

Creating Pathways Loreto Federation 2009
The 27th Conference of Loreto Federation of Australia
Loreto College, Coorparoo
21-23 August 2009

We welcomed nearly two hundred local and national delegates to Federation 2009 Brisbane. The weekend commenced at Mulwith on Friday evening with a cocktail party and book launch. Sr Jane Kelly ibvm invited Justice Ann Lyons to launch *Loreto in Australia* by noted historian Mary Ryllis Clark. The wonderful book is a record of the significant contribution the Loreto sisters have made in Australia. Mary Ryllis Clark spoke beautifully of the process of writing her book and documenting the pathways created by the nuns since 1875. It was an enjoyable evening for all. Mulwith hummed with the buzz of past pupils, staff and parents all meeting each other or reuniting and enjoying the wonderful view.

On Saturday morning Sr Christine Burke, patron of Federation and Province Leader in Australia officially opened the 27th Federation. As part of the liturgy Sr Liz Keane performed a brilliant and entertaining soliloquy as Martha. The beautiful music and singing was provided by past pupils.

The keynote speaker was Ms Clare Martin, CEO of the Australian Council of Social Service and former Chief Minister of the Northern Territory who gave a thoughtful and provocative address on the issues facing indigenous Australians and the role governments play in people's lives. This was followed by an inspiring session entitled "Creating Medical Pathways" chaired by Mary Clarke, President of Loreto Coorparoo Past Pupils Association, and comprising a panel of past pupils; Associate Professor Michael McGuckin, Associate Professor Alison Rice, Dr Brigid Hickey and Dr Julia Kelly. They reflected on the influence of a Mary Ward education in the work they do.

After lunch Sr Libby Rogerson facilitated the Mary Ward Justice Symposium. Sr Pat Murray (Ireland) presented her stimulating presentation titled *Daring to imagine; willing to risk – keys for social transformation*. She was followed by Josephine O'Reilly, entertainer, comedian and writer, and a past pupil of Loreto Kirribilli who's session was definitely full of audience participation and was thoroughly hilarious. Sr Janet Palafox's then spoke on the work of Mary Ward International Australia and highlighted the needs of our local communities and outlined ways in which we can all help.

Our final session for the day was "Law and Justice in the Middle East" presented by Ms Aline Matta, a past pupil of Coorparoo and introduced proudly by her mother Yvonne Matta, a past pupil from Ballarat. Aline, a lawyer, spoke inspirationally about her work in creating pathways to ensure people in the Middle East could experience a better life.

The Federation dinner saw one hundred and thirty people enjoy the beautiful vista of the Brisbane River and the city lights at The River Room at Southbank. We were superbly entertained by Paul and Outi Svoboda on guitar and flute. The meal was wonderful and we felt refreshed to participate in the final day of Federation.

Sunday morning began with the a dramatic presentation titled Mary Ward Tableaux performed by Loreto Coorparoo students under the guidance of teachers Ms Helen Radvan and Mrs Peita Ward. It is difficult to describe the beauty of this presentation. Part of this presentation was a most breathtaking a capella interpretation of *Cruci Dum Spiro Fido* performed by current students. Their performance succeeded in reducing many of us to tears. It was magnificent. Two staff members at Marryatville, James and Wendy Muir then presented "*The Life and times of Mother Gonzaga Barry*" in an entertaining and very practical session that took aspects of Gonzaga Barry's life and applied them to the way we raise girls in this modern society.

The formal component of Federation consisted of a healthy debate and the passing of a resolution committing us all to support the work of Mary Ward International Australia thereby ensuring Federation continues to promote the vision of Mother Gonzaga Barry, the founder of Loreto in Australia.

The week-end concluded with a joyous and spiritual Mass celebrated by Bishop Brian Finnigan DD and Fr Dave Austin O.S.A.

My thanks go to the Federation Committee, Carmel Dunne, Helen Carty, the Loreto Coorparoo staff, students, past pupils, parents and friends and everyone who worked so tirelessly to make Federation 2009 such a wonderful success.

Martine Whitton
Federation President