associate Group, and look forward to seeing you at any meetings you may be able to attend.

*"Go and with what you have and will receive do
all the good you can"* (St Emilie de Vialar 1847)



Our Associates Write



Congratulations on your 150th year of the arrival of the Sisters in Australia. I was so happy to receive the newsletter for this wonderful occasion. We pray to St Joseph to watch over you all. Wishing you all a Holy Easter and Joyful celebration. With my prayers and love
Vee Appleton

Happy Feast Day on 19th. Congratulations on 150th years. Wishing you all Peace and Joy at Easter. Thank you very much for the newsletter. God bless. Love John and Ivana O'Dea

Congratulations on the latest Associate Newsletter. I do appreciate each one of them as they come regularly and this latest, the March edition arrived on the 1st of the month exactly. I read it with lots of enjoyment – the Historical notes, the New Parish of St Emile the 'Letters to the Editor' section, the Seton College "Assembly Day" and the Prayer List (so important) revives many memories and informs myself and so many others, as I note from their letters. What impressed itself so much in this issue were the graphics – a bright colourful parade of images on each page starting with the icon of traveling (and my father's favourite doodling drawing), and favourite of them all was the animated chillies which invited a chuckle and a Samba line-dance. So, you invoke more cheer than you probably imagine. The photos were really clear and Cecilia and I were recalling each familiar face with barely a hesitation for names! This was all very much appreciated. Please extend my congratulations to all the Sisters for the great occasion, plus my apology and disappointment at not being able to attend. My thoughts and special prayers will be with you.

Vince and myself send the best of good wishes for God's blessing on all the endeavours of the St Joseph Sisters and their many Associates who journey on in St Emile's spirit and work ideas well into the future.



Hugs and Love Lina Strangio (Ruggera)



Thanks for the newsletter. Seeing dates on the _____ page reminded me it's 50 years since I donned the navy uniform and started school at St Joseph's with Sister Pauline, initially on an enclosed verandah then in the room which later became Sister Assumpta's speech room. We entered, not through a door but via the French window – I thought that pretty special! From walking through the front window to adding our names to the back brick lintel.

*So the last of the "Bubs to Leaving
"Ita Ad Joseph" crew I thought I'd write to wish
you :*

Happy St Joseph's Day.

Regards Margaret Coxon (Thompson)



As Time Goes By

One of our new Associates (Lynette Reilly – Knight) tells of a little “get-together” of some Associates and school friends.

On 19th January last, a “get-together” was held at the home of Lynette Reilly (Knight) for all the “old girls” of the Junior Year of 1955 (several of whom are Associates.) There was great excitement as each one arrived, trying to guess who they were, as some we had seen approximately 12 years ago, but others it had been 50 years, so you can imagine the laughter, especially as some of us have changed the colour of our hair. (No grey hairs to be seen!)

Eating seemed to be a low priority, because mouths were moving so fast they didn't seem to be able to stop for food' nevertheless we did manage a few bites in between the chatter.

”How good God is to those who desire to love Him”

(St Emilie de Vialar)

Notes from the Session in Rome from 31st March – 3rd April for Sisters who are accompanying members of the Laity.

Sister Helen Giles and Sister Jeanette Hevron joined Sisters from other Provinces of the Congregation to take part in a session for Sisters involved in journeying with Associates. Sister Helen gives an account of the meetings.

The Sisters met at the Casa St Emilie de Vialar in Rome. The countries represented were Australia, England, Ireland, Palestine, Jordan, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Tunis, Burma (Myanmar), Philippines and Thailand.

1. The first day began with a brief overview of the history of associate groups in the Congregation since the Chapter of 1989. Australia, Malta and England were established in that year, a few of the Provinces e.g. Ireland, Burma, the Philippines and Thailand began their movement after the Chapter of 2001.

2 The following day an address was given by Mme Lucienne Sallè a member of the Pontifical Council of the Laity in Rome. She spoke in French, hence I had to rely on the translation to follow her presentation. Madame has written, in French, several books on the laity in the Church. For our gathering she referred to the Assembly of the 30th May 1998, which for the 200,000 persons concerned represented a new Pentecost. From Vatican Council 11, MM Salle referred to the documents: *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) and *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World) which suggest that the Vatican Council decided to move away from an hierarchical Church to a more democratic kind of church: from an hierarchic **Body of Christ to People of God**, in which the laity, who constitute the vast majority of its members, would be consulted and have its voice heard.

Pope John Paul 11's Apostolic Exhortation (*Christifideles Laici* (On the Vocation and the mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the world) released in 1989 uses the Gospel image of the vine: “You go into my vineyard too.” *I am the vine and you are the branches.* (John 15:5) In the Congress of 1998 focus was on the lay ‘movements’ in the Church, for example Focolare, L'Arche, Neo-Catechumens and many others. The pope likened the Church to the starlit sky in which each star has its own charism and must be allowed to shine in its own Way in the Constellation.



This is her summary:

1. The Lay Faithful

From the Council to *Christifideles Laici*: a terminology which defines the unity of the body of Christ and the diversity of its members.

Body of Christ

People of God

“You go also into my vineyard.”

Unity but not confusion.

11. That which is specific to the mission of the laity (Lumen Gentium n.31)

- Baptised in the world
- To have an integrated life of faith
- The necessity of a formation and the Sacraments.

111. A new springtime of life lived in association.

- The range of new associations.
- The new Canon Law (1983)
- The new communities

Those who are consecrated people [The Body Alive](#)



That afternoon there was a reflection on the text by Brother Botana fsg:

Spiritual Family. The term ‘spiritual’ does not mean ‘invisible’ or ‘immaterial’ but ‘charismatic’.

Charism is like the blood of the family. It affects the way we live, our mission, spirituality and heritage.



The Foundress – Emilie de Vialar

Our Charismatic figure

Icons: Are they important? Yes and no! Looking at an icon of St Joseph's dream a *pious* person would remain in prayer before the personages represented in the icon; *the spiritual* person would remain in contemplation of the **mystery symbolized**, dwelling on the feelings that it would stir up, and awakening and nourishing the attitudes brought to life by the personages of the icon.



3 The focus of the third day was on the spirituality and charism of St Emilie. Sister Janet Arrowsmith shared this by means of power point presentations. Regarding spirituality she concluded that the simplest definition she could find on spirituality was the way a person, or a group of persons responded to God. In her account of her spiritual life St Emilie said:

"The Lord developed in me a spirit of recollection, and trained me in this by making me feel his presence even in the midst of my occupations and in such a way that I was very intimately united to him."

In her first Constitutions she wrote:

"Recollectedness...should be, as it were, the soul of the Congregation."

The spirit of recollection means a way of living in which we are always in the presence of God, *although not always conscious of God's presence.*

The founding charism of the Congregation is a gift of God, a grace given to the Church and humanity in the person of St Emilie de Vialar. The founding charism cannot be defined or explained, as with Emilie, it is discovered by contemplative gazing and meditative listening. The mystery of God has many facets, like a brilliant sparkling diamond.

4. During the last day Sisters from different provinces: Malta, Ramallah, Burma, the Phillipines and Thailand spoke on how they accompany the Associates in their provinces. In the discussion sessions that followed thought and experiences on these questions were shared: i) What has come clearer for you in accompanying your group? ii) What do I need in order to accompany the group better?

Now from you, our Associates, what would you suggest in answer to these questions.?

Our e-mail stjopawq@iinet.net.au : Fax 8 9332 9857: Phone 9310 4072.
You know our postal address!!!

(Sister Helen Giles)



Our Deceased Sisters, Associates Relatives and Friends

Eternal Rest Grant to them O Lord



Relatives, Friends, and Associates

Dermott Walsh
Lina Salomone
William Crowley
Reece Duckett

Frank O'Loughlin

Nancy Evans
Kieran Brady

Kevin Brady

Mara Sambrailo
Ted Sharp
Fausto Pelosi



Brother of Sister Kathleen
Sister of Sister Emmanuel
Brother of Sister Anastasia
Nephew of Sister Rose and
Mary
Nephew of Shirley Verjans
and Mary Thompson
Mother of Margaret
Son of Mary Brady :
Nephew of Sister Marietta
Brother of Moya and Bernadette
Brother-in-law of Mary
Mother of Frances and Lily
Husband of Hope
Brother of Alberta and Sandra

Praise to you O God,
for your gentleness and strength,
Praise to you for the words and
the songs,
the rhythm and the dance,
the resting and the rising
as we make our way to you.



We pray for all our sick Sisters, Associates, relatives and friends and for all who have asked for our prayers during this special year.



Australia and the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition

This year of our 150th anniversary, whilst being one of celebration is also tinged with some sadness as we, in planning for the future of our Sisters here in Australia, have found it necessary to withdraw from two of our houses. Northam - where the Sisters have been for the last 116 years and Medina where we have lived and ministered for the past 49 years. It was not easy for our Provincial Council to reach the decisions regarding these two houses but with our limited number of Sisters it has become necessary to regroup in order to continue for as long as we can and as long as God wants us to in the spirit of St Emilie.

Old Convent Northam



The following are short accounts of the history of Northam and Medina and the farewell extended to the sisters in each of these places. I am sure they will bring back memories to some of our Associates who have connections with Medina and Northam.



The first community in Northam was formed on 1st May 1894. When the Sisters arrived Father Tracy, who resided in Toodyay was in charge of Northam. It is not known if the sisters realized that there were only five Catholic families in Northam when they arrived. It would seem that this knowledge would not have made any difference to their decision to leave the comparative comfort and security of their Fremantle convent and make the 98 kilometre journey to this distant town.

The first sisters chosen for the Northam foundation were Sister Columba Jordan, (who came from Malta) and two companions, Sister Gertrude Campbell and Sister Joseph Collins, who were both born in the colony. Two courageous young women, Miss Smith and Miss Moran also accompanied the sisters.

The sisters' first residence was a rented shop-fronted dwelling, opposite what is now the Saint Joseph's secondary school in Wellington Street. Using the nearby church as classrooms, they soon opened a school, with an initial enrolment of 9 pupils. In 1904 another school was started in West Northam where the sisters continued in their teaching apostolate until 1967 when they announced they were closing West Northam school as well as withdrawing from teaching their 3 post primary classes in Wellington Street..

In 1955 the enrolments increased in both schools. There were 1250 pupils in the Wellington Street school and 120 in the West Northam school. 45% of these pupils were New Australians from the Northam Migrant Camp i.e. children whose parents had been

displaced by the war or the rise of communism in post war Europe, many of whom were Catholic and wished their children to be educated in Catholic schools.

In 1971 the sisters amalgamated with the boys' school conducted by the Marist Brothers to form the first Catholic co-educational school in Western Australia.

Since that date, the sisters progressively withdrew from teaching in schools in Northam. They have been involved in various ministries there until the 1st May in this year of 2005.

It can be noted that many sisters have lived in Northam. In some years there were as many as 12 sisters in the community. Several of the students who attended the schools there eventually became Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition, and today we can count five still living among our ranks.

The last of the Sisters to leave Northam were Sisters Jacqueline, Anne Marie and Aemelia. We wish these three Sisters many blessings in their future and give thanks to God for them and all the Sisters who were involved in ministry in Northam during the last 116 years.

The Sisters were also farewelled by the Town of Northam at a morning tea on Thursday 28th April. Mayor Ray Head presented the sisters with the town plaque. He pointed out there were originally three sisters in Northam. Other Councillors were present as well as Representatives from the Church, the Principal of the School and Mr Neville McManus, the first Lay Principal, as well as the Sisters' Provincial Council and other Sisters, including those who had been working in Northam until now.

Afterwards the Sisters, with a local historian visited the graves of the eight sisters buried in the Northam Cemetery. Sister Agnes Murphy was the last to be buried there in 1954

“Our sole ambition was to make Him known”
(St Emilie de Vialar 1842)

On Sunday 1st May a farewell

Mass in Thanksgiving celebrated by Archbishop Hickey was held in St Joseph's Church. It was a memorable occasion and an opportunity for all of us – the people of Northam and the Sisters as well to express our appreciation for all the good that has been accomplished in Northam during all those years. In St Emilie's words:



Convent vacated 1st May 2005

*“It is for God that we have left all things,
and he has undertaken to watch over us.”*



Medina 1956 -2005

The first Medina community was founded in 1956 at the invitation of Archbishop Prendiville. The three founding members were Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart Walsh, Sister Cecilia Meagher and Sister Concepta A'Vard. At the time of the foundation Father Harper C.M was the parish priest, and for many years after that the Vincentian Fathers continued to minister in Medina.

The first convent was a very small State Housing Commission House which proved too small. The community moved to a larger house across the road when it became vacant

The first school was built with Father Harper as Architect and several of the parishioners helping him with the building. It served as a church for several years, and we remember well those early days when, each Friday afternoon we changed the school into a church by moving all the desks etc. and preparing everything for Mass. Many lessons were learnt from that experience!

The first students in the school were mostly from migrant families in the district – the greater number, of German and Dutch descent. They had started their education at the local Government school and fitted very well into our school situation. Most came from a very Catholic background.

The sisters continued teaching in the school until the end of 1987 but one sister remained in the capacity of Religious Coordinator. In the years following they were involved in the various parish groups (Sacramental Programmes, RCIA) etc. and other pastoral work.

The last Sisters to leave Medina were Sister Bernadette who left Australia to teach English to our Novices in the Philippines, and Sister Alma who continues her work at St Patrick's Care Centre in Fremantle. We wish these Sisters many blessings also in their future and give thanks to God for them and all the sisters who were involved in ministry in Medina from 1956 – 2005.



Medina Convent

On 6th March a special Mass was celebrated by Bishop Sproston in the new Medina Church to celebrate the first anniversary of its completion and also to farewell the Sisters. It was a lovely occasion where old friendships were renewed at the social gathering afterwards. At the end of the Mass a Native Frangipani tree was planted in memory of all the Sisters. This grows to a large tree and in anticipation of that growth a plaque acknowledging the sisters was placed on a rock which had been taken from the old church and on which was also placed the plaque for St Vincent's church.

*"My guiding principle is to promote in all things
whatever providence designs for us"*

(St Emilie de Vialar)



The Hand of Christ blesses the Cup

The Hand of Love offers the Cup

The Hand of the Suffering receives the Cup

In the Spirit of the Society of St Vincent de Paul

Recently at one of the Masses in Willetton Sister Monica Kirby was presented with a badge for her 10 years of service to the Society. Sister has worked tirelessly since coming to Willetton 10 years ago. Her presence as a member is greatly appreciated.

“Emilie” Group Meetings 2005

Sister Helen Giles

-
3. Wednesday 25th May - *“The Way We Were”*
Meet at St Patrick's Church 10.30 am.
4. Wednesday 10th August - *“Chrstifideles Laici”*
Willetton Sts John and Paul Centre 7.30pm
5. Saturday-Sunday
1st and 2nd October *“Some time with Sister Zina ”*
Time and place to be decided.
6. Wednesday 7th December - *“Time With Mary”*
Willetton Sts John and Paul Centre 7.30pm



SJA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Sunday 24th July

Willetton

Sts John & Paul Parish Hall 2 pm

Albany

To be arranged

Victoria

To be arranged



Acknowledgements

We believe that “there is a time for everything under the heavens.” Especially for us, it is our time to give thanks for all that we have received as a Congregation over these 150 years. We give thanks to all of you who have been part of the lives of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition in Australia. We have had such support and kindness that it is not possible to mention everyone individually so we ask you to accept our sincere thanks for all you have been and done and we remember you especially in our prayers..

We wish you every blessing in the future

Associate Retreat
Albany
Spirituality of the Eucharist

“'A Presence that
Disturbs'

at
St Joseph's Parish Centre

Saturday 30th July
9.30am - 3.30pm

Facilitator:

Sister Margaret Anne Beech

RSVP Monday 25th July
Tel 9841 1176

Associate Retreat
PERTH

Spirituality of the Eucharist

“'A Presence that
Disturbs'

at
'A Place to Just Be'
4a Preston Point Road
East Fremantle

Sunday 2nd October
9.30am - 3.30pm

Facilitators

Sr Margaret Anne Beech
Sister Zina Schaker

RSVP Friday 23rd September
Tel.9310 4072

Celebrating the Journey

1855 – 2005

Commemorating the 150th year
since the arrival of the

Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition
in Fremantle

on 24th May 1855.

*You are invited to join in the celebration of Mass
in St Patrick's Basilica
on Sunday 12th June 2005 at 11 a.m.*

