

FCJnews

in the Province of Asia–Australia

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‘Sur les pas de Marie Madeleine’

FCJ Pilgrimage

Introducing members of Marie Madeleine d’Houet’s family at the home of Alain de Bengy des Porches.



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FROM THE PROVINCE LEADER



We have so much to learn from each other's culture. There are so many different ways of living our humanity and of honouring the image and

likeness of God. These are expressed in the diverse cultural traditions and responses to life which have emerged in the rich variety of the contrasting situations of our world.

One of the articles in this publication tells us a little of what someone has learnt about the cultural responses to life of the First Peoples of this land. We also read about work with asylum seekers who must surely regret having to leave their culture and their familiar way of life, but feel they need to because of fear, poverty, disadvantage and lack of peace.

In the last few weeks we have heard of the Yazidi people in Iraq who have been forced from their homes and heritage by the threat of violence. Yazidi is a cultural identity of which I had not heard before, so I Googled, and I realised once again that I am ignorant of so many peoples and their backgrounds. The importance of identity, defined in terms of affiliation, traditions, language, and customs, is a very strong influence in the life of every human. We all do and say things as a result of our different cultural experience.

Even though there is great difference in belief, action and thought, our common humanity is the strong bond uniting us. Unfortunately, it is a very painful irony that so instead often in suffering we can see this bond entangling and holding us. The recent tragedy of MH17 has focused our thoughts on so many disparate parts of the world. The best of our humanity emerges as we reach out to each other across cultural divides.

With today's media we can so easily see what is happening around the world in the lives of our brothers and sisters, and how the earth is being treated. It is our privilege to keep ourselves informed, to be involved and to share the weight of each other's experience. Let our lives not add to separation but grow together in respecting our diversity.

Judith Routier fcJ



A Child's Q & A

I have always been fascinated watching young children grow and learn and make sense of their world. Recently I had the privilege of sharing with a six year old as he sorted through some of his profound ideas.

"Nanny, who made 'Lucy'? Was it God or God's dad?" came the agitated demand of one who had just discovered a perceived discrepancy between religion and archaeology.

'Lucy' was found in Africa, the remains of a Hominid thought to be about 3,200,000 years old and the first found to have walked on two legs. Interest in 'Lucy' sprang from a children's book series entitled *Horrible Histories*.

The questions tumbled out. Yes, he knew about BC and that some things happened before and some things happened after Christ. *"Were Jesus and Christ the same person?"*

He had absolutely no doubt that Mary was the mother of God and the mother of Jesus. *"Were they brothers, God and Jesus?"*

"How come Jesus had two fathers, God and Joseph?"

Yes, he knew the story of Adam and Eve and baby Jesus and that Jesus died to save us. *"What did he save us from, Nanny?"*

He was adamant that Jesus was God and kept referring to God the Father and creator of all as God's dad. Soon we had a six-year-old's style pictorial record built up of creation, the fall and redemption with the Trinity overseeing it all. Then came the inevitable question that we've all asked, *"Well, who was God's dad's dad?"*

The answer, 'God always was and always will be' left something to be desired, I could tell. By now, sitting cross-legged on my kitchen bench, head in hands, he said, *"I don't get it!"* You and the rest of mankind, my son.

Soon he was back pondering 'Lucy.' "So," he deduced, *"in history, 'Lucy' was alive before Christ...that's Jesus. Right? But in RE, God, that's Jesus' dad, was alive before 'Lucy.'* Yes, he was happy with that. It seemed to make sense to him

"Suffer the Little Children to come unto me ... for of such is the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt 19: 14) is a beautiful scripture passage that elevates the place of children in the heart of Jesus. I'm sure He must have watched with great love this earnest little boy's efforts to "find God".

Geraldine Peck CiM

'He had absolutely no doubt that Mary was the mother of God and the mother of Jesus.'



2014 Outstanding Alumna

Sr Maryrose Dennehy fcJ and Junior Alumna Chloë McCardel

The Genazzano FCJ College Council through its Outstanding Alumna Award has since 1995 acknowledged a former student who has demonstrated a love of learning and service to others and who is an inspirational role model for young women today. On Wednesday 20 August 2014 in the Madeleine Centre for Music and the Performing Arts, a large group of FCJs and Alumnae of Genazzano came together for an evening honouring Sister Maryrose Dennehy fcJ as she was awarded the 2014 Outstanding Alumna and Chloe McCardel, on her receiving the Outstanding Young Alumna Award.

Sister Maryrose began her association with Genazzano as a student in 1943. Since then her affiliation with the College has been as dedicated teacher, Principal, Province Leader, Council Member, friend and supporter. She has a wonderful memory for people and events; she attends many functions associated with the College and maintains contact with a wide range of students and staff both present and past. Maryrose's presence within the College and her contribution to its life and spirit is deeply valued by the whole College community.

To coincide with Genazzano's 125th year, an Outstanding Junior Alumna was also honoured this year; the recipient, Chloë McCardel, a graduate of 2002, received her award for her commitment to marathon swimming and for her support of cancer charities. Alongside her own swimming achievements, (she is one of Australia's top female marathon swimmers), Chloë's energies have focused on educating others in swim teaching, life guarding and first aid training, as well as motivating others to live a healthy, active lifestyle and reach their potential.

She has swum six solo crossings of the English Channel (34km per crossing), including two single crossings and two double crossings, as well as many other amazing marathons. In September 2014, Chloë will be coaching, mentoring and crewing three relay teams to swim the Channel. Two of these teams have already raised \$100,000 for the US Cancer Charity Swim Across America in order to take part in their Relays and Chloë has donated her time to support them. In 2015, Chloë will

be coaching seven relay teams and two solo swimmers to swim the Channel. Chloë is keen to expand her charity relays to continue fundraising.

The evening began with the chance for guests to mingle and meet. In the formal ceremony, introductions were given by Kathy Bowlen, who also interviewed the two recipients after they had received their awards from Lindy Priest, Chair of College Council. Julia Zaetta and Gabrielle Trainor added a lively and humorous appreciation of Maryrose as they reminisced about school days. The Senior Chamber Choir sang, the College Captains concluded the ceremony with words of thanks, and at the end of the evening, the serving of supper gave further opportunity to renew friendships and to congratulate the two recipients.

Frances Kennedy fcJ



Sister Maryrose with the College Captains, Zara Fitzgerald and Zoe Robertson



Gay Trainor



Kathy Bowlen interviews Chloë McCardel



An enthusiastic audience



Anne Morrison fcJ

FCJ support for Asylum Seekers in the FCJ province of Asia – Australia

During the last few years the situation of asylum seekers, particularly those who have arrived by boat, has become increasingly difficult due to the harsh policies of both major parties. The brutal treatment of men, women and children in places such as Nauru and Manus Island is causing untold damage, both mental and physical, which has proven to be long-term.

As Christians, we must remember that every human being is precious for who he/she is and to this end deserves our respect. The current policy of the Australian Government is quite unethical and demands a response from us in so far as we are able.

As a Province, we are endeavouring to respond in practical ways. During the past two to three years, several Sisters and Companions in Mission (CiM) have participated in information evenings organised by the Brigidine Asylum Seekers' Project (BASP), Amnesty International, and the Asylum Seekers' Resource Centre; some Sisters and at least one CiM have been teaching English to groups of asylum seekers in Boronia and Dandenong. These class times are not only opportunities to help with English but also enable the participants to learn in a safe, secure and happy environment where those who tutor ensure support in other ways when needed. For example: recently one of the group from St Mary's Parish, Dandenong, learned that his 19-year-old daughter had been killed by the Taliban in Pakistan. He was totally devastated, so the tutors have endeavoured to obtain counselling help for him.

In December 2013, BASP invited those interested to support their Christmas Hamper Project, so FCJ communities and CiMs were invited to donate what they were able. There was a great response to this invitation with donations of non-perishable food, cleaning materials, toiletries supplied by FCJs and CiMs; several communities donated vouchers for Coles/ Woolworths, etc. With the help of two Redemptorist seminarians, all these donations were taken to the Centre where the hampers were being put together. BASP was very grateful for this support.

'One FCJ Sister from the Moonbria Community participates in Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Asylum Seekers' Committee, supporting this whenever she is able.'

With the appropriate permission from Katherine Mary O'Flynn, General Superior at the time, the apartment where Mary O'Shannessy fcJ lived in Box Hill was made available through Catholic Care, at no cost, to a single mother from Pakistan and her two young sons. The Province is financing maintenance as well as other things. One FCJ Sister has been tutoring the younger son who commenced school at the beginning of the year. During Term 1 this took place once a week for approximately an hour and a half. At present this tutoring service is on hold as the mother has temporarily increased her work load and is not at home at the normal time. The family have settled in very well and are very grateful.

One FCJ Sister from the Moonbria Community participates in Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Asylum Seekers' Committee, supporting this whenever she is able. The community donates non-perishable food to the monthly collection of the parish. Another FCJ Sister from St Anthony's Parish in Alphington supports a group in that parish.

Many FCJs and CiMs write letters to and sign petitions to support those working for more just and fair conditions for asylum seekers. A number of others have written letters to asylum seekers in off-shore detention centres in response to the invitation to do this from high-profile refugee advocate Julian Burnside AO QC. The hope is that receiving letters from caring people will be some encouragement to those suffering in such inhumane conditions.

Anne Morrison fcJ

For further information about what you can do to help refer to the website: www.basp.org.au



FCJ Sisters regularly visit Sudanese families in Shepparton

'The hope is that receiving letters from caring people will be some encouragement to those suffering in such inhumane conditions.'

The Vineyards of Parassay



In the Steps of Marie Madeleine d'Houët

Companions on the Journey

There was a great sense of anticipation among us as we headed for Tullamarine, Melbourne Airport. Donna, Paul, Isaac, Adrian and I, from Benalla in country Victoria, weren't quite sure what to expect on a pilgrimage, but we were all thrilled to have been given this opportunity to share further in the FCJ story. On Sunday morning, 29th June, along with many fellow pilgrims who had arrived from as far away as Canada, Ireland, England, and of course our Genazzano friends, we set off for Gard du Nord to begin our journey.



Mary Campion McCarren fcJ outside the first FCJ House in Amiens

Being warmly welcomed by five FCJ Sisters: Mary Fitzpatrick, Lorenza Maganin, Trish Binchy, Juliette Ory and Mary Campion McCarren, all so full of enthusiasm and warmth, made us quickly realise this was going to be something special. For the next seven days we travelled through France following the footsteps of the Venerable Marie Madeleine d'Houët visiting Amiens, Issoudun, Pouplain, Châteauroux, Bourges and Parassy. There was a great sense of awe as we walked where she had walked, prayed where she had prayed, and heard so much of her life, the challenges she faced and the absolute clarity she had about what she was being called to do.

Friendships were formed with other pilgrims who also wanted to know more about the FCJ founding story and to take that story back into their lives in a renewed way. There was a special grace in Mary Campion, our own 'living treasure'. She captivated us with her knowledge and her incredibly detailed account of each place visited and what the significance was in Marie Madeleine's life. You could hear a pin drop when she gently and lovingly (and with a very dry sense of humour) spoke of a woman for whom she clearly held enormous admiration and love. The insights about Marie Madeleine's life as a religious, wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, friend, businesswoman, and her trials and successes as she came to found the Faithful Companions of Jesus, made it evident that her story still has a special resonance almost two hundred years later.



Pilgrims at Issoudun

Whether at Marie Madeleine's birthplace, the place of her baptism at St Martial, the Jesuit school, St Acheul, in Amiens where her son was educated, the vineyard where she spent many happy hours, or her final resting place at St Dominique in Paris, each place held profound significance in her life story and each was an opportunity to learn, pray and reflect on the particular time in her journey. Beautifully moving liturgies were prepared by different groups from each country and as we shared in these there was a real sense of being very close to the foundress.

It was a fabulous sight to see the great chandeliers lit up in the stunning Bourges Cathedral where Joseph de Bonnault d'Houët and Marie Madeleine de Bengy were married in 1804. These had been a wedding gift from both families to mark the occasion. The delight we all felt in meeting Marie Madeleine's direct descendants who warmly hosted us at their country property, providing fruits of their vines and delectable French cuisine, was much appreciated. We were honoured to talk with them and share their story. Such a tangible connection brought the life of this incredible woman alive in an even more powerful way. The foundress of the FCJ Sisters was truly an amazing person who was guided by God to form the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus, despite many obstacles along the way. Visiting the church of St Dominique where her remains are housed in a special reliquary and listening to Mary Campion's story of how this came to be was moving for all of us.

On pilgrimage, we shared something special and are now inspired to share what we experienced with others so that Marie Madeleine's charism is kept alive upon our return home. It has been a very humbling experience to walk in the shoes of an amazing, brave, faith-filled woman and learn so much. It has deepened our understanding of the FCJ spirituality and how vital it is not to lose sight of our mission.

Our heartfelt thanks to our companion Sisters and to the whole FCJ community for the privilege of being on the journey.

Margaret Daw and Isaac Demase
Benalla Pilgrims

'Whether at Marie Madeleine's birthplace, the place of her baptism at St Martial, the Jesuit school, St Acheul in Amiens where her son was educated, the vineyard where she spent many happy hours, or her final resting place at St Dominique in Paris, each place held profound significance in her life story and each was an opportunity to learn, pray and reflect on the particular time in her journey.'

News from Benalla FCJ College



Year 11 students from FCJ College, Benalla, with Prof. Jack Martin at St Vincent's Institute

A backstage tour of Saint Vincent's Institute.

Learn what it takes to make a breakthrough, hear about the cutting edge of medical research and discover what researchers at the Saint Vincent's Institute are doing to help Australians affected by disease.

SVI researchers regularly host tours of their labs. They relish the opportunity to explain their research to their guests and enjoy meeting people with an interest in the disease to which they dedicate their time.

In April, students from FCJ College, Benalla, made the 200 km trip to Melbourne to visit the researchers at SVI and hear Professor Jack Martin from the Bone Cell Biology and Disease Unit speak about medical research as a career. This is the third year running the school's Year 11 students have visited the Institute.

Deputy Principal Joseph Mount says it has been an invaluable experience. "The tours of the laboratories, talking formally and informally with the SVI scientists and being invited to share in the latest research is a wonderfully valuable experience for our students. The scientists have always been humble about their achievements and speak on a level that is inviting, stimulating and inspiring. We feel as though we are, for the day, part of a very determined, prestigious and happy community."



'Students from FCJ College, Benalla, made the 200 km trip to Melbourne to visit the researchers at SVI and hear Professor Jack Martin from the Bone Cell Biology and Disease Unit speak about medical research as a career.'

‘Every room is comfortable and spacious, with automatic ventilation and lighting, generous natural light and environmental features, interactive whiteboards and complete wireless access.’



Trade training
Benalla

Trade Training Centre

On Friday 21 March we saw the formal opening of FCJ College's new Trade Training Centre and the naming of the junior school Victoire Wing. The FCJ Province Leader, Sr Judith Routier fcJ, welcomed with great joy the General Superior of the FCJ Society, Sr Claire Sykes fcJ, and our Bishop of Sandhurst, Leslie Tomlinson DD. We were privileged to also have many FCJ Sisters, including members of the Province Council, our Chaplain, Fr Peter Taylor, Parish Priest of Benalla, the Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, Ms Philomena Billington, the Member for Indi, Ms Cathy McGowan MP, the Member for Benalla, Dr Bill Sykes MP, and many other distinguished guests.

When we gather our young people, who are our future, together with our leaders and respected elders, it is a time to remind ourselves of our story. Almost 120 years ago the Catholic community of Benalla, led by Dean Owen Davy, held a public meeting on what is now the site of FCJ College. I have pointed out to the students before that it is no accident our beautiful Church was not built for another ten years. The community wanted a Catholic secondary school for their children. Dean Davy provided the leadership, the FCJ Sisters provided the expertise and the labour, the community provided the resources. In today's value, the convent building cost the equivalent of three million dollars.

What is remarkable is that fully one-third of the cost was subscribed at that first meeting. For around 20 years, FCJ College was the sole provider of secondary education in the district – children of both Catholic and non-catholic families have always been welcome here. As we look around FCJ College, we are enjoying the results of their vision – they were people who believed in the future. In another 100 years, I hope people will look at what we have done and say that we too believed in a positive future.

Sr Claire Sykes fcJ, General Superior, spoke to the students of the significance of Marie Madeleine Victoire and what she hoped for all her extended family of children. Victoire was a happy, lively girl,

a hard-working student and a team player. In naming the Victoire wing, Sr Claire hoped that all the children who learn and live there will also be happy, lively, hard-working and team players. Ms Billington spoke of the background to Trade Training Centres and the importance and value of all kinds of work. She outlined some of the political activity required to promote and support Catholic education. Ms Billington also praised the work of the FCJ Sisters and their contribution and collaboration over many years in the life of Benalla and the Diocese.

Both the Trade Training Centre and the Victoire wing are striking, quality buildings. The Victoire wing complements the heritage buildings it stands beside, and inside it is also bright, inviting and modern. It represents the new vision of flexible learning – the rooms can be reconfigured to provide large and small spaces, for individual learning, small groups or large groups in open learning areas. Every room is comfortable and spacious, with automatic ventilation and lighting, generous natural light and environmental features, interactive whiteboards and complete wireless access.

Trade Training Centre is another strong design. Its form proclaims its function. It fits its site perfectly, and is full of practical details. Careful attention has been paid to natural light, attention to noise levels both within and outside the building, and to ventilation, including heating and cooling. The workshop is spacious, comfortable and well laid out, but the real beauty of this building is in the equipment it contains and the possibilities it opens up for our students.

The opening is a chance to celebrate and give thanks for the \$1.0 million Australian Government capital grant, which fully funded this project. I thank the staff and students who worked so hard to make the day a success. On your behalf, I also thank every organisation and every person whose time and talents went into making all this possible.

David Leslie

Aboriginal Catholic Ministry for Victoria



I am so fortunate to be able to volunteer with Australia's First Peoples, the oldest living culture in the world. In the present period of seeing creation through the eyes of the Cosmic Christ, we are beginning to understand how deep-seated is the Creation Spirituality of our First Peoples, with their profound belief in one Creator Spirit. As with all First Peoples, the Creation stories are similar to our Bible stories.

Gum nut Rosary beads

When I left Broome in 1995, I wanted to continue working with our First Australians as they had an intangible depth of spirit which I had not encountered elsewhere. I believe this 'spirit' is deep inside all First Nation cultures once a person looks below the surface to the beauty within. In 1996, I made contact with the coordinator of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne, as it was then known. Vicki Walker asked what I could offer. I said that I could help in the library.

Over the years I have been part of many wonderful developments: the *Pass It On Relay*, which culminated in message sticks being brought from all over Australia to Alice Springs in 2006. This was the twentieth anniversary of Pope John Paul II's speech to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Here, I learnt of the importance of land from a lady in the Northern Territory. The land is 'Our Mother'. Between sessions of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Catholic Council, which was held at the same time as the Relay, she would stamp her feet hard into the ground to get in touch with the spirits within.

The Archdiocese of Melbourne has recently refurbished the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry building. It is full of Aboriginal symbolism. Permission for the Blessed Sacrament to be reserved has been obtained. The tabernacle is in the shape of a mia-mia. The Victorian Aborigines lived in such dwellings. The sanctuary light is in the form of a campfire because that is where the stories are told at night and fire gives warmth and is used for cooking. The ciborium is a coolamon. A coolamon is used for gathering food and water, for carrying small babies and for healing Smoking Ceremonies. We celebrate the Eucharist on a monthly basis and sometimes hold Communion Services.

Currently I am working on the Rosary Project, which incorporates the painting of each mystery of the rosary: *The Happy Stories*, *The Sad Stories* and *The Wonderful Stories*. The first fifteen paintings had been seen all over Australia, so in 2010 we wanted to include the Luminous Mysteries, or *The Stories of Light*. This took us a step further in making gumnut rosaries in three sizes: small, medium and large.

There are many other projects in action currently. There is The Opening Doors Foundation, which aims to keep Koorie children in a Catholic or independent school of their choice. Other projects include the FIRE Carrier Project (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education), which is for primary and secondary students. Vicki is also involved in RAP, the Reconciliation Advancement Project for corporate bodies. The latest project has been The Proud Race Project, again for schools or other institutions that wish to become involved. Life-size bollards are made and the community researches information about local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is a great way for the community to find out about the history, culture and spirituality of local people or organisations and to grow in respect for and reconciliation with our First Peoples.

Helen Mary Langlands fcJ



In her office Helen Mary Langlands fcJ



The Third Mystery of Light by Melissa Brickell

‘The Victorian Aborigines lived in such dwellings. The sanctuary light is in the form of a campfire because that is where the stories are told at night and fire gives warmth and is used for cooking.’

‘Here, I learnt of the importance of land from a lady in the Northern Territory. The land is “Our Mother”.

Between sessions of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Catholic Council, which was held at the same time as the Relay, she would stamp her feet hard into the ground to get in touch with the spirits within.’



The Crucifixion by Richard Campbell

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20th International AIDS Conference Melbourne

20–25 July 2014

The International AIDS Conference is the premier gathering for those working in the field of HIV, as well as policy makers, persons living with HIV and other individuals committed to ending the pandemic. It is a chance to assess where we are, evaluate recent scientific developments and lessons learnt, and collectively chart a course forward. www.aids2014.org

What did I learn at this important international conference?

I learned that people living with AIDS in Australia are cared for by many people, especially doctors, nurses, family and friends. I learned that there is still the fear of judgment, discrimination and rejection from many people in the wider community and across the globe at large. I learned that in some countries people are put in prison because of their sexual orientation, so who is going to come forward to receive medication or find out if they suffer from HIV/ AIDS under these repressive conditions?

It is encouraging to know that there are great partnerships where clinics have been set up to enable people to receive the medication that will give them some quality of life. In Papua New Guinea, three clinics have been established in the Mount Hagan area. Some of the women have to walk three hours to reach the clinic to receive their medication and if it has run out they just walk the three hours home again. The area is mountainous and travelling even by car is often difficult. It is important that the drugs are taken on a daily basis to slow the effects of the virus as there is no cure.

One lady I met from Kenya is part of a team of four who care for over four hundred and fifty women, men and children, plus six hundred and fifty children who have been orphaned because their parents died from AIDS. The government in Kenya gives the AIDS tablets free to those who have the disease, but to combat the side effects other medication has to be bought at the chemist. The people in this area are very poor so the little



Jamie Davies Flickr

money they have is used to feed their children. This necessitates their taking the prescriptions to one of the team of four who buy this side-effect medication from money raised through the Edmund Rice Foundation in Australia. The women are also being helped to develop means of earning an income to support themselves and their families.

The greatest of my findings at this AIDS Conference is how God has used so many people to spread his love and care around the world. I feel that God's love for each of us would be shown more readily if we could become less judgmental of others' actions and the situations they may find themselves in.

Margaret Olsen fcj OAM

Margaret received this award for her Ministry to those in the HIV community.

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