



Australian Circle Newsletter

Missionary
Franciscan
Sisters

Welcome from Pauline



As we await the coming of the Christ child, we look back over the past few months and thank God for the blessings. In late September I led a group of 23 Pilgrims following in the footsteps of Elizabeth Hayes. Some of these pilgrims will tell of their experience of Elizabeth Hayes. We also celebrated in a special way the feast of the Immaculate Conception and 140 years of our MFIC Foundation.

It was inspiring to see how the pilgrims embraced our MFIC Charism. We had teachers from Mt Alvernia

College and St Anthony's schools and their partners, Maria Awa mfic and Clara Wartak mfic from PNG, Board Directors from Mt Alvernia and Delamore, our Retirement Village, as well as the young Parish Assistant, Joseph Nguyen OFM. We shared some amazing experiences together. Everyone loved the visit to Guernsey, Farm Street, Wantage and Oxford, Assisi, Rivo Torto, Gubbio, Greccio, Villa Spada and the Generalate. They are all committed to spreading our MFIC Charism in our schools and around Board tables. Our legacy will be ensured into the future. With Pope Francis we rejoice in the "Joy of the Gospel". Every blessing for Christmas and the New Year!

In this Edition

[Pauline's welcome](#)

[It all started with...](#)

[Mercy Partners retreat](#)

[E.H. Pilgrimage reflections](#)

[Gathering at Yamba](#)

[Delamore refurbishments](#)

[St.Mary McKillop pilgrimage](#)

[E.H.Corner](#)

It all started with fish and chips...

On the dot of 9.00 am a diminutive lady rushed into the senior's Craft Centre and with a flourish opened a plastic bag and scattered a number of brightly coloured miniature dresses onto the long table.

Yes, it all started with fish and chips... when Miriam came to stay in Cunnamulla. She arrived with one small brightly coloured dress on the needles plus a copy of the pattern. She told the ladies about the project to knit garments for the premature babies in Africa. Apparently the hospitals do not have the funds, and the people are too poor to purchase special garments for these children, so when they leave the hospital the babies are wrapped in newspaper. The women listened attentively whilst Miriam, that creative and enthusiastic person she is, told the story. I wondered just what would happen. To my surprise I found that by the end of the craft session there were at least 6 of the attendees requesting patterns.

Since Miriam's return to Kedron two parcels were posted to her and I believe that there are another 20 garments to be delivered. A lady from Rockhampton was visiting and she asked for the pattern for her craft group so they could start their own project. People from one of the towns nearby are also working on the same project and they are now encouraging the Cunnamulla group to start working on small blankets for the preemie babies. This is a great example of the connections we can make with people – who says that being old and frail is a handicap!



Miriam was also in Cunnamulla for the visit of the Bishop, Robert McGuckin. Both she and I enjoyed his visit and we made certain that he experienced the length and breadth of this sparsely populated parish. In this picture we are at the Thargomindah Caravan Park where we had lunch with a number of the parishioners and their children. The people were very appreciative that the Bishop took the time to visit them.

The Cunnamulla Sacred Heart Parish entertained the Bishop in grand style after he celebrated Mass for us. We were delighted that it was an ecumenical celebration attended by people of other denominations. Miriam and I, with the assistance of the teachers and children, had set up tables in the school quadrangle and it was here in the night that we sat and feasted whilst sharing stories about our lives with the Bishop. The Bishop proved to be a great communicator especially with the children whom he met at Assembly in the morning and also during a tour of their classrooms.



For some time I had wanted to sell second hand clothes to the people of Thargomindah and Yowah. Miriam certainly came at the right time and I was fortunate that she was able to recall skills from her time in the Kimberleys when she and Sr. Frances Crowe were able to exist financially through this retail service to clients. Four unsorted bales arrived from St Vincent de Paul in Warwick at no cost. The bales were transported by rail to Charleville and then by road transport to Cunnamulla. Finally they were delivered to the presbytery by the Cunnamulla Station Master and his assistant. The assistant rode the forklift for a few kilometres from the station. When I recall this memory I chuckle to myself as once again I see Miriam standing with hands on hips saying "Thanks boys!!"

Unfortunately the bales were so high and wide they were unable to be stored in the Colonial Accommodation out the back so they stayed in the garage. The first bale took around 6 hours to be unpacked and sorted. I am indebted to Patricia Cordwell who came to Cunnamulla delivering more clothes and generously gave of her time.

One of the greatest gifts Miriam gave to me was the reorganisation of my fernery. She had a vision of how to improve the look of the fernery where we sat, ate, prayed and looked at the sky. Both the front and back fence of fernery are now graced with extra plants which will thicken and grow and give me some colour especially during the summer months.

Miriam had to leave earlier than anticipated because Sr Frances, her good friend, was seriously ill. The people of Cunnamulla whose hearts she touched are looking forward to her return where she may inspire them to other interesting projects.

Miriam you brought us fun, laughter and creativity. Fish and chips will never be the same. We look forward to seeing you again in 2014.

Sr. Maureen Andrews

Mission ...in a spirit of bold humility

Mercy Partners Leadership Formation Program ~ Theology of Mission. Townsville. 16-18 October 2013

Alison Stone, DP Mission and Outreach from Mt Alvernia College, Kedron recently represented the MFIC's Mary of the Southern Cross Australian Governance Circle at a three day Mercy Partners Leadership Formation Program at the live-in retreat in Townsville. The retreat was attended by fifty five members of Mercy Partners which included staff from various ministries within Mercy Ministries together with Sr Kathleen Tynan representing the Presentation Sisters in Australia and Alison representing the Missionary Franciscan Sisters.

The retreat concentrated on understanding the biblical foundations of Catholic Ministry, the Theology of Mission, understanding and applying the Theology of Sponsorship with Mercy Partners, understanding and being able to apply an audit of the Mission to ensure Mission Effectiveness. Alison shares her reflections with us.

In the opening sessions of the retreat Fr Anthony Mellor explored the question of **"What does Mission mean?"** He identified the prophetic role of leadership in ministry today and exclaimed that mission and evangelisation must be carried out in a spirit of 'bold humility.'

"Who we 'are' is primary" he said, and "What we 'do' is the secondary part. Being and doing! Being present in all we do is essential and this is Theology of Presence."

This declaration sat very comfortably with me because I could see that mission is about our nature. It is about who we are - our sacramental – for we are called out of the world to be shaped by the Gospel so that we can go out into world. This is about who we are! Evangelisation on the other hand is about how we live the Gospel, or rather what we do!

Ministry can be used but it is more about service. Our task is to cooperate with God's mission in the world. God invites us to be partners and co-creators. With four core values of compassion, justice, respect and hope presence is as powerful as action. This understanding of mission necessitates that our eyes should be always on God, just as Francis and Clare declared and lived. I became very conscious of the fact that joining Mercy Partners would be a 'good' partnership.

Inspired and buoyed by the program ideas, learnings and warm fellowship my presentation about the MFIC Australian Governance Circle was very warmly received. I did warn the participants that I was going to take them on a lightning ride through 800 years of Franciscan history in just 1800 seconds! My hope was to give retreat participants an introductory understanding of the three key spiritual figures for MFIC communities, its Sisters and Missions, and briefly look at Mt Alvernia College as one of the MFIC ministries in the world. Having used the symbols of the tau cross and the San Damiano cross as reference points in my presentation I placed these symbols of Franciscan ministries into the sacred space.

Sr.Margaret Endicott, past student of Mt Alvernia College, and now a member of Mercy Partners Formation Team facilitated day two of the retreat. On this day we explored what it means to **"Form a Mercy Culture for the Sake of God's Mission". ."**

Margaret introduced us to the “Six Phases of Mission Integration.”

Phase 1: Sisters Presence - embody the mission

Phase 2: Ethos Training - Sisters share some things with others in the organisation

Phase 3: Project Focus

Phase 4: Public proclamation

Phase 5: Mission Reflection

Phase 6: Moving towards Spiritual Maturity



My thoughts would be that Mt Alvernia College fluctuates between Phases 4-6. There is no doubt that we publicly proclaim who we are. There are some staff members who have a matured and developed notion of the spirituality of their work, while others do not. We effectively weave our values into job descriptions (Phase 4); we reflect on mission (Phase 5); and some staff members are moving towards spiritual maturity because they understand that they are bringing about the reign of God through their work. (Phase 6) Furthermore Margaret and others explained the key stages in a charism and culture audit which will be a useful document in the future. The framework for the formation program of Mercy Partners was also clarified. Being a member of Mercy Partners requires commitment to formation and members must be involved in this program. The program has five levels and they are to be completed within three years. With the realisation that other congregations are joining Mercy Partners it was identified that in the future there need to be sessions within the Formation Program devoted to how congregations within Mercy Partners animate their unique charism within their ministries. To celebrate the collaborative affiliations Mercy Partners commissioned a song which has now been released called “Wheel of Mercy”.

Sr Anne Hetherington finished the retreat with a session that was devoted to “**Looking Forward**”. She reiterated that Mercy Partners was established for the future of congregations and that the partners have identified the common values of compassion, justice, respect and hope. In the past couple of years the process and energy of Mercy Partners has been to get partners together. Now that there are three congregations in Mercy Partners, relationship building is the priority. She claimed that however long it takes to finalise the relationship for the Presentation, MFIC and Mercy ministries then that is good enough. Everyone within the ministries has to be comfortable that this should be happening. Mercy Partners is now moving into a consolidation phase and sustainability is on the future agenda.

The next retreat offering will be in March 2014 at Robertson Gardens in Brisbane. The focus will be on Leadership & Governance. The Annual Gathering will be held on 18th and 19th July 2014 at the Seville Mercy Centre, Cairns for those members who have completed Level 1.

This retreat led me to a new understanding of Mercy Partners and the role we have to play. May the partnerships be blessed!

Alison Stone, DP Mission & Outreach, Mt.Alvernia

Elizabeth Hayes Pilgrimage Reflections

“How the Pilgrimage brought me into contact with the ‘Real’ Elizabeth Hayes ...

An in-service at Mt Alvernia some years ago whetted my appetite to explore further the life and times of Elizabeth Hayes. In fact, a teacher remarked at the time that a journey to Guernsey and England would lead to a greater understanding, not only of her, but also of the religious order who established our college. This was proved true through our recent pilgrimage. For me, the visit to the Anglican sisters’ convent at Wantage and the Farm Street church enabled me to understand the culture and history that Elizabeth emerged from. The seminar and reflective time with the sisters in Rome during our day with them helped consolidate my knowledge of Elizabeth and the way she saw her mission.

I see her now as a woman out of her time, able to make her way successfully through the difficulties raised by her religious conversion with courage and great determination – a woman for today! ’

Trisha Sullivan

“As a former parent of Mt Alvernia, the spouse of a teacher at Mt A and as a Director on the College Board, I had almost no knowledge of Elizabeth Hayes before the 2013 Pilgrimage. Having followed in the footsteps of Elizabeth in Guernsey, Wantage and Rome, I now have a growing appreciation of this remarkable woman. I also have the greatest admiration for the intellect, courage and determination of this highly-competent female who had a specific vision of missionary work and who pursued her goal, despite the substantial obstacles she faced. While Elizabeth and her extraordinary achievements are an example to all who follow in the tradition of Francis and Clare, Elizabeth is an especially apt role model for the young women who are educated at Mt Alvernia College.”

Terry Sullivan

“Academically, I knew about Elizabeth Hayes before the Pilgrimage, especially after reading Sr Pauline Shaw's book. There is a special connection, however, that comes from walking where another walked. I found the visit to Wantage had a profound effect on me, as I saw sisters living and working there today, just as Elizabeth had and I felt drawn back in time. The other most telling experience for me, was the visit to the gravesite of Elizabeth's family, where I was able to look around and feel the mixture of emotions felt by an 18 year old girl who was leaving her home and family knowing she could never return. Many words came to my mind then to describe Elizabeth: brave, courageous, devoted and committed were just a few of them.

Mari Vine ,*Curriculum Leader Religious Education, Mt Alvernia College.*

“Elizabeth Hayes was a well educated woman in an age where education for women was not the norm. She did her extensive journal writing in various languages for all of her life sometimes under the most extreme conditions. She was a woman of great vision who was not daunted by dangerous sea and land voyages with only one small bag of luggage and a hand-made rug.

She overcame adversity, fought the legal battle for Villa Spada in Rome, lost, but moved on. She inspired much devotion in her followers which continues in the carrying on of her ideals to this day.

I enjoyed the camaraderie of my fellow pilgrims, with lots of discussion and frequent laughs and felt a great lift in spirit by the completion of our pilgrimage. “

Judith Forster



"A Pilgrimage is both a shared and a private journey. The Elizabeth Hayes Pilgrimage provided me with a much-needed opportunity for personal reflection and renewal, in a supportive atmosphere provided by a group of people who I have come to know and appreciate. In addition, the example of Elizabeth Hayes in applying knowledge and thought to her approach to her life, and her showing the courage to grow and develop against all odds and opposition, was fundamental to my personal journey and has reinforced my belief. I have returned home much more at peace with myself."

Trevor Forster

"Elizabeth Hayes was an intelligent and inspirational woman who was a visionary in her time. We found Guernsey Island to be a beautiful place where she began her learning from her family, both academic and spiritual. But the seeds must have been sown for her to have a spiritual vocation to travel to England. Academically gifted, she must have enjoyed teaching and then challenging herself with the Oxford Movement and being baptised into the Catholic Church. Her travels to the wild and unknown world in the Americas not only show her bravery and adventurous spirit but also her inspiring personality and vision to establish education in the more remote areas of her world. Her missionary vocation inspired men and women across cultures and seas in her time and continued after her death for her order to establish schools and missions in Australia and beyond.

We are very fortunate to have learned much about her life and also very grateful to be a part of her legacy of education for ourselves and our children. "

Jennifer Letitza and David Bennett



Gathering at Yamba... with Marguerite, Clara, Francois, Rita, Josephine, Jo, Moya...

Looking back over those five days I can describe the experience as a gentle re-knowing of each other. Stories were told, gifts shared, trust always present, especially in the drivers and navigators! But overall the sharing was a joy-filled experience. Our arrival at Star of the Sea Conference Centre at about 4pm revealed that we were situated on a hill overlooking the ocean on one side, and the many lakes and islands of the delta on the other. It was a water paradise! Sandy, the conference manager welcomed us and took us to our rooms which turned out to be palatial. She cooked us a delicious dinner that evening and we made our plans as we sat around the table. We were the only guests.

Next day the rain was gone and we made it a time to explore the town, buy post cards, and research the material in the Information Centre. As a result we resolved to take the ferry to Iluka next day. Iluka is an island and to get there we would explore the Clarence River. One of our scouts discovered that there was mass on Wednesdays so this was built into the next day's program.

By Wednesday we were ready for some action, so after mass some of us filled in the time before the ferry's departure with a visit to the museum. This proved to be most informative about the life of the river, especially the work of the pilots who guided the ships through the bar and into the river.



Yamba was to be the port of the state envisaged for Northern NSW and South East Queensland, but the idea was not followed. Our boat trip took us past other islands with channels marked out by beacons. We arrived at the marina in Iluka and were told that there was a free bus trip to the hotel in the town. We took the bus. But to our horror it sailed past the town's three or four shops and Catholic church and kept on to the hotel. We'd been kidnapped! The hotel looked as though it had stepped out of Dickens. Was it constructed of drift wood? Marguerite, Rita and Josephine opted to stay there for lunch and the view of the river, while Jo, Clara, Fran (plus walker) and Moya set off for the shops. The art and craft shop was tempting but lunch at the bakery was more so. Thursday became our most eventful day. Clara told us about a great beach called Brooms Head near the town of MacLean. This was where her niece Joanne has the General Store. Brooms Head turned out to be mostly a caravan park and here we found Clara's niece, Joanne, and her General Store. Her husband, Gary, has the kiosk on the actual beach so we went round there to admire this truly beautiful beach. Then Gary arrived with a great lunch for us – fish and chips with a mountain of salad. He would not take any money for the lunch, saying that we brought a blessing to the family and its work... Friday was our last day. Marguerite, Rita and Jo left on time but just as Clara, Josephine, Fran and Moya were about to leave we heard that there was an accident at Devil's Elbow (!!) and highway was blocked in both directions. Eventually we arrived at Kingscliff and a delicious lunch served by Josephine and Clara. All that was left was for Fran and Moya to arrive at Kedron to a great



welcome and just in time to farewell Pauline and newly arrived Maria Awa and Clara from PNG en route to Rome. Looking back in gratitude on this week my impression is one of great peacefulness and delight in each other's company. We have resolved to make it an annual event!

Sr.Moya Byrne

Delamore Refurbishments

Delamore has been a hive of activity since early May this year. A large number of units and serviced apartments were vacant and the decision was made to do a complete refurbishment on the properties as they were starting to show their age.

So, down came the old cupboards, and out went the old carpets, curtains and white goods to make way for a unit/serviced apartment that is up to date and will meet the needs and wants of the most fastidious buyer. The initial round of refurbishments included stone bench tops to the kitchens and bathrooms and glossy white doors with chrome handles, and good quality wool blend carpet. This mixed well with the ultra white walls and the stainless steel appliances and gave the units a bit of 'bling'.



We had a couple of the units/serviced apartments 'dressed' for the Open Day and some months following, so that prospective purchases could imagine for themselves how their furniture and belongings might best fit. The feedback from the public has been very positive with the one most consistent compliment being how spacious the accommodation really is.

Again in the past few weeks we have had another round of refurbishments prior to the sales day which we held on 23 November 2013. In the new round of refurbishments, we enlisted the assistance of an interior designer who refined the project. The new colour scheme is a little softer with a hint of light grey throughout, but still keeping the stone surfaces and chrome finishes, with a pale grey low pile wool carpet underfoot.

Bernadette Turton, *Business Manager*.

St. Mary MacKillop Australian Pilgrimage 2013

It is some weeks since I returned from experiencing the wonderful, reflective and caring St Mary MacKillop Australian Pilgrimage. In fact I am still walking in Mary's footsteps, reading more about her and hopefully catching something of her compassionate spirit. As the words printed around Mary's tomb in Sydney remind us, she saw life as a journey. She wrote 'I wish we would only remember that we are but travellers here.'

At the pilgrims first Mass together held in the Melbourne Centre, the celebrant reminded us that the real challenge of our journey would be 'to move from the head to the heart,' how true.

What surprised me? How well educated and full of faith Flora's, Mary's mother was, and how many Scottish Catholic people had migrated to southern Australia. Also the size of old Penola town and how

many of Mary's relatives lived in the area. I loved the story of Mary getting the net on her hair pulled off by a low branch of a tree as she raced her horse near 'Penola Station' where she was governess to her relative's children. A high point for me was Sunday Mass in Penola Church with Fr Paul Gardiner as celebrant. Mary's words near her image in the side chapel will stay with me, 'There where you are, you will find God. The pilgrimage often moved us by bus and plane to the key places in Mary's life, Melbourne, Hamilton, Portland, Penola, Robe, Adelaide & Sydney. It was great to meet in a fresh way the people who touched Mary's life, especially her parents and siblings, Julian Tenison Woods, her relatives, the early Josephite Sisters and so on. I delighted of course to see how Mary's Scottish connection with our Glasgow Franciscans in three towns was given prominence in displays. Also to note with interest how one of the interactive shows in the Sydney Centre voiced the story of



Mary's pilgrimage to Paray-le-Moniel. Elizabeth Hayes translated the French account of this pilgrimage in her first volume in 1874 in her *Annals of Our Lady of the Angels*. The presence and influence of so many Josephite historians gave deep insight into our journey. The pilgrimage made possible so many unique and moving experiences that it is impossible to sum them up in these few words.

Sr. Francine Shaw

E.H. Cornersnippets

St Francis in the Order's early days was convinced that a great number of men and women from almost every country would join the Order. He said, 'Frenchmen are coming, Spaniards are hastening, Germans and English are running, and a very great multitude of others speaking various tongues are hurrying.' Celano's words, quoted by Elizabeth Hayes, could be used again to describe the growth and propagation of Franciscan periodical literature in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century.

1 Celano 27 in Marion A. Habig, ed., *St Francis of Assisi, Writing and Early Biographies*. Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago. 1973, 250-251, in Eric Doyle ofm, *Canterbury and the Franciscans 1224-1974* (Canterbury, Kent: Friars Minor & Guildford Offset Service, 1974), 20.



Elizabeth was much aware of the 'growth and development of the Franciscan Order in Europe' which she had witnessed first hand and which she included in her *Annals'* content. Francine's research has revealed that between 1874 and 94, the years when Elizabeth was editor-publisher, at least another thirty-five European Franciscan journals were founded across Italy, France, Spain, Germany & Austria, Belgium, England and Ireland. This number was in addition to the eight Franciscan periodicals that began between 1861 (in Paris) and 1874, Elizabeth's included.

Elizabeth Hayes, "The Seraphic Order," *Annals of Our Lady of the Angels* XIII, no. xi 1888: 88-89.

E. Hayes, "The Progress and Development of the Third Order in Europe," *AOLA* I, no. i, 1874: 28-29.

Sr. Francine Shaw