



THE SISTERS OF CHARITY  
OF AUSTRALIA



## Keep in touch

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# In the footsteps of Mary Aikenhead

## Sr Joan Jurd rsc celebrates 80 Years of Religious Profession

On 20th January, 1936, Sr Joan Jurd, (Sr Perpetua), made her Religious Profession as a Sister of Charity. This year 2016, on 20th January, Sr Joan celebrated not a Silver, Gold, Diamond or Platinum but an Oak Jubilee: 80 years, of walking in the footsteps of Mary Aikenhead!

The Congregation celebrated this great achievement on 20th February, 2016 with Sr Joan's family and friends in the St Joseph's Village Chapel, where Sr Joan resides. Fr Kevin Walsh, who was known by Sr Joan since he was eight years old, was the Celebrant, assisted by Fr Isaac, the Village Chaplain. Sr Joan was accompanied by her niece, Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc and by many of her relatives. Her nephew, Mr Paul Jurd, read the first Reading, and Annette's sister, Mrs Penny Kerr, prayed the Prayers of the Faithful.

During the Mass, all witnessed Sr Joan pronounce her vows in a very strong voice. Vows she would have said daily for 80 years. As she finished there was spontaneous clapping! At the end of Mass, Sr Suzette, representing Sr Clare, our Congregational Leader, before Sr Joan was presented with the Papal Blessing from Pope Francis, spoke about the significance of the Acorn, that when planted, becomes the Oak Tree, and how Joan, over the years demonstrated the Wisdom of her age and the Compassion demonstrated throughout her life.

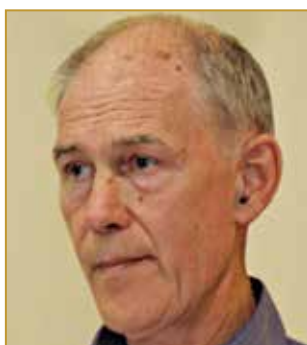
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Sr Joan reading her vows



Mrs Penny Kerr



Mr Paul Jurd



Sr Joan was presented with the Papal Blessing from Pope Francis



Sr Joan's family and friends



Sr Suzette Clark

# In the footsteps of Mary Aikenhead

## Sr Joan Jurd rsc celebrates 80 Years of Religious Profession

from page 01

When the Mass drew to a close Sr Joan, followed by her family, friends and sisters moved to the afternoon tea, the cutting of the cake and a speech by Sr Joan, thanking all for coming and celebrating with her this great event!

Sr Clare Nolan, Congregational Leader, wrote the following to Joan on the actual Anniversary of her Religious Profession:

*It is the massive root system of the oak that helps the tree to maintain its stability and sustenance as it grows. It represents wisdom and longevity. Joan, you have reached this incredible milestone that is only reserved for the few. The oak grows over hundreds of years from a tiny acorn to a huge tree. It weathers whatever storms it faces and continues to grow and expand. The oak tree is only partially seen – the root system is as tall and wide as the tree itself. This teaches us that there is much to living our spiritual experiences that we can't see. You are the fruit of your spiritual life Joan. As our Pope Francis says, "Faithful discipleship is grace and love in action."*

*Joan, thank you for your faithfulness as a Sister of Charity. Thank you for the great love of the Congregation you have had for 80 years and for all you have done for others under the banner of Caritas Christi Urget Nos.*

*In the words of Mary Aikenhead: 'May each and all become more and more grateful for and faithful to, our holy vocation.'*



Sr Joan Jurd rsc

This you have done dear Joan. Congratulations!



Sr Jennifer Fahey rsc AM

## A time for everything

*Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses.*

Ecclesiastes 2, 3

Reflecting on this passage Sister Jennifer Fahey has recognised the time to resign from the following:

- Twenty-five years as Chairman of the Archdiocesan Committee for the submissions rebuilding new schools and refurbishing older school buildings.
- Eight years assisting the coordination of the volunteers at St Vincent's Private Hospital.
- Four years judging the John Lincoln Awards for senior students making contributions to the Communities across New South Wales.
- Three years on call from Macquarie University in correcting PhD's on the topic of Self-concept and Self-esteem.
- Two years assisting with the writing of profiles for disadvantaged children connected with DOC's.

Jennifer will now be working part-time at the Sisters of Charity Outreach Darlinghurst.

# 200th Anniversary Mass

## Sandymount Parish, Dublin (16th January 2016)



Sr Una O'Neill rsc

### Homily

Throughout the past year, in cities and towns, in villages and outstations – from Lusaka to Los Angeles, from Sydney to Glasgow, from Cork to Chikuni, from Clarinbridge to Konzalendo, from Bomadi to Birkenhead – we have been celebrating our 200th anniversary with colleagues, families, volunteers, service users, friends and co-workers. Today it is fitting that all of these celebrations come to a conclusion in this Parish where Mary Aikenhead lived on Sandymount Avenue and where the Sisters of Charity have served for over 185 years.

We also remember and give thanks once more this morning for the fact that Mary Aikenhead has been declared Venerable by the Church. However, while that title is indeed a cause for thanksgiving, there is the danger that it could distance her from us and we might lose sight of the practical, down to earth woman who, like Mary in the Gospel of this morning, noticed what needed to be done and immediately set about finding a remedy.

Mary Aikenhead's holiness was equally practical. One commentator wrote of her:

*"I think Mother Aikenhead must have been a Saint, because she could fly with such facility from the depths of a clothes basket to the heights of heaven."*

Life and Work of Mary Aikenhead  
(p. 116)

She was a woman whose life was rooted in her commitment to Jesus, in her fidelity to prayer and in her life of chastity, poverty and obedience. Her commitment, her prayer and her vows were matched by her practical service of the poor. And that wholeness of life is surely one of her greatest gifts to us.

Here in Sandymount, Mary made sure that she was fully aware of the realities of poverty, oppression and exploitation of the people and then she set about doing something to address these realities.



200 years 'In the Footsteps of Mary Aikenhead' (Free App available)

*We are, each and all of us, called to do the best we can in our corner of the world no matter what the circumstances.*

She details this in the letter she wrote in 1833 to the Commission set up to enquire into the State of the Irish Poor. In that letter she outlines the appalling sufferings by the people of the area, and "...the heartrending misery which we (the sisters) daily witness."

She speaks of terrible effects of unemployment with the closure of the glass works and of the distillery at Dodder bank; the reduction of employment in the salt works and the foundry; the absence of medical help, the hunger of the children, the lack of sewage, the poor ventilation in the houses, the excessive rents for miserable hovels, the cost of buying drinking water... and the list goes on. This situation was not confined to Sandymount of course and in later years she wrote to a friend:

*"I own to you that sadness is more deeply over me than I allow but we are in truly awful times in every sense of the word."*

(December 1848)

If she were writing today about the broader world-wide situation she would be talking about war and want in many parts of the world; the threat of terrorism; the pain of people starving and diseased; the destruction of land and forests; the tragedy of human trafficking; the anguish of refugees; the corruption of politicians, the ruthless profiteering that defines many business and multinationals – and the list goes on.

It would have been so easy for her and the early Sisters to sink into despair. It would be so easy for us today to be overcome with a sense of helplessness and hopelessness – to be paralysed by what the poet Denise Levertov call the imagination of disaster. But that was never Mary's way. On the contrary she would say to us: Go and do something.

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# 200th Anniversary Mass

Sandymount Parish, Dublin (16th January 2016)

from page 03



We are, each and all of us, called to do the best we can in our corner of the world no matter what the circumstances. And that is the message of the second reading: There are all sorts of service to be done in different ways by different people. It is the same God who is working in all of us. When we are committed to truth and justice and compassion and forgiveness; when we listen to those in trouble; forgive when we want to pay back; speak the word of comfort to those who are suffering; contribute to the services that enable others to help themselves; highlight injustices and exploitation; pray passionately for those in need; challenge unjust systems; notice when a helping hand is needed – then we are making an impact on the miseries of this world. Our contribution may seem small but it is part of a whole.

As we look to the future the challenge for all of us is plain and simple. It is the challenge of Jesus – to ‘hope against hope.’ Hope is about believing in the light even as we are in the midst of darkness. It’s about doing our best to be a life-giving presence to others even when we are bothered and anxious and depressed. It is about trusting in God even when our hearts are breaking.

As Mary puts it so vividly:

*“My poor heart is as weak as that of a chicken. Pray that I may be faithful to the end!”*

(27th August 1856)

One of MMA greatest gifts to us and to the church was her ability to risk. Many of her decisions made little business or economic sense. Many of her projects challenged the status quo and caused discomfort to those in power. She challenged the systems that locked the poor in their poverty and she tolerated no interference from those of ecclesiastics who would have wanted to domesticate the Sisters and bring them under their local authority. The reason for her courage and tenacity was because of her profound and practical trust in the Providence of God and her determination to act always on behalf of the suffering Poor.

Mary Aikenhead was never one to moan miserably about things. She did not tolerate long faces or sulky silences. She encouraged celebrations. She reminded us to be always grateful. She told us to be cheerful. And the reason is given us

in the First Reading where we are told that the Lord takes delight in us, that our God rejoices in us. This is echoed delightfully in Edwina Gately’s lovely words:

*“When I have fun and enjoy myself God laughs.”*

Laughter releases our creative energies.

We need to be brave and creative as we try to imagine as we try to imagine the future. We need to look outward and see and hear God’s call to us in the reality of the world in which we live. Sometimes we can be so focussed on our own individual, family or community situations that we begin to turn inward and forget Jesus’ call to us to be a life-giving presence to those around us. We can look to the future knowing that God is with us and that those who have gone before us are surrounding us with love and encouragement.

So let us turn outwards and move forward with heads held high and steps that are steady and eyes that can smile. May we continue to walk in faith, with a spring in our steps, singing our song of God’s love and fidelity, realising our need for daily conversion and living out, in practice, the gospel we preach.

## Celebrating our Jubilarians

Platinum Jubilarians: Srs Maria Therese Hess and Eileen Duffy

Thursday, 14th January, 2016 was a very special day for the Congregation. We celebrated 70 years of Religious Profession for Srs Maria Therese Hess and Eileen Duffy.

Fr Steve, Parish Priest at St Peter’s, Clayton celebrated the Eucharist for and with Maria Therese at 11.00am, as Maria was surrounded by the residents of Corpus Christi, Clayton and Corpus Christi Village and a number of Sisters of Charity. Maria Therese was well aware of all that was going on for her on this big day.



Srs Denise Hannebery and Maria Therese

She accepted the Papal Blessing from Pope Francis via the hands of Sr Suzette, Congregational Councillor, who travelled from Sydney for the day. It was a very simple occasion but beautifully moving and an emotional experience for those present.

Later in the day at St Catherine’s, Balwyn we gathered to celebrate with Eileen, her family, residents and Sisters of Charity. This Eucharist was celebrated by Fr Kevin Dillon, Parish Priest of St Mary’s, Geelong.



Sr Eileen cuts the cake



Councillors, Srs Cate and Suzette with Maria Therese after presenting the Papal Blessing

Prior to the Offertory the Sisters of Charity, along with Eileen, renewed their Vows. Once again this was a simple celebration but most meaningful. Suzette presented the Papal Blessing from Pope Francis to Eileen before the final prayer. Following the Eucharist we enjoyed a beautiful afternoon tea where there was much laughter and stories abounded.

*For this day we are most grateful to all who contributed in any way in making two beautiful Sisters of Charity very happy. I am sure that Mary Aikenhead would have approved of the events of the day at Clayton and Balwyn.*

## Diamond Jubilarian: Sr Jean Montgomery rsc

### *“Not My Will but Thine Be Done”*

On January 28, 2016 a celebration was held for Sr Jean to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee.

Throughout her 60 year journey Jean has crossed many geographic borders; served in many and varied ministries and touched thousands of lives in her living as a Sister of Charity.

Jean chose to have a quiet celebration-sharing Mass and dinner with Clare Nolan, Congregational Leader; her Co – Pauline Staunton; her community – Frances Graham, Cecilia Kinsella, Gaye Reynolds and Margaret Valentine; her St Anne’s Place ‘neighbours’ – Kate Fitzpatrick and Margaret Guy; good friends – Chris and Michael Scanlon and Fr McAuliffe from Cabramatta.

A Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated in the Chapel at St Anne’s Place followed by dinner in Frances Graham’s Unit.

During the Eucharist Fr McAuliffe invited those present to reflect on how Jean’s life as a Sister of Charity had touched each of us. Jean’s prayerfulness, her trust in God, her faithfulness, her compassion and love, constancy, kindness, friendliness, generosity, her gifts of listening and storytelling, her deep trust in God – along with many other qualities – were shared. This sharing spoke of a life well lived – well done Jean and thank you for who you are and what you have done for many, many fellow pilgrims in the Service of God.

The whole occasion was very joyful.

*‘Well done good and faithful servant.’*

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Sr Jean cuts the cake



# Celebrating our Jubilarians

## Diamond Jubilarian: Sr Pauline Staunton rsc



Back: Srs Rose Holman, Elizabeth Costigan, Jean Montgomery, Jan O'Grady, Linda Ferrington  
Front: Srs Marie Haren, Val Green, Colleen Noonan, Pauline Staunton, Virginia Wilkinson

On the 23rd January, I celebrated my Diamond Jubilee by attending the evening Parish Mass with friends and the Parish Community In St Francis Church, Paddington.

All of our Jubilarians were remembered by Fr Phil Miscamble OFM, with a special remembrance for our departed Co Sr Annie Hall and Dominica Wanless who also travelled with us for many years as a Sister of Charity.

Mass was followed by a simple meal at home with a few who could not attend the more formal celebratory gathering on 24th January with my community and friends at Dede's Abbotsford.

Jubilees are times for celebrations and my Silver and Golden Jubilees were celebrated "big" ... However, this seemed to me to be an appropriate way to celebrate my Diamond Jubilee just for "starters". Later, there will be follow up in one way and another with family (Brian and Elaine's Diamond Jubilee of Marriage), and other friends. It will be a Diamond Jubilee Year!!

*Jubilees are times for celebrations and my Silver and Golden Jubilees were celebrated "big" ... However, this seemed to me to be an appropriate way to celebrate my Diamond Jubilee just for "starters".*

## Golden Jubilarians: Srs Mary Gabrielle Clarke and Anna Maria Parlevliet

On Sunday 10th October 2015 Sisters Mary Gabrielle Clarke and Anna Maria Parlevliet celebrated their Golden Jubilee together with their Parish Community whom we have served for the past 28 years. Sr Clare, members of Mary Gabrielle's Family and many of the Melbourne Sisters attended.

Fr Brendan Reed, our Parish Priest, together with his assistant Priest, Fr Matthew Baldwin, concelebrated the Mass. After Mass we were all invited to a beautiful morning tea which had been provided by the Parish Hospitality group.



Srs Mary Gabrielle, Mary Frances, Fr Brendan, Srs Clare and Anna Maria



Srs Clare, Mary Gabrielle and Anna Maria at the Eucharist

# Golden Jubilarians: Srs Helen Clarke rsc and Mary Francis Gould rsc

## Sr Helen Clarke rsc

Helen Clarke celebrated her Golden Jubilee of Profession on Saturday 30th January. The celebration commenced with a concelebrated Mass in St Ambrose Church at Concord West. Sr Clare Nolan, Congregational Leader welcomed all present at the beginning of the celebration and later presented Helen with the Papal Blessing. Father Peter Clifford OFM was chief concelebrant and was joined by several long time priest friends of Helen, some of whom had known her since her youth. Sir Trevor Garland on the organ and the Cathedral Singers really enhanced the liturgical celebration. In his homily Father Peter spoke of Helen's journey as a religious and of the prophetic role religious women have in the Church.

High Tea followed in the Aikenhead Centre at the parish school. This was a very joyous gathering of Helen's family, the sisters, friends from her school days through to those she has met along the way and colleagues from the various ministries with which she has been involved over the years. Helen thanked all for their presence, mentioning many had travelled long distances to be there, and for their friendship and support.



Sr Helen Clarke rsc

## Sr Mary Francis Gould rsc

On Saturday, 6th February, 2016, a Mass of Thanksgiving was held at the Holy Name of Mary Church Hunters Hill to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Religious Profession of Sr Mary Frances Gould. Bishop Terry Brady, an old friend, was the main celebrant with Fathers Matthew Solomon, Mel Cotter OFM, Roberto Castillo and Chris Jenkins SJ also celebrating. Fr Kevin Bates SM (Parish Priest of Hunters Hill and a friend) was unable to be there owing to a prior commitment and sent his apologies.

Fellow Jubilarians, Sr Anna Maria Parlevliet and Sr Helen Clarke joined Mary Frances in the Offertory procession. The readings, singing and musical accompaniments (organ and cellos) – a combined effort of some Sisters of Charity and a number of Mary Frances nieces and great nephews and nieces – added to the solemnity and joy of the Eucharistic celebration. Bishop Brady in his homily, spoke of the wonderful mission of every Sister of Charity – to be Christ's love in action.

Sr Clare Nolan, the Congregational Leader, before the commencement of Mass, welcomed all assembled in the church – about 180 in all. Before the final blessing, Sr Clare presented Sr Anna Maria and Sr Mary Frances each with a papal blessing on the occasion of their jubilee, Sr Helen having already celebrated her jubilee and received a papal blessing a week earlier.

Many Sisters of Charity were in attendance, along with old friends and the large Gould Clan. The latter were largely responsible for organising the day and luncheon following the Mass which included the greeting of guests, food preparation, serving, speeches and a PowerPoint presentation of some highlights in the life, family and past 50 years of Mary Frances.

Sr Mary Frances noted that a Jubilee is an occasion of thanksgiving – to God and to the many persons who have come into her life – and by their generous, loving support, have enabled her to respond to her call over those 50 years.



Sr Mary Francis Gould rsc

She expressed her gratitude to Bishop Brady, to the priests, to Sr Clare Nolan and Congregation, to her family and to friends who had contributed to make the celebration so wonderful. The Congregation generously made the beautiful luncheon possible and Mrs Melinda Guttriez at the Congregational Office printed the lovely Mass booklets.

The celebration of Mass and luncheon were indeed family-oriented celebrations enhanced by the beautiful, spacious settings of Villa Maria Church and the adjoining parish hall. Sincere thanks go to Fr Kevin Bates for the use of the Hunters Hill parish facilities and for his generous contribution towards the celebration.

The change of venue from Potts Point for some was a difficulty. To all who were present in person, and to those who would like to have been there, but were unable to get there – and to all who sent greetings and promise of prayers... your loving support was greatly appreciated. Be assured of my gratitude, love and prayers for you all.



# Decommissioning

## of All Saints Girls College, Liverpool



The Principal with Sisters of Charity, Ex-students and Staff

On 8th December, 2015 a special Mass was held in All Saints Church, Liverpool, to mark the decommissioning of All Saints Girls College (formerly St Mary's High School) Liverpool. In 2016 the two All Saints 7-10 Colleges are to be combined as All Saints Catholic College, Liverpool.

The Parish Priest, Fr Remi, was the celebrant. He was preceded into the Church by the altar servers, two students carrying the All Saints Girls College banner, then Sr Jan O'Grady (the last RSC Principal) carrying the College candle and six students each carrying a candle representing the six Houses – Aikenhead, Caritas, Ignatius, Loreto, Marian and Xavier. Those candles were all placed to the right side of the altar beneath a statue of Our Lady, while the banner was hung from a stand to the side.

The choir, ably conducted by Ms Julie Aysom, led the beautiful singing throughout the Mass, concluding with a stirring rendition of the College song.

At the end of Mass the Congregation enjoyed a PowerPoint presentation highlighting many of the key events of the year in the life of the College.

### In a moving ceremony the banner and candles were brought to the front of the altar.

Therese McDonald, the Religious Education Coordinator, spoke in turn of the significance of the names of each of the Houses. As she finished describing each one, that candle was blown out. Finally, after a moving tribute to the history of the College, beginning with the story of Mary Aikenhead and the Sisters of Charity, the final candle was extinguished and the College banner rolled up. There were tears in the eyes of many in the Congregation as the banner and candles were recessed down the aisle.

Among the staff there are six ex-students for whom their association with the College has a very special meaning. Two other ex-students – Ms Joy Halloran and Mrs Pat Luccini – were also present. Both have had a long association with the Ex-Students Association. Sisters of Charity present for the occasion were Srs Jean Marie Brennan and Eileen Browne, (both of whom continue to travel to Liverpool from Auburn each week to teach English to migrants), Mary Frances Gould, a former teacher in the Primary school, Jean Montgomery, who currently lives in Liverpool, and Cate O'Brien, a Congregational Councillor.

The Principal, Mr Steve Hough, invited the adults to share a light lunch in the College. Many memories flowed around the table, including tales of former PP Fr Roth Delaney who left his stamp on the parish and schools. There were recollections of Combined Sisters of Charity Athletic Carnivals and of course, the Garden party held in the rose garden in 1978 to mark the centenary of the arrival of the Sisters of Charity in Liverpool. Joy Halloran regaled us with how Sr M. St Jude, the organiser and Principal of the Primary School, was unfazed when the Governor of NSW, Sir Wallace Kyle, declined an invitation, so she drove to Canberra to gain the consent of the Governor General, Sir Zelman Cowen, to attend.

The annals of St Mary's High School and All Saints Catholic Girls College now move into another chapter as All Saints Catholic College. May the spirit of Mary Aikenhead and the Patrician Brothers combine to inspire the students and staff as they continue the tradition of their respective Colleges.



# The Ecumenical Coffee Brigade

## Serving Queensland's 'needy'

Sr Carmel Coyle (right) is one of the team who volunteers every fourth Monday on the Ecumenical Coffee Brigade van as well as collecting articles and other items for the clothing containers. Sr Clare Nolan, Congregational Leader, joined in the van experience with Carmel recently when she was visiting with her in Brisbane.



In October 1970, Louisa Toogood was on her way to work in her Morris Minor car and she saw some men sitting in the gutter, she stopped to talk to them. They were homeless.

Next morning she went along to that spot with a Thermos of tea and some sandwiches.

Needless to say the next morning there were many men gathered in that spot. Louise would have known this and she had more to share with "the boys." Soon she had a collapsible shelf placed on the window of her car.

After much struggle with Church and State, she began her coffee with a small van and many, many helpers who had heard of "Mommo" and her coffee.

Over the years this has grown, now called the Ecumenical Coffee Brigade. We have a large van well set up with 14 boxes of sandwiches, 15 in each box with a variety of fillings, all labelled. They choose what they would like, served in plastic bag. They receive two sandwiches, two pieces of fruit, always bananas, tea and coffee, Milo to go, along with the meal. Many have another top up or two while we are there. Very often there is something else – biscuits or chocolates etc., to brighten their morning.

There are four stops on the way – Fortitude Valley, Wickham Terrace, West End and William Street. Each day, every day of the year, the van leaves at 6.15am, after it has been packed, to these four stops. They usually serve 120 folk, mainly men, who come along. The amazing part of the visit is the gratitude of these people. They are so happy to see the van come along and are so grateful for being there, whatever the weather may be!

Right: Photos on the sides of the van of Louisa Toogood with the name of the service

They are always looking for something in the container of clothing and other items which is good to see them satisfied when they find something clean, often new, and always fresh for them.

45 years this October since Louise started, (her photo is on the side of the van). There is never a want for volunteers. Many Colleges around Brisbane have their students come and make sandwiches, especially Saturday mornings, and once they are 18 years old they can go in the van.

Many Churches and Business Foundation groups contribute, which enables the purchase of food and running of the van. One bakehouse over the south side helps with the bread delivery.

A most successful project, begun in the simplest of ways, to serve some of our needy!



# My life at Viridian

By Sr Maureen Parker rsc

We have Mass four times a week. We are anointed twice a year and we have communal Reconciliation twice a year. I contribute to these, as requested. I am on the roster for Reading and as a Special Minister.

- I pray, read, reflect and enjoy the beauty around me.
- I take Communion to the sick Residents here and in the Nursing Centre when needed.
- I run a Lenten Programme each year during the day. I attend a weekly Prayer group which breaks open the Sunday Gospel and I provide the music for the evening when needed.
- I belong to the choir and attend meetings and practice as required. I came up with the name for the group, the *Viridian Voices*.
- I attend the monthly Pastoral Care morning teas in the Café and functions run by CRAQld.
- I visit the sick in their apartments, phone them, send them emails or drop them a note. At times I have visited residents in hospital.
- I comfort the bereaved, write notes, visit them, attend vigils and funerals when possible. We have had 19 residents go to their eternal reward since I've been here. Three residents have buried one of their children.
- I listen to people, have a cuppa, socialise! There are in-house markets each Wednesday. All residents on my floor have morning tea together each Wednesday so we can get to know each other.



I belong to the choir and attend meetings and practice as required. I came up with the name for the group, the *Viridian Voices*.

- I maintain relationships and friendships with Sisters here and interstate by phone and email. With family in Toowoomba, on the Sunshine Coast and elsewhere. Friends from my Outreach days in Toowoomba, from my teaching days at the Gap and Cabramatta.
- I've been contributing to the Crossroads Newsletter since 1992. Twice a year now! I wrote a reflection on Easter for the *Shalom* magazine of the Zillmere Parish as requested. I prepare and give a talk on Mary Aikenhead each year for 22nd July and I meet up with the members of my Community from time to time, to pray, chat and celebrate. I attend community meetings, functions, movies and celebrations. I also visit Sisters at Mt Olivet when I can.

## Exercises

- I attend weekly aqua aerobics, Zumba for Seniors and making good use of our walking is set up here.

## Other things I do

- I keep my apartment in order: washing, ironing, shopping and cooking etc. I do the budget each month, pay bills. I visit the Doctor regularly. I care for the car: petrol, cleaning, servicing every six months.
- I have learnt how to use the technology in the Media Room and have taught others to use it. I am able to show DVDs when needed.
- I am responsible for the care of our Sisters' graves here at Nudgee, in Toowoomba and at Lismore. I liaise with Sr Maria Wheeler.



# Obituaries

We remember each deceased Sister with love and pray for her.

## Sr Joan McKenna rsc

(25 March 1935 - 26 February 2016)

**Welcome:** For those of you who don't know me, I am Colleen Jackson. It is my privilege, on behalf of Joan's community – 10 Sisters of Charity from around Melbourne, country Victoria and even Hobart – to welcome you to this faith celebration of the life of Joan Wilma McKenna – Sister of Charity, sister, aunt, friend and colleague. Especially, we welcome Joan's family – Brian, Brian John, Helen and her beloved "little people" Matilda and Charlie.

We acknowledge the presence and support of Sr Clare Nolan, our Congregational leader, and Congregation counsellor Sr Cate O'Brien. And finally, welcome – and thank you in anticipation – to our celebrant today, Fr Brendan Reed.

## Joan

I have the privilege now, of taking a few minutes to honour Joan's life with a few words of remembrance. Never was a task made so easy as this today – because what I'm going to share with you is actually an account of Joan's life – in her own words! Yes, as ever, she was a step ahead of us!

"My father was in the Navy so my early years saw us move around a lot – Canberra, Raboul, Garden Island, Kings Cross to name a few. At the end of the war we moved to Melbourne and I was enrolled at Catholic Ladies College East Melbourne, thus beginning a long association with CLC. In the next 60 years I would be a student, a teacher at CLC Eltham, and finally a Board member until 2009.

I worked in the Public Service at the Mont Albert Barracks for a year before entering the Sisters of Charity in 1954. The Novitiate was a happy time for me. I never ever thought of going home. My family's nomadic lifestyle held me in good stead once I was professed in 1956. (Joan lived in 20 different RSC communities over the course of her life).

From NSW I moved to Sandy Bay Tasmania. In those early days we kept a few pages ahead of the students. At Sandy Bay I went to Tech one evening a week to learn enough to teach the senior classes for the following week.



After completing a science degree I taught in Canberra and then Brisbane ... and then 23 years after I left Melbourne, I returned there. This time my 'L' plates were for being Principal at Sancta Sophia College Glenroy. After Principalship I took the opportunity to go back to the classroom as a science teacher at CLC Eltham.

After 30 years in education and having had an accident in the surf, I accepted a position as Chaplain to prisoners with psychiatric illness and intellectual disabilities. The next ten years plus were spent between G Division, Pentridge, and Mont Park Mental facility's locked ward. After a sabbatical year spent in Aboriginal communities in Central Australia I spent the following 10 years caring for carers – at Outreach in Sydney, and later, Comely Bank, Healesville.

In 2010, while on holidays at Shellharbour I suffered a stroke while swimming in the sea. This put my philosophy to "take things as they come" to the test! I realised how much I had valued myself for what I did. Now I am more conscious of 'who I am and what I can be for others'. It is a pity that it takes something so drastic! I am still getting used to being on the 'other side' of caring. At Deepdene Mary Gabrielle, Anna and Trish walked the line between letting me do the best I can, and looking out for my needs. I have been lucky with all the help I've received.

After rehab (following the stroke) I joined a stroke support group. Life is to be lived – I participate in lots of the group's activities. There is no 'poor me' syndrome. My ministry is to be with people in whatever state of life and health. It has taken a lot for me to realise that it is not so much 'doing' as 'being' there for them. I am still learning."

## Mary Gabrielle takes up the story from there:

Anna and I met Joan at St George's hospital when it looked as though she was destined for residential care. We thought it worthwhile to ask if Joan could come and live with us at Deepdene.

After some fast talking we brought her home to Deepdene in May, 2010. The first thing we did was take the door off the bathroom to enable better access and she did not look back.

From day one Joan won us over. She was so determined, so tenacious, so positive and so lovable – except when we insisted on certain rules to be followed – and then we clashed for a few minutes!

Joan kept saying she was the luckiest person alive to have two people looking after her. Actually Joan looked after us because of her positive attitude.

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# Obituaries

We remember each deceased Sister with love and pray for her.

## Sr Joan McKenna rsc

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Joan endeared herself to us because as she too loved Sheba the cat and Peppi the dog. They never left her side. In fact it was not unusual for us to come home to find Joan flat out on the bed with Sheba sitting on her chest and Peppi lying beside her. The one thing she said she would miss, when she made the decision to stay at St Catherine's, was her furry friends!

Joan's ability to be committed to the Stroke Community of Borroondara was extraordinary. She threw herself into it with gusto, learnt to play lawn bowls, got onto the committee, attended the Writing Skills programme at Hawthorn library, supported and took her turn at the Pop-up shop in Hawthorn, and became a volunteer at St George's as a mentor to stroke victims.

When Joan eventually made her home at St Catherine's she gave it everything and loved her time there. Community celebrations, gatherings etc. were often a challenge but her words when asked would she like to come along were always "why not". She was a wise lady, a happy lady, a woman of integrity.

Joan's love for people, her family, especially her beloved 'little people', Matilda and Charlie, and our RSC Congregation was the best in every way."

Joan Wilma McKenna rsc, Sister, friend, carer – tenacious, positive, loving, funny, wise, mischievous, compassionate, passionate. We loved you, and our lives are blessed by yours.

*Vale Joan.*

## Sr Denise McCarthy rsc

(24 January 1934 - 28 February 2016)



### Reflections from our celebrations of farewell

At the Funeral Eucharist on Friday, March 4, for Sister Denise at St Therese's Church Essendon, we recalled in the eulogy the ways in which "presence" was a key aspect of her ministry through her role as teacher and principal in schools in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart over the decades.

When she was with people she was attentive to them and her attention communicated her deep respect for whoever she was with.

There was a graciousness in her presence that Sisters, family and friends had spoken about at the wake at St Monica's the day before. She was also a woman with a flair for colour and style in all aspects of living and caring for herself and others.

This interest took her to Emily McPherson's College to study fashion and design, and her students and friends received the benefit of her talents as she taught formally and informally a variety of arts and crafts during the latter years of her active ministry. After spending some time in Ireland she developed an interest in Irish arts and crafts and was active with the Irish Welfare Group in Fitzroy.

A new way of being graciously present in the informal ministry of "morning coffee" and occasionally this ministry carried into the afternoons. Denise and Sister Margaret Case, each with a delightful sense of humour, were known for their Moonee Ponds presence as they carried out a ministry of "conversation and coffee" with the people who enjoyed their caring presence. Loneliness amongst the elderly was regularly softened by the warmth of Denise and Margaret's presence.

The depth and graced reality of Denise's presence was carried into the palliative care ward where she spent her last days and hours. Visitors who came to see her as she was moving closer to her death were still, as long as she was able, greeted with questions about how they were, and there was little focus on herself.

To the last, peace and graceful Presence remained with her as she sent visitors off with a wave of her hand, and a

*"Goodbye and God bless you."*



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