



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH - HOLY SPIRIT PROVINCE IN AUSTRALIA, (No14/JUNE 2013)

WELCOME

EVERY time I have to travel somewhere by plane, I find the airports a fascinating place to be. Of course not because of the fact of long waiting or various security checks, but because of the unique opportunity to observe people and have a time simply to sit and think. It is great to see and try to imagine where do people go, where they are coming from, what kind of emotions accompany their “goodbyes” and “welcome”. Happy reunions and tearful farewells make me ponder on the different levels of relationship between the people in the places and communities we live in. I am always in awe of the ways communication has developed in the past few centuries— how quickly and comfortably we are able to move from one place to another.

Life is so interesting and I am so blessed to live at this time of world and church history where every single small event which happens in the smallest country in any place in the world can instantly be known around the world. The power of media makes me passionate about encouraging each other to share good stories in opposition to so much discouraging and depressing news we are bombarded with every day.

In this issue of the bi-annual Newsletter from the Holy Spirit Province you will find little and significant stories shared by our sisters ministering in this beautiful Land Down Under.

I hope that from the moment you open the PDF file (for those receiving this Newsletter electronically) or touch the first page of the printed copy, you will join me in words of admiration to the service of such a small group of sisters in the far away country.

I hope you will be encouraged to visit regularly our Website for the full version of some of the stories and for more updates “in the months between” till the next issue of this Newsletter.

While you read this June edition, you will be taken on a journey through the different states of Australia as well as make overseas trip to the Holy Land, with two of our sisters, who went there for their personal renewal.

We will give you a taste of the various ministries we are involved in. We will share with you some stories about our vocation as well as those we currently accompany in their discernment process. You will have a chance to hear about and from our associates. You will have an opportunity to meet two new sisters soon coming to Australia and listen to their life stories.

I am hoping that you will find some “food for thought” in the article which we together with the experts find the answer to the question: *Why should religious use the media?*

I hope that the time you spend reading will bring you happy memories, inspirational ideas and encourage you to see that the small Province in Australia is part of a bigger picture of an international Congregation which is so needed for families around the world.

Happy reading! ■



SR GRACE (GRAŻYNA
ROŚLAWSKA)
PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

STIR INTO FLAME OF SPIRIT



“STIR into Flame the Gift of God” was the motto of the international meeting of young perpetually professed Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth from around the world. The meeting took place January 15 – 25, 2013 in the Generalate in

Rome. The goals of that meeting were to bring together some of our sisters from different countries and cultures, to enable them to experience the reality and richness of our internationality; to offer a chance to delve deeper into our Nazareth spirituality and to be re-energized in their passion for our mission and charism. No wonder that the meeting took place in Rome, the heart of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the

Church.

I had the privilege to participate in the meeting and I have to say that the meeting met the set goals. I am very grateful for being there and having the opportunity to touch again the mystery of our charism and experience our Congregation in different ways.

Besides different meetings, talks and faith sharing, we had time to meet each other, to share our daily struggles and successes, our limitations and our dreams. I think it was most important that we could see a bigger picture of our Congregation; we could see each other through different eyes and we could see what we did not see before, especially the richness of our diversity. When I listened to the sisters’ stories about their ministries in different countries, I realised once again how rich we are by having many talented sisters full of courage, enthusiasm, love and faith. I really feel grateful for our Nazareth: that means for our sisters. I would like to say to each sister, “THANK YOU. Thank you for your dedicated life to spreading the Kingdom of God’s Love in whatever you do and wherever you live...”

What I said before was that one of the goals of the meeting was to delve deeper into our Nazareth spirituality. Many of the meetings helped us to discover anew the beauty and richness of our charism and spirituality. Gathering and Mass in the house on Via Machiavelli where our Mother Foundress lived and died was one of the most

touching experiences for many of us. We had time to meet Bl. Mother Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd (Mother Foundress) by being in her room, touching her belongings and praying individually in the chapel where she prayed. Once again I could see and experience that our charism lives in me and in each sister; that our charism is a dynamic reality and has to be experienced, guarded, deepened and expanded to grow. To be in the heart of the Church, it is impossible not to visit the Vatican and many other sacred places connected with our faith history and our Congregational history.

We had a chance to see and pray in many places and it is not possible to mention all of them. The most significant events for me were the Mass in the tomb of the Bl. Pope John Paul II and the Vespers with Pope Benedict XVI in the basilica of St. Paul Outside the Wall. Visiting and prayer in each church was like meeting with many witnesses of our faith. These called and inspired me to be a better witness of Gods’ love.

However, the meeting finished officially and we came back home. The spirit of that time lives in us. We have the challenge to “be stirrers of the flame in our communities, wherever we find ourselves. I have a challenging task to stir into flame the gift of God by allowing the Holy Spirit to stir into flame the gift of God in my heart. ■

BY SR MARGARET (MALGORZATA KOZUB)



For more photos from this event go to: www.csfm.org.au

TIME OF RENEWAL



DURING this past year, I was given the opportunity to participate in a study tour of the Holy Land as part my renewal. The trip was organised through Australian Catholic University, with Sister Mary Coloe, pbvm, and Doctor Michael Theophilos, who were the lecturers on our trip. The group was a mixture of students, teachers, school administrators, a minister of religion and various interested people. Sister Mary and Doctor Michael are experts in their respective fields of biblical, scriptural and archaeological studies. Having spent time in the Holy Land, previously, they were able to add more depth to our study, making the experience so much more than simply a tourist view of the Holy Land. Every evening, we gathered to review and respond to the events of the day and prepare for the next day. Their knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, along with the archaeological information was exceptional.

There were many memorable experiences during our stay in the Holy Land and each day brought a deeper appreciation of this sacred place and a more personal experience of Jesus. A highlight for me was to have snow in Jerusalem, with the holy city wrapped in a blanket of white. Jerusalem usually gets snow every two or three years and only a dusting at most, so the city was not prepared for the several centimetres that fell and didn't have the equipment necessary to clear the area. The city literally shut down. We were fortunate to be staying at Notre Dame, which was only a short walk to the New Gate of the Old City. Having our scheduled tour cancelled, many of us ventured into the Old City on our own and although all the shops were closed, we were fortunate to find the Church of the Holy Sepulchre open. With few people out and about, we were able to spend hours in prayer and reflection in the church.

Another highlight was going to Nazareth and while there, I was able to meet two of our sisters. Sister Speranza met me and took me to see their house, where they had lunch prepared for me. Sister Speranza even made it possible for me to speak with Sister Mary Michael on her mobile. Sister Mary Michael and I lived in Syria years ago, and she is now stationed with our sisters in Haifa. After this short visit, Sister made sure to get me to

the next location on our tour. It was wonderful to meet our sisters from another country in this distant land. I'm grateful to have had this opportunity, as it makes the Scriptures seem more alive to me, especially during the Holy Week Services. ■

BY SR MAUREEN JOSEPH STEMPKO



TANTUR EASTER ENCOUNTER PROGRAMME

I ARRIVED in Tantur Israel to begin the Easter Experience programme with the five others from Perth. We joined nine other people from the United States, India and Ireland. The Rector, Fr. Tim Lowe, and staff gave a very warm welcome and outlined the programme. Firstly we spent time in the environs of Jerusalem and had lectures on Biblical geography. Our guide helped the group connect with the landscape by reading from the Old Testament. In this way the Scriptures came alive for us. We went on to visit the ruins of the Second Temple Jerusalem. In preparation for Holy Week, we walked from the Mount of Olives to the Old City and reflected on the Gospel in each place. After Mass on Palm Sunday, I joined thousands of other Christians walking joyfully from Bethpage to Jerusalem. I was so happy to be joined by Sisters: Bernadetta, Magdalena, Christella, and Edyta from communities in Haifa and Nazareth. For the first few days of Holy Week the group spent time reflecting on the early life of Jesus. It was a great grace to be in Jerusalem for the Easter Triduum. On Holy Thursday the group went to Ecce Homo to celebrate the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. After Mass we were invited to share a simple meal. Afterwards, I spent time in Adoration and quiet prayer at the Altar of Repose. Later that night, we attended the Holy Hour at the Church of All Nations, Gethsemane: I was able to watch and pray with the Lord. On Good Friday, with one of the priests, I went to Jerusalem to pray the Via Dolorosa. I met our sisters (Sr. Bernadetta and Sr. Renata) at the Damascus Gate and joined some others from Poland. After the Via Dolorosa I went with the sisters to the Polish House in Jerusalem. After a light breakfast, we went back to the Holy Sepulchre to join the Latin Patriarch for the Solemn Celebration of the Passion of the Lord. With Sr. Bernadetta and Sr. Renata I was able to attend the ceremony at the Calvary itself and also to kiss the relic of the true cross during the Veneration of the Cross. After the ceremony the sisters and I were able to go inside the tomb to pray. We attended the Easter Vigil at Ecce Homo. On Easter Sunday morning I went back to the Holy Sepulchre with our sisters. We attended Easter Sunday Mass celebrated at the empty tomb by the Latin Patriarch. On Easter Monday we went to Emmaus for Mass. After Mass the Custodian gave each person a piece of blessed

bread to share. It was a very joyful celebration. The group spent most of the second week in Galilee. As the Tantur group arrived at Nazareth I was met by Sr. Bernadetta. She began by taking me to pray at the well in the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation. Sr. Bernadetta then brought me to our house to visit our community in Nazareth. It was wonderful to spend just over twenty minutes with the sisters and to hear about their life.

I went with Sr. Bernadetta to visit the Church of St. Joseph. This visit gave me an opportunity to reflect on the hidden life and love of the Holy Family. It also gave an opportunity to reflect on our charism.

I rejoined the group from Tantur for a visit to "Nazareth Village". It is an attempt to re-enact the story of Jesus' childhood and early life: we met

a shepherd tending sheep, visited a synagogue and saw a carpenter in his workshop. We shared a traditional first century meal of soup, vegetables and bread, before saying goodbye to Nazareth.

In my final days at Tantur I was able to spend more personal time in Jerusalem. Going to the Holy Sepulchre very early in the morning, The programme at Tantur

also included visits to archaeological sites, lectures on the political and social situation in Israel and Palestine and Scripture lectures. We spent some time at the Dead Sea and had a short visit to Qumran. The group spent a day in Hebron and visited a Palestinian refugee camp beside the separation wall at Bethlehem. It was very upsetting to see the situation of the people. We also visited the "Tent of Nations", near Hebron, where a Catholic family is trying to make a peace centre from their farm. Their peace farm is visited by people from all over the world but their land has been targeted by Israeli settlers. During the course, we had some lectures from Jewish and Palestinian people and also some input on the peace process. We began each day with Mass concluded the day with prayer together.

I was very privileged to spend this time in the Holy Land over Easter. It was a time of grace for me when I was able to pray at the Holy Places. I remembered all of your intentions in my prayers in the Holy Land. I am very thankful for this opportunity. I returned home with many blessings from the Lord. ■

BY SR JOSEPH MAZUR

For full story and more pictures go to: www.csfm.org.au



STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR VOCATIONS

PRAYING for Vocations is very important because saying “Yes” to God’s calling the individual to life work and meaning. Fulfilment of one's vocation not only creates the individual into whom he/she is supposed to be, it also fulfils God's plan for all of his creation.

During Lent, Saint Michael’s Parish, Blacktown South invited the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth to lead the parish in the Stations of the Cross for Vocations on the 22 February, 2013. Eight sisters attended: Sister Grażyna Ročławska, (sacramental coordinator of the parish, Sister Lucyna Frączek, Sister Emilia Smolak, Sister Paula Volchek, Sister Malgorzata Kozub, Sister Lois Ann Richardi, and Sister Jean Wojcik.

Before the congregation started the stations, Sister Grażyna Ročławska introduced the format of the service. Sister Malgorzata Kozub operated the computer, which projected a visual of each station by the artist Sieger Kóder. These pictures were beautiful and unique representations of the stations. Then the meditation began after she read the station’s title. Next the sisters in the front pews lit a vigil and they took turns placing the light on the steps in front of the Altar later forming a cross of the fourteen stations. Sister Jean Wojcik read the meditation for each station and then Kieran or Veronica read the special prayer that followed. After the picture of the station was screened, pictures of people in consecrated life followed. Participants in the Congregation said that they enjoyed the stations very much. Fourteen families took one of the candles lit during the ceremony home to remind themselves to pray for vocations.

These Stations were repeated in two different parishes. Although the main format remained the same, each parish had added their unique way of praying them as well. The second of the Stations of the Cross for Vocations was held in Saint Padre Pio Parish in Glenmore Park on 8 March, 2013, where Father Robert Riedling is the parish priest. Although a smaller contingent of sisters attended, the stations were beautifully presented, and we received many expressions of thanks from the congregation.

Father Albert Wasniowski OSPPE invited the sisters to pray the Vocation Stations of the Cross at the parish of St. Margaret Mary in Merrylands NSW on 15 March, 2013. Sisters Grażyna

Ročławska, Malgorzata Kozub, Paula Volchek, Lucyna Frączek and Jean Wojcik welcomed the opportunity to pray with this parish. A fairly good crowd came to participate in the prayers.

Father Wasniowski entered the sanctuary vested in purple stole and robe. Altar boys and an acolyte processed to each station before it was introduced. The prayers were said as in previous gatherings. At the end of the stations, fourteen members of the congregation representing their families, took home one of the ceremonial candles. The Stations were followed by Mass and then a scriptural teaching in the parish hall. The sisters stayed for the Mass and then returned home as it was getting rather late in the evening. ■

BY SR JEAN WOJCIK



Photo: Shelly BARNS



THIS IS GOD CALLING



IN a little book of compiled teachings on the “Characteristic Virtues of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, as taught by Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd” our Foundress, she writes: “Just as Our Lord Jesus Christ chose as his mother the most Holy Virgin

Mary and as his foster Father the chaste St Joseph, - so, too, did he call each Sister of the Congregation to serve him in virginal purity”. (*Virtues pg. 7 unpublished work*)

One day a group of sisters was talking about how they were called to be Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Each story was different, but inspiring. Over the next few issues, one of the stories of “Call” will be shared with you, our readers.

Sister Emilia Smolak (*in the Congregation since 1982*) shares this story of her call to Nazareth:

I was just about to finish my secondary education. I had plans for my future, the plans included marriage to a boy I knew for more than two years. I had NEVER given religious life any thought at all! However, one day I was on the train and there was only one vacant seat. The seat was next to a nun! After I sat down, we started to talk. Her name was Sister Bogusława from St. Elizabeth's congregation. She seemed so nice, “normal” and “down to earth”. In fact, she was the first sister that I ever really conversed with. The trip took forty five minutes and I left the train in my town, but soon I realized that it was a life changing experience and for the first time it occurred to me that perhaps religious life could be an option.

A few months after that, I went on a nine day walking pilgrimage from Wrocław to Częstochowa to the shrine of the Black Madonna. During the pilgrimage the thought of entering religious life came to mind again. I returned home but ten days later I “had” to go back to Częstochowa for the Feast of our Lady.

On this day I met the first Nazareth sister, it was Sister Bogumiła Baran. After many prayers and

exchanged letters one year later on 26 August 1982 I was one of six new postulants accepted into the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth by Mother Medarda. Six new sisters for the Jubilee of 600 years of the Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa.

Sister Bogusława and I became good friends over the years. She always called me “Tereska from the train”. We kept in touch until she died. Meeting her on the train changed my life completely. May she rest in peace. ■

BY SR EMILIA SMOLAK



CALLED BY NAME

ON a very wet and cold Saturday in April, I attended the “Called By Name” retreat run by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Marayong, NSW. Before the retreat I had never met the sisters and had not heard much about them. All I really knew was that they had a strong Polish connection and a big focus on the family. I was really looking forward to learning more about their community and getting to meet some of them. The retreat was also the very first discernment retreat I’d ever been on, so I was quite excited about the day and what it would hold for me.

Thanks to the weather, I arrived very early for the retreat! I remember being worried about being so ahead of time and imposing on the sisters, but when I was arrived I was instantly welcomed by Sister Julia and Sister Grace, both of whom seemed very happy to have me there! While we waited for the other women attending the retreat to arrive, I got to meet Sister Margaret, Sister Flavia, Sister Lucy, Sister Cristina and Sister Jean, who told me a lot about her life and work as a sister.

The day began with a casual discussion and opportunity to meet some of the sisters and the other retreat participants. We then moved to another space where Sister Margaret gave an amazing talk to us about the meaning of consecrated life and vocation. Afterwards, we separated into groups to discuss different Bible passages relating to vocation and discernment and at the end of the exercise shared our thoughts. It was great to hear how everyone had interpreted their own passages and how they recognised and thought about discernment.

It was then time for a lunch lovingly prepared by Sister Lucy. We all enjoyed getting to know the sisters and each other better. After lunch we learnt some more about the community itself and about the process of application and formation before hearing Sister Grace’s vocation story. Her story affected me deeply; it was so touching, genuine and happy, and I learnt a lot by hearing her speak.

We then took a couple of photos and moved into the chapel for Adoration. Sister Grace gave us an introduction to praying the Vespers and taught us a few songs we would sing during the Eucharist. Having the time for Adoration was something I really looked forward to. It was wonderful to be able to pray in peace and solidarity with the Sisters before Christ, and I remember spending much of the time

contemplating what I had learnt and received during the day. We then had Vespers, which was a new and very beautiful experience for me – especially in terms of working out which pages of the book we needed to follow!

After Benediction, we prepared ourselves for Mass, which was celebrated by Father Damian. The most memorable part of Mass for me was definitely Father’s homily, as he ended up giving us the beautiful story of his vocation! Following Mass, I got to meet some more of the sisters – Sister Barbara and Sister Emilia – before having a lovely, light-hearted and very happy dinner.

Spending time with the sisters was such a joyful and enriching experience. I not only had a wonderful opportunity to learn a lot more about the community, but also got to meet some very inspiring women. I discovered a lot by going on the retreat, not only about the sisters, but also about myself. I realised that we can’t rush to know God’s Will for each of us – He will reveal it to us when we are ready, in a spirit of trust and prayer. I had a fantastic day with the sisters and really can’t wait to spend more time with them again! ■

BY SOPHIE BOFFA



For more photos from this event go to: www.csfm.org.au

SR BOGUMILA MALIKOWSKA COMING TO AUSTRALIA (1)



Rodzina

Urodziłam się 28 lutego 1971 roku w Sępopolu. Mam 3 braci i 1 siostrę, ja jestem najmłodsza. Moja Mama zmarła w 1996 roku, po operacji na woreczek żółciowy (byłam wtedy neoprofeską), miała 66 lat. Mój Tata żyje, mieszka sam w moim rodzinnym domu na wsi w Ponikach, jesienią skończy 75 lat. Jest jeszcze sprawny, chociaż w pracach domowych typu sprzątanie, gotowanie, zakupy nie bardzo sobie radzi, pomaga mu mój najstarszy brat Przemek z żoną Wioletką, ja gdy jestem na urlopie robię generalne sprzątanie, pranie itp.

Powołanie do Nazaretu i posługa

Po liceum uczyłam się w Szczytnie w Studium Nauczycielskim, tam w internacie mieszałam z Aliną, która zaraz po ukończeniu szkoły wstąpiła do Nazaretanek w Częstochowie, ja poszłam na „kuroniówkę”, co miesiąc jeździłam do Urzędu Pracy w Bartoszycach, była przy nim biblioteka, a ponieważ bardzo lubię czytać wypożyczałam książki i w jednej z nich znalazłam obrazek z naszą Matką Założycielką z modlitwą za rodziny i adresem do Częstochowy przypomniałam sobie Alinę i napisałam do niej. Ona wysłała mi zaproszenie na rekolekcje w lutym dla dziewcząt pragnących założyć rodzinę. Z koleżanką Gosią pojechałyśmy spotkać się z Aliną, a przy okazji rekolekcje. I wszystko się zaczęło. W pociągu, gdy wracałyśmy do domu płakałam prawie całą drogę mówiąc do koleżanki „Gosia ja wracam, nie wiem co się stało ale ja wracam”. Od lutego do czerwca przeżyłam wiele wahań. Dopiero w czerwcu poczułam wewnętrzny pokój, radość, odwagę by to zrobić napisałam do Sióstr Nazaretanek w Częstochowie. Gdy weszłam do Nazaretanek wiedziałam i byłam pewna, że to jest to miejsce. Postulat przyjął 27 lipca 1993 roku. W postulacie przez cały rok pracowałam w naszym przedszkolu w Częstochowie. Po pierwszych ślubach pracowałam w przedszkolu w Gdyni, tam podjęłam Studia Teologiczne, po 2 latach studiów, zaczęłam katechizować w szkole podstawowej w Gdyni Chyloni. Byłam tam przez rok, był to mój czas przygotowania do ślubów wieczystych – okazał się szalenie trudnym czasem. Wówczas przeżyłam niesamowitą próbę mojej wiary i powołania. Śluby wieczyste złożyłam jednak 26 lipca 2003 roku. W Wadowicach katechizowałam w Szkole Podstawowej 3 lata i po magisterium 3 lata w szkole średniej. Potem zmiana na 2 lata do Krakowa i katecheza w Szkole Podstawowej, potem Słupsk, w którym jestem 4 rok i katecheza w gimnazjum.



Dlaczego Australia?

Gdy 2 lata temu nasza Matka Generalna napisała o misji w Ganie wiedziałam, że się nie zgłoszę, ale nie dawało mi to spokoju, myślałam sobie „jestem tak związana z Polską, mam już wszystko wypracowane, nareszcie mam stabilność, spokój” itp. Ale ciągle wracała do mnie myśl o moim strachu i tchórzostwie, potem słysząc zgłosiły się siostry - jada! „Ła! A jak tak kocham Polskę! Tu jest tyle do zrobienia!” W wakacje i na początku roku szkolnego 2011 przypomniałam sobie pewne wydarzenie sprzed lat, gdy byłam w liceum pani z geografii pytała mnie przy mapie świata o Australię, nie mogłam jej znaleźć, szukałam w Europie, Afryce, Azji i Ameryce – było mi wstyd i dostałam niedostateczny. Postanowiłam wtedy, że tak nauczę się geografii, że będę miała 4 na koniec roku (było to wielkim wyczynem, bo ona nie stawiała 5, uczeń mógł być na 4). Dopięłam swego. Powróciło to w mojej pamięci i postanowiłam, że jak będzie prośba z Australii to się zgłoszę,

i tak spokój do mnie wrócił. Niedługo po moich postanowieniach Siostra Prowincjalna Grażyna napisała prośbę o wsparcie personalne Australii - no i po moim spokoju. Znow się wszystko zaczęło, „mocowałam się” z Bogiem, z sobą, szukając różnych przeszkód. Teraz gdy już to jest jasne, że jadę naprawdę – trochę mam mętlik w głowie, boje się, ale ufam Panu Bogu, że jeśli tak mnie poprowadził, to będzie dobrze. Boje się lotu samolotem,

zwierząt i gadów Australii, trudu czasu adaptacji do nowych warunków, kultury, języka, odległości. A jednocześnie bardzo mnie to pociąga i ciekawi, jest dla mnie niesamowitym wyzwaniem, impulsem- to jak drugie powołanie i znow zostawienie wszystkiego. Chciałbym się odnaleźć w nowej i nieznannej dla mnie rzeczywistości i odkryć prawdę dlaczego właśnie ja i Australia, czego tak naprawdę Pan Jezus tam ode mnie oczekuje?

Osobiste zainteresowania

Interesuje mnie duchowość, życie świętych (przeczytałam ostatnio książkę o australijskiej świętej Mary MacKillop – niesamowita historia). Lubię czytać książki, pracować w grodzie i w nim wypoczywać, lubię chodzić po lesie, i po górach, lubię jeździć rowerem. Interesują mnie ludzie – ich sposób przeżywania różnych rzeczy, osobowości, kultura. Lubię muzykę, lubię oglądać komedie, filmy kostiumowe i biograficzne oraz kabarety. Gdy jestem w nowym miejscu lubię poznawać jego historię, zwiedzać ciekawe miejsca przez to po jakimś czasie zadomawiam się. W relacjach z drugim człowiekiem bardzo cenię prawdę, Bardzo kocham nasze Zgromadzenie, mimo że doświadczyłam wielu prób mojej wiary i powołania, mimo słabości moich i słabości sióstr. Mam w sobie wewnętrzne przekonanie, że to jest ta droga, którą dla mnie wybrał Bóg, a ja się zgodziłam. W Polsce, czy w Australii, chcę żyć zgodnie z Jego wolą. ■

BY SR BOGUMILA MALIKOWSKA

SR BOGUMILA MALIKOWSKA COMING TO AUSTRALIA (2)

Family

I was born on 28 February 1971 in Sepopol. I have 3 brothers and 1 sister. I am the youngest. My mum passed away in 1996, as a result of a gallbladder operation (I was only a neo-professed sister), she was only 66. My dad is still alive and lives on his own in our family house in Poniki- he will be 75 this autumn. He is looking after himself well, however now and then he needs some support in household and shopping. My eldest brother Przemek with wife Wioletka help him. When I come for the summer holidays I do the general cleaning etc.

Vocation to Nazareth and ministry

After High School I started Teaching College in Szczytno. I was living in the boarding house with Alina, who when we finished school, entered our Congregation in Czestochowa. At that time I was on the government support, every month travelling to Bartoszyce, to "Centrelink" as well as the local library. I love reading, so I borrowed many books. One day I found in one of the books a picture of Mother Foundress with the prayer and address to our sisters on the back. I remembered about Alina, so I wrote to her. She sent me an invitation for the retreat for women who want to start a family. Together with my friend Gosia I went to see Alina and to participate in the retreat. And then everything started. I cried all the way back. I said to Gosia: "I am going back there, I don't know why but I have to". From February to June I had so many doubts. But in June I felt inner peace, joy and felt brave enough to write to the sisters to make the next step and I wrote to the sisters in Czestochowa. When I entered the house I felt that this is my place. I became postulant on 27 July 1993. During postulancy I worked in the preschool in Czestochowa. After first vows I worked in the preschool in Gdynia and began the Study of Theology. After 2 years of study I was teaching RE in Gdynia Chylonia. I was there one year only – it was the time to prepare for final vows – time for my faith and vocation to be tested. Eventually I made my final vows on 26 July 2003. I taught RE in Wadowice for 3 years in Primary School and after graduating with a Master of Theology Degree, 3 years in the High School. Then I was transferred to Krakow and Slupsk, where I am until now teaching RE in Junior High School.



Why Australia?

When 2 years ago, Mother Jana asked for volunteers to Ghana, I knew that I would not put my hand up, but I could not stop thinking: "I am so attached to Poland, I have such a well organised, stabile, peaceful life, etc." I thought a lot about my fears and apprehension. When I heard that the sisters are going there I thought: "Wow! But I love Poland so much! There is so much to do here". During summer holiday and beginning of the school year 2011, I remembered one event from many years ago. When I was in High School my geography teacher asked me to point to the map of Australia and I could not find it (trying to point to places in Europe, Africa and Asia and America)- I was so embarrassed and failed the subject. I promised myself to learn my geography and finished that year with distinction. This event stayed in my memory and I promised myself that if there would be a request for Australia, I would volunteer. This brought me back my peace. Shortly after that Sister Grace, provincial, wrote the request for personnel and... my peace was gone again. I began a "tug a war" with God, with myself, I was looking for excuses. Now, that everything is clear that I am going – I feel a little dizzy, anxious, but trust in God's guidance. I am scared of flying, scared of reptiles and Australian animals, the hardship of enculturation, learning the language, culture and distances. I am curious of new things and challenged to follow my second vocation- to leave everything and go. I would like to discover what God really wants from me putting "Australia and me" together?

Personal interests

I am interested in spirituality, life of the saints (read recently the book of St Mary MacKillop – amazing story). I like reading, working in the garden, resting in nature, bushwalking, hiking, riding the bike. I am interested in people's personalities and cultures. I like music, watching movies, biographies and stand up comedies. I like to learn the history of new places in order to feel settled there. I value the truth in human relationships. I love our Congregation despite that my faith and vocation were tested, despite mine and other sisters' weaknesses. I feel that this is my way, chosen for me by God which I agreed to follow. In Poland or Australia, I would like to live according to his Will. ■

Translated by Sr Grace Roclawska

THIS AND THAT FROM HERE AND THERE



In Parramatta Cathedral's yard for the Youth Event.



In St Marys' Cathedral for prayers for Vocations.



Bp Ingham, Sr Valerie with group at Stanwell Tops during the Leadership Retreat Weekend .



"Youngish" priests of Parramatta Diocese meeting in our Chapel in Marayong.



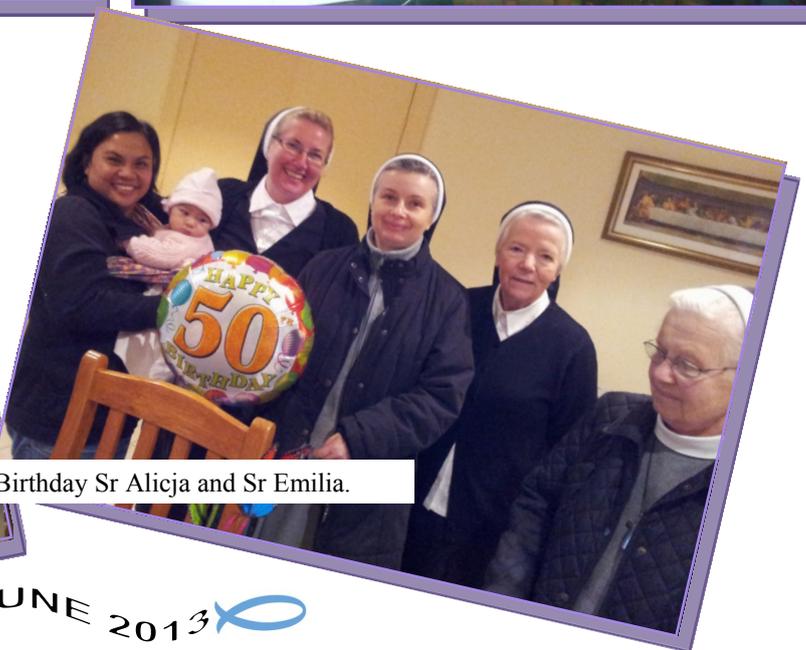
Sr Emilia with her work colleagues at workshop.



With Fr Christopher and newly baptised Catholics.



Happy 50th Birthday Sr Alicja and Sr Emilia.



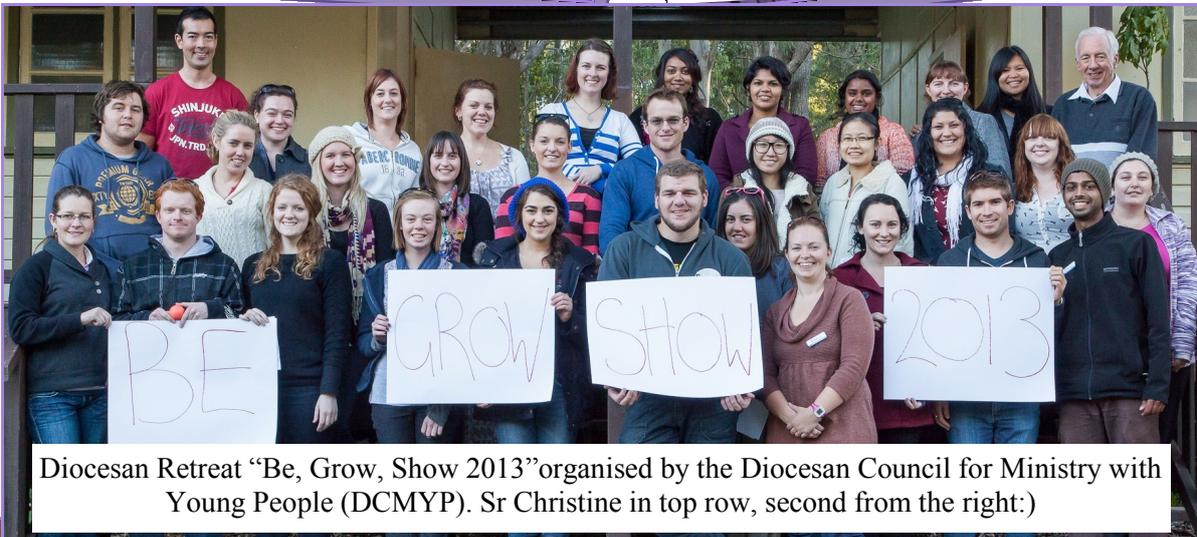
THIS AND THAT FROM HERE AND THERE



Sr Anita in Rome during the Governance Study group.



Rewards for the children from the Polish Saturday School



Diocesan Retreat "Be, Grow, Show 2013" organised by the Diocesan Council for Ministry with Young People (DCMYP). Sr Christine in top row, second from the right:)

Photo: Eloy AGUIAR



"Farewell" to Fr Pajdak and welcome to Fr Zasiura and Fr Szura



Archbishop Zimowski visiting Aged Care.



WANT TO HEAR FROM US MORE OFTEN?
We are a click away!
www.csfn.org.au

SR AGNIESZKA MISIAK COMING TO THE LAND DOWN UNDER (1)



O mnie i moich bliskich słów kilka...

Imię Agnieszka otrzymałam po mojej babci – ze strony mamy, której nigdy nie poznałam (moja mama zresztą też nie, gdyż jako niemowlę została wzięta na wychowanie przez ciotkę, ale to już całkiem inna historia)... i tak imię od chrztu stało się też moim imieniem zakon-

nym. Urodziłam się w Brzezinach k. Łodzi, 13.02.1965 r., w rodzinie dziś określanej jako bardzo wielodzietna: mam cztery siostry i brata, dwoje rodzeństwa – siostra i brat zginęli w wypadku. Tato nie żyje od 10 lat, mama (85 lat) pod troskliwą opieką mojej siostry cieszy się wnukami, prawnukami... no i oczywiście moim powołaniem - mama od dziecka chciała być siostrą zakonną. Jej życzenie ułożyło się inaczej, ale Jej pragnienia spełniły się we mnie... taką mam nadzieję!

Przygoda z Nazaretem...

„ Nie chciałabym tu zostać... ” z takimi myślami przekraczałam furtkę dzielącą mnie od świata w domu częstochowskiego Nazaretu na Jasnogórskiej 58, gdzie znalazłam się z grupą pielgrzymkową z Łodzi. Również rok później zadzwoniłam do tej samej furtki prosząc o przyjęcie... Tego nie da się wytłumaczyć ot tak po ludzku... tajemnica? Może! Wiem jedno, nigdy nie chciałam być zakonną i nigdy nauczycielką... w efekcie: 29 lat w zakonie – wstąpiłam 17 czerwca 1984 r., i 28 lat uczenia religii ...

„Miłość zerwaną znieś jak gorączkę Z chusteczką do nosa w łzach Świąte cierpienie pocałuj w rączkę Bogu się mówi – tak” ks. Jan Twardowski
Ostatecznie TAK powiedziałam Bogu składając śluby wieczyste 9 sierpnia 1992r. – s. M. Agnieszka od Boga Miłości Wiernej.

...trwa dalej

Główną posługą w Zgromadzeniu – jak wspomniałam wyżej – była i jest katechizacja dzieci i młodzieży oraz związana z tym praca duszpasterska w parafii. Pracowałam w Częstochowie, w Gdańsku i w Krakowie. Zawsze w małych, przypara-

fialnych wspólnotach, gdzie trzeba jak w każdej rodzinie ugotować, zrobić zakupy, posprzątać itp. Oprócz pracy w szkole, działalność w duszpasterstwie: prowadzenie grup parafialnych, przygotowanie dzieci i młodzieży do sakramentów, organizacja wyjazdów wakacyjnych i zimowych. W wakacje pomoc w naszych placówkach np. przy osobach starszych we Wrocławiu, dzieciach w Rabce, gościach w Komańczy itd. Charakter pracy wymagał podnoszenia kwalifikacji, dlatego oprócz magisterium z teologii na UKSW w Warszawie, ukończyłam podyplomowo Organizację i Zarządzanie Oświatą, konieczne do pełnienia kierowniczych funkcji w Oświacie – byłam dyrektorką parafialnej szkoły katolickiej w Krakowie.

Dlaczego Australia?

Może ze względu na misie *coala* (które właściwie misiami nie są) - nazywam się Misiak (też misiem nie jestem!) A tak trochę poważniej – intuicja i wewnętrzne przekonanie, że właśnie tu! Ja już tak mam – wiem,

że **tak**, ale nie wiem **dlaczego**, mam nadzieję, że na miejscu Bóg mi da odpowiedź... Jestem otwarta na nowe, lubię nowe wyzwania, to co nowe mnie nie przeraża, ale dopinguje, dodaje energii... no i słońce, którego u nas tak mało!... I jeszcze to super spotkanie z s.Helen, obiecałam, że będę na nią czekać w Australii!

Co lubię robić w wolnym czasie?

... to brzmi jak obietnica, że taki czas będę mieć - bardzo się cieszę!



Książki, muzyka, film, ale przede wszystkim odkrywanie i podziwianie piękna przyrody. Ten zachwyt towarzyszy mi od dziecka (dorastałam na wsi), a znalazł odzwierciedlenie m.in. w poezji ks. Jana Twardowskiego, z której pisałam pracę magisterską.

Moje dzisiaj.

Pracuję w dwóch szkołach, w jednej integracyjnej – uczniowie z różnymi dysfunkcjami.

W parafii prowadzę katechezę dla dzieci 4-5 letnich oraz scholę dziecięcą – młodzieżową (nie gram na gitarze, mam animatorki muzyczne). Przygotowuję dzieci do I Komunii świętej. W domu – gotowanie, sprząatanie itp.

Znajomość języków – mówię poprawnie po polsku, co współcześnie w Polsce nie jest aż tak oczywiste, znam trochę rosyjski, próbuję uczyć się angielskiego. ■

BY SR AGNIESZKA MISIAK

SR AGNIESZKA MISIAK COMING TO THE LAND DOWN UNDER (2)

About me and my relatives...

I was named Agnieszka after my grandmother – from my mum’s side. I have never met her nor has my mum, because my mum was brought up by my aunty, but this is a totally different story...). My baptismal name became my religious name. I was born in Brzeziny near Lodz on 13 February 1965, in the family of many siblings: I have 4 sisters and a brother. My brother and sister died in the car accident. My dad passed away 10 years ago. Mum (85 years old) is being looked after by my sister and enjoying her grandchildren and great-grandchildren and my vocation – because since her childhood she wanted to become a nun. Her life took a different direction but her dream became real in me... I hope so!

Adventure with Nazareth...

“I would not want to stay here”- this thought accompanied me when I entered the gate of our convent in Czestochowa at 58 Jasnogorska Street with the group of pilgrims from Lodz. Exactly one year later I rang the very same door asking to accept me to religious life. I cannot explain this from the human perspective... mystery? Maybe! I know that I never wanted to be a nun neither a teacher... and now I am already 29 years in the Congregation (I entered on 17 June 1984) and 28 of teaching Religious Education.

There is a poem by Fr Twardowski: *Take broken heart as a fever, with a handkerchief full of tears kiss the hand of suffering. To God you say – YES.* I said my final YES to God during the final vows on 9 August 1992 as Sister Maria Agnieszka of the Faithful Love of God.

Adventure continues....

My main ministry – as I mentioned above- was and is teaching Religious Education as well as pastoral work with children and youth in the parish setting. I worked in Czestochowa, Gdansk and Krakow. I was always in the small parochial communities, where you had to, like in any family: cook, do the shopping, cleaning etc. Besides my work at school I was active in the pastoral

work: preparation of children to the sacraments, organising the summer and winter holidays events. During summer holidays I would help in our provincial sponsored ministries, eg. In the nursing house in Wroclaw, children in Rabka, visitors in Komancza etc. My work required continued professional development, this is why, despite already holding the Master of Theology Degree from Warsaw University of Cardinal Wyszynski, I also completed the post- graduate School of Education and Business – which was necessary to be able to be a principal of our catholic school in Krakow.

Why Australia?

Maybe because of the koala bears (which I already know are not bears) – because my surname is Misiak (by the way I am also not a teddy bear). But seriously – it is my intuition and inner feeling that I have to go there! This is just me- I might not know *why* but I know that I *have to*. I hope God will give the answer when I get there. I am open for new challenges, what is new is not scaring me, but motivates and energises... and of course I love the sun which is so limited here in Europe! I also had a great meeting with Sr Helen, I promised to wait for her in Australia!

What do I like to do in free time?... It sounds like a promise that I will have some- I am so happy about it! I love reading books, music, movies, but most of all discovering nature. I grew up with the awe of nature (growing up in the country), which I found reflected in the poetry of Fr Twardowski (I wrote my theological thesis based on his poetry).

My today.

I am working in two schools. One of them is for the children with additional needs. In the parish I lead the catechesis for the 4-5 years old children and the little schola for the young children and youth (I do not play the guitar, but I have some musicians working with me). I am preparing children for the First Eucharist. At home- cooking, cleaning etc. I do speak properly in Polish –

which believe me, is not so common these days in our country. I know Russian a little and already started to learn English. ■



Translated by Sr Grace Roclawska

SR PAULA'S ENGLISH STUDY



G'day everyone. This is me and my class. I am still studying English.



Sometimes I try new food..



Sr Jean helps me in my study a lot!



Sometimes I go to see famous places.



Even under water...



But most of the time it is just a hard work to learn...

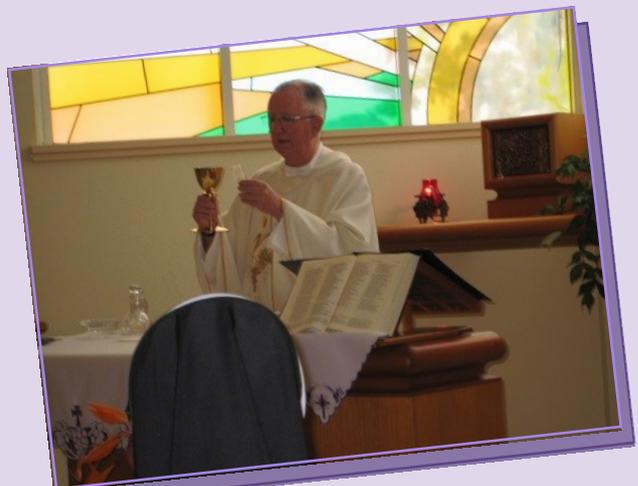
FIFTY YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD CELEBRATED

ON 29 June, 2013, Father Keating (former parish priest of Our Lady of Grace Parish in North Beach) will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of his ordination. Since the sisters in Sydney could not attend the celebrations in WA, Father Ken decided to come to celebrate his special occasion in Marayong.

On Thursday, 14 March, sisters from the nearby convents came to Our Lady Queen of Poland Convent to attend Father Keating's Thanksgiving Mass. The propers of the Mass were from the feast of Saints Peter and Paul which are used on 29 June, the actual day of Father's ordination. Still more appropriate were these readings because the conclave had just elected Pope Francis. Sisters Lois Richardi, and Jean Wojcik read the first and second readings. Sisters Alicja Drabik, Ludwika Pliszka, Joanna Zarzyczna, and Małgorzata Kozub read the Prayers of the Faithful. Sister Grażyna played her guitar and led the singing of the hymns.

After the Mass, the sisters gathered in the dining room for speeches, gift giving and breakfast. Although many had to rush off to work, those remaining took a few more pictures on the lawn to

commemorate the occasion and spent some time in conversation with Father Ken. ■



AUDIT RANKS HOLY FAMILY SERVICES AMONG THE BEST



HOLY Family Services is a leading aged care, childcare and education provider with more than 50 years' history and experience in the Marayong Community. Established by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in the 1950s as a means of supporting the Polish community in Australia, Holy Family Services has developed to become a leading multicultural care provider offering aged care and child care.

Dedicated care provider Holy Family Services (HFS) at Marayong has been awarded the highest possible rating for food safety, knowledge and quality. The audit was undertaken by the NSW Food Authority in 2012. HFS received a perfect score to be ranked among the top five food service providers in NSW. The rating also guarantees HFS accreditation in food service for the next three years. The CEO of Holy Family Services Kevin Rocks said that HFS had always been a multicultural aged care provider. "The food preferences of our residents and cooking requirements can be quite varied," he said. "We are really proud of the outstanding effort made by all staff members to ensure that our menu not only tastes great, but that our kitchen always meets the highest nutrition, health and safety standards."

The audit reviewed the practices, skills and knowledge of all kitchen staff, along with standards for managing temperature control and handling potentially hazardous foods. Administration, resource management, clinical and nutritional care, cultural life, and respect for the privacy and dignity of residents were also considered. "All staff, who work in the kitchen at HFS are required to have completed a level one certificate in food safety and are also encouraged to undertake additional training" Mr Rocks said. The mission to families undertaken by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth is inspired by the belief that God is present in the most simple and ordinary experiences of human life. The family is central in the formation of loving persons. Therefore, the sisters adopt a family perspective in all their ministries. The enhancement of family relationships is a primary consideration of policies, programs and services. Wherever possible, the sisters strive to change systems that erode family life and support those that empower families. The legacy of the sis-

ters lives on in old and new ways, meeting the ever-changing needs of families. At Holy Family Services in Marayong, they do it in a practical way serving the age and childcare facilities with a dedicated management and leadership team. Some comments from families: "To arrive at the home each week to join with the sisters and your staff who all have the same dedication and caring culture, seeing their happy smiling faces, their positive and helpful outlook, has been so personally uplifting for me following the passing of my dear mother, Aleksandra, earlier this year"(Halina) "Both the kids and staff have enjoyed learning about our environment and how we can live sustainably through the new vegetable garden, rain-water tanks and worm farm." "Holy Family Services is the ideal childcare provider for our family. The centre is close to our home and primary school and my son really enjoys using the computers."

In 2013, HFS will investigate the possibility of sharing the success of the facilities kitchen with the broader community in Western Sydney.

"HFS is conscious that more support is needed for ageing residents in our area," Mr Rocks said. "HFS would like to share our skills and expertise with the community to ensure that all aged residents have access to quality and delicious food in their own homes."

HFS is currently undertaking a feasibility study to determine the best way to provide such a service to the community. ■

The article appeared in CATHOLIC OUTLOOK (May 2013)



To find more about the HFS Aged Care and Child-Care facilities in Marayong visit:
www.holyfamilyservices.com.au

ASSOCIATES MEET IN SYDNEY AND CANBERRA

THE first Association meeting for 2013 was held on the 15 of March, in the Meeting room at Our Lady Queen of Poland Convent. The Associates were greeted by Sister Grażyna Rocławska, provincial superior. After the greetings, Sister Lucyna Frączek, the director of the Association, introduced the guest speaker, Father Paul Newton. Sisters Paula Volchek and Alicja Drabik, Lois Ann Richardi joined the associates in listening to a Father's very inspiring and practical talk about Faith. After that, the group celebrated the Sunday liturgy in the chapel. After Mass the group re-assembled in the meeting room for lunch. Sister Grażyna Rocławska and Lucyna Frączek organized the projector to show slides of the mission in Ghana and the recent meeting of the professed sisters that just occurred in Rome. Sisters Małgorzata Kozub, Grażyna Rocławska and Lucyna Frączek provided useful commentary. The associates took some of the brochures about the mission in Ghana and the upcoming "Come and See" meeting to distribute to their friends. The meeting ended at 2:00 pm.

The meeting in Canberra was held on the following Saturday. Sisters Grażyna Rocławska, Lucyna Frączek, director of the Association, Jean Wojcik and Paula Volchek had a pleasant drive to the house of our hosts Denis and Margaret Wylkes. After the entire group assembled, the meeting began. Greetings were extended by Sister Grace and Sister Lucyna. Sister Jean Wojcik was introduced as the morning's presenter. The topic was Faith. The talk reflected the one presented by Father Paul Newton, sister's research and a sharing of her personal experiences of faith. The group also engaged in lively discussion addressing questions posed at each stage of the talk.

After the talk Sister Grażyna presented the slide show introducing the mission in Ghana and invitations to the "Come and See" meeting that would be held later in the month. The Associates were asked to pray for the success of the Come and See Day. The time of fellowship and sharing the meal followed. All too soon, the sisters had to leave as they wanted to visit the New Parliament House before heading back to Sydney. ■

BY SR JEAN WOJCIK



FAMILIES IN THE CENTRE



THE World Congress of Families, founded in 1997 by Dr Allan Carlson of the Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society in Rockford, Illinois, USA, has become the premier event in the world to support the natural family. Since 1997 the WCF has been

successfully held in Prague (1997), Geneva (1999), Mexico City (2004), Warsaw (2007), Amsterdam (2009) and Madrid (2012).

The World Congress of Families is a time of intense teaching, learning, networking and exchange as those who seek to strengthen and promote the natural family tackle some of the most complex issues affecting family life today

Sydney's bid to host WCF VII was supported by more than 80 organisations and businesses in Australia and New Zealand. The Local Organising Committee thus comprises representatives of many of these organisations, working collaboratively to advance the cause of the natural family.

WCF VII Sydney 2013 had a challenging programme bringing together many of the world's leading pro-family advocates, policy makers and academics, business leaders and professionals, educators and students, media and popular culture figures and many parents - the backbone of a healthy society.

It seeks to inspire people from all walks of life to consider and implement strategies to help strengthen the natural family, the economy and civil society.

Read more at: www.wcfsydney2013.org.au ■



THIS is what our Associates: **Phil and Helen Carberry**, who we met at the World Congress of Families, shared with us about their work for families and our Congregation:

Why did you come for the Congress?

We came for the Congress representing the Australian Family Association which we belong to since early 1970. This is a group, Australia wide with a branch here in Canberra. The main aim of the association is to lobby politicians for good family values to be up held in government decisions. At Territory and Federal election days we help hand out how to vote literature and encourage people to vote for candidates who will up hold good values. We also attend rallies protest against abortion and same sex issues.

How long have you been part of the AHF?

Our association with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth began when our Sarah started school at Garran in 1971. Because we lived conveniently close to the Convent we were "on call" for the sisters especially Srs. Anece, Josita, and Helen. For years we were not officially associates but became so a few years ago.

What did you think about the Congress of Families?

Successful marriages and families are made and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and recreation.

We have come away convinced that everything we do to strengthen marriage and family life, whether in public, in the workplace or at home is an investment in the future of our country. ■



NEW CHAPTER OF HISTORY

YEAR 2013 marks a very significant change in the manner in which the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth serve the Church in Western Australia. The Congregation passed on the ownership of the school and convent to the Archdiocese of Perth. Our Lady of Grace School is now fully governed by the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia. The whole transfer process took over a year and was finalised the first week of June, 2013.

On 30th May, Sister Grazyna Roclawska, provincial superior, announced the change of ownership of Our Lady of Grace School to the school community during an assembly and to the parish community on the weekend of 1st and 2nd June. This was an opportune time to share with both the parish and school communities a brief visual presentation of its history and for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth to acknowledge their gratitude for the privilege of being part of it since 1957 and until today.

Prior to the big move the sisters of Infant Jesus Convent packed the convent's belongings and during the first week of June, the sisters relocated to the nearby suburb in Duncraig. The unfaltering help of volunteers from the school and parish made the impossible – possible!

On Saturday morning the 8th June, the sisters returned to Our Lady of Grace to celebrate the last Eucharist in the small convent chapel with Father Richard Smith. During an afternoon farewell prayer service, the empty building echoed with the tears and laughter of numerous friends and colleagues associated with the sisters over many years.

Bronia Krupczak (former Sister Antonia) said, "Even though many years have passed, my memories of our first sisters in North Beach are still so vivid."

Patricia Harris (affectionately known as Patty) shared precious memories which were part of her life for many years.

Sister Irene Kubacki admitted, "I will miss the chapel most of all because of the special times of friendship and prayer shared there with many people."

Sisters Irene Kubacki and Joseph Mazur will continue to minister with the dedicated people of Our Lady of Grace parish and school communities. There are still countless stories yet to be told and prized memories yet to be shared. This is simply the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Western Australia.

So together dear friends, "Let us open wide the door of our lives to the new things of God which the Holy Spirit gives us. May he transform us, confirm us in our trials and strengthen our union with the Lord, our steadfastness in him: this is a true joy! So may it be." (*Pope Francis*)■



WHY SHOULD RELIGIOUS USE THE MEDIA



FOR years I've heard the complaints and excuses why not to get involved in the media as a religious. You might be familiar with them:

- "The Media has an agenda which is anti-Church – So why bother if we'll never get good coverage anyway?"
- "You always see and hear from the same people anyway – clearly the media have their favourites"
- "I don't want to toot my own horn – I think we are of better service doing what we've always done in the community."

Well I put to you, as someone intimately involved in the media world for the past 15 years, that the media do want to get a Church perspective but they normally get "no comment" or they get certain people who make themselves available in the news cycle who may not always be the best.

Can you imagine a world where Mother Teresa had not agreed to media coverage of her work?

Or better yet, imagine the world if Jesus had told his disciples not to write anything down or proclaim his resurrection because he "didn't want to toot his own horn." Or where you would be if the founder of your order had left instructions not to publish any of their writings?

Fundamentally, the reason religious should use the media is TO EVANGELISE.

Now, that doesn't mean getting out there and presenting passages out of the Catechism or Bible (something that can often be counter productive in fact.)

But it does mean sharing your story, or even the stories of others that you work with.

It's your work, and the stories of the people you work with, which will indeed reflect on how the Church does impact on Culture in a more overwhelmingly positive way than it does negative.

For example, when the media conversation touches on the topic of Asylum Seekers, AIDS or the Gaol System in Australia (to name but a few), how often do we see a blogged opinion piece, or an interview on a current affair program or even a social media retort by an Aussie Religious working in these arenas?

If you don't speak for those people and their plights, those who have no voice, who will?

Did you become a religious to hide your light under a bushel and escape persecution? (Clearly a rhetorical question.)

Can you imagine the world if everyone knew of the incredible work our Religious have done and continue to do on a daily basis? It would shift the concentrated

'sex abuse' stigmas and humanise the brand again by realigning it with what it is really about – LOVE.

"They will know we are Christians by our LOVE!" So why not try to represent it?

Another plus these days is the fact that never before in the history of the media have we been able to take ownership of our voice in such engagement as professionally and affordably as we can now with the web and social media.

You can write an article, or better still, record an audio or video using your iphone, and upload it to social media (e.g. Facebook), or even somewhere like '[The Punch](#)' or '[Online Opinion](#)' or even send it in to your Archdiocesan publication. Check out how some Catholics are already doing it via [catholic-blogs.blogspot.com.au/](#). Many of these people have attracted traditional media requests in their homelands on the back of their writings.

But while I'm advocating to be fearless in this pursuit, I would still recommend being prepared. For example, when you get a call from a media agency following up on your article and requesting commentary, it's worth having prepared a Q&A document with punchy key messages to respond efficiently and effectively. Let's face it - you know what they're going to ask because you've been in this game long enough!

We need to get over the false humility factor and tall poppy syndrome. Age is no excuse and neither is ignorance.

I've worked with a 95 year old Religious Sister who is better with an ipad than I am, and an 80 year old Brother who understands the interactive blogging realm just as well as an 18 year old I have on staff.

Be bold. Put yourself forward for the sake of representing the faith ... Or someone else will!

NOTE: If you need a little more context, encouragement, tips and tools, you could book to attend the upcoming [Catholic New Media Conference](#) in September, held in Melbourne.■

BY CATHERINE SMIBERT,
Director of Virtual Shout

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HONOUR, THANKSGIVING AND CELEBRATION



THE 9th of August of this year is a special day for me and my family in the Philippines. It is my father's ninth year death anniversary and I am blessed to be with my family for this occasion. I call this an occasion because in the

Philippines, death anniversaries are celebrated the way Western Cultures celebrate a birthday except with some additional rituals; although different parts of the country honour this day in various ways. Ninth year death anniversaries are special because it is the last time that families celebrate the departed loved ones anniversary in a particular way. In my region of Bohol, it is customary to celebrate death anniversaries not only with immediate families and relatives but also with the people in the village. Most families start the day by attending a Eucharistic celebration followed by a visit to the cemetery. One of the most important parts of the day is praying a particular prayer with everyone present at the family's home. And of course every celebration in the Philippines always involves food and a festive community spirit!

This occasion means for me a chance to celebrate the life and memories of a loved one lost as well as opportunity to express our love and appreciation for those who remain. I consider it as a chance to honour my father and give thanksgiving to God for giving my father to me. ■

BY SR CHRISTINE RAMADA



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