



Australian Circle Newsletter

Missionary
Franciscan
Sisters



Welcome from Pauline

Dear Sisters and Friends,

This year of 2014, brings with it preparation for our Governance Circle Chapter commencing on 22nd September as well as preparing for the transfer of Sponsorship of Mt Alvernia College to Mercy Partners PJP. This formal handing over will take place on 17th September, the College feast day of the Stigmata. We are also mindful

that on 6th May, it is 120 years since the death of Elizabeth Hayes.

In our Governance Circle we have made the decision to celebrate certain feasts as a Governance Circle. These feasts are - 6th May, Elizabeth Hayes; 15th September, Mary of the Southern Cross; 4th October, St Francis and 8th December the Immaculate Conception.

In this edition of our newsletter you will hear of the ministry of two of our Sisters. The Mt Alvernia Principal and the Delamore Manager will tell you something of these our two corporate ministries. We are also aware of the other Governance Circles who are preparing for Chapters this year and we include you in our prayers.

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Sr. Pauline Robinson

An Evolving Ministry

I minister in the extensive yet not so heavily populated Diocese of Toowoomba on the Darling Downs of south west Queensland which covers an area of four hundred and eighty seven thousand square kilometres. I am based in Toowoomba, the largest city in the region which is about 132 Kilometres west of Brisbane. My ministry, however, reaches out to embrace parishes and rural communities throughout the diocese, particularly those whose personnel resources are limited. This means that I am often on the road, along with the many huge road trains that are a key means of transporting goods and livestock in the area. It is a common sight to see the carcasses of kangaroos, wallabies, emus, pigs, feral goats on the rural roads. While the possibility of hitting an animal on the road is a danger to be avoided, at this point I have experienced more grief from the recent sight in the town of Mitchell of at least eight sizeable green frogs in the bowl of an outside toilet in the parish grounds! Given that the western outback is suffering from a devastating drought, I should not begrudge God's creatures the right to some reprieve from the scorching heat.

Essentially, my role as Spirituality and Mission Development Officer is to nurture missionary discipleship in the context of the parish and diocesan faith community. In dealing with those involved in parish pastoral councils or church ministry, the challenge is to ensure that the inspiration and energy of the

Spirit underpins the external activity and that maintenance is replaced by mission. On the other side of the coin, there is the need to stimulate the spirituality of parishioners so that it does not become stagnant, a means of satisfying personal needs which does not translate into missionary outreach and willingness to be co-responsible in working to make the world a better place.

My two key areas of focus to date have been spirituality enrichment in the diocese by the provision of retreats and spiritual enrichment days, and practical faith formation and facilitation of parish pastoral councils and other leadership groups within the parish or deanery setting.

Now that my former colleague is no longer working with the diocese, it seems that my involvement will expand to include a third focus, namely coordinating training for full-time lay pastoral ministers via a new program to be introduced to the diocese entitled “Foundations for Evangelizing Ministers.”

I have enjoyed my ministry, particularly the spiritual enrichment and retreat days. I am pleased to be able to offer opportunities for people in their own parish setting without the burden of cost which so many in current economic circumstances would not be able to afford. A project that I am working on at the moment is to bring together a number of different prayer groups across parish boundaries for a



“pray-fest” day in an effort to inject new life via a guest speaker presentation and the enrichment that comes from mutual sharing. Amongst the challenges of my ministry is the inability of some priests to function with a new model of church and the debilitating effect of the self-appointed group of traditionalists who see themselves as the guardians of orthodoxy but who are totally closed to change of any kind, particularly to the changes heralded by the second Vatican council. Recently I was reported to the bishop by the “temple police” (for an understanding of Eucharist which has

been in the public domain as far back as I can recall) – I am told by some that being on their attack list is to be considered a badge of honour! It is burdensome for the current Bishop, as it was with the former, to deal with this disruptive element whose mind-set is so rigid that dialogue is impossible.

To date, my ministry has been a solo affair but I have this week established a Spirituality and Mission Development Committee to provide me with creative and visionary support in promoting activities and inter-parish events designed to nourish the life of the diocese. Our human resources officer has also recently introduced into this office the concept of the Mission and Ministry Advancement Team which includes a Project Officer (Communications and Religious Education in State Schools), the Youth Ministry Coordinator and myself. We have not yet explored how we might support each other as a team but what is clear is that my ministry continues to be in a process of evolution.

Sr. Elaine Morzone

Mt. Alvernia Building Program

Mount Alvernia College has been an amazingly busy place in 2013 and this busyness will continue into 2014. The college has experienced a 'growth spurt' in the last few years and that, with the government's change to move Year Seven students from Primary to Secondary School, has been the motivation for the development programme at the college.

This programme is not just in the construction of new buildings but as well in the development of programmes and personnel to cater for the increased enrolments.



The theme for the development is Simplicity and Beauty, and the new La Verna building is both simple and beautiful. The design was deliberately chosen to make use of the breezes from Moreton Bay and so minimize the need for air-conditioning. Staff and students are enjoying teaching and learning in this environment.

The plans for the redevelopment of Anthony Building and La Foresta – the gardens to be developed in the Cremorne Road entrance to the college are designed to reflect the Franciscan emphasis on ecology. This process will take place across the course of 2014 and is planned to be finalized for occupying by the start of 2015.

Student numbers for the start of the year are as follows:

- Year 8 - 174
- Year 9 - 168
- Year 10 - 174
- Year 11 - 147
- Year 12 - 159

Our student population is 822 students in total. This number includes twelve students who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and 22 students with verified disabilities.

This year we employed nine new staff members. These new staff members replaced several retirements and staff members on leave. We held a very successful Formation Day for new staff at the Santa Teresa Centre; the purpose of the day was to give new staff an understanding of Franciscan Spirituality and how that relates to their role at the college.

We have moved the staff room to Level 0 of the La Verna Building. One end of the building houses the staff desks and the other end is the Common Room and meeting area. Staff members seem to be appreciating the space. So far the building has proven itself to be a cool space, even on the hottest day. We are, however, aware that February is often a difficult month weatherwise.

There have been a number of gatherings for parents and students. There was a morning tea following the Year Eight Welcome Assembly and it was an opportunity to meet parents and allay fears. The College held its Opening Mass on Monday 10 February.



The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Bill Morris and it was at this ceremony that the College Captains received their badges of office. The Parents and Friends Support Network gathering for Year Eight parents after the Year Eight/Year Twelve Activity afternoon was held last week and it was a big success, with over 100 people – and students eating pizza and meeting other community members. We have had the first of a number of Parent Information Evenings to be held this term as part of informing and supporting parents during the formative years at the college and these continue throughout the First Term. We have had the first of a number of Parent Information Evenings to be held this term as part of informing and supporting parents during the formative years at the college and these continue throughout the First Term.



Late last year the college was invited to be the venue for the Sorry Day activity for schools. The Impact Team worked with the Sorry Day Committee to develop the activity, which took place on Thursday 13th February. There were representatives from the Indigenous Elders in the community and staff and students from Brisbane Catholic Schools and the programme highlighted the issues that still exist

relating to the Stolen Generation.

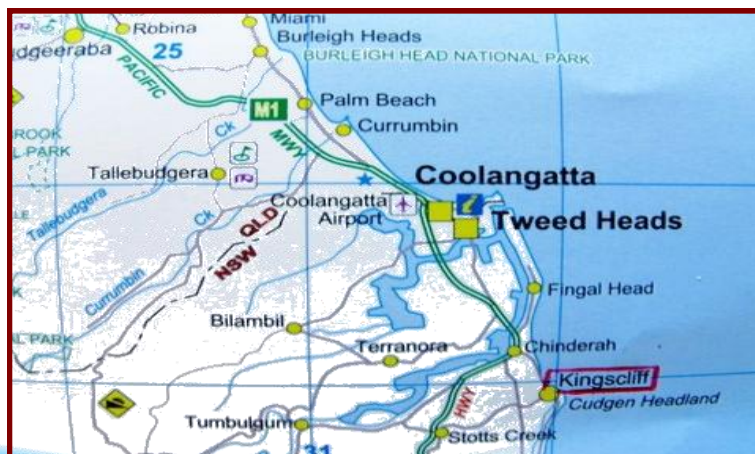
Thank you to all for your continuing support of all we do at Mount Alvernia College. We appreciate your ongoing care and prayers.

Pax et Bonum , Kerrie

Dr Kerrie Tuite , Principal Mt.Alvernia College

A New Beginning

Having entered a Missionary Order I could never have imagined that after sixty years I would return to minister in my home State of New South Wales. After thirteen years on the Gold Coast in Queensland engaged in home and hospital visitation with "Care and Concern" and Communion to the sick and elderly in Nursing Homes, I have moved over the border to this State although only a distance of fifty kilometres. Here in Kingscliff it is a much smaller Parish but still a challenge to get to know people and become involved in new ministries. Fortunately the distance from my previous location does not prevent me from



continuing visitation to a few people who feel unable to begin again with a new person.

One recent and unexpected experience was the need to find a Retirement Home and organise the transfer of a lady I had been visiting for ten years. After some weeks in hospital Mary was advised by the Medical Personnel that she could no longer manage on her own. The transfer and clearing out of her Housing Commission Unit required some days, and hours of contact with Government Departments and Local Authorities. It is certainly an experience to remember, but was a call to respond to someone alone and in distress.

Here in Kingscliff among my few visiting opportunities so far I have learned much about the early days of the area from a delightful ninety year old Aboriginal lady. Having grown up from childhood in a small house on a large block of land by the beautiful Tweed River she can well marvel at the transformation of the area today into a much developed and popular beach resort. Now, the last in her family, and having sold part of her land for development, she enjoys a modern home and delights to spend her time in her garden.



There is a strong Branch of the St.Vincent de Paul Society in the Parish. The members meet fortnightly and there is a "Drop-In" Centre where the needy are able to come for assistance three days a week. I am pleased to be a member of the Society and able to be part of this ministry but am saddened by the plight of so many who come seeking help.



My association with the Secular Franciscan Fraternity on the Gold Coast as Spiritual Animator/Spiritual Assistant continues by way of monthly meetings and in between by phone calls in lieu of personal contact as formerly at Parish activities. As a Franciscan it is, of course, a special ministry for me.

So here I am Lord, as I continue my life's journey

Sr. M. Clara Condon

A Word from our Delamore Manager

Let me introduce myself – My name is Christine Nitz and I have been the manager at Delamore Retirement Community for almost a year now. I have had 3 distinct careers in my working life, nursing, sales and business management. I have now been able to combine all three into a 4th career in the retirement village industry. Delamore is the second village that I have managed, so I bring a good deal of industry knowledge to the role.

This first year has been a very busy time, starting with a major renovation of the gardens at the front of Delamore House, and the refurbishment of several of the units and serviced apartments in preparation for a major marketing campaign, with the aim of increasing the occupancy at Delamore. Many people worked tirelessly, for weeks, to get the village ready for the grand open day last June.





Happily, the campaign was very successful and we achieved outstanding success with many units being sold over the following months.

Renovation of different sections of the gardens continues as does refurbishment of units and serviced apartments, as they become vacant. We look forward to having full occupancy in the next year or so.

My first impression of Delamore was of the peace and tranquillity the residents enjoy every day. That peaceful environment is what makes Delamore so appealing and so special.

I will continue with the work that my predecessor, Robyn, spent a lot of time and energy on; providing entertainment, social engagement and a safe and happy place for those who choose to call Delamore home.



Christine Nitz

Franciscan Federation of Queensland Meeting (FFQ)

Each year the FFQ have a Planning Meeting on the first Monday of February. This year I hosted the meeting in our Governance Circle Offices building.

In July there will be a reflection day led by Brother Daniel ssf, recently retired General Minister of the Society of St Francis. In August the Anglican Franciscans host the Transitus of St Clare.

In our parish of Kedron, the Transitus of St Francis will be celebrated. This year the Order of Secular Franciscans will prepare the ceremony. Last year the FFQ hosted sessions by Friar Bill Short ofm, from Berkley University. He spoke on "What Makes an Organisation Franciscan".

Sr. Pauline Robinson



L to R Bronwyn Fryar tssf; James MacDonald ssf;
Pauline Robinson mfc and Patricia Cullen fmm

Our Star Past Pupil

Mt Alvernia Alumnae Committee launched a book in the iCentre at the College one evening recently to honour women who had remarkable achievements and contributions to society. Twelve women were chosen for this first edition of "Belong, Believe, Achieve".

This is an extract from the Book.:

"Catherine White mfc a student at Mt Alvernia from 1967 to 1971 was the first recipient. Of Mount Alvernia College, Catherine well remembers the good humour; as well as genuine kindness of the Franciscan Sisters. 'The staff verses student netball games with the Sisters wearing ground length habits and veils are not to be forgotten.' However the fondest memory is of Sister Carmel Beirne (Sister M Ignatius) striding about in front of the class reciting Shakespeare in a "Stratford on Avon" voice - an inspiring teacher who made her students want to read Shakespeare and present their own production of The Merchant of Venice.



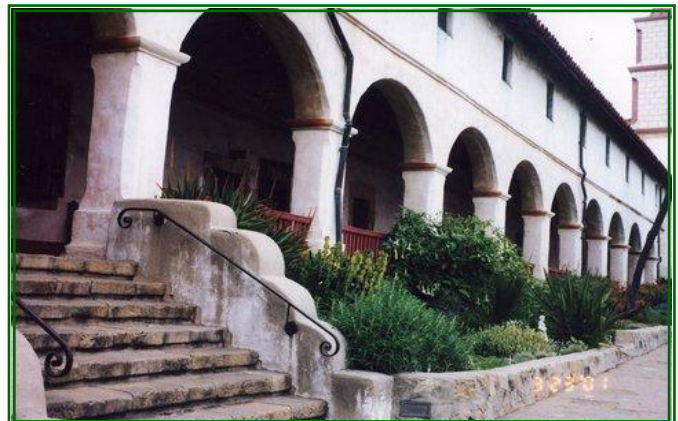
Catherine says Mount Alvernia taught her to be herself. She was encouraged to embrace her gifts, to use them for good. The warmth and caring of the staff and their willingness to engage with students is a friendly and supportive way, taught her how to be a good teacher herself in consequent years."

Sr. Pauline Robinson

E H Corner...more snippets

We know that Elizabeth walked up these steps in 1873 to visit to Friar Joseph Romo at the old Santa Barbara Mission in California. At their meeting Friar Romo urged Elizabeth, who had dreamt of being an apostle of the press for years, to begin a Franciscan journal because there was 'no Franciscan periodical at that time printed in America.'¹ Fr Romo continued his interest in Elizabeth's publication for in 1889 he wrote to her secretary, Sr M. of the Angels Chaffee, requesting that the *Annals* be sent to his new address in Egypt.

Elizabeth's 1874 illustrated monthly *Annals* was the very first Franciscan periodical to be published in the United States and it rolled off the Brainerd Press of Mr. Morris Russell.



Santa Barbara. (Front steps)

When Elizabeth's large wooden Belle Prairie Convent was built, the front steps led into a corridor from which on the right hand side, Sisters entered the printing office and behind that there was another room where the Sisters stitched and bound the *Annals*.

The 'printing in America' continued after Elizabeth transferred the printing work from Belle Prairie to Augusta (Georgia) during 1878. Sisters printed in Augusta, Georgia, and the 1882 *Annals*' cover carried the place of publication. By late 1881 Elizabeth was editing from Rome. At that time the income from the *Annals*' subscriptions had more than doubled from the previous year, from 4087 US dollars to 9047.² With Papal approval, Elizabeth transferred and opened her Roman printing office in 1883.³ Sisters in Rome printed, stitched and bound the *Annals* and shipped them to the United States.



In cities, such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago, Sisters known as 'zelatrices' did the hard work of canvassing for subscriptions and of personally delivering or mailing the *Annals* to the subscribers. In **1915** the *Annals* was being printed again in its country of origin, at first in Union City,⁴ and then in **1921** at Tenafly until the final centennial volume in 1974.

Elizabeth's *Annals* had brought new life into American Franciscan literature when the editor-publisher had seized the opportunity for mission through a periodical.

Sr M. Francine Shaw

Foot notes:

1. Chaffee, "Memories," 25. Mother Chaffee's phrase, 'received her inspiration' from Fr Romo can mean 'outside inspiration' for evidence shows that Elizabeth had the original inspiration and this visit to Fr Romo was a confirmation of it.
2. Brian de Breffny, *Unless the Seed Die*, 169.
3. From this period onward copies of all the *Annals*' year books are held in the Roman archives of the MFICs.
4. Sr. M. Edward Sherry mfc, *Centennial Commemorative Volume. The Annals of Our Lady of the Angels 1874-1974* (Tenafly, N.J.: Missionary Franciscan Sisters with Freeman & De Troy Corporation, 1974), 16.