



Loreto Friends *Networker*

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Issue 8
June 2008

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Dear Companions in Mission,

In May I attended a Congregation of Jesus English Province Assembly. The theme, “A future full of hope” involved conversations about women in religious life.

Huge changes in the last 40 years have made religious life a rarer calling. Opportunities for spiritual formation, theological education and apostolic works are available to many more single and married women and men, bringing breadth and richness to the life of the church. In inverse proportion, life-long commitment within a vowed community has receded.

What can those in religious life still offer to the church and the world? Other well qualified women and men are stepping into the specific roles religious sisters once filled, and bringing their wisdom and experience. What is our purpose? A life explicitly committed to God has its rationale in the carrying forward of Jesus’ vision. An intensive spiritual formation and a base in a community who share that vision offer a structure and space that can assist one to listen with freedom to the radical ‘Otherness’ of God. Openness to God can lead one to unexpected works or to raise uncomfortable questions: when the Gospel comes up against the current reality it often brings an alternative, perhaps uncomfortable, perspective! Naming these realities can create tensions. To risk this from the base of a community of similarly inspired women remains both a possibility and a need in both church and civil soci-

ety. These two dimensions—prophetic and communal—shape the heart of the calling of active women religious.

Today a small trickle of women in their late 20s or 30s inquire about this way of life. They bring a different and richer life experience than those who entered at a younger age. We need new ways of welcoming them and gathering their insights as we shape with them the next stage of Mary Ward’s company of friends.

While much of our tradition is shared with and increasingly carried by others in our various works especially the schools, all of us who find in Ignatius and Mary Ward challenging and inspiring role models need fresh voices and younger women to hold this spiritual tradition as a resource for the church in the next 400 years.

We cannot produce this new life: we can only welcome it! In the more general sense, our call today is to offer what we can from the opportunities in spirituality and theology we have been given to “build up our church and world”. Our *Futures Team* has been launched with a challenge to reach out in whatever ways are possible to the many groups who work with and alongside us. They will work with others associated from the IBVM to spread the message at the heart of Mary Ward’s life. Mary believed that attentiveness to mysterious “Other” at the heart of our lives, a close following of Jesus, and response to the promptings of

the Spirit in our daily living will draw us ever deeper into a relationship with the Divine Mystery which we call God. Led by that relationship we can contribute to the transformation of our world. From this more general outreach, perhaps God will work unexpectedly to draw new seekers to this rather “different” way of life.

At home, this has been a most significant few months for us. The sale of Loreto House, with its attendant letting-go of a cherished feeling of being ‘at home’ in this house, this part of Melbourne and this local church community, has been demanding for many. Arranging the move to leased premises in Hawthorn has been a massive and exciting undertaking and we have been wonderfully supported by advisors. We hope to welcome committee members and other visitors there as the year unfolds. We are also working on plans for the new dwelling we hope to build, with an emphasis on ensuring suitable accommodation for ageing sisters, of whom we know there will be many in coming decades. At the same time we have to provide opportunities to foster and continue our outreach as Mary Ward women into the future. So life is full of challenges!

Sr Christine Burke, Provincial

To access the full address by Sr Christine Burke at the CJ assembly visit:

<http://www.loreto.org.au/news/article>

Further information

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www.loreto.org.au

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Province News

We are moving—farewell to Albert Park

FROM 23 JUNE

New office details:

Level 2

257 Auburn Rd

Hawthorn East 3122

Postal:

PO Box 4082

Auburn South Vic 3122

Tel: 9813 4023

Fax: 9813 4019

The Loreto Sisters this week bid farewell to their much loved Albert Park province office. The move ends over 100 years of involvement in the local parish and community.

The historic move will enable the Loreto Sisters to provide better administrative support for their core mission: educating for the future and bringing the gospel to life by promoting dignity, advocating for women and children and challenging unjust systems.

The move has been prompted by the expanding administrative needs as the Loreto Sisters support their national network of schools and colleges, Mary Ward International Australia (the development office), and other pastoral works both in Australia and overseas. More appropriate accommodation for increasingly aged members is also required, and a centre where the sisters can gather for community occasions. Monies raised by the sale will be used to fund these needs. As has happened throughout the four centuries that the sisters have been beginning new initiatives, finance from this sale in one place will also be used to fund new initiatives as part of the Loreto mission at home and abroad.

The South Melbourne/ Albert Park area has been a hub of the Loreto Sisters' work since 1888, when they began a small school in a rented house in Merton Crescent called "Mononia". By the end of 1889 the sis-

ters were looking for another site and land was purchased in Albert Road. While the three storey convent and school was being built, the Sisters lived at 51 Canterbury Road, Albert Park. The Albert Road Convent and school opened in late 1890 and in 1906 the Central Catholic Training College was opened on the same site. Both continued until 1924 when most of the students

Commercial College was opened in the same premises in 1962 and ran until 1976.

The triple fronted property, Loreto House, at 73 -77 St Vincent Place, was bought by the Loreto Sisters in 1969. It had been a Christian Brothers Boys' Hostel which closed in June 1967. The houses were redesigned into province office, residence and novitiate ac-



and Sisters moved to establish Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak.

The Loreto Sisters began their involvement with Sts Peter and Paul's Parish School in 1891 and continued until 1988. The Sisters lived in a parish owned building at 82 St Vincent Place. They also administered and staffed Our Lady's School, South Melbourne, from 1966-1987. The Loreto free kindergarten, established in Bank Street for under-privileged children was run by the Loreto Past Pupils from 1912-1961. As a greater need arose for young girls to be trained for secretarial employment, the kindergarten was closed. Loreto

accommodation. On 23 June 1969 the Province Leader and novices moved into Loreto House and the first Mass was celebrated on 16 July. In December 1974 the 82 St Vincent Place community moved into no. 77.

From 23 June the new province office will be located in Hawthorn. The Loreto Sisters and their colleagues are looking forward to this new office - a centre of activity that will continue to support the wide network of people who carry forward their core mission.

A Mass of Farewell and Thanks for the Loreto Sisters will be held at Sts Peter and Paul South Melbourne on 29 June - 10am.

*Above Right:
The St Vincent Place
province office.*

Province News

Loreto Sister tops her class

Sr Theresa Elliott has received the **Margaret Jennings Award** following her graduation from Edith Cowan University with a Graduate Diploma of Science (Information Services) on 16th March 2008. The award, donated by the Australian Society of Archivists, recognises the most outstanding student of the year.

In her degree Theresa specialised in Archives and Records Management.

She studied online while working in records and archives at Loreto Normanhurst (NSW). During this time she compiled the stories of the Sisters who are buried at Loreto Normanhurst and published 'Resting beneath the Rainbow'.

Currently, Theresa is setting up the archives at John XX111 College in Mt Claremont WA. The principal, Mrs Anne Fry, formerly principal of Loreto Mary's Mount in Ballarat, is very

aware of the value of heritage and record keeping in schools and colleges. In 2007 John XX111 College celebrated the 30th anniversary of the coming together of the two colleges, Loreto Claremont (1897) and the Jesuit St Louis School (1938).

Right: Sr Theresa receives her degree.



The modern IBVM Constitutions

The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM) Loreto Branch Constitutions are currently being revised in an Institute-wide process which is the final formal stage of reunion of the Irish and North American branches of the IBVM .

The IBVM Loreto Branch follow the guidelines (the Constitutions) prepared by Ignatius of Loyola for his followers.

Mary Ward (1585-1645) founder of the IBVM, believed God was asking her to set up a female version of the Jesuits; a venture dismissed by church authorities. When the IBVM were finally recognised as an order, the then Superior General of the Jesuits Fr. E. Mercurian, gave them unrestricted use of the Ignatian Constitutions with permission to feminise the textual wording.

The world wide IBVM, until recently has been divided into three branches. In 2002 a reunion of the Irish and North American branches occurred. As a result in 2005 the world wide IBVM commenced a four year process of consultation, response, reflection, writing, discernment and decision around the formation of a new Constitution.

In essence, the modern Constitution captures "what it means to be a Loreto sister". The writing and review of the Constitution Volume 1 is being lead by Irish sisters while Volume II is being revised by Sr Deirdre Browne in consultation with a committee (Sr Noni Mitchell, Sr Joan Nowotny, Sr Mary Wright and Sr Margaret C Honner).

Volume II reflects the heritage of Mary Ward, the

feminine interpretation of Ignatius' insights and new theological insights and understandings about religious life and mission. Together with Volume 1 the document is based on the North American and Irish Branch Constitutions of 1986 and 1985.

Deirdre has received comments on her draft from 12 countries and the completed first draft of Volume II is now with international readers who are critiquing it in the areas of cannon law, theology, language and style and Ignatian and Mary Ward charism.

The rewrite will be completed by 1 September 2008 for discussion at the provincial congregations planned in late 2008/2009. It will then proceed to the General Congregation to be voted on by delegates in Rome October 2009. From there it will be prepared for production and Vatican consideration and

Global Links

Mary Ward International Australia Update

Financial support from individuals, schools, past pupils and parents associations, community groups and businesses are helping MWIA make a long lasting and practical difference.

You too can help. Please email mwiaustralia@loreto.org.au to find out more or visit our website www.loreto.org.au

Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) develops partnerships within the global Loreto network which promote dignity, advocate for women and children, challenge unjust structures and educate for the future.

Thanks to our generous supporters MWIA has recently provided support to the following projects.

Strong Young Mum's – Margaret Mary Flynn IBVM

Centacare's Strong Young Mums project in Bourke, NSW began in September 2005 in response to the high occurrence of teenage pregnancies the area. The project is providing opportunities to these young mothers towards further education, increased parenting skills, and the development of positive support networks.

The Strong Young Mums project has now connected over 30 women with the education system and early intervention programs. It runs regular activities to connect mothers with other services and support networks. The young women attend weekly TAFE classes and have successfully completed modules in food preparation and clothing production and are now commencing a computer skills module in order to help them study for their year ten certificate.

The young women also participate in weekly play

groups and social gatherings which are attended by health and early childhood professionals as well as older women who act as mentors for the young mums. The families also receive regular home visits which create the opportunity to expose the whole family to early childhood education experiences in their home.

The Strong Young Mums project has successfully connected a highly vulnerable group of parents with many existing services and opened the doors to addressing the disadvantage in their own lives and the lives of their children.

India and Darjeeling

The Loreto Sisters, who have been in India since 1842, continue to manage numerous primary, secondary and vocational schools in India. In recent years, they have also successfully managed and coordinated various outreach projects in education and health among the most disadvantaged people of India. These projects are established in partnership with local communities.

Development programs in Entally, Shillong, Thakurpukur and Sealdah in India include:

- Barefoot teacher training
- Teacher-Leadership training for village youth
- Income generation and

skills training

- Technical and vocational training of young women
- Hostel for school children from far flung villages
- Health program for mother and child
- Community micro-credit groups.

Development programs in the Panighatta, Lolay, Sadam (Sikkim) in Darjeeling and Dharan in Nepal include:

- School teacher training
- Community micro-credit groups
- Barefoot teacher training
- Health program for mother and child
- Hostel for children from far flung villages
- Coaching classes
- Adult education for women.

The mission of Mary Ward International Australia (MWIA) is to assist our partners to build their capacity, become sustainable and improve the life of the people in their community.

For a list of all our other currently funded projects please visit <http://www.loreto.org.au>

Global Links

A month in Albania

Here Sr Jane Kelly shares her personal account of a month spent in Albania.

The last time I had seen Imelda Poole was in London almost 30 years ago when I was studying at Heythrop College. Now, after all this time, we met at the international airport in Albania's capital, Tirana. From the time that had elapsed since our last meeting, and preceding it by about twenty years, Albania had been enclosed by a fence of electrified wire and in the grip of a communist regime which would not fall until the 1990s.

What hit me immediately, as we approached the city, was the extraordinary number of cars, driving rather haphazardly from my rather prim 'western' standards, and the noise. It was traffic noise, lots of honking and policemen with whistles. What I was to experience on reaching our destination was the smell of petrol and smog that hung over the city. And the air was full of another sound, not so familiar to me at that stage, but to become more so: the sound of generators.

Arriving at Imelda's flat, we climbed the concrete stairs up three flights in the dark, and entered the darkened flat. I was conscious of the darkness, not only because it was evening, but, as I was to learn very early on, there was no electricity most nights between 5 and 6pm, the electricity having been off a minimum of four hours prior to this during the daylight hours. Daily power cuts, noise and traffic – they

are endemic to the Albanian experience, and the first things requiring some basic life strategies to negotiate. And there was another sound, foreign at first, but to which I became very accustomed: the sound of the cries of beggars.

Imelda Poole is a Loreto sister from the English Province of Loreto. Since arriving in Albania mid-2005 she had been working with Caritas Albania, and at the same time, managed to engage in an amazing diversity of programmes ranging from the trafficking of women, to work with the Roma communities.

Arriving from Australia I had set aside one month to be with her and work alongside her in whatever way possible. She had identified three possible areas where I might spend my time most productively: with University students of English, for conversation classes; with the Roma community, working under an amazing group of young Albanians in a centre for the Roma and in street teams; and with abandoned babies. So I set about my tasks, willingly enough, but with access to virtually no skills in the language of the country. That was to prove quite a challenge.

Albanian is an almost impossible language with its mix of Latin, Slavic and ancient Illyrian roots and a grammar all its own. So, apart from a few stock phrases my poor head could hold on to (Mirëmëngjes – Good morning; Mirëdita – Good afternoon; Mirupafshim – Good

bye; Gezohem – Pleased to meet you; Falemenderit shumë - Thank you very much....) When I wasn't contributing to classes with University students in English, or nursing babies, I was with the Roma, usually the children. When with them I reverted, as appropriate and whenever possible, to the one universal language I knew: the language of play.

I played with the Roma children in all sorts of places, in their Centre and in their own communities, all sorts of games. We played counting games up to ten (and to my shame, I never could get past 4 without muddling what came next); we played clapping games; a game like ring-a-ring-a-rosie, but different; and we sang songs. The Roma seemed to sing a lot and the children loved it. When it was my turn, the song of the kookaburra up a gum tree was rather more accessible than the jumbuck, swagman and billabongs of *Waltzing Matilda*. But they didn't seem to mind. The other thing they did easily was to laugh.

Many people have asked me about my time in Albania and what stays with me. I want to respond in terms of the story of my introduction to the Roma children...

To read more about Sr Jane's experiences with the children as well as her work with the Organisation for the Support of Albania's Abandoned Babies and field trips with the Caritas health team please visit <http://www.loreto.org.au>



"I had come into their world unbidden and a stranger and they did the one thing necessary without having to give it a second thought: they made me welcome."

Above: Sr Jane Kelly at the Missionaries of Charity

A tribute

Acknowledging the life of a good man



A personal tribute to Melbourne's Archbishop Emeritus, Sir Frank Little DD.

I have a favourite story of Frank Little. It is an evening late in the 1980s. The scene is St. Mary's College at the University of Melbourne; the occasion, a black-tie event to which members of the College Council were invited as the guests of the College. The students were there, as were senior members of the College community, dressed up and looking splendid. Prior to the dinner the Archbishop, as Chair of the Council, celebrated Mass in the Junior Common Room. The music started, the choir sang, and Frank arrived up the aisle, bowed to the altar and turned. Standing almost directly in front of him stood a student: a young man, tall, upright, bearded and striking, sporting a magnificent punk hairdo. Not only that, it happened by chance that the colour of his hair matched perfectly that of the pileolus, the violet-hued skull cap worn by archbishops. Without missing a beat Frank appraised the situation, stating with fitting solemnity: 'I see', indicating his skull cap, 'that I have been up-staged', with which he swept the cap from his head and beamed, inviting the congregation to join in the celebration of the liturgy. It was vintage Frank: the priest, pastor and archbishop who, for all the trappings of office, was

unfazed by the wiles of youth, responding to them always with courtesy and grace – and in good humour, should the occasion require.

Melbourne's Archbishop Emeritus, Sir Frank Little DD, died in his sleep on of 7th April at the home he loved in Camberwell. For twenty-two years, 1974-1996, he served as the leader of Melbourne's catholic community, and it was over the last sixteen of those years that I had the good fortune to get to know him in my role as head of St. Mary's College. The College, as with its neighbour, Newman College, is owned by the Archdiocese and Suffragan Bishops of Victoria – and so to the reason for Franks' chairmanship of the College Council. As chairman he was informed and astute, listening to the elders and encouraging always the contribution of the student representatives. I think in all his twenty two years in office he missed only one Council meeting; witness enough to the priority he gave to University students whom he viewed as leaders among peers and of the future.

Since his retirement from public office nearly twelve years ago, Frank was free to do what he did best: relate to people, enjoy their company and serve the community in any way he could. While often called upon all over the archdiocese for confirmations, he also continued the volun-

teer pastoral work in which he had engaged over years, quietly and without fanfare. An artwork submitted for the Archibald some years ago, featuring Frank kneeling before the wheelchair of a disabled little boy alongside his mother, was the illustration chosen for the requiem booklet. A few weeks before he died he told me about that portrait, mentioning in passing, that he had visited the disabled children at the centre for over forty years.

The last time I saw Frank was on an evening shortly before Easter. A small group had gathered in our home for a liturgy, after which we shared a very simple meal. What was to become the full Easter moon was shining, partially formed, bright and low in the sky. As Frank got into his car to drive off, my companion said very quietly, 'He is a really holy man'. I noted that and, whilst I had never expressed that thought to myself, knew how apt it was. Within the month he was dead – and the people he had served so well gathered in their thousands to honour him at his requiem.

In the liturgy for burial there is a lovely image: that of the angels coming to meet those who have died and conveying them to their rest. If, indeed, Frank Little died gently in his sleep, I can think of no more fitting end for a dear friend and good man: one acquainted with the ways of the angels and well suited for the company of saints.

Jane Kelly ibvm

23rd April 2008

Events

Mary Ward Week 2009

In 2009 we will be celebrating 400 years of Mary Ward's Institute.

The occasion offers an opportunity to claim Mary's vision and prophetic response in our 21 Century context.

Some aspects highlighted in our celebrations are:

- Mary's profound experience of the Divine (the Glory Vision) in 1609 which is cited as the beginning of the Institute;
- the particular charism given to the world through Mary's Institute; and
- the expressions of this gift in our contemporary world.

Celebrations in the CJ and IBVM communities throughout the world will span 2009-11; a period recognising two of Mary's founding experiences: the Glory Vision (1609) and 'Take the Same' (1611).

An international event will take place in Rome, October 4-9. It will include a concert in the Church of S. Ignatius, a Symposium on Mary Ward and the chance for those who are captured by Mary's vision to meet up.

Mercia Richards and Angela Slattery are the coordinators and will work in consultation with a wide network of friends and colleagues.

It is envisaged that various events taking place during this period – Federation, International Women's Day, past pupil reflection days and the like – will reflect our 400 year celebration in whatever way seems appropriate. In addition, an event is being planned to mirror the celebrations in Rome.

Each state/region is planning one or two events to engage with the wider local community and reflect the essence Mary Ward's spirit and vision.

Keep an eye out on our website for more information soon.

World Youth Day - MAGiS 08

World Youth Day will be held in Sydney, Australia from 15 - 20 July 2008.

The week long event will gather thousands of young people from around the world to celebrate and learn about the Catholic faith and to build bridges of friendship and hope between continents, peoples and cultures.

The event will mark the first visit to Australia of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. Days in the Dioceses will take place in the leadup to WYD08, from approximately 10-14 July 2008.

Inspired by great gatherings of the world's young people for special youth

events in Rome in 1983-84, Pope John Paul II established World Youth Day as an annual event and a way to reach out to the next generation of Catholics and spread the Church's teachings.

As part of the Loreto celebrations for MAGiS08 two students from East Timor are being sponsored to attend WYD events in Australia, and two sisters from India and one sister from Africa will be visiting.

MAGiS08

MAGiS08 is the Ignatian Program for World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, for young people wanting to give and find more.

MAGiS08 invites young people from 18 to 30 to join together

on a journey with those of a like mind and heart from different countries, cultures and language, to explore and to share their experiences in an Ignatian context fostering a "faith that does justice".

MAGiS08 is an initiative of the Australian Ignatian Congregations who seek to accompany and support you as young adults (18-30 years of age) in discerning life choices and providing:

- **Meaning** - Helping you to know GOD in your life
- **Purpose** - Building a relationship with JESUS
- **Direction** - Developing a sense of how you are called to respond to HIS love.

For further information about MAGiS 08 please visit the MAGiS 08 website:

www.magis08.org