



Loreto Friends *Networker*



Welcome to our 2nd edition

Issue 2 - Oct/Nov2006

Welcome to our second edition! We thank you for your feedback on the first edition and hope you enjoy reading the latest news and information from the Loreto Sisters Australia Province Office. It has been a busy few months and we have much to share with you. In this edition we update you with news and pictures from the General Congregation 2006, recent achievements and upcoming events. Please share our news with your staff, colleagues, parents or students via your own publications. And remember, you can access our regularly updated news and events anytime at www.loreto.org.au

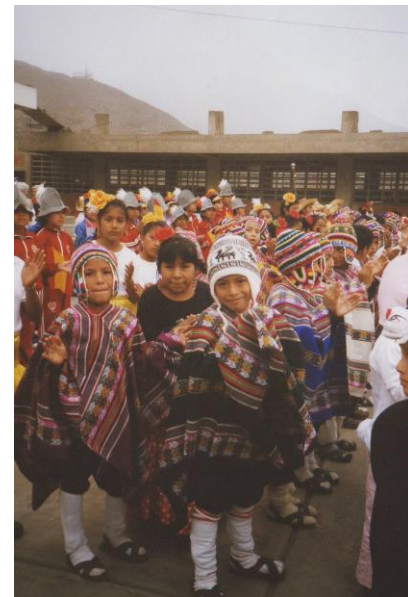
From the Provincial

Colour and dust; Hope and challenges

A kaleidoscope of images come to mind when I think of our time in Peru. The opening liturgy with a local choir accompanied by Andean pipes and guitars; bright colours swirling as Peruvian families from parishes where our sisters work had us up and dancing with them around the quadrangle - no common language, but music works! Fifty-six sisters from so many cultures meeting and searching together for the specific call of the Spirit in our time; elections which affect the lives of so many: the ones we ask to be on the new leadership team have their adjustments, as do the provinces they leave.



Dust, pollution, smoke and smog hang from the mountains across the desert that stretches along the coastline. Our school, on the outskirts of Lima is an oasis of colour and joy, amid makeshift huts; parents earn a living making bricks, yet ensure their children leave each morning properly kitted out for school. Those same children put on a pageant for us on the history of Peru-bringing tears to our eyes as they so proudly danced each segment of their history.



Above left: Dust and smog - The streets of Jimarca.
Above right: Colour and joy - The children of Jicamarca put on a show.

For the latest Loreto Sisters news and events visit www.loreto.org.au

From the Provincial *cont...*



Above:

The sisters unite in a show of shared vision, values and spirituality at their opening celebrations.

Below:

The many faces and cultures of the Loreto Sisters worldwide.

L-R: Sr Ephigenia (East Africa), Sr Eileen (England), Sr Françoise (Mauritius), Sr Marie Ange (Mauritius), Sr Mary (East Africa), Sr Magdalene (England), Sr Lucy (East Africa), Sr Mary (East Africa), Sr Chris (Australia).



Our challenge while there was to sift the many responses from the provinces to discover the common threads of concern and hope. Religious life in the West has been through a few decades of decline in numbers, but this is not yet the experience of places like India and Kenya. The call to all of us was to speak more openly about our lives and to encourage young women to consider whether or not God might be calling them to this life- a life where a focus on God and service of the other is grounded in a vision shared with others and supported by that wider community.

One strong theme coming through was the importance of closer ties with our colleagues and past-students, with those who share a Gospel vision enlivened by the charism of Mary Ward. This *Networker* is one way we are trying to do that, and we hope the mailing list will grow as others learn of its existence.

In Australia a closer partnership was forged in a new way at the meeting this past weekend as the provincial councils of the Loreto and FCJ sisters met with the Ward d'Houet Education Board, (a group appointed by the provincials of Loreto and the FCJ sisters to advise us on educational matters) and Chairs and Principals of Loreto and FCJ schools. This took place at Loreto Mandeville Hall and was an opportunity to open lines of communication and clarify some directions.

Many will know that we are farewelling Sr Sandra Perrett in November as she heads to Rome to take up the role of Vicar to our new General Superior, Sr Marian Moriarty. Sandra's commitment to sharing the charism with staffs and past-students is widely appreciated. The Institute world wide will be a new field in which she will foster new life.

I know all will join me in wishing Sandra well, knowing she will be a vital presence "full in the panting heart of Rome", as the old hymn used to have it!

Sr Christine Burke

News

Mary Ward International obtains DGR approval

Recently, the Mary Ward International /Australia (MWI/A) Office received the welcome news that its application for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status had been approved by the Australian Government Tax Office. This means that anyone wishing to make a donation over \$2 and requiring a Tax Deductible Receipt may now do so. This is great news and we hope that it will encourage more individuals and businesses to make donations. Donations will be used to support the many charitable works of the Loreto Sisters in Australia and overseas.

Mary Ward International gives hope

Marist-Sion Catholic Regional College in Warragul recently made a donation to Mary Ward International which will enable two East Timorese students to complete their secondary schooling. Here Sr Marg Burchell, IBVM, Director of the Mary Ward International/Australia (MWI/A), tells us how it all came together.

Recently, Ms Deb Cumming, the co-ordinator of "Loreto" House at the Marist-Sion Catholic Regional College in Warragul, contacted our office in regard to their concluding House Liturgy for the year. Ms Cumming keeps in touch with our office in order to deepen the school's connection with Loreto – the shrine which also gives its name to Loreto Sisters.

In response to this contact I offered to go to Warragul for the Liturgy and to speak about the works the Sisters do in the Australian Province.

I spoke to the students and staff about our works in East Timor and mentioned in particular, Sr Helen Parer's work in Aboriginal Australia over many years, Sr Libby Rogersons's work for Justice in the Parramatta Diocese and her involvement with Caritas Australia and the Jesuit Refugee Service. I also spoke about Sr Margaret Mary Flynn's work for Centacare in the Wilcanda Forbes Diocese, as well as the ways in which Sr Trish Franklin has addressed the educational needs of impoverished children in Vietnam.

In conclusion, I spoke to the students about the Australian Province's latest foundation in East

Timor, where three of our sisters are currently based. Two of these sisters work at the Marist Teachers' Training College in Baucau and recently, one of them, Sr Diaan Stuart wrote requesting help for two young girls unable to complete their secondary education, because of the recent troubles in Dili. Instead, these girls have had to come to Baucau to the Salesian College, while living with their older sister and brother-in-law. They were unable to pay the fees totaling AUD\$210. I read part of a letter from Sr Diaan about the plight of these two girls and asked the students if they would consider helping them.

At the conclusion of the liturgy, not only was I presented with a beautiful bunch of flowers but also a cheque for \$250, together with a commitment to continue this assistance for the next five years.

This very generous and thoughtful donation was the result of a discussion between the teachers and student leaders of Loreto House, prior to my arrival. Not only has this donation cemented the links between the Loreto Sisters and the students and staff of Loreto House in Warragul, but it has also enabled two very needy and well-deserving young girls to complete their secondary schooling and to have the prospects of a more hopeful future than would be otherwise possible.



Left:
Sr Marg Burchell
accepts flowers
from a student.

Sr Marg is currently in India gaining a grasp of issues and possible projects there as well as sharing our experiences with Sr Sabrina Edwards ibvm, the Mary Ward International officer in India.

How you can make a difference

You too can help make a difference by supporting similar Loreto works and projects around the world. To make a tax deductible donation, cheques can be made out to the "Mary Ward International Australian Foundation" and sent to the office of Mary Ward International/Australia, PO Box 74, Albert Park Vic 3206. A formal receipt will be sent to the donor acknowledging the gift, which may be used for tax deductibility purposes.

News cont...

Sr Sandra reflects on Peru And yet, I will rejoice...

A month without sunshine (except for three afternoons), a month without stars and moon, a month without rain (except for a little overnight which was said not to be rain!), a month with limited vegetation - this is one way to describe Lima. However, it is not the immediate things of nature that stay in my mind and heart after the experience of GC06 so much as the faces of the local people and the stories of their lives that touched me deeply. The "and yet..." words of Habakkuk often came to my mind.

One free Sunday afternoon I spent three hours with Fr Leo Donnelly whom many will know from Ballarat. Leo has been in Peru for about 50 years. We drove south of Lima passing through the rich suburbs with views over the Pacific and access to restaurants and entertainment, through the shanty towns with no water, no electricity and no infrastructure for roads, and the shroud of smog and pollution covered rich and poor alike. I said to Leo: "You must love it here?" and he replied, "No not the place, but the people". He went on to share stories of the families struggling with domestic violence, child abuse (particularly for the young girls) lack of access to fundamental resources, to name just a few. He spoke of the hope of the young adults and the privilege of being a pastor.

However, similar to a talk at the beginning of GC by Dr Catalena Romero, Leo spoke of their deep faith in spite of a church increasingly taken over by right wing attitudes. Catalena referred to their desperate need for evangelisation, not indoctrination. "We will wait - we are still Catholic..." Catalena said. Waiting, it seems, is what they do well. And yet.....

The second wonderful insight into Lima was given to me through the eyes of Elizabeth Donnan. We were in the back seat of a bus with no springs in seats or suspension in the underbelly and there were considerable potholes in the road! Add to this all those who got on to sell you a little this or that, and the loud calling to those on the side of the road, advertising the destination of the bus. Lizzie was amazed - not at what my eyes saw as run-down buildings, chaotic road rules and gushing diesel fumes - no, Lizzie saw good buildings, wonderful overpasses for pedestrians, the locals knowing exactly about the local road rules and the little bit of fresh air that was around!!

If you have been in Witbank and other shanty towns of South Africa, even some places in Kenya, then Lima was progressive and almost sophisticated. It taught me an early and valuable lesson. And yet....

Before the Congregation began we were privileged to take a bus ride to Jicamarca and see the 400 children in the Fe y alegría school there perform the story of Peru through a little commentary and much music and dance. Each child was resplendent in costume and thoroughly versed in movement. Jicamarca - this shanty town where three of our sisters live, has no running water, no electricity and no vegetation..... And yet....

Right: Lampa

Below:
Children of Jicamarca



Faces that are alive in my heart come from a visit with Margie Bourke to Lampa D'Ora. How she is loved and admired by the people, how she loves them and communicates so freely. There is water and electricity there, a little vegetation tenderly watered by hand and the usual pollution from the various factories in the valleys is all around. And yet.....

And the last face is that of the beautiful Miroslava Santillán Dávila ibvm - radiant in hope for her country and filled with gentle yet deep conviction that God is at work within and amongst her people and all will be well.

So the words of Habakkuk 3: 17-18 were very close....

*Even though the fig does not blossom,
there is no fruit on the vine,
The yield of the olive will fail and the fields afford
no food;
The sheep will vanish from the fold, and the cattle
stalls stand empty,
Yet I will rejoice in Yahweh, I will exult in God my
Saviour.....*

Sr Sandra Perrett

Sisters in the spotlight

Sr Sandra Perrett elected into international leadership role

Australian Loreto Sister Sr Sandra Perrett has been elected “Vicar General” to help lead the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary Loreto Sisters worldwide. Sr Sandra will be second in charge to Sr Marian Moriarty, the newly elected General Superior and former South African Province leader. The new international leadership team also consists of Carmen Diston (Canada), Barbara Murphy (Ireland) and Beatrice Stuart (India). The team will serve an eight year term, leading the Loreto Sisters worldwide and guiding the IBVM mission in the spirit of Mary Ward (founder). Sr Sandra will support Sr Marian in her responsibilities for the governance, finance, formation, development and progress of the order worldwide, acting as General Superior in Sr Marian’s absence.



For further information about Sr Sandra and profiles on each of the leadership team members, please click on [Sr Sandra and the leadership team](#)

Loreto Sister named ‘Remarkable older Australian’ by The Bulletin.

Sister Veronica Brady was recently featured in The Bulletin’s “How you can live to 100 and beyond” cover story. The article profiled seven “remarkable older Australians” who are still leading active and productive lives in the workforce.

Sr Veronica still cycles to the University of WA – a 16km round trip. She has almost finished her fifth book and continues to publish academic research. She says “I’ve always wondered what it is like to live in a time when everything is falling to pieces. We are living like that now... but the show is still on the road because people take a stand... I have always liked watching things unfolding, and I love what is beautiful.” The Bulletin 29 Aug 2006

Loreto Provincial in film about women religious in Australia

Sr Chris Burke was recently involved in a documentary film called “An Unfolding Reality”. To see Sr Chris in this film as well as 15 other women from 12 religious congregations, including imagery and commentary from cartoonist and poet Michael Leunig, contact Albert Street Productions on 03 9662 9211. (Cost to purchase film on DVD is \$40.)

Promoting interfaith dialogue

Sr Marg Finlay has been doing some wonderful work in promoting interfaith dialogue in Perth. Her Circle of Peace group has been enjoying a series of gatherings focusing on the importance of connecting with, and sharing ideas, values and experiences with other religious groups.

She says that these gatherings have enriched and broadened their understanding of different faiths and has helped them recognise the values that are shared. The group has met with representatives from Muslim Women’s Support group and the Jewish Community.

A literal achievement

Sr Anne Carter has finished co-authoring the history of St Gertrude’s Ladies College, New Norcia, “A Rich Harvest” in collaboration with Sr Elizabeth Murphy from the Sisters of St Joseph. Congratulations Sr Anne!

The book will be launched at John XXIII, Mt Claremont, WA, on Wednesday November 1st at 6.30pm. To attend the launch contact Marie on 08 9275 6307 or email suenhack@bigpond.com.

School News

Loreto Link Program wins award

Loreto Kirribilli's *Loreto Link Program* was recently awarded the 2006 Australasian Award for Excellence – Community Relations and Alumni category by ADAPE Australasia (Association of Development and Alumni Professionals in Education Australasia Ltd). The award was presented at the biennial International Conference for School & University Development Professionals hosted by the New Zealand Chapter of ADAPE. The award recognises excellence and achievement over various categories.

Congratulations to Trish O'Brien and all the committee members, helpers, panelists and speakers involved in Loreto Kirribilli's Loreto Link Program.

Loreto Sister leaves Portland

Sister Bernadette Ziesing will be returning to her home city of Adelaide after a three month sabbatical in Castle Hill NSW. Sr Bernadette has worked at various Loreto colleges for over 40 years

New Mary Ward Centre in Ballarat

On Sunday 22nd October, a great gathering of 1500 people celebrated the blessing and opening of the new Mary Ward Centre at Loreto College Ballarat. It is the fulfillment of a dream the school leadership - both school council and principals past and present - have had to unite the school on one campus. Bishop Peter Connors led the liturgy of blessing and the building was officially opened by Sr Christine Burke. Her opening address is available at <http://www.loreto.org.au/uploads/documents/Ballaratenaddress22Oct06CB.pdf>

including Portland, Brisbane, Ballarat and Perth. She also spent 12 years working in juvenile detention centres and most recently worked at Portland Secondary College offering one on one support to maths students and assistance to students and teachers in class. The staff and students at Portland Secondary College said they would miss Sr Bernadette's gentle manner and caring nature.

Federation 2007

Loreto Federation 2007 is the coming together of Loreto past students, staff and families Australia-wide. This exciting event is being co-hosted by Loreto Kirribilli and Loreto Normanhurst Ex-Students' Associations and will be held at Loreto Kirribilli, NSW from the 4th to the 6th of May 2007.

The theme for 2007 Federation is "Building Bridges", covering tolerance, respect, justice and morality. For further information go to http://www.loreto.org.au/loreto_networks/federation.html

Add a friend or a news item

We hope you enjoyed this edition of **Loreto Friends Networker**. If you would like to make a contribution to a future edition or would like to add a friend or colleague to the mailing list please contact Sophia Ljaskevic, Communications Officer at communications@loreto.org.au or on (03) 9249 3208.

More news at www.loreto.org.au

For more information on the stories within this newsletter as well other news, information and calendar events please visit our website at www.loreto.org.au

To read some current calendar events and news stories select a title below:

[International Leadership Team Profiles](#)

[JPIC Mary Ward Social Justice Lecture – Making Indigenous Poverty History](#)

[Ward d'Houet Education Board - Updated Information](#)

[Loreto History Highlighted at Ballarat Heritage Festival](#)