



UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH - HOLY SPIRIT PROVINCE IN AUSTRALIA (No19/ July 2016)

IS GOD THE WRITER OF OUR LIVES?

WRITING the introduction for this newsletter made me realise that every time I write an introduction for the next issue of Under the Southern Cross, it is a time of reflection on some *endings* and *new beginnings*. It is an opportunity for me to see the *abundant grace of God* in the life of my sisters, of our communities, of the Church, the Congregation and in my own life. There is so much to be grateful for. There are *Minutes*, *Hours* and *Days* which are ordinary and simple. Those create our life and, most of the time, are not being captured by the camera or in the words shared with others.

There are *Times* and *Places* which are extraordinary when we celebrate the grace of God in a special way and want to say to the whole world: Hi everyone! Our life is great! God really lives! He made us special and created for us the moments of joy and excitement in the midst of ordinary moments and as a fuel to go through the times of dryness, desert and darkness. And it is all balanced – those shared and untold stories, those moments which we spend in a private chat with Jesus and in a public chat in common places.

I very much love the words I read recently: “*God is writing in the book through the lives of each and every one of us. We just need to allow him to write. We do not need to understand completely what he is writing. The essential things is to know that God means something with all that happens and to life in such openness and wakefulness that he can give us insight into meaning when he wills.*” (Wilfrid Stinissen – *Into Your Hands, Father*)

But the questions I was asked by one of my friends after reading this quote were very interesting:

Maybe God is more like a reactionary writer? Maybe His book of my life is filled with so many scribbles and cross outs! Maybe this book that He writes is less of a plan and more of a desire for us. Maybe He's more like an editor sometimes. Leaving the story as it is but writing in a subtext so that we can see that even in this there is purpose. Maybe our God is the writer, but His writings are not set in stone. God begins at the end of the story. That is, His desire that we will be one with Him. That our whole lives will be aligned toward Him and His will. Because He knows in this great book of our lives how we might best get there.

Maybe all these images are actually true...

This time, when you open the July issue of Under the Southern Cross, I invite you to join me in reflecting on the events and people with eyes of “awe” at God’s writing skills in the stories of our lives. It is my hope that this reflection will inspire you to see the great works of God in your personal life. ■



SR GRACE (GRAŻYNA ROĆŁAWSKA)
PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

FAREWELL TO BRISBANE

AFTER fifty-three years of ministry in Our Lady Queen of Apostles Parish in Stafford, Queensland, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth will soon be leaving their ministries here. Twelve Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth were present for the Farewell ceremonies which took place over three days. The sisters present were Sisters Josita and Maureen, who are the last two sisters to live in the parish. The other sisters travelled from Maitland, Marayong and Plumpton in New South Wales to be present for these significant events. The sisters present were Sisters Grace Rocławska, Rita Apura, Lucyna Frączek, Paula Volchek, Agnieszka Misiak, Lois Ann Richardi, Anita Litwin, Rosanne Sinclair, Christine Ramada and Bogumila Malikowska.

On Friday 6 November, Queen of Apostles School farewelled the sisters. A service of Celebration of Gratitude and Thanksgiving was held in Our Lady Queen of Apostles Church with the sisters, the parish priest Father Denis Scanlon, the school principal, Nigel Bird, the staff and the students of Queen of Apostles. Pam Betts from the Catholic Education Office thanked the sisters for their many years of valuable service and their great contribution to Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

On Saturday evening 7 November, an evening Mass was held with the twelve sisters present for the weekend with Father Robert Doohan as the celebrant. Mass began in the convent courtyard. Candles were placed in the courtyard representing the forty-six sisters who lived and ministered here. The Mass continued in the convent chapel and ended with a ceremony in the courtyard with memories of all the sisters who ministered here over the fifty-three years. White vigils were lit to represent the twenty-three sisters who have passed away and coloured vigils represented the twenty-three sisters who are still in Australia or in other parts of the world. The sisters then shared a meal together in the dining room where they had the opportunity to reminisce about the many years that our sisters ministered in Stafford.

On Sunday morning the 8th of November, a Mass of Thanksgiving was held at Our Lady Queen of Apostles Parish at 9 AM. This Mass was for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and also a

celebration of the 65th anniversary of the ordination of the Most Reverend John Gerry, the retired Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane. The concelebrating priests were Father Denis Scanlon (parish priest), Father Michael McKeaton, Father Terrance Mayniham and Father Kevin Smith. Apologies were received from Father Kevin Carey and Father Clem Hodge. The homilist for the Mass was the Most Reverend John Gerry (retired Bishop of Brisbane). Mass was followed by Morning Tea in the Parish Hall. During this time a plaque was presented to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth from the parish. The parish council recognised and gave a presentation to Bishop John Gerry for his service to the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Throughout the weekend many stories were shared by the sisters and the parishioners. Many fond memories of the time that the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth ministered in Stafford will surely be a part of this parish community for many years to come. ■

BY SISTER JEAN WOJCIK



CELEBRATING OUR MINISTRY IN STAFFORD

OVER the years 46 sisters ministered in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The decision to close the convent in Stafford and to move the two sisters, Sisters Josita Paczkowska and Maureen Joseph Stempko, to new places was not made lightly. Saying “Farewell” to the ministry in the school and parish was a weekend affair (November 6-9 2015) that was attended by a contingent of Sisters from Marayong, Quakers Hill and Maitland. On Friday the school community said their “Good-bye” with a special prayer service.

On the Saturday evening, Father Robert Doohan celebrated the last Mass in the convent chapel, which was only attended by the Sisters. The Mass intention was thanksgiving for the gifts of the sisters’ lives and service to the people of Kalinga, Bowen Hills and Stafford, the Catholic Community of the Brisbane Archdiocese. Forty-six vigil candles represented the sisters, living and deceased, also encompassing the treasured memories of Bowen Hills, Kalinga and Stafford.

The first reading of the Mass was an adapted passage from *Out of Nazareth* by Sr M De Chantel csfn about the pioneering Sisters who came to Australia, and who lived in Queensland in particular. The passage quoted below illustrates the Missionary heart and service of all of the sisters then and today.

“The pioneering sisters came to help the immigrants, negotiate with hope, their transition into the Australian system. They were Americans by birth and education, but their knowledge of the Polish language and customs assisted the people in adapting to their new way of life. Those who volunteered to serve in “the land down under the Tropic of Capricorn”, were possessed of a kinship with the Foundress who believed that Nazareth’s mission was above and beyond frontiers. They were convinced that the culture they had studied, inhaled and treasured was not the property of any one race or class, but that it should be shared and diffused freely.”

The closing of the Mass was also surrounded by moving ceremony. After Communion the sisters wrote a feeling, memory or a blessing on paper that was in the pew. After the blessing these were burned in ceremony on the grassed area in front of the Chapel. Then Sister Josita Paczkowska announced that the Covenant Agreement which was forged in 2011- the sisters’ pledge to each other that as members of that local community they would fulfill their religious obligations according to the Constitutions and Statutes- ceased to exist as the convent of Queen of Apostles in Stafford was closed.

Finally, on the 9th of November, Bishop John Gerry, former parish priest of Queen of Apostles Parish, who was also celebrating his 40th anniversary as Bishop, celebrated the Mass of thanksgiving in the parish church. Despite the sadness and brokenness felt at this time, a feeling of hope and trust in the loving care of God permeated all of the participants. ■

BY SR MAUREEN JOSEPH STEMPKO



GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

“LIFE is a journey, not a destination” is a well-known saying.

The year 2015 was a very significant year in my life’s journey.....a year brimming with gratitude to God for the generous blessings bestowed on me during 50 years of religious life in Nazareth.

During times of quiet reflection and the many liturgical celebrations of thanksgiving, several scriptural texts inspired my prayer.... *..... “I am with you always.....God keeps his promises....How can I repay the Lord for His goodness to me?.....”* God’s faithfulness to me has enabled me to be faithful.

The 8th December, 2014, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, rather quietly marked the beginning of this special Golden Jubilee year, but I can truly say it finished with a BANG!!!

Due to the kindness of the Sisters I was both honoured and humbled to have celebrated in Rome, Ghana, and Australia, and to have other smaller celebrations in between. All these were meaningful and special, reminding me of God’s infinite love, goodness and providential care over the past 50 years.

I am particularly grateful to Sr Grace and all the Sisters in Holy Spirit Province for the special celebration in Marayong on 21 November 2015, the Feast of our Mother Foundress.

This was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate with my group – Sr Anita and I – and all the Sisters in the Province with whom I have shared my Nazareth journey. It is true that we are all ‘companions on the journey’.

During this celebration it was a real joy and blessing to share with the members of my family, friends from near and far, teaching colleagues from bygone days, as well as our Holy Family Associates from Canberra and Sydney. All these special people have revealed to me a unique aspect of the face of God..... *“I am with you always”*

During one of the celebrations someone asked me “What has helped you to remain faithful for these 50 years?” Undoubtedly, it has been that God’s grace has been with me every step of the journey,

as have the special people in my life who have supported me with their love, patience, friendship and often, very sound advice. Life is certainly not a journey one can make alone!!

One of the huge blessings of these 50 years has been the opportunity to serve Nazareth and God’s people in several parts of the world. For the first thirty years or so, I was based in Holy Spirit Province, and enjoyed the joys and challenges of ministering to children and families in various schools and parishes in Australia. More recently I have come to know and appreciate a much broader Nazareth by meeting Sisters in various parts of the world, and with and through them witnessing the growth of our charism, which is being lived out so generously in service and ministry by the Sisters.

Today, I am still basking in the blessings of my jubilee year as well as the numerous graces I have received. Together with Mary my prayer is *“The Lord has done marvelous for me.....holy is His Name.”* ■

BY SR HELEN TEREBA



NAZARETH AT THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL

LAST year I had the privilege, along with two other sisters (Sr Rita Apura and Sr Paula Volchek) to attend the Youth Festival in Adelaide. What is this event?

“The Australian Catholic Youth Festival is a national gathering of Catholic young people established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. It exists to provide young people with opportunities to deepen their relationship with Jesus, be empowered to be disciples in the world today and encounter and celebrate the vitality of the Church in Australia. The first Festival was held in Melbourne, December 2013.

In 2015, young people were invited to attend the Festival hosted by the Archdiocese of Adelaide. Eighteen bishops joined 3,000 young people from across the country to celebrate three days of faith-based music, inspiring and challenging talks, practical workshops, and plenary sessions each morning and evening, all of which generated robust discussions.

Centring on the theme from the Beatitudes, ‘blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God’ (Mt 5.8), young people between 16 to 25 years old asked questions about their faith, in particular what it means to be pure of heart.

Archbishop Fisher officially closed the festival by announcing that the ACBC Office for Youth will host the next ACYF in partnership with the Archdiocese of Sydney in 2017. This will also commence a ‘Year of Youth’ throughout 2018 as designated by the Australian bishops.” (source www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au)

During the festival we had a stall with some promotional materials. This gave us a chance to share our mission with others. Many people showed their interest in our mission and they loved sharing their stories with us. We had some special visitors whom you can see in our photos. I must admit it was a time of grace and a deep encounter with faithful and enthusiastic young people. And many of them showed their appreciation of our presence there in the Australian Church as well.

I can’t wait for the next Youth Festival in Sydney. We need to be there! ■

BY SR MARGARET (MALGORZATA KOZUB)



Mercy Minute...

with Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd

"...it is mercy, solely the mercy of my Lord, which is my hope."



ENCOUNTERING GOD'S MERCY

POPE Francis, in his Bull *Misericordiae Vultus*, described the mercy of God as a never-ending, loving concern for each person. I have felt this mercy in a deep and special way throughout my life, but a particularly strong encounter with God's love took place on March 19. On this day, I was received as a postulant into the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, after having journeyed as an affiliate for over twelve months.

The weeks leading up to this date had been a time of spiritual and emotional preparation for me as I tried to help myself become as aware as I could of what becoming a postulant, and becoming a Sister of the Holy Family of Nazareth in the Holy Spirit Province, would mean. It was particularly meaningful for me that I would be received into the congregation on the solemnity of St Joseph, a saint who is very special for me.

I was received as a postulant in a beautiful prayer ceremony held at Our Lady Queen of Poland convent, Marayong, where I was privileged to be joined by the sisters from that community and from our surrounding convents.

A very powerful moment of the ceremony was when I said, with all the sisters, St Augustine's prayer to the Holy Spirit, while each sister extended her hand over me in blessing. I felt in this moment, and throughout the ceremony, that I was truly giving myself to Jesus, to our Mother Foundress, and to my sisters in the Holy Spirit Province and all around the world. It was such a powerful, stirring and exciting feeling.

Sr Grace Rocławska, Provincial, gave me several symbols of my postulancy: a medal, a book of meditations, and several books on the life of Mother Foundress, our Blessed Martyrs, and Servant of God Sr Małgorzata. She then presented me to my pre-novitiate director, Sr Małgorzata Kozub, with whom I had the great privilege to work closely as an affiliate.

Following the ceremony we all experienced a wonderful time of joyful fellowship. I loved just being with sisters and talking with them, as well as sharing an array of beautiful cakes!

I truly see the work of God, and His mercy, present in my life and in my beginning as a postulant. Every day I am so thankful, and often truly amazed, that God has shown me such mercy in leading me where I am – in leading me to Nazareth

and to a deeper encounter with Him. It is with deep gratitude that I look back on my call to Nazareth, on the particular events and people that led me to where I am today. It is with very real joy that I look toward my future. ■

BY SR SOPHIE BOFFA, CSFN POSTULANT



A NEW PASTORAL CARER FOR LONG DAY CARE

IN February Sr Josita Paczkowska began her new ministry as pastoral carer for Holy Family Services' long day care. Below is an interview done with Sr Josita by Miss Kelly, who works at the centre.

What will your role be at Holy Family Children's Services and when will you be in the centre?

My role is in Pastoral care for staff and parents within the centre. I will still be involved and connected with the children in the centre, but my role is mostly for the adults who belong to the centre.

My hours will be flexible. I will sometimes be present in the morning to greet the families and stop and chat if they would like. Generally though, I will be in the afternoon, when families are picking up, as this is the time families often can spend a little time having a chat.

What are you looking forward to in regards to your new role?

Having the privilege of going on a journey with individuals, whether good or bad, and walking that road with them.

How long have you been with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and can you explain some of your previous roles?

I have been with the Sisters for 55 years. I moved to Australia from the USA in 1970 and was a Primary school teacher in Canberra. I then came to Marayong and was a teacher of maths and science at St Andrews (formerly Holy Family). I also took on the formation for young sisters in our province. I was later the principal of St Andrew's Primary School for a few years, before taking on the role as Provincial Leader. This is a role I took twice, once residing in NSW and the second time residing in Queensland.

During my time at Holy Family I also helped take care of the children of migrant families at Holy Family Children's Home.

Do you have any hobbies/interests?

I enjoy light music, light reading and I have an appreciation of flowers.

How many languages do you speak?

I speak English and a small amount of Polish.

What was your favourite sport or interest as a child?

Being from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I enjoyed baseball and also swimming.

Thank you for taking the time to answer some questions, which helps us to get to know a little bit about you. We look forward to getting to know you and welcome you. ■

BY MISS KELLY AND
SR JOSITA PACZKOWSKA



HAPPY BIRTHDAY ROLLY

TODAY at group time the Lions were very privileged to have a special visit from the lovely Sister Irene who read the story 'Happy birthday Rolly'. It was fantastic for Sister Josita to invite her over and the children were very happy to meet another member of our vast community. Making connections, building relationships and being active participants within their community contributes to and supports the Lions' sense of belonging (EYLF Outcome 2).

The Lions greeted the Sister as she sat down and dug her hand deep inside her mystery bag and pulled out a bright yellow hat adorned with two large flowers.

"This is my special story time hat and each time I wear it, it means it's time for a special story" she said with a smile, placing her hat on top of her head.

Providing opportunities and experiences for the Lions to effectively communicate and respond with relevant comments to the story and visual print helps encourage and support positive attitude towards literacy (EYLF Outcome 5).

The Lions listened on as the story went into detail about the preparation of Rolly's party, which the Lions have a vast understanding of from all of the hard work and planning it took to organise their own successful party!

The Lions are extending their understanding of their Micro system, which is their immediate community, by meeting and interacting with more members of Holy Family and building positive connections (Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory) Eventually story time finished and the children gave a round of applause. We thanked Sister Irene and Sister Josita for the story and they were farewelled with lots of hugs. We have encouraged Sister Josita to extend an invitation to any of the Sisters to come for a visit and say hello. ■

FROM LONG DAY CARE NEWSLETTER
(FRIDAY, MAY 27)



Mercy Minute...

with Sr Paula Volchek



"The Lord's mercy abides unceasingly, His compassion is never exhausted; every morning it is renewed, so great is his faithfulness." (Lam)

"The Lord's mercy is a huge protection for us. When I was a little girl and started to prepare for my First Communion I was really wondering about God's righteousness. I believed that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked. But when I grew up my faith and understanding of the mysteries of God matured. One day I understood that God is merciful. His mercy has no end. The mercy of God renews me every day and gives me a new chance and new life."

A BRIEF REFLECTION ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON...

A new day! Saturday! Full of promise! A day for staying in bed, free leisure time, relaxation etc.; though, not for me! For me, Saturday plays a different tune. Let's start from the beginning...

I taught for thirty years in Poland and experienced many changes in the Polish education system: Systematic change, curriculums, methodologies and education programs. In these winds of change my primary focus was and always will be, the all important - the student.

In 2014 I farewelled Poland and its education system and arrived in Australia to commence my new duties. A surprise awaited me, Polish School and on Saturday! My thoughts were positive: "Education and teaching is my profession so I will take on the challenge". Very soon I came to realize it wasn't going to be easy. When I began this "new adventure" of teaching Polish in Australia, my group of students consisted of 9 children of different ages and different levels of ability in spoken Polish language. Then I realized I had no experience in teaching Polish as a second language! However, my years as an educator helped me overcome the initial obstacles. Very quickly I had to change my way of thinking and adapt to the needs of this school system. Step by step the needs of these students and the expectations became clearer.

As the number of students increased, I strongly believe Divine Providence intervened; God gave me a new helper, a teacher named Edyta Hoffmann. She brought new ideas and a fresh energy into our school. Edyta is a Polish - English teacher, which has its benefits in a country where English is the spoken language. This year our Saturday Polish School is celebrating its 60th Anniversary! It is time to look back and to define our "today" as a school community. Our "today" is 20 students, aged 6-11 years. Our students vary in the ability of speaking Polish. In the majority of our families, English is the language used at home and the children's first language. Some parents speak little Polish or no Polish at all. Our students are a generation predominantly born in Australia.

In today's reality we endeavour to plan and conduct our lessons for the maximum benefit for our current students. We endeavour to cater through play, games and song to engage students

in learning activities. We try to incorporate the abilities and skills of the students. Our aim is for our students to master the Polish alphabet, to read, to write and acquire Polish language for simple conversations and to enjoy the social engagement of play and interaction. All these goals! Remembering that classes take place on a week-end, a school free day, a Saturday.

An important aspect of our teaching is introducing students to our rich Polish history, its traditions, customs, culture and folklore. Included also are religious instructions by Father Henryk Zasiura SChr. In our endeavours to bridge the gap of generations, we visit our residents in the Holy Family Aged Care and our Polish Nursing Home. These visits are special and much-awaited by children and residents.

Our vision for our "Saturday Polish School" is to increase student numbers, to be involved in the Polish Community, such as in our church at Marayong, and to instigate contact with a school in Poland. Sound ambitious? Yes, it is! But, in the words of the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz: *Measure strength by ambition, not ambition according to strength!* ■

BY MRS HELEN MINOL



HERE AND THERE PHOTO-STORY



Beginning our celebrations for the 25th jubilee of religious life for Srs Grace, Margaret and Paula.



Sr Margaret Kozub (centre) with sisters at Meeting for Formators and Vocation Directors in Cracow in May.



Sr Grace and sisters during the International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu in January.



Sr Grace Roclawska (second from right) at the Meeting of Formators of our congregation in Cracow.

The Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth is an international apostolic congregation founded in 1875. Sisters live and serve in 170 communities in 13 countries on 5 continents. The Generalate is located in Rome, Italy. ■

SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH

Generalate of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Rome, Italy

Polish Language: www.nazarethfamily.org

English Language: www.nazarethfamily.org

Donations towards the places of our Congregation which are in need of your support can be made by cheque or Direct Transfer .

Kindly make cheques out to the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and send to POBox 8142, Blacktown, NSW, Australia or directly to:

BANK: Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Blacktown Branch
 Account Name: Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth Mission Fund
 BSB: 062121
 Account No: 10920857

HERE AND THERE PHOTO-STORY



Our retreat for women on June 25th was a great success! Thank you for your prayers!



Sr Grace with Fr Peter Confeggi and First Communicants following a ceremony at Mary, Queen of the Family parish in Blacktown.



Sisters, associates and (hopefully) associates-to-be coming together for our June gathering.



Sisters representing CSFN at the Good Shepherd Parish Expo in Plumpton on Pentecost Sunday.

Do you ever find yourself wondering what sisters are up to? Then check out our Facebook page for the Holy Spirit province. We post regular updates on important news and events happening in our Province, in our Church, and in our world.

Check us out at:
<https://www.facebook.com/csfnaustralia>



Mercy Minute...

with Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd

"My entire life...is a continuous series of God's marvels of love and mercy."



CELEBRATING SR PAULA'S SILVER JUBILEE

GREETINGS from Belarus!

Hello, my name is Sr. Klara Volchek and I am Sr. Paula's 'baby' sister. I am writing to you from Schuchin, Belarus, where we grew up in a family nurtured by loving faith-filled parents.

Paula is not only my sister, she is also my best friend and confidant. When I was only nine years old, Paula entered the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth. I missed her very much when she went to Warsaw, and then Lublin in Poland, for her initial formation. I was so happy when she finally returned to Belarus to teach in the parish schools. Paula loved preparing her young students for the reception of the sacraments. In fact, it seemed to me that she loved just about everything and everyone. It was then that I realised that I wanted to be a Sister of the Holy Family, too. I prayed every day that Jesus would invite me to follow him. And he did.

Four years ago, I was disheartened once again when Paula left Belarus to serve the people in Australia. However, that soon changed when I saw how well she adjusted to her new country. We speak frequently on Skype and keep abreast with things that sisters and best friends enjoy.

Paula and I hold treasured memories of our years in religious life, one of which I would like to share with you. In our last Belarussian winter, or your Australian summer, Paula came to Belarus for a home visit. We spent quality time together on a family retreat for our associates in Novogrudok. One evening we received an invitation to attend a youth meeting led by Fr Vitaly Sluka, assistant priest of our home parish of St. Theresa Avila in Schuchin. Fr Vitaly was Sr Paula's student! We spent hours sharing our experiences in religious life and Paula entertained us with interesting stories about life in Australia.

The climax of Paula's home visit occurred on 17th January 2016. Our parents, along with all our family members, friends, Sr. Maria Blaszczyk, Provincial Superior, and many Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, gathered together in our parish church to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving in

gratitude for the many blessings God has so generously bestowed on Sr. Paula during her 25 years of religious life.

In place of the traditional Sunday homily, Sr. Paula was invited to share her life story and call to Nazareth. The children as well as adults listened with great interest as she encouraged them to be unafraid to follow Jesus. Fr Witold Petelchic, parish priest, along with Fr Nicholas Tihonovich and Fr Victor Burlako, prayed for the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and for future vocations to the Congregation.

After the Mass the parish youth presented Sr Paula with a beautiful basket of roses. The sisters, family and guests congratulated her and wished her continued joy, health and growth in holiness in serving others. It was a day that I will never forget.

I thank you for the privilege of sharing with you a glimpse of our life. ■

BY SR KLARA VOLCHEK



CELEBRATING SR PAULA'S SILVER JUBILEE

Серебряные юбилей монашеской жизни

17 января в Щучинском приходе св. Терезы Авильской наш Назарет благодарил Господа Бога за 25-летие монашеской жизни с. Паулы Волчек. С. Паула Троиного Бога уже четвёртый год служит в Австралии. Родилась в г. Щучине и в 1991 г. приняла постулат в Варшавской Провинции. В 2000 г. принесла Вечные Монашеские Обеты в Гродне. И хоть точная дата юбилея 25-летия должна быть летом, празднования прошли раньше – во время «отпуска» сестры. Главным моментом торжества стала Святая Месса, в которой приняли участие Сестра Провинциальная Мария Блащик с сёстрами из разных домов провинции и семья с. Паулы. Отец настоятель Витольд Петельниц с приглашёнными священниками (кс. Николаем Тихоновичем и о.Виктором Бурлакой) молились за сестру и о новых призваниях в нашу Конгрегацию. О.Витольд предложил с. Пауле сказать несколько слов о своём призвании, поэтому вместо воскресной проповеди дети и взрослые с огромным интересом слушали историю жизни с. Паулы. Своё свидетельство сестра закончила обращением к родителям – не бояться отпустить своих детей на служение Господу, и, конечно же, не бояться и самой молодёжи слышать голос Христа и идти за ним. После Мессы приходская молодёжь поздравила с. Паулу и вручила красивую корзинку роз. А



продолжение праздника перенеслось в ресторан, где был приготовлен вкусный обед. Там сестру поздравили Сестра Провинциальная с сёстрами и родные! Прославляем Господа в жизни и служении нашей сестры и молимся о её укреплении и святости. ■

с. Кляра Святой Троицы

Mercy Minute...

with Sr Bogumila Malikowska



The year of Mercy is very meaningful for me. Mercy is the biggest of God's attributes and very challenging for us. God's Mercy which I am receiving every day is challenging my heart to forgive, love, serve others without expectation, be compassionate, and treat others not as they deserve, but as God wishes them to be treated - with loving-kindness and mercy. This year became a year of gratefulness for my life, vocation, people, and experiences which help me to be closer to God. I also try to catch every moment to be in God's presence, it means that He is close me in the sense that He exerts his influence for my good in special ways.



WANT TO HEAR FROM US MORE OFTEN?

We are a click away!

www.csfm.org.au

PASSION FOR RETIREMENT

FIVE years ago when I considered retirement, I decided that I needed not only something **to retire from** but also to have something **to retire to**. Retirement to me, as a religious, means accepting changes that come from ageing gracefully and gratefully. It encompasses a change of ministry to meet my capacity at the time and a deeper development of personal prayer. For example, my classroom teaching has been transferred to individual tutoring. In short, when I really retire, I would like to expand my time of retirement into mission. But seriousness aside, I'd like to start the series of thought on the subject of retirement by concentrating on having fun.

Everyone needs to find some fun in life. My fun emerges from my passion for craft. It started at the age of five- that's right, five years old. I watched my mother embroider and I said, "Can I do that too?" So Mom got me a piece of embroidery with the printed cross-stitch alphabet, a little girl going into a school house and some thread in black, red and blue. That was my first piece that I completed in 1950. My sister, Marie, found the piece a few years ago and sent it to me in a quilted frame decorated with buttons. It hangs on the door of my closet in my bedroom.

Other craft kits were given to me as gifts as I was growing up. I also attended the local community centre weekly for basket and tray weaving (I still love to look at the grain of plywood and imagine it being sanded and shellacked. I really enjoyed that activity so much that we had a whole wall displaying the baskets and trays I wove during that time). Embroidery or needlepoint pieces were given away as gifts to others for Christmas or Birthdays. My big achievement of that teenaged era was the pom-pom rug made on a huge loom that I was allowed by Mrs V, Foster Centre's craft teacher, that would be a gift for my mother. (Usually only adults worked on those looms.) After discussing the project with Mom, she agreed to pay for the thick yarn in darkish brown and tan that Mrs V ordered for the rug. It took me about six weeks to two months to finish it. The finished rug lay beneath the coffee table in our parlour for years.

When I entered the Sisters of the Holy Family of

Nazareth, I saw that every sister did some sort of craftwork during recreations. Through them I was exposed to lace making for albs, crocheted borders, macramé, rosary making, knitting, and huck towelling, which is making a design border on a woven huck towel. As a professed sister I tried beading and quilting. During the quilting stage, the staff and students and I made some lovely quilts together that were given to cancer patients. I also tried a hand at basic crocheting and needle knitting.

As time went on, I decided that the stash for quilting and making quilts was too cumbersome to handle. I traded knitting needles for looms. So far I've made scarves, hats, baby sweaters and blankets, socks, gloves and mittens on my looms. I've started a looming group and the four of us are engaged in some charity looming as well as making things for family and friends. I've taken up crocheting again. I have a few goals at the moment: to make myself a loom knitted jumper; to learn to do intarsia knitting; to make a sleeved poncho which is called a Sancho, and to crochet a baby Baptismal blanket. With looms and a set of crochet hooks I will travel into retirement next year. I wonder what else God has planned? Perhaps writing a series of articles on retirement? Wouldn't that be fun?! ■

BY SR JEAN WOJCIK



LIVING A GRATEFUL LIFE

IT'S now four months since I was received as a postulant with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth...and by no means has it been a boring or quiet four months! Life has been very full. I am still keeping busy with my study and am closer and closer to submitting my thesis, and I love getting involved in doing what I can in my community and with my sisters.

Postulancy has started a new chapter of my life and so I have begun some new ministerial experiences which challenge me each and every day to grow as a person and as a Sister of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Every week I teach Catholic Scripture at Quakers Hill Public School. I take the Year 5 class, which is made up of around 30 children, every Tuesday. I really enjoy planning activities and sharing the material...but most of all, I love just being with the kids. They always surprise me and have actually taught me a lot too! Working with them fulfils a passion of mine to share God's love and joy with young people.

I also spend two full days each week as a volunteer pastoral care worker at Holy Family Services aged care in Marayong. This is the most challenging work I do and have ever done – not just because I work several hours, but because I work with people carrying a lot of hurt, pain and loss. Some people just like me to sit and listen to them, others want to tell jokes or stories (sometimes, I spend the entire time with a resident just laughing with them!), and some want to pray together. This work has taught me the importance of meeting people where they are at, of being prepared to let go of my own preconceptions, stereotypes and judgements, and of simply “BEING” with people rather than “DOING” --- I know that I sometimes get so caught up in doing things that I forget to simply BE! It's also given me the great opportunity to work with and learn from several of my sisters and other volunteers.

In May I picked up some weekly volunteer work with the Loaves and Fishes program, which runs in Blacktown and is coordinated by the St Vincent de Paul Society. This program provides daily emergency assistance to people in need in the Blacktown area, giving them food parcels and donated goods. I work four hours every Friday and love it! I've been able to connect with some

wonderful volunteers and have been privileged to meet and connect with many people from all different walks of life. I'm still getting the hang of working the data spreadsheets and learning how to pack the stock!

Once a month, I test my vocal cords with one of the choirs of St Andrew the Apostle Parish in Marayong! I love to sing and it's another great way to get involved in our parish community and to praise God. The members of my choir are great fun to be with and so talented, and it's so good to be able to connect with them. Maybe you'll catch us singing one time at Mass or another event!

Thinking about these past three months fills me with so much gratitude and hope. I'm so fortunate and grateful that, through the generosity and kindness of many people, I've been able to have so many great experiences of growth, openness and challenge, and I truly can't wait to see what the next few months of life will bring! ■

BY SR SOPHIE BOFFA, CSFN POSTULANT

Mercy Minute...

with Pope Francis

"The mercy of God is His loving concern for each one of us."



"In mercy, we find proof of how God loves us. He gives his entire self, always, freely, asking nothing in return."



A JOURNEY OF BLESSING WITH THE CHINESE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

THIS year, 2016, is a special year of blessing and thanksgiving for me. It marks 30 years since I was first introduced to the life and work of the Chinese Catholic Community (CCC) in Australia and beyond. Many of the members of CCC immigrated to Australia from countries such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, Macau, and, in more recent years, from China itself. Many were converts to Catholicism before coming to Australia and many have been baptized, after making contact with CCC, here in Australia. I first learned of CCC while living in the United States of America.

In early 1986 I was asked by the then provincial, Sr. Anece Godlewski, to complete studies at the Institute for Religious Formation (IRF) and a Master of Arts in Religious Studies, at St. Louis University in the USA. At that time I was involved in full-time teaching in primary education, and had never travelled outside Australia, so Sr. Anece's request came quite unexpectedly. Despite my fear of travelling away from home, and living outside the congregation for two years, I said yes to Sr. Anece's request. That "yes" opened the door to many new and unimaginable blessings! The education I received at St. Louis University, in a totally different environment to anything I had previously experienced, without forms of regular communication such as Skype or regular phone calls, challenged me to move beyond everything familiar. Studying with priests, sisters and brothers from many different cultures broadened my perspective of the Church, of religious life and of life itself. The first language we all had to learn, at the IRF, was "mid-western" United States English. Only then did we venture to learn to communicate with each other across different languages and cultures! The priests and brothers lived with the Jesuit Community nearby, and the Sisters formed community at De Matthias Hall, a Precious Blood Sisters' residence, near the university. We met each day for classes and activities at De Matthias Hall. Despite our relatively short time together deep relationships

grew and have continued across time, distance and irregular communication!

One of the most precious blessings of my time at St. Louis University was the friendship that grew between a Chinese priest, Fr. Joseph Yim, and myself as we engaged in our studies. Fr. Yim was in my group at IRF and he too stayed on to complete his Masters Degree. I also came to know Sr. Jin Jin Wong (a Precious Blood Sister from Hong Kong) and we too became friends. Sr. Jin Jin was in the group behind my IRF group but we lived together at De Matthias. Fr. Yim and I didn't attend many of the same classes in the Master's Programme but we had the opportunity to learn extra subject information as I assisted him with English in his assessments and he helped to type my papers. I was also asked by Jin Jin to assist her with English and she prayed for my success in studies. Productive working relationships developed into life-long friendships! My deep respect for the dynamic witness of Fr. Yim's commitment to his priesthood and his tireless service to the Chinese Catholic Community in Hong Kong (where he lives), in Australia, and in other countries continues to grow. Sr. Jin Jin was a gentle and courageous soul who fought cancer before going to St. Louis. She successfully completed her studies and returned to formation ministry in Hong Kong until her death from cancer, soon after our last opportunity to meet each other, in 2000.



Fr. Yim first introduced me to executive representatives of CCC, when Eve and Hudson Chen visited him in St. Louis. It was at that time that I learned the extent of Fr. Yim's earlier involvement in the establishment of CCC in Sydney. A month or so after my return home, in May 1988, Fr. Yim visited Sydney to give retreats and talks before returning to Hong Kong. I was invited by CCC to visit their Centre at St. Joseph's Parish Church, Camperdown, near to Sydney city. On that day I was asked by CCC executive members if I would assist them in their spiritual journey in whatever ways my congregation would allow. I had already begun full time teaching in our Congregation's "Holy Family High School" at Marayong but I received approval to assist CCC as a representative of our Congregation on weekends and during holidays and evenings as required, so long as my community and ministry responsibilities didn't suffer.

So began my "journey of blessings" with CCC: in weekly prayer groups (for several years); sessions with young children in preparation for Mass; working with groups during yearly family bible camps; giving spiritual talks; spiritual companioning; joining in Chinese cultural / religious festivals; Snowy Mountain skiing / evangelization trips; and attending many communal baptisms of "whole families" and individual converts, at Easter Vigil Masses. Often I was asked to assist with photographing events. Many times, while photographing large groups of converts at Easter Vigil ceremonies (often as many as 40 – 80+ baptisms at a time), I found myself trying to focus through tears as I saw the expressions of awe and gratitude on the faces of so many adults experiencing something obviously "special" and "precious" in their lives and in the lives of their children. Those pictures remain "burned" into my memory!

In more recent years, despite my more limited involvement in CCC activities, due to changes in community / ministry responsibilities and aged parent responsibilities, members have continued to invite me to be with them as time allows. Whether I am in the Sydney area or transferred to different places (as now) the connection has remained. I have been blessed to be invited to numerous weddings (children I taught so many years ago), to baptisms of the next generation, to be a spiritual companion in times of decision-making, or to just drop by for Sunday Mass with CCC and to share a meal

together. Sadly, I have also been invited to attend the funerals of friends and known members of the community. As CCC membership has grown significantly, over the past 30 years, further centres of worship were established in parish centres at St. Monica's North Parramatta (1991); Holy Family Lindfield (1997); and at St. Kevin's Eastwood (2014). Official CCC Centres remain today at Lindfield and Eastwood while original members from CCC remain parishioners at St. Monica's, Parramatta and St. Joseph's, Camperdown. Some members have moved into other parishes and joyfully engage in broader Australian parish life. I have had the privilege of worshipping and engaging with CCC members at all major centres but my main involvement was at St. Monica's, North Parramatta, due to its proximity to the convents where I lived. I was privileged to take part in the first meeting between the CCC executive and the then bishop of Parramatta, Bishop Bede Heather, when CCC was first invited into the Diocese of Parramatta.

The "Chinese Catholic Community" (CCC) is only one of many Chinese Catholic Associations in Australia. Centres continue to grow throughout Australia and in many countries throughout the world where Chinese Catholics are free to worship and to pray for and actively support their fellow brothers and sisters in their own country. I have personally witnessed how CCCs' prayers and concrete efforts to help their fellow countrymen and countrywomen in practical ways has been a source of blessing to China, beyond anything that could have been imagined thirty years ago. The situation of the Catholic Church in China remains complex as many Catholics live their faith in the government-sanctioned Catholic Church and also in simple communities together.

I thank God for the blessing that members of the Chinese Catholic Community have been and continue to be to Australia, to their own homeland and to me. The example of their Catholic commitment to "living, loving and giving" for love of God, continues to inspire!
Thank you Sr. Anece RIP, thank you Jin Jin RIP and thank you Fr. Yim! ■

BY SR ROSANNE SINCLAIR

Photos: Sr Rosanne and Fr Yim in St Louis (1987);
Hong Kong event with Bishop Wu;
celebration of third-generation members of the
Chinese community

KNOW GOD, KNOW LOVE

I TOOK part in the Good Friday Night Walk with about 1200 young people, walking from Blacktown to Parramatta. We gathered together at ten o'clock in St Patrick's Church, Blacktown, where we listened to instructions, started our prayer and moved forward with a small fluorescent cross and enthusiasm. The whole night we meditated on God's Mercy: we sang Divine Mercy hymns in the five churches we visited; listened to Gospel readings and the witnesses' speeches, and thought about God's Mercy in our lives. Listening to how others have experienced God's unconditional love, forgiveness and mercy challenged me to look upon my own experience of mercy, especially in this Year of Mercy.

I have discovered God's Mercy in my life many times. Every time it has been connected with a big decision or change in my life. A few of the situations were very significant, difficult, challenging and wonderful, full of God's love and presence. It is almost like I feel that God abandons me, and I get into trouble with no way to escape on my own. I know and I am sure that this time is His and I am in His hands. He is working in my heart but I do not feel and understand it. He wants to bring me through this experience to discover His will in this stage of my life. Every time there is something more and more. It is very important for me to pray and surrender to Him for whatever is going to happen, because in the right time He always gives grace, love and mercy. He is always my Saviour.

This year is World Youth Day in Poland. The hymn for World Youth Day is so beautiful. We sing "Blessed are the merciful, for it is mercy for those who show mercy". This sentence from the Gospel (Mt 5:7) is challenging my heart this year. At the end of the Good Friday Walk, we prayed together in St Patrick's Cathedral. As we prayed I saw one man in front of me who wore a T-shirt on which was written: Know God Know Love. This sentence summarized my night's reflection. I asked myself: Do I know God? Do I know His love and mercy?

God, I am so grateful for your mercy in my life, for the unconditional love you give me every day. Help me to be merciful. Amen. ■

BY SR BOGUMILA MALIKOWSKA



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**HOLY SPIRIT PROVINCE
ASSOCIATION OF THE
HOLY FAMILY**



The Sisters and the Association of the Holy Family of Nazareth recommend to your prayers the soul of their beloved Associate **Mary Rose Butler**



who was called to the Lord on 19 June 2016.

Mass of the Resurrection: Monday 27 June at Holy Trinity Church, Curtin ACT

May she rest in peace!

More about Mary will appear in our next issue.

PRAY WITH POPE FRANCIS

Official prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.

Show us your face and we will be saved.

Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.

Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God!"

You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.

You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy, you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Amen. ■



Mercy Minute...

with Pope Francis

"God never tires of reaching out to us."

"Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy."



MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER: INTERPRETING THE YEAR OF MERCY LOGO

The motto of the Year of Mercy is taken from the Gospel of Luke: **“Be merciful like the Father”**.

The almond shape is an important figure in ancient iconography. It represents the union of two circles: **the divine and human natures of Christ**.

The colours
Red: blood, life and divinity.
White: the light of Christ.
Blue: represents man.
Gold: Adam (and each one of us) is in a process of becoming like God through Jesus Christ.

The gaze
 Jesus and the man share one eye, meaning that God communicates Himself in such a way that **man is able to see as He sees**.

The Good Shepherd
 Jesus is the Good Shepherd **who carries Adam** (and all of us) on His shoulders.

The concentric ovals suggest the movement of **Christ who carries humanity out of the night of sin and death**.

This interpretation taken from CatholicLink.

THE FACE OF MERCY AMONG US

WHEN you open the link to the Jubilee Year of Mercy for the Diocese of Parramatta: www.mercyhasaface.org.au you will see three logos – the logo for the year of Mercy for the universal Church, the diocesan logo (featured on this page) and the logo for the Diocese of Parramatta, NSW. All of them, similar in shape and with some connecting symbols, aim to remind us about



one message: *Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy.* This message leads us to another very important one: *Mercy has a face.* What is this face? ME! You and me! We are the face of Mercy. Every single day of the year, and not only in the Jubilee Year. In the routine of daily life and in the periodic extraordinary events happening in our lives, we are the face of Mercy, because our task is to reflect the Mercy of God.

Today I invite you to finish the day with two questions:

1. How did you see the face of Mercy today? In what event? In what person?
2. In what ways did you show others the face of Mercy today?

#mercyhasaface ■

BY SR GRACE ROCLAWSKA

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