

FCJnews

in the Province of Asia–Australia

Autumn 2012

Ad Altiora...to higher things

Carolyn Merry was a student at Vaucluse College, Richmond, between 1979 and 1983. Carolyn went on to study science, and later education, nursing, international development and human rights law. Since 2000, Carolyn has worked for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Afghanistan, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Chechnya, Malaysia and Zimbabwe, and most recently was Head of Mission in Yemen.



Carolyn Merry



Carolyn Merry with former teachers, Anne Morrison fcJ and Anunciata O'Connor fcJ



Field work

Those years at Vaucluse formed my ideals in many ways. The intimate nature of such a small school meant that the students really did feel cared for ... and it gave me a solid basis for the future. I knew the school motto well enough: *Ad Altiora* – to higher things. We sang it, we studied it in religion class, it was on my blazer pocket and it was modelled by many of the staff who taught us, FCJ Sisters and lay teachers alike. At the time I understood what it meant on a cerebral level, but it would play a much larger role in my thinking and future direction after I left Vaucluse. Over the past 12 years of working around the world, there have been a couple of ways that ‘to higher things’ has meant a great deal to me.

Firstly, the everyday things I do have to work towards a bigger purpose of making the world a little more just. Australians I know sometimes think I lead a very exciting life when I am on mission. It is true that things can be a bit insecure, and I have been fortunate to travel, live and work beside people in the most amazing settings and circumstances. However, in general, daily life on mission is as routine and uneventful as in Australia ... especially in very remote spots. So the bigger purpose has not always been immediately evident as I struggle out of bed every morning to get to work (I am not a morning person), or write a report, or organise schedules or chair meetings. But I try to see each routine activity as a small but necessary piece of MSF’s provision of health care to millions in precarious situations around the world.

Secondly, this principle is not confined to when I am working overseas. A couple of years ago, I had the privilege of looking after my mum for the last seven months of her life following an accident. That time was made up of many similar days filled with many routine acts of care and rehabilitation exercises. But each act and exercise contributed to a bigger picture of giving honour to my mother and filling those last days with the love and security I think all people should feel as they near the end of life.

The other area where ‘to higher things’ always comes into play for me is when I make choices. Choices can be as varied as accepting a mission to an insecure context, staying that bit longer with a frightened patient, engaging in conversation with teenage boys holding AK47s at checkpoints (rebel soldiers who in a different life would probably be at home playing video games and arguing about cleaning up their rooms), or choosing to remain calm when the shelling gets a little close because supplies need packing or wounded people need treating. Some choices are easier than others. But when choices have been difficult, basing the decision on higher principles has always helped. Choosing what will best advance grace and/or justice has made many decisions easier (although that does not mean that I have always made the right choice!).

I never imagined when I was at Vaucluse, that I would be living the life that I am now, with the privilege to work and live in places at critical moments of history, and to contribute, even in such small ways, to the lives of people caught up in natural and man-made disasters. None of this was imagined when I was at Vaucluse ... but it certainly started there.



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FROM THE PROVINCE LEADER



April 5th is a meaningful day for our Society as it is the anniversary of the death of our foundress, and in 2012 it is also

Holy Thursday and that is the day on which Marie Madeleine d'Houët founded our society before the Altar of Repose. But this year, this doubly special day for all Faithful Companions of Jesus has an additional emphasis in the Province of Asia–Australia, as it is also when we begin a designated 'Year of Companionship'. This is a fruit of our recently held Province Assembly.

During our days together with the theme 'Transforming Attitudes for Mission', we became more aware of our desires for deepening relationships and how this is often challenged by our usual constant hectic schedules. This led us towards recognising that in our yearning to companion more closely with Jesus, we also needed to re-emphasise our call to companion with each other and with all those who are a part of our lives.

We have begun the 'Year of Companionship' by having a 'Conversation Pack' of topics and concerns which came up during our assembly. One concern which was relevant to all, no matter which country we live in (Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar and Australia), and is very much a part of life today, was 'busy-ness'. There seems to be a need to be busy. I wonder how often it is said: 'I am very busy'? How do we feel when we say this? Do we feel justified and important, or harassed and exhausted – or all of those? How do we feel when we hear others say these same words? Why do we let our lives run away with us? If our workload is too heavy, maybe changes are needed. If we want to have strong relationships with our God and those around us, then we need to spend time together – to reflect, to listen to the stories of those we live with and those we meet each day.

Judith Routier fcJ

Adapting to Change

The life of each of us, whether we be married, single or religious, consists of change and adaptation, so I would like to share a few lines on one experience of coping with such change.



Bolivia

After spending 22 very happy years in Tarija, Bolivia, on 28 April 2011 I bade farewell to the beautiful people with whom I had shared so many wonderful and inspiring moments, as well as many painful ones. After a long and tiring journey I arrived in Melbourne late at night on 1 May, welcomed at Tullamarine Airport by Maureen Merlo fcJ, my new local leader, and my lovely nephew, Terry Walshe. I had been preparing myself for this change for several months, but one is never fully capable for such momentous events in one's life. So, how did I cope?

My FCJ community, my family and my friends all welcomed me with open arms, but my heart was still in Tarija and often I would find myself speaking Spanish instead of English! Returning here was like a reverse culture shock, which in some ways is worse than an initial culture shock when one goes to a poor country and immerses oneself in the lives of people who often barely have enough for the next meal. Witnessing the way so many here are addicted to consumerism and complain endlessly about unimportant things when the vast majority of the world's population don't have enough to eat is quite challenging.

Fortunately, I had many opportunities to share a little of my experiences with different groups of people and hopefully through this sharing I helped these people to become a little more aware of

the enormous gap between the rich and poor. Our last General Chapter of 2008 reminded us that 'we live in a world of enormous inequalities where many people have to fight to survive'. We are invited to respond to the hunger of the world.

Apart from this, I endeavoured to enjoy and live the best way I could in this very different situation, becoming part of the life of the community here and the many ways they are involved in diverse activities. I was extremely fortunate in August to have an intensive week of re-entry with a Good Samaritan Sister, Geraldine Kearney. This week helped me to treasure and hold in my heart all the people and experiences of my years in Tarija, as well as looking forward to new possibilities and new ministries in Australia. Another ongoing help in this process is the monthly gathering of returned missionaries, which is organised by Father Larry Nemer SVD. At this gathering, we have the opportunity to share our story with others who have had similar experiences in developing countries.

I am not saying for one moment that everything just fell into place in a few short months, but for me the important thing is to have a positive attitude to life and all it brings each day and to treasure the many blessings that have been part of the wonderful fabric of my life.

Anne Morrison fcJ

Sr Ita Joyce fcJ

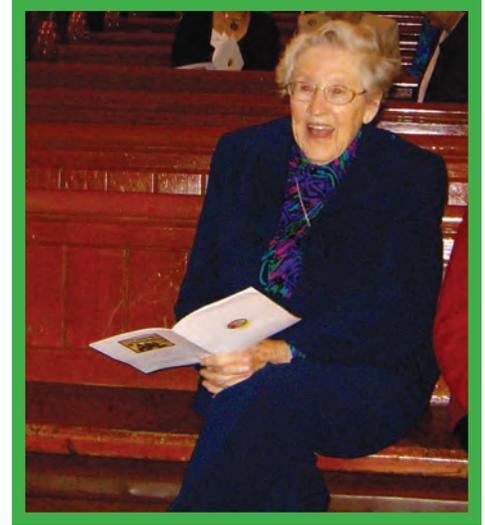
Sr Ita was born in 1917 in Richmond, the youngest child of six children, four boys and two girls. Richmond held a special place in Ita's heart throughout her life, since it was where she grew up, and where she experienced the joys of a loving family. St Ignatius' Church held many memories for her. It was the place where she was baptised and received her first Holy Communion, and where she later celebrated her golden and diamond jubilees of profession. Ita attended school at Vacluse Convent, Richmond, where she felt called to be an FCJ. In 1936 she left Australia for the FCJ Novitiate in Belgium, where she made her First Profession two years later. She was sent for her studies to Switzerland, London and Dublin before returning to Australia in 1946.

'She was a woman of prayer, a quiet achiever with a good sense of humour, and she was always ready to help others.'

Ita was missioned to Benalla where she taught both at St Joseph's parish primary school and the FCJ College for the next 23 years. At this time Ita was known as Sr Philippa. She was a woman of prayer, a quiet achiever with a good sense of humour, and she was always ready to help others. In 1971 she moved to Richmond and gained much from the freedoms and opportunities that flowed from the changes in the Church and in Religious Life after Vatican II. She found new ways of being a faithful companion of Jesus and of all the people to whom she was sent.

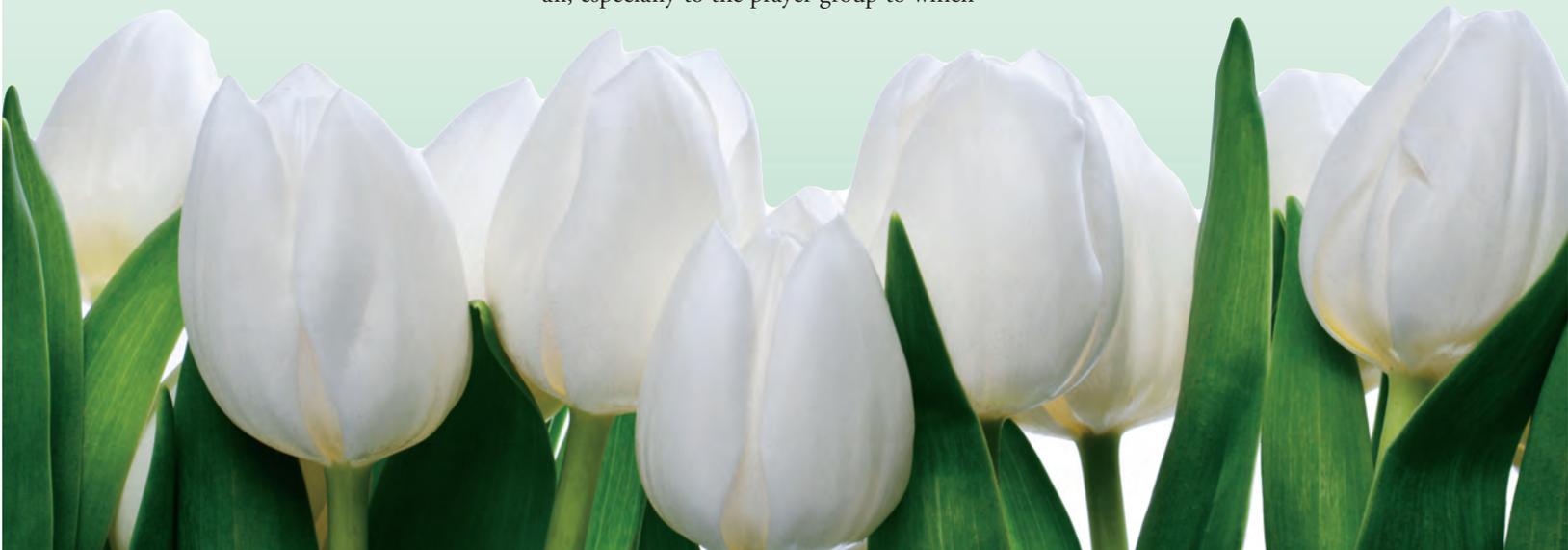
When, in 1978, Ita was missioned to Langwarrin as a member of the Frontier Group she assisted greatly in the establishment of the new parish and school by welcoming or visiting the parishioners. Later Ita joined the community at Stella Maris, Frankston, and served as a Pastoral Associate in St Francis Xavier's and St John's Parishes and formed many friendships with elderly citizens. At this time she took up painting. She showed great skill and initiative and set up groups of people to whom she taught her new-found artistic skills. It was clear that her ease of manner and her adaptation to different circumstances were appreciated by many people. In 1990 Ita was back at Richmond as Superior of the community and was a regular visitor at the local hospitals.

In 1997 at the age of 80 Ita was missioned to Adelaide. Ita was a woman of prayer and her relationship with Jesus, her Companion, was a wonderful example to all, especially to the prayer group to which



Sr Ita Joyce fcJ

she belonged. One of the women explained their relationship as: *'Ita was part of our life and we were part of hers'*. When Ita returned to Richmond it soon became apparent that she required more care and she was moved to the Mary MacKillop Home. She quickly endeared herself to the staff, who cared for her in a beautiful and respectful way. Sr Myrna Nunan, also resident in Mary MacKillop, was a faithful companion to Ita all through her time in high-level care, bringing her comfort and companionship when she most needed it. Ita passed away peacefully on 17 February 2012. Her funeral took place in St Ignatius Church. The celebrant was Fr Celso Romanin SJ, with concelebrants Fr Stan Lim SJ, Fr Ferruccio Romanin SJ and Fr Barry Moran. May Ita's gentle soul rest in peace.



Transforming Attitudes for Mission

FCJ Province of Asia–Australia Province Assembly 28 Dec 2011 – 3 Jan 2012

The Sisters in Australia were joined by those from Asia and all entered into the spirit of the theme, so creatively and sensitively led by Geraldine Kearney sgs.

Philippines Community



On the final day Marion Dooley fcJ from Myanmar proposed a vote of thanks to Geraldine (Gerry) Kearney sgs, which is reproduced here as it best expresses the spirit of the Assembly.

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the group, to thank you, Gerry, for your great contribution as facilitator to our week together reflecting on 'Transforming Attitudes for Mission'.

I think we would all be of one heart and mind in saying this time together has been filled with many blessings. There are many reasons for this – the opportunity to come together from Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar and to share companionship, enthusiasm, broken dreams, passions, frustrations and hopes. We have shared in various ways, as individuals and as groups, and because of this we are reinvigorated, renewed in heart and spirit and in the goodness of each of our companions.

We thank you, Gerry, because you have skillfully, artistically and creatively led us through this time and have helped us to recognise the gifts among us and within us. You have reminded us to look again at each other with new eyes, with renewed love, compassion and trust, to take the time to sit at each other's wells, to share our light and our shadow and to hear, acknowledge and honour the interplay of both the light and the shadow in creating beauty in our lives. Through your own sharing, Gerry, you have encouraged us to make space in our hearts and lives for the stories of our companions, to invite each other to share our 'doll' stories and to be sensitive to and ritualise the missioning of each Sister (which we did beautifully last evening), as well as sharing each other's significant experiences and stories.

As we shared about companionship, and our imaginations were captured by the doll story, I was reminded on a few occasions of a story Judy Cannato shares in the introduction to her book, *Field of Compassion*, a story which she says 'captures everything – what our lives are about, what we strive for, why we do what we do, where we hope we are headed ... its power expresses what humankind is to be about at this time in our history and that is transformation'. Gerry has led us in mirroring this story many times this past week. It is a story about a man called Nate Sears who lived on the east coast of the United States. One morning as he was walking along the beach doing his job checking the piers for storm damage he noticed three whales were coming quickly towards the beach. He asked a neighbour to alert the National Sea Shore Service but the whales were coming so quickly Nate knew they would have beached before they arrived. Instinctively, he threw off his shoes and socks and waded out towards the first whale which was thrashing about on a sand bar. He could see cuts on the whale's body. Moved solely by instinct, Nate placed his hands on the whale and held them there. The thrashing stopped. The whale became completely still. He gently turned the whale around and pointed it towards the sea. He did the same for the second and third whale. Nate's actions – simply putting his hands on each whale and holding each one until it was still, then pointing it towards the sea – are a wonderful image of transformation: how to reach out compassionately and companionably to our suffering world, but also to our companions with whom we live and share life.



A Sacred Space



Community Baciro Indonesia

Soropadan Community Indonesia



Our world is full of beached whales, people who have lost their way, people crying out for help, wanting to be included, people longing for a gentle look and the touch of compassion, companionship and love. And the Good News, as Gerry has reminded us ... and as we have reminded one another, is that we too, each one of us, are gifted and empowered to have the same impact as Nate Sears.

Through Gerry's creative facilitation this past week we have explored many aspects of our lives together. We heard the invitation once again to 'open wide the space of your tent' (Is 54:2), to reach out as individuals and as communities to all in need 'excluding no one and no thing from our love and compassion'.

We have delved into and reflected on many areas of our lives with honesty and with a desire to be transformed, so that we may more freely love the world and be women of outrageous hope.

We, with the entire cosmos and all people, are as Karl Rahner suggests, 'pressured from within', and together we 'groan in one great act of giving birth' to constantly desire the magis, to be people fully alive, ready to pour out our love on the world. We have chosen to commit ourselves to the ongoing deepening and exploration of the four themes of (1) Companionship, (2) Making Space for Difference, (3) What is core to our FCJ Living? and (4) Governance and Leadership.

There is sure to be that mixture of light and shadow as we go about it, but may we remember Gerry calling our attention to the beauty of this mixture when we do meet it.

Our thanks to you, Gerry, is expressed in the fact that we go with enormous joy, in renewed and deepened companionship and with great courage and confidence to set fire to the earth!

Marion Dooley fcJ

'We thank you, Gerry, because you have skillfully, artistically and creatively led us through this time and have helped us to recognise the gifts among us and within us.'

Light for the Journey



Sisca fcJ making her final vows with the Province leader, Judith Routier fcJ



Shepparton Community Australia



Sisca's Vows

Sisca fcJ reads her vow



Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch ... (Lk 5: 4)

Loving and eternal God, in the presence of Mary, Virgin and Mother, of the angels, the saints and all here united with me, I, Fransisca Arti Setiati, make forever to you the vows of religious chastity, poverty and obedience in the Society of the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus... (taken from the FCJ vow formula).



The Blessing for Sisca fcJ

On 3 January 2012, our Society feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, during the celebration of Mass in the chapel at Genazzano FCJ College, Sisca pronounced her final vows. They were received by Judith Routier fcJ, Provincial leader, and witnessed by Maryrose Dennehy fcJ and Marion Dooley fcJ. The principal celebrant of the Eucharist was Fr Michael Kelly CSsR, and so many others were involved in preparing a wonderfully rich and meaningful liturgy, which included songs and symbols incorporating the different cultures of our wide and varied province. It is not difficult to imagine the joy of all present – our Companions in Mission, friends of the Society, friends of Sisca and FCJ Sisters from the Province of Asia–Australia (Myanmar, the Philippines, Indonesia and Australia), gathered together at the end of our Province Assembly!

The readings and songs chosen by Sisca spoke of God's joy and gladness in her response to the call, of God's faithful love and of her trust in God at work through her in her life and mission. Pull out into the deep is literally what it means to give one's life completely to God in the service of others. We rejoiced, too, with Sisca in her obvious joy to live this life of service in companionship.

Immediately after Sisca pronounced her vows, Judith prayed a beautiful prayer of blessing and hope for Sisca: '... that, by keeping her own heart free, she may free from care the hearts of others; that by helping the distressed, she may refresh the suffering Christ ... and that by the gift of her own life, she may hasten the coming of the reign of God ...'. On the evening before the vows, we had the opportunity to offer our prayer and blessing for Sisca 'en famille' – both individually and as group. Following the vow ceremony, all enjoyed the chance to meet and renew friendships over a delicious afternoon tea.

Sisca has returned to Indonesia, the country of her birth, for a short period and during this time there will be a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated with her family and FCJ Sisters. She will then return to Myanmar to continue her ministry of teaching, the accompaniment of young women interested in becoming FCJs and pastoral work amongst youth. These are exciting times in a 'new' Myanmar – with great opportunities to 'put out into the deep' and trust that God will continue that work already begun. Witnessing to Sisca's generosity, joy and enthusiasm is a great encouragement for us all to reignite that same call and commitment to live our lives with whole-hearted loving service – risking an unknown future in the certainty of God's faithfulness and love. We are grateful to Sisca that she has chosen to give her life to God in the service of others as an FCJ Sister!

Barbara Brown-Graham fcJ

'Pull out into the deep is literally what it means to give one's life completely to God in the service of others.'

Two Scholars say ‘Thank You’

Many poor families live alongside the dumpsite of Bagong Silangan in the Philippines. These families are supported by the FCJ Sisters and their co-workers at the FCJ Center in every aspect of their lives, including housing, health & wellbeing, skills training, income-generating programs and education.

A number of groups around the world provide financial support for all these services. One group that helps fund the education of the young people is The Friends of Romania and Philippines, mainly through the sale of Christmas Cakes. Currently more than 20 students attend College, including Aloysius and Monica. Here are their stories.

‘It is really a blessing to have the FCJ Center here in our area because their help has brought so many improvements.’



Aloysius with his mother and siblings. He is first on the left.

Aloysius

My name is Aloysius Cabuyao and I am 21 years old. I am the eldest son of Virgilio and Flora Cabuyao and I have seven siblings. All of my siblings go to school. Last September my father went to work in Jeddah, United Arab Emirates. He took this brave step to be able to support his family.

I am a fourth-year student at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and I hope to graduate in March this year. I am taking a BSc degree in Business Administration, with a major in Human Resource Development. At present I am doing on-the-job training at Pag Ibig, a Government Agency offering housing loans. I am enjoying my work there very much. Because I am an FCJ scholar I try to give something back to my community. Every Saturday I tutor young children and Elementary School scholars, particularly in Maths. I am also very active in KABASI, the FCJ Youth Organisation. We organise many community events and give appropriate input to the young people in the area.

It has been a wonderful help to me and my family to receive a scholarship because without it I would not have had the chance to go to College. Maybe I would have been scavenging on the dumpsite instead. I am very grateful to everyone who has supported me, especially to our donors who make so many efforts on our behalf, even though they have never met us!

Aloysius Cabuyao



Monica with some members of her family. She is second from the right

Monica

My name is Monica C. Javier. I am 19 years old, and I live in Area 6 Sitio Veterans where the FCJ Center is located. I am the third of seven siblings. My mother has been a widow since I was in the first year of high school. She works on the Payatas Dumpsite as a scavenger to support our studies and our family needs.

I am in third year at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, doing a Bachelor’s degree in Office Administration, with a major in Corporate Transcription. In return for the educational support given by the FCJ Center I offer Street Education for the children in the area who do not go to school and a Tutorial Class for the Elementary and High School scholars. During summer I help run our mini Olympics called ‘Palarong Pinoy’. This activity promotes the Filipino games that were almost forgotten by the children because they prefer to play computer games, and also helps to promote sportsmanship and good health. In this simple way we FCJ scholars try to give back something to our community.

It is really a blessing to have the FCJ Center here in our area because their help has brought so many improvements. This formerly poor and hopeless community has become a happy and hopeful one today, and it is all because of the help of the FCJ Center. The educational program is very important because many of the children here in our area are not at school. Their parents are working on the dumpsite and are not able to support their children’s education.

I am most grateful to the many generous donors who give time and energy to raise money for the FCJ Center, providing scholarships for students like myself. It has made a great difference for good in my life.

Monica Javier

The FCJ Sisters thank readers of the FCJNEWS for their contributions to the missions of the Province of Asia–Australia.

Carers of God's Creation

In the Genesis story of creation God created the world with its creatures of the sky and sea, its lumbering and lithe land animals, its mountains and rivers and valleys. Over all that swam and flew and crawled and ran, over all living things, he gave mankind dominion.



Such dominion was never meant to be domination. However, over the millennia the harvest of the land and its life-giving potential has been subjected to pillaging and pollution and, more recently, the ravages of industrialisation have come to wound the planet we call home, our mother Earth.

This year, the 2012 college theme for Genazzano FCJ College and FCJ College, Benalla, is Carers of God's Creation. This theme aims to remind each student, staff member and the wider school community of the importance of stewardship and of the need for an increasing ecological awareness of our relationship with the planet that nurtures us. This theme is a timely reminder that stewardship and sustainability are not just token words to be bandied about thoughtlessly, but that there must be careful thought and positive action so that the mandate to be carers of all creation is realised. These words must be invested with heft, not hyperbole, so that they become realities in the lives of those who subscribe to a truly Earth-saving paradigm.

In *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Benedict XVI wrote, 'The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole' (n. 48).

This is the call to ecological conversion, a reframing of world views to mindsets that, instead of plunder and profit, recreate a sense of the beauty and bounty for all that the Earth offers us.

Last year the Genazzano staff was reminded of Richard Rohr's dictum: 'You don't see things as they are; you see things as you are'. This was the urgent invitation to create a new Earth story by the healing of the blind spots that have occasioned disregard or carelessness of the world around us. It is time to adopt a policy of environmental rehabilitation and re-reverencing of God's creation in all its myriad manifestations.

This year the respective school communities will be made increasingly aware of the stewardship imperative, of environmental justice and the deep integrity of creation. Individually and collectively they will be encouraged to rethink their attitude to the world around them and to take action for change. Such action might simply be picking up lunchtime litter or turning the lights off when the classroom is empty. It might be doing curriculum research into areas of environmental concern or taking up a new sustainability initiative. And in our beautiful college gardens the students may pause a moment to thank God for all creatures great and small.

Ann Rennie

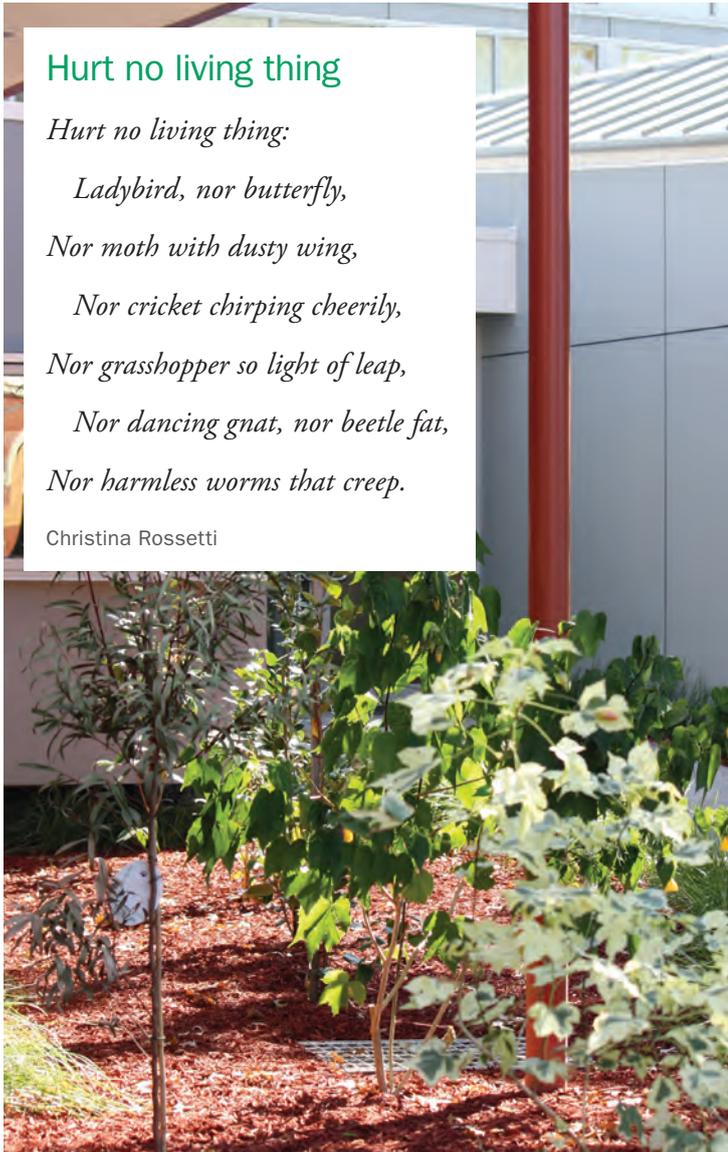


Hurt no living thing

Hurt no living thing:

*Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.*

Christina Rossetti



‘It is time to adopt a policy of environmental rehabilitation and re-reverencing of God’s creation in all its myriad manifestations.’

Aung San Suu Kyi – *Carve Her Name with Pride*



Aung San Suu Kyi

It struck me some time ago that in some respects, perhaps my early life was not too unlike that of Ignatius of Loyola! This may seem pretentious. No, I didn't live in a castle and I never had my leg shattered by a cannon ball! I was, however, open to some of the same influences that eventually led to Ignatius' conversion. While convalescing, Ignatius dreamt of doing 'great deeds' and, in the absence of novels, found great inspiration in the lives of the saints.

The lives of good people rub off on us, sometimes by osmosis. They call us to inhabit and live far 'bigger' lives than we thought we were capable of living. Occasionally, we are privileged to know people like that. Now and again we live with them. Sometimes, we may read about them. Perhaps they are real-life characters or maybe they exist only in fiction. But each has the power to touch us at a very deep level, to arouse and awaken our better selves to greater deeds, calling us to live life more fully, more meaningfully.

My first conscious awakening to this was when I was approximately 10 years old and I was in the FCJ Primary School in Bruff, in a quiet rural area Co. Limerick, Ireland. We were encouraged to read novels. I'm sure the lives of the saints were stocked in the school library but the book that made the greatest impression on me was called *Carve Her Name with Pride*. I don't even remember the content of the book now but I have never forgotten the title and the young woman who was willing to do heroic deeds at great cost to herself for the benefit of others. I'm sure at a subconscious, subliminal level the content of this book worked its way into the marrow of my bones and in unknown, mysterious ways may have helped shape my life also.

Aung San Suu Kyi is another such person in my life. In Myanmar, the country formerly called Burma, where she has spent 20 years of her life under house arrest, she is affectionately called 'The Lady'. She exudes a great sense of dignity, integrity, courage, graciousness, inner strength and a firm conviction that she is

called to enhance the lives of the people of Myanmar. She has chosen to live among them, to allow their grief to be hers, their struggle to be her struggle, their unfreedom to be mirrored in her life and decisions. Her strength of conviction speaks loudly, especially in the face of personal suffering and struggle.

While under house arrest, her husband, Michael Aris, was diagnosed with cancer. On several occasions, he was refused entry into Myanmar to visit his wife before he died, in the hope that she might be enticed to leave Myanmar and so would be refused entry on her return. Tempting as it must have been, she remained focused on what she considered was her greater call. Michael Aris died and Aung San Suu Kyi mourned his death in the seclusion of her home while under house arrest. Neither personal grief nor injustice, nor false accusations nor accolades have deterred her in her determination to respond to the cry of the people of Myanmar. Faithfulness of this magnitude is not the norm and elicits the greatest respect and love.

For the past three years, I have lived quite close to her house in University Avenue, here in Yangon. At times when I struggled with various aspects of life, just to remember her 'down the road' paying such a high personal cost for her commitment brought a sense of perspective and reality to my own struggles.

I have seen her on three occasions and actually met her once. On the first occasion I stood just a few yards from her on the night she was released from house arrest. It was Saturday, 13 November 2010, and is one of those occasions that will be forever etched in my heart and memory. There was a great air of expectation that day and rumours were rife around the city. Through the radio static I could just barely decipher on the 5.30pm news of the BBC World Service that her release was imminent. I was gripped by unbounded joy and a deep desire to be there, to share this moment with others who rejoiced also. As a foreigner, my head told me it was unsafe to go but my heart insisted that I walk down the road and be there to welcome her! Thankfully, my heart won the battle.

I will never forget the feeling of standing outside her home on University Avenue and being among a small crowd who welcomed her and witnessed her first taste of freedom. On that evening she was her usual dignified, gracious self: there was neither a hint of triumphalism, nor defeat in her words to the awaiting crowd. Before returning to her home, she announced that she would speak to her supporters the following day outside the headquarters of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in Shwegondine Road, Yangon.

Unlike the previous night, Shwegondine Road was thronged. She spoke encouragingly but also reminded her supporters that she could not undertake on her own the people's burning desire for democracy. It was, she reminded the crowd, the responsibility of each and every individual and all needed to work together to achieve this longed-for goal.

Then on 8 December 2011, I had the wonderful opportunity of meeting and greeting her when she attended the centenary celebrations of St Mary's Cathedral in Yangon. I treasure this experience very much but I am aware that I treasure even more the night I stood outside her home witnessing her release and rejoicing with her and so many others throughout the world.

She has been true to her word in the time since then. She has reached out to government ministers and ordinary people alike, encouraging dialogue at all levels and the sharing of ideas. The government has become more conciliatory under the leadership of President Thein Sein and some significant changes have been initiated. Many are uncertain and unsure how to interpret this change. In a few days time, on 1 April 2012, Aung San Suu Kyi will stand as a candidate in the local by-elections in Yangon. This, in a way, is a litmus test that will judge the sincerity of the government and the desire to initiate the type of democracy that is genuine and inclusive of all.

With a voice in *bluttaw* (parliament), Aung San Suu Kyi will be an unstoppable force for good, an ally for the people who have lived with struggle and darkness for the past 50 years since the *tatmadaw* (military) coup led by General Ne Win. It seems the time has come for hope to replace fear; 'the best is yet to be'. World history and undoubtedly the people of Myanmar will 'carve her name with pride'.

Marion Dooley fcJ

'Neither personal grief nor injustice, nor false accusations nor accolades have deterred her in her determination to respond to the cry of the people of Myanmar.'



Map of Myanmar

Postscript

On April 1 jubilant supporters of both freedom and Aung San Sui Kyi rejoiced at her election to Myanmar's Parliament.

We rejoice with them.

The film, *The Lady*, is now showing in Melbourne and is the story of Aung San Sui Kyi and her husband Michael Aris. It is the epic story of the peaceful quest of the woman who is at the core of Myanmar's democratic movement.

Living Calm in a Busy World

An introduction to *Living Calm in a Busy World: Stillness Meditation in the Meares Tradition* by Pauline McKinnon, David Lovell Publishing, Melbourne 2011.



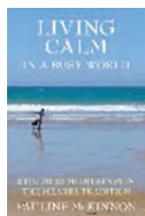
When Pauline McKinnon was a young mother with a growing family she suffered from extreme anxiety and fears. After consulting various professionals she was led to consult Dr Ainslie Meares, the renowned Melbourne psychiatrist. In time she learnt how to become still and calm and to meditate as he taught her and slowly she returned to her normal equilibrium.

Dr Meares invited Pauline to go further and to learn his method of meditation and begin to teach others. Pauline has told this story in earlier books. In *Living Calm in a Busy World* she pays tribute to Ainslie Meares' work, explains it anew and describes the different forms of meditation through the ages to the 21st century. She stresses that the meditation she teaches is one of healing, a therapeutic approach, and that the brain has the capacity to heal itself without medication.

Pauline's book is packed full of wisdom and hope for all of us, not just those who suffer from extreme anxiety.

On the cover of her book a number of experts from various fields of study commend Pauline's book to readers. One of these reviews is from Rev. Dr John Dupuche, parish priest of St Joseph's, Black Rock, and Stella Maris, Beaumaris, and Lecturer in the Graduate Certificate in Guiding Meditation, Catholic Theological College, East Melbourne. John writes:

I warmly endorse this heartfelt tribute to Dr Ainslie Meares and his impact. Even to read this book has a calming effect. It presents Stillness Meditation with great clarity, anticipating the many questions a reader might bring. The book is reader-friendly, and is a valuable contribution to the ever-widening practice of meditation in our time.



Living Calm in a Busy World is available at St Paul's Bookshop, Camberwell.

Pauline McKinnon (Morgan) began her education with the FCJ Sisters at Sacred Heart, Kew, and is a past parent of Genazzano FCJ College.

Julie Chamberlin

'Pauline's book is packed full of wisdom and hope for all of us, not just those who suffer from extreme anxiety.'

FCJ Communications and the Digital Age

FCJ Communications is adapting to the digital age. Our new FCJ E-newsletter (*FCJNEWS* – launched in March this year) aims to engage a younger audience who are comfortable with the electronic media and who respond to the immediacy of this communication technology.

FCJNEWS, entitled 'The Thinking Woman', provides readers with a forum for ideas, social concerns and reflection.

The distribution list is growing from a small base. If you would like to receive it in your inbox or if you wish to add the email address of a young person who would be interested in the ideas and issues that the E-newsletter canvases, please send the details to secretary@fcjasau.org.au

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FCJ Province Centre

44A Waltham Street, Richmond 3121.

E-mail: secretary@fcjasau.org.au

Website: www.fcjsisters.org



FCJ Missions You will find enclosed a donation envelope. Any contribution to the work of the FCJ Society's Missions is most welcome. The Sisters wish to thank all the contributors following publication of the Autumn Edition.

Email address: If you have an email address please send it to the Province Office, secretary@fcjasau.org.au