



Loreto Friends *Networker*



Issue 4 – March 2007

Welcome to the 4th edition of our newsletter. As Holy Week and Easter approach, we are called again to ponder the inexplicable mystery: our God chose to commit God's very presence to a message which would lead to brokenness and failure. It was unacceptable then. It remains a mystery, but one that rewards pondering. It turns all our expectations upside down. Drawing closer to this man Jesus can lead us to hope that a life 'for others' can finally break open into transformation for the human enterprise and for our cosmos. It's a short time in the year when our Church asks us to journey along this path through suffering to unimaginable newness, to remember, to ponder, to try to make the connections to our world, with its brokenness and pain, and its wonder and beauty. Our own lives so often have echoes of this deep truth of new life emerging from the shards... let us try to make a little time so that the mystery of this Easter lights a small candle in our hearts. **Sr Christine Burke**

A word from Rome – Sr Sandra Perrett

When you read these few lines I will be just three months old in Rome and in that time I was away in Canada for three weeks – so from an admirer of this wonderful city and a novice in the ministry - here are some reflections.

It is, for me, the land of hidden treasures! I love nothing more than turning a corner or looking back and being surprised and charmed by a dome, a bell tower, a ruin, an archway, a fountain – and with a sunset or a rising moon, it's even better. Someone recently called these moments *sacramental glimpses* and that's how they come to me. We live near the parish church of the young martyr St Agnes with its third century catacombs and the adjacent Mausoleum of Costantia, daughter of the Emperor Constantine who probably built the basilica on her estate. We're surrounded by history with its own beauty.

I am enjoying little adventures into the language and wish it were easier and quicker. I've had lovely times with a CJ sister across Nomentana who has helped me with the pronunciation of all the Mass responses as well as the phrasing. I can now say more than *Mia Culpa*... Shopping in our local supermarket is a treat – the man in the deli loves to try his English and I love to try my Italian, the lady at the flower stall does the same. The Italians are so friendly, so warm and very generous with help.

Traveling is a major part of the ministry and the photo (right) shows me in Canada in January walking on a frozen lake on a day when it was minus 25° with a wind chill ten degrees below that! Two

Canadians are on the left and Barbara Murphy from the Council is on the right. We were there for a consultation to select their new Provincial as Carmen Diston was elected to the General Council. This week Carmen and I will visit Imelda Poole from the English province in Albania for their Courage to Move venture. At the end of the month I will fly to Nairobi for two weeks including Easter and meet as many of the sisters as I can and visit their places of ministry. In mid April we have the Provincials' meeting in Johannesburg and then it's back to Rome in May. Marian and I will go to India for 6 weeks in June/July.

It's all a wonderful privilege, challenge and adventure.



Right: Sr Sandra pictured in her winter woollies (3rd from left)

News

A fond farewell for Mary Kathleen Sylvester O'Malley ibvm

On Wednesday 28th February a very happy farewell was held for the much loved Sr Sylvester or "Sylvo" as she was affectionately known. Sr Sylvester died peacefully on the 21st February after a heart attack.

Sr Sylvester was born in Ballarat Victoria in 1912. She began religious life with the Loreto Sisters in 1932 and taught at a number of Loreto schools including Loreto Toorak and Mary's Mount in the 1950s and Portland in the 1960s. In retirement she remained involved in parish activities including ecumenical discussion groups.

Sr Mercia Richards, Sr Angela Slattery and Sr Claire Gardiner planned a wonderful and fitting farewell for Sr Sylvester at St Peter's in Toorak. Sr Deirdre Browne gave a touching, uplifting and at times amusing eulogy which depicted Sr Sylvester's life beautifully. We are pleased to share a part of this special tribute with you:

"There is no doubt that Sylvo was and remains a blessing for us all. The quality of friendship so characteristic of her, seems to flow from an inner source where there is ease and peace. You always feel that Sylvo has no pretensions, no hidden agendas. She was a person totally at home with herself and with that ease came a charming freedom... One could go on and on about Sylvo's virtues: generous, loving, caring, quirky, free, funny, charming. She rejoiced in the glories of sport, annually attending the Australian Open, avidly following the cricket, and always into footy tipping. She rejoiced in children; in education; in giving a helping hand; in being around for people."

Read the entire [Eulogy for Sylvo](#)

From Sr Sylvester's collection of poetry:

Life's wot yeh make it; an' the bloke 'oo tries
To grab the shinin' stars frum out the skies
Goes crook on life, an' calls the world a cheat,
An' tramples on the daisies at 'is feet.

The Sentimental Bloke, CJ Dennis

Sr Sylvester's motto:

***Mater mihi te opus est!
Mother, I have need of thee!***

Blessed be God for the life of Sylvo!

Unveiling of Mary Ward Sculpture

The first of eight magnificent bronze Mary Ward sculptures was unveiled on Thursday 22 February in Adelaide. The sculptures, by Meliesa Judge, were commissioned by the Loreto Schools Advisory Committee. The first two sculptures will be installed at NSW Loreto schools - Loreto Kirribilli and Loreto Normanhurst, in time for [Loreto Federation](#) 4-6 May. For further information please visit our website [news page](#).



News cont...

New Communications Committee

A new Communications Committee has been established to support the communications work of the province office. The Committee recently held its first meeting to discuss communications progress to date and plans for 2007.

The Committee consists of two Loreto Sisters with an interest in communications, a past Loreto student and an expert in IT, as well as the Communications Officer. The Chair of this committee is Ms Christine Allanadale. If you wish to contact Christine or the committee please email Sophia at communications@loreto.org.au

We look forward to bringing you many more communications updates in the future and keeping you in the loop on all things Loreto.

Celebrating Loreto women

On the 8 March women around the world celebrated International Women's Day. The day was first celebrated in 1975 by the UN. In 1977 the General Assembly adopted a resolution which proclaimed a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace, as International Women's Day is officially called.

To mark this day we added a list of profiles about our sisters onto our website. To read some of their inspiring stories visit our [News](#) page. More will be added throughout the year.



World Youth Day 2008

The Loreto Sisters are supporting the Jesuit initiative for an Ignatian program for WYD08. The Ignatian program is called *MAGiS 08* and will involve up to 2000 18-30 year olds.

Activities are planned from 5-11 July 2008 prior to the official program in Sydney, with 2000 participants organised into groups of about 20-30 in various experiences across Australia and Asia; followed by three days (12-14 July 2008) of live-in reflection and spiritual guidance at St Ignatius' College Riverview. The 2000 will then join with the 30,000+ other young people in the official WYD program in Sydney (15-20 July). The aim is to give them a sense of belonging to a community, a deeper knowledge and love of Jesus, and a readiness to serve the wider community.

More information: <http://magis2008.org>

New member of Provincial Council

After Sandra's departure for Rome, our Provincial Council has begun afresh with a new member: Sr Wendy Hildebrand. Wendy joins, Sr Chris Burke, Sr Liz Hepburn, Sr Anne McPhee and Sr Francine Roberts and brings the very grounding experience of her work in Mission Australia in Sydney, where she heads up a number of programs for homeless youth and youth at risk in the society.

New staff member joins Province Office

Ms Kate McKenzie, has been appointed as Executive Assistant to the Provincial Sr Chris Burke.

Kate once worked in the Hawthorn parish; then she was Personal Assistant to Bill Uren sj when Bill was provincial, attending all council meetings; she worked for Deirdre Rofe when Deirdre ran the Loreto Education Office, and since then she has worked in the Victorian Premier's Office, coordinating the Cabinet committees in social policy, education, welfare, women's issues and inter-faith.

Kate will add an important dimension to our planning and understanding of situations as well as being able to follow up and be a reference point for a number of issues, especially while Chris is absent.

Kate's contact details are:

Telephone: 03 9249 3204

Email: kate.mckenzie@loreto.org.au

Website page updates:

Education Board

The Ward d'Houet Education Board webpage has now been updated. It contains a list of the committee's key documents such as the Governance Structure, Charter and Constitution. The page also includes a list of all the Board members and their profiles, as well as a school directory. Visit our education board by clicking on the link below: http://www.loreto.org.au/education_board/index.html

Internationality and Leadership

The Internationality and Leadership page has been updated with the names of the new International Leadership team.

Visit <http://www.loreto.org.au/about/ibvm.html>

Links and Contacts

Do you need to contact an overseas province office? Want to know what's happening in India, South Africa or Spain? Visit our recently updated Links and Contacts page:

<http://www.loreto.org.au/about/LinksandContacts.html>

Sisters in the Spotlight

Loreto Sisters on the Honours List

We are very proud of **Sr Toni Matha** who recently joined the Australia Day Honours List. Sr Toni was appointed as a Member of the General Division of the Order of Australia for service to the community, particularly the provision and development of services through St Vincent de Paul; to people suffering from mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction and to education.

The award highlights Sr Toni's extraordinary achievements in the social justice and welfare sector. Sr Toni has been an active force in social welfare in Australia and in particular in the collaboration between social welfare services, Church and State. To read her profile, please visit our [News page](#) on our website.

She joins a list of Loreto Sisters who have also had their remarkable work recognised in this way:

Sr Margaret Mary Manion

2001- Centenary Medal. For service to Australian society through art history and the promotion of the arts in the community
1989 - Officer of the Order of Australia. For service to education and to the arts.

Sr Margaret Ann Noone

1999 - Member of the Order of Australia. For service to children with progressive life-threatening illnesses, and their families, as director of the Very Special Kids organisation and founder of the first children's hospice in Australia.

Sr Patricia Ellen Franklin

2005 - Officer of the Order of Australia. For service in the field of international humanitarian relief and to children in South East Asia, particularly in Vietnam, through the establishment and administration of education and social welfare programs.

Sr Noni Mitchell

1997 - Member of the Order of Australia For service to education, to health care and the catholic church particularly as worldwide Superior General of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Loreto Sisters.

To find someone on the Honours List visit:
<http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/>

Our Achievements are Global!

On the same day that Sr Toni was included in the Australia Day Honours List, **Sr Cyril Mooney** (India Province) was included in the Republic Day honours list with a Padma Sri Award – India's highest national civilian award for social service. The award was given in recognition of Cyril's work in education in particular how the poor can be served within the structure.

Elizabeth Carey (USA) was named as the Daily Sun's Female Citizen of the Year 2006 for 30 years of service in a variety of pastoral ministries to San Francisco de Assisi Parish in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Loreto Centre, Crumlin and **Sr Anne O'Dwyer** (Ireland) were highly commended in the Dublin category of the STAR Awards 2007. These awards were granted to projects that demonstrated the most collaborative and learner approach to creating equal opportunities for all.

To access international Loreto Sisters websites please visit our [Links and Contacts](#) page.

Sr Deirdre's photo on display at the Museum of Sydney

A photo of Sr Deirdre Browne has been included in a new photographic exhibition at the Museum of Sydney (3 March – 28 October) in celebration of the ABC's 75-year history of reporting, dramatising and documenting Sydney events, its people and places.

The photo, taken in 1969, features Sr Deirdre, then referred to as "Mother Cecilia", conducting Loreto Convent Normanhurst students while they record Christmas carols at the Gore Hill Studios in Sydney. The carols were featured nightly before the 7pm ABC national television news leading up to Christmas 1969.

More information:

<http://www.abc.net.au/sydney/stories/s1863456.htm?sydney>

Sr Margaret Noone an inspiration!

On a recent talk back ABC radio segment Sr Margaret Noone was named on air by a caller as "her greatest inspiration"! Sr Margaret is an inspiration to many, in particular for her work in setting up Very Special Kids and the enormous difference this has made to families coping with children with a terminal illness.



*Mary Ward
International –
thanks you for your
support*

At a recent meeting of the Mary Ward International board and advisory councils, six projects were selected for support in 2007.

These include:

- A scholarship for a young East Timorese woman to train in Baucau in a TAFE certificated course, as a Registered Child Carer (3 years).
- A scholarship for a young woman in Ho Chi Minh to study for a Social Work Degree (3 years).
- A half time salary for a young woman in Ho Chi Minh working with single mothers and in prostitute rehabilitation.
- Assistance with seed funding for a development Officer at Centacare, Wilcania Forbes.
- Completion of the Bursary Program in South Africa.
- A development program in Alice Springs for Aboriginal women and children in need.

Thanks to your support these projects have been made possible and will help improve the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of people around the world.

To make a tax deductible donation to support further MWI projects, 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.

For further information about [Mary Ward International](#) and how to make a bequest or donation please visit our website.

LSAC Loreto Leadership Conference

The Loreto Leadership Conference, organised by the Loreto Schools Advisory Committee, was recently held at Loreto Mandeville Hall Toorak and Loreto College Ballarat (14-16 March).

Leadership and executive teams from every Loreto school across Australia, as well as staff from associated schools, Bayview College and John xxiii, came together for three days of workshops, presentations, reflections and prayer.

The conference was attended by the Loreto Sisters Provincial Council, Province Office finance and communications staff, LSAC and the Ward d'Houet Education Board.

The keynote speaker was Sr Gemma Simmonds, a sister of the Congregation of Jesus (the other 'half' of the IBVM) in England. Sr Gemma invigorated the audience with her keynote address, "To Live Justly" on day 1, bringing a lively, thought provoking and engaging discussion to the group. Her following two sessions titled "To love tenderly" and "And to walk humbly with your God" further illustrated her commitment to our common mission and spirituality. She facilitated discussions and reflections and by all accounts thoroughly enjoyed her first visit "down under".

Guest presenters included Sr Deirdre Browne, Sr Margaret Burchell and Sr Libby Rogerson. Loreto Provincial Sr Chris Burke gave an inspiring opening address as well as a joint presentation with Sr Barbara Brown-Graham (FCJ Provincial) on the shared Ignatian heritage.

The conference gave participants the opportunity to get to know each other and develop links, share experiences, ideas and wisdom and deepen their understanding of the charism of Mary Ward.

Participants were able to engage in academic, theological and educational discussion relating to the ongoing Loreto mission and to discuss future directions for Loreto Schools in Australia.

We would like to thank Susan Stevens and the LSAC committee, as well as all who assisted at both Loreto colleges, and all the attendees for a wonderful and very successful conference.

We are very blessed to have such a cohesive, enthusiastic and committed group of people working together for the future of Loreto schools in Australia.

Loreto in East Timor

Many will be wondering how our East Timor project is going. This is an endeavour that mirrors the Good Friday experience. People in East Timor carry deep brokenness from all that has happened over generations. Their struggle to begin again to build trust and become a nation in this volatile world is seen in the reports and snippets that hit our media pages.

Dili, the capital, has been a place of great unrest. Baucau, which hosts the Marist College with which two IBVMs area associated, remains calm. However, Australian Volunteers International (AVI) has withdrawn its workers for security reasons. Both Sr Anne Kelly and Sr Diaan Stuart have been in projects that AVI supports, so both are back in Australia.

Diaan returns to Baucau next week, to join Anne Byrne whose work with the Canossian sisters is not AVI supported. If AVI return after the elections they will again include her in their support network. Anne Kelly has enjoyed working with Kirsty Swords-Gusmao's ALOLA Foundation for mothers and babies, but her base in Dili is untenable at present and after a number of traumatic incidents, Anne is back home for a longer period while the future unfolds for her and for these people all three have all come to love. Please keep all in your prayers that Easter peace might break through.

Federation 2007 draws closer

'Federation' is the coming together of the staff, past-students, family, and friends of Loreto schools from around Australia. It has been held every 2 years since its inception in 1955 when the first one was held at Loreto Mandeville Hall. The next Federation will be held from the 4th to 6th May 2007 and will be co-hosted by Loreto Kirribilli and Loreto Normanhurst Ex- Students Associations. It will be held at Loreto Kirribilli.

The theme for the 2007 Federation is "Building Bridges", covering tolerance, respect, justice and morality. Everyone is welcome! For further information and a registration brochure please visit our [website](#).

Add 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 please contact Sophia Ljaskevic, Communications Officer, at communications@loreto.org.au or on (03) 9249 3208.

Add a friend

Please circulate this newsletter to your friends and colleagues. If you would like to add a friend or colleague to the mailing list please email their details to Sophia at communications@loreto.org.au

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

Check out upcoming calendar dates at: <http://www.loreto.org.au/calendar/index.cfm>

Access the latest news at: <http://www.loreto.org.au/news/index.cfm>