



# Australian Circle Newsletter

Missionary  
Franciscan  
Sisters

## Welcome from Pauline



Dear Sisters and friends,  
This year 2013, is a special year that we have decided to celebrate in our Governance Circle. It is 190 years since the birth of our Foundress, Elizabeth Hayes, on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1823 on the Island of Guernsey. It is also 140 years since the first school of St Anthony's was opened on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973 in Belle Prairie, Minnesota. The date that we recognise as the

foundation of our Institute of Missionary Franciscan Sisters. We celebrated on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February with special presentations which will be reported upon in this edition of our Newsletter. The theme was: "Remember-Recall-Rejoice". On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>, while we were all together we celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of Joyce Fenton and Noela Leamy with a "High Tea" after the renewal of their vows in the Chapel.

**Sr. Pauline Robinson, Australian Leader**

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**REMEMBER      RECALL      REJOICE      CELEBRATE**

**190 YEARS SINCE ELIZABETH WAS BORN ON FEBRUARY 10<sup>th</sup> 1823**

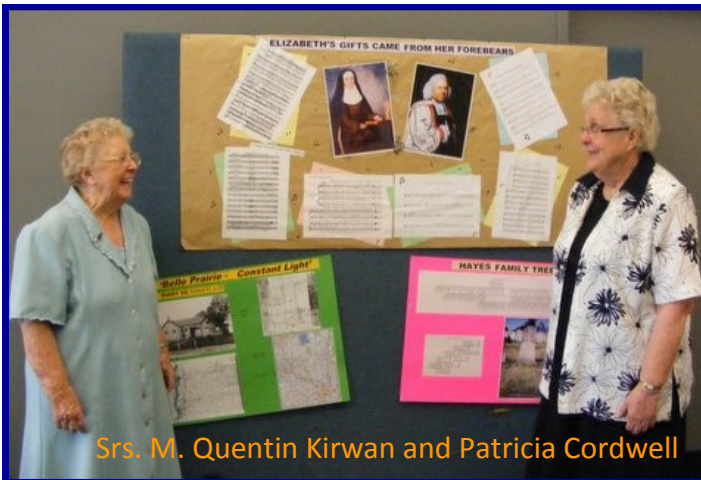
**140 YEARS SINCE BELLE PRAIRIE CONVENT-SCHOOL OPENED ON JAN.1<sup>st</sup>,1873**

On Feb.9<sup>th</sup> the Sisters gathered at Kedron to begin a year of celebration and thanksgiving. By means of Power Point and dialogue the life of Elizabeth and the foundation of our Institute were happily recalled.

To celebrate Elizabeth's birthday it was fitting to begin our presentation by recalling her ancestry.



Her family especially her great grandfather, Dr. William Hayes, (1708-77), her grandfather Rev. William Hayes,(1741-90), and her father, Rev. Philip Hayes, (1781-1841), were outstanding and celebrated musicians. The two former were brilliant organists at Oxford Uni-



Srs. M. Quentin Kirwan and Patricia Cordwell

versity as well as noted Composers of sacred, secular, and instrumental music.

Elizabeth herself is known to have had a beautiful singing voice.

The story of the Belle Prairie foundation unfolded by means of a commentator, several readers, and characters in Elizabeth's life all reading from a prepared script. It was

noted that the first white settlers arrived in

Minnesota in 1851. The arrival of Elizabeth and her companion Clare Peet by rail and coach in 1872 is humorously recalled from an interview with a 92 year old, Antoine Bellefeuille, in Sr. Assumpta's book "IN THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS" (1977) A lad of fourteen he witnessed the arrival of the stage coach and the first passenger to alight - " a strange figure - tall graceful and in every way dignified – yet oddly clad – in no way like any woman I had ever seen." Yet to him everything suggested that she was a lady but such queer apparel. He looked, he stared, he wondered, and to him everything suggested she might be a princess in disguise. For disguise it surely seemed to be.

We recalled the purchase of the land close to the Mississippi River, the log cabin, the building program, and the announcement in the Minnesota Press of the Opening of St. Anthony's Academy for Young Ladies on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1873. With her base now established at Belle Prairie Elizabeth lost no time turning to the project so dear to her heart, the ANNALS OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS. Her missionary object was to promote and defend Christian values through the press. In spite of the fears of failure by Bishop Grace and her printer, Morris Russell, Elizabeth embarked on this momentous undertaking, the first publication being January, 1874.

Selections from the Memoirs of Mother Chaffee professed in 1875, and of Mother Columba Doucet who was enrolled in the School at Belle Prairie in 1879, provided insights into the seventies and eighties - the opening of the mission to the black people in Augusta-

the closing of Belle Prairie for one year and the establishment of the Novitiate in Rome. We concluded our story of Belle Prairie at the time of the disastrous fire on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1889, with serious consequences for our Institute. Of special significance during our presentation was the recalling that our own Sr.M. Jarlath McIntyre who had arrived in Australia on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1930, from Boston, USA, had lived with Mother Humiliana and Sr.M. Leonard in Boston and Brooklyn. Both sisters had known Elizabeth personally and had shared with Jarlath their memories of Elizabeth and the early days of our Institute.

There was a tremendous feeling of gratitude towards Sr. Francine for the hours of preparation and the organization of this presentation. The process used created variety and generated much interest and enthusiasm. The Sisters response was evident and they happily participated throughout. There was a general feeling of “awe” at the extent of the information covered and we were left with a real desire to know what happened next and to continue our story telling as our year of celebration unfolds.

**Sr.M.Clara Condon**

“It was very moving to recapture something of the vitality and warmth of our foundress; to reinform ourselves of her family roots and our roots too as an Institute. To look at her giftedness as a person; to realise that her giftedness came from her family of musicians and clergymen ; that this giftedness was shared with the sisters in her lifetime and that her charism lives on in us and is shaped by us today. What a privilege! “

**Sr.Pauline Robinson**

### *Life As A “Retiree”*

2012, my Diamond jubilee year, is nearing its end and I’ve been asked to write a few lines on what life contains for me living in Kedron these last ten years. Many changes have taken place here during that time, and my coming to live in Unit 3 at our Delamore Retirement Village was for me the biggest change. I enjoy the freedom of being able to paint, read, crochet rugs, play the piano, entertain visitors, look after the plants in the little fernery attached to the unit and play snooker three times a week with three keen male players and the Vietnamese OFM priest who has lately been joining us at the game. I taught myself to play snooker and pool in order to entice our male residents out of their rooms and give



them an interest. Now two of the players are from the parish and only one is from Delamore. It has been a wonderful pastime as we have plenty of laughs. We also celebrate their birthdays by going to a picnic or to a restaurant for a meal. These are always happy occasions. I have a Holy Hour in the chapel every month for the residents and invite them to the unit to entertain them on the piano.

My paintings were very popular one year when I made over \$100 for charity. Yes, life is great for this 84 year old and have a lot to be thankful for to the Lord for His goodness to me.

**Sr.Cecilia Norris**

*Not bad for a Diamond Jubilarian- an 84 year old snooker champ! Keep it up Cecilia. Editor.*



## *Diamond Jubilees*

Yesterday Sr. Noela and I celebrated our Diamond Jubilee with our Sisters and I have been asked "What was the Highlight of your day?" As I was standing preparing to proclaim the Word of God I looked down at the group of women all Missionary Franciscan Sisters and I was so proud to be one of them. Each one was waiting to hear what Message they would hear. It was from Mt.5. 14-16. "You are a Light for the world".

It really gave me so much joy to think that I too have been called to go forth doing my part by being light for others which shows I follow Christ.

After our beautiful renewal of vows ceremony we moved to The Centre – into an elegant setting for high morning tea and enjoyment with the sisters. There was much sharing around the tables and retelling of stories of our past years - sixty years of exciting episodes in our lives. There were hardships to be true, but living together in community we formed special relationships, especially in the remote places where there were normally only three sisters in community. Being a missionary in Papua New Guinea during forty-eight of my sixty years of religious life, I was called on to fulfil a variety of challenging ministries – nursing, teaching and pastoral work which called for lots of long walks and travel by motorbike and Suzuki over bush tracks. After teaching in primary school I moved on to secondary school to teach Religious Education and Home Economics. I found working with the older girls both in class and in the boarding school very fulfilling. I have never had any

doubts about my calling and feel deep gratitude for being called to be a Missionary Franciscan Sister.

**Sr. Joyce Fenton**



Srs. Noela and Joyce



Kedron chapel

The occasion of a Jubilee is very much a call to reflection and review of the years and as I created the booklet for the Renewal of Vows and did some of the preparation for the morning tea in The Centre, I had plenty of time to do just that.

I recalled that not long before my mother died at the age of ninety-four she said, "I have lived from the age of the horse and dray to the space age" and she went on to outline some of the extraordinary changes that had been called for during that long lifetime. As I reviewed sixty years of religious life, I concluded that we too had lived through and adjusted to equally extraordinary changes in community life, our ministries and society. In the archives last week I opened a box that contained the different editions of the Constitutions and noticed a thin white booklet of the Statutes from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century – I became absorbed in it and found myself laughing out loud at some entries which showed how far removed that lifestyle was from community life today.

Reflection on the vows highlighted the fact that Poverty and Chastity freed me to go, to do and to be but it was the vow of Obedience that plotted for me a life path that I would never have chosen for myself, opening doors and presenting challenges that were very demanding but which brought wonderful experiences, considerable joy and great fulfilment. Having been sent to mission *ad extra* I was more than half the sixty years outside Australia and twenty years living with other religious communities. But in all my wanderings I knew that ultimately I would come "home" and here in Kedron I now find that living in Unit 26 at Delamore I have found the peace and apartness that is more suited to my personality and

and temperament while providing a strong sense of community and the opportunity to share in active ministries through prayerful support.

I have always appreciated the way the sisters missioned at home have provided for me in many ways and welcomed me during home visits across the years and now as I enjoy the fruits of their careful stewardship and wise forward planning I am truly aware that I reap what I did not sow and am deeply grateful for that.

**Sr.Noela Leamy**

## *Golden Jubilees*

I celebrated my Golden Jubilee with Tricia on November 3 last year. The Eucharistic celebration took place in the parish church and a light meal followed in St Anthony's school hall. Father Stephen's homily on the Beatitudes at the mass really blended in with the tenor of the day. It was a grand occasion and enjoyed by all. Having so many of the sisters, as well as my family and friends present made the day one which I will always remember. I am blest and thank God for the privilege of spending the last fifty years in this wonderful Franciscan community.



**Sr. Margaret Costello**

The day of our Jubilee celebration was above all a happy day - a day for thanking God for fifty years of blessings. Of course there were ups and downs during those fifty years, and some events did not seem like blessings at the time! But it was good to reflect on the precious gift of our Franciscan way of life and our Franciscan community, and to celebrate with our Sisters, families and friends.



Sr.Patricia

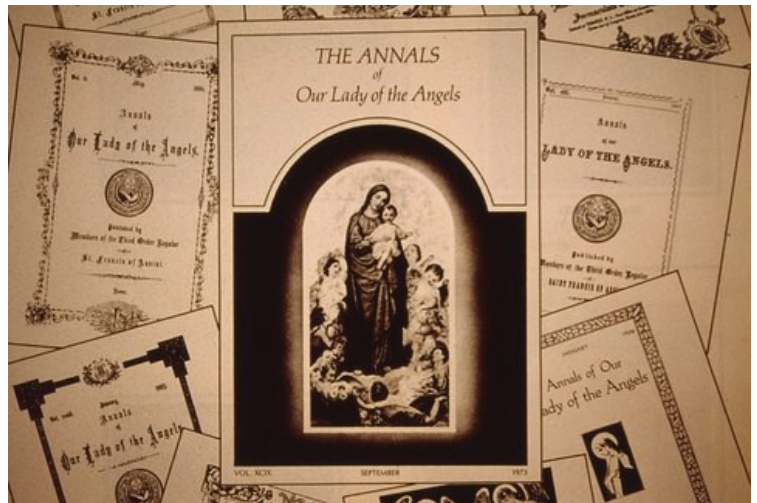
Sr. Margaret

**Sr. Patricia Treacy**

## *Elizabeth Hayes Corner*

With this edition we begin a series of short “snippets” of perhaps less well known facts about our Foundress compiled by Sr.M.Francine Shaw from her store of resources and rich knowledge of Elizabeth Hayes built up over years of meticulous research. We hope these will generate interest and a desire to learn more about Elizabeth and the legacy she has left us. Thank you Francine! **Editor.**

Through the publication of her *Annals of Our Lady of the Angels*, Elizabeth Hayes dared to be different. Most Franciscan Sisters in the United States, in the period up to 1894, paralleled the work in education and nursing of thousands of Sisters from numerous congregations. The Apostolate of the Press was almost unknown to most religious women in late nineteenth century, yet Elizabeth and her Sisters produced a fruitful and enduring publication. She set out to educate and to entertain the general reader and the Franciscans; she succeeded magnificently.



Pope Leo XIII was a Franciscan tertiary. His example and call to the world to follow the gospel example of St Francis, and his wish for the Catholic Press to be an evangelising instrument, had a great influence on the growth in tertiary membership and the publication of Franciscan journals toward the end of the nineteenth century. Elizabeth, with other Franciscan editors, by their religious commitment, hard work and sharing of resources, were truly outstanding ‘Apostles of the Press’. Even today we call these professionals our Catholic Press Apostles.

Elizabeth Hayes, the first Franciscan woman to edit and publish a successful Catholic journal and the first publisher of a Franciscan journal in the English language, was truly an amazing woman – Franciscan, educator, missionary, foundress and pioneer of Franciscan periodical literature.

**Sr.M.Francine Shaw**