

CSC Newsletter

Volume 48 N°2 November 2015



Sr Fiona celebrates her 90th!



Where was Sister Hilda Mary?
Loitering within tent?

It feels like CSC is always celebrating someone or something, and 2015 has been no different.

We have had a **90th** Birthday (Fiona), a **125th** and a **50th** (in Canada) and a **100th/10th/75th** in Taizé.

In between all the special things, daily life goes on. Sisters are involved in the round of corporate and individual prayer, and ministries within our houses and out in society and communities. Sometimes Sisters' ministries and experiences have a very outgoing nature, such as at Greenbelt (page 9), but much of the time, as with all Christians in their daily life and commitment, working for God is a quiet, unsung reaching out to God and our neighbour. Living out our Christian life, it has been said, often takes a quiet heroism.



Mother Emily 'placed the Community under the patronage of St. Michael and the angels, pointing us to a life of worship and active ministry, of mingled adoration and action.'

(The CSC Rule)

The Religious Life is countercultural because it is not about who we are as individuals but as Communities.

The Religious Life is one of intimacy: intimacy with God and intimacy with life; they are inseparable.

Sr Annaliese



Community of the Sisters of the Church - An International Anglican Religious Community

125 Years in Canada!

In the Beginning....

‘Our two travellers [Sister May and Sister Frederica] set sail from Liverpool on September 18th, accompanied by many earnest prayers for a blessing on this new undertaking – prayers which have, indeed, been abundantly answered already, and which will, we trust, receive a still wider fulfilment as our work develops.

‘Our own Festival – that of St Michael and All Angels – was indeed an auspicious day for our Community first to set foot in the New World, and the Sisters were still further inspirited by the very hearty welcome which they received from [the Rev] Mr. Wood, and [the Rev] Mr. and Mrs. French, of St. John’s Church, Montreal.

‘After enjoying the hospitality of these kind friends for a day, and seeing the beautiful church and admirable school, and hearing

much that was encouraging of Church work in Montreal, our travellers started again by the Canadian Pacific Railway, and reached Toronto in time for breakfast next morning.

‘Here, again, a hearty welcome and more hospitality awaited them, so it is not surprising that a warm sense of gratitude for all the kindness shewn [sic] to them as the first representatives of our Society in Canada, should colour the Sisters’ letters. ‘Nor was this all, for a very earnest and hearty invitation had reached them on landing, from the Bishop of Niagara and Mrs. Hamilton, to go over to Hamilton, and, if possible, to begin work in that diocese at once.’

Bring Baths!

In their first letter back to Mother Emily, Sister May wrote, ‘Sr. Frederica has just reminded me to ask, if school Sisters are coming if they might bring baths as they cannot be bought here.’

Characteristically the cable received from Mother Emily in answer to the Sisters’ query about work in Toronto and/or Hamilton was, ‘Start both centres.’ And as they say, the rest is history!

Sr Marguerite Mae



Sr Marguerite Mae (CSC Archivist) holding the lid of a tin bath.

The lid reads:

**‘Sisters of the Church
Passengers via Montreal
S.S. Numidian**

125 Years On



Sisters Margaret, Michael, Heather and Marguerite Mae at the 125th

Congratulations and Celebrations

Sr Margaret (Canadian Provincial) writes:

We kept Michaelmas, the 125th Anniversary of CSC in Canada, and the blessing into my third term as Canadian Provincial. The celebrations took place in St. Cuthbert's Church, Oakville.

The weather was lovely - not too hot, but bright and clear. We had a turnout of about 150, counting everyone in the choir, the sanctuary and the congregation! The singing was loud and joyful, especially of the Solomon Island tune for Mother Emily's hymn.

Bishop Michael Bird celebrated, and spoke kind words, before the service. Bishop Ralph Spence preached a very moving homily, if at times quite hysterically funny.

Bishop Fred Hiltz blessed me as Provincial, blessed the Icon we had had written in honour of CSC's 125th Anniversary in Canada, and commissioned me for the work I do with the Residential School Survivors. Many of our Associates and friends took part in the service.

After the service there was a reception in the Church Hall, with food and fellowship. We had a cake made with the CSC cross and Union Jack, Maple Leaf, and the dates.

As people left, they were each given a souvenir

'cookie' with the old and new CSC crosses and dates, a suitable token I think.



**It was a
Wonderful
Day!**



Cake and Cookies

'St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School has been around for many years of excellence and behind the founding of this school, there was the Community of the Sisters of the Church. Now, 125 years later, the Sisters of the Church are right here supporting us! Both the Sisters and the School have put a strong emphasis on the core values of respect, integrity, innovation, commitment and courage. When we look back at our own time here at SMLS, there have been many fun and educational times to explore these

important values. We want to thank the Sisters for being here today for this special commemoration of 125 years of St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School! To us, SMLS is a safe place to make friends, to have a wonderful education, and to develop strong core values, and the Sisters have been and remain an important part of that journey - from the past, through the present, and beyond.'



The Sisters and students, past and present, of St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School.



The Sisters in Canada commissioned this **Icon of St. Michael** from **Regan O'Callaghan**, to commemorate the **125th** celebrations of CSC in Canada. (Regan is a New Zealander who lives in London, UK. He is an Anglican Priest and artist.)

In most images St. Michael, is shown holding a golden censer and a sword, but in this icon, he holds the censer and a **Loon**. The loon is the official bird of Ontario, Canada and is also used as a national symbol representing Canada's rugged wilderness. It has a very haunting cry.



Sister Fiona talks about celebrating her 90th Birthday

My **90th birthday** on June 28th was a wonderful occasion. I had kept it rather quiet as I did not want a lot of fuss, so Sister Linda Mary did not note it in the diary.

The day fell on a Sunday, which suited the local parishioners at All Saints, Kempsey who wanted to celebrate with a special morning tea after the service. On this particular Sunday the Rector was celebrating the Eucharist in two other centres in the parish.

This meant that Sister Helen was rostered to take Morning Prayer at All Saints. As Sister Linda Mary was with us, she was able to celebrate the Eucharist, which was a big plus as far as I was concerned. Sister Helen preached her usual well thought through sermon.

When I entered the church I found a beautiful bunch of roses on my seat which came from the organist's garden. He specialises in roses! As we came out of church the same organist played tunes a little different from usual. They were; 'Why was she born so beautiful,' 'Ain't she Sweet!' and one or two others of a similar nature! The whole service was very festive, so despite my protestations, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

One of our friends who works in a local chemist shop, made a lovely cake covered with purple icing and little butterflies. The shape of it reminded me of one of the Queen's hats. When she knew that the cake was to be shared with more people than she thought, she went home and produced another, cut up ready for eating. We discovered later when we cut the first one, the middle layer consisted of chocolate covered nuts and raisins.

Two days earlier, I received a beautiful bouquet of flowers through inter-flora from my sister Rose and her family. On the following day two more arrived; one from two Tasmanian Associates, and the other from the Nursing Home where I visit. We used them to decorate our chapel and house.



Cutting the cake at church

The celebrations seemed to go on throughout the following week, with a special morning tea hosted by a Mercy Sister with whom we have a special friendship, and a celebratory meal at South West Rocks, organised by two of our Associates who regularly come to our chapel for Evensong.

I discovered later, I shared my birth date with none other than Margaret Thatcher!!



Fiona with Srs Helen, Linda Mary and Rosamund... and The Queen's Hat Cake!



The Taizé Community and CSC

Sister Annaliese (UK) writes of her experience at Taizé this year:

I first came to Taizé in 1978 aged 19, and then after University I spent a year living alongside the Community as what is called a 'Permanent'. It was during that year that I experienced the call to the religious life (although it took some years for me to discover which Community was to be my home). It was at Taizé in the beauty and simplicity of the Prayer, in the music and in the silence that I experienced again and again the call to go deeper, to surrender all and to become 'yes' to God's Love in Jesus - a Love which knows no beginning and no end. I am hugely indebted to Brother Roger and the Community for giving me that year which became without doubt, the foundation for the rest of my life.

100 - 10 - 75

2015 has been a very special year for Taizé marking 100 years since the birth of Brother Roger, the 10th anniversary of his death and the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Community. It was a great joy and honour to be invited back to Taizé for part of these celebrations.

In July 350 young religious from Catholic, Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox traditions gathered for a week of 'reflection on the monastic vocation' and I was one of the invited speakers. Returning to Taizé 20 years after my last visit was a real homecoming. Although there had been significant structural additions particularly to the Church of Reconciliation, and a simplifying of the Common Prayer, the essence of the spirit of Taizé felt much the same. The beauty and spaciousness of the Prayer was as breathtaking as ever with the simple chants being accessible to all. Central also to Taizé is the continued welcome and acceptance of thousands of young people who come with their questions and their searchings for truth.



Sr Annaliese delivering her address at Taizé with Br Thomas Dürr

It was very moving and inspiring to listen to the talks from Religious from all over the world, some living in war torn areas and some living for many years in remote enclosed Communities. It was a special gift to have meals together with the other speakers and share together informally about our lives, our joys our struggles and our hopes.

I took away many treasures in my heart from that week, encouraged by the depth of spirituality and commitment. Some of those treasures are in the shape of quotations from the talks or the question and answer sessions.

Treasures

“God invites us to joy. Christ asks of us limitless trust.” Sister Angelika, Community of Imshausen, Germany

“The unity of life and words is the very basis of credibility.” Brother Marcellin Theewes Former Prior of the Grande Chartreuse

“Be immersed in Christ.” Anaba Thomas, Coptic Orthodox Bishop from Egypt

“If we shut ourselves up in our differences.... do we not risk making them into obstacles?” Brother Quenardel, Abbot of Citeaux

“God sees goodness in us that we cannot see ourselves.” Sister Pierette, Prioress of the Community of Grandchamp Switzerland

More Treasures from Taizé

“Be attuned to the Spirit of God, because if you are attuned, you will vibrate with things of the Spirit. Then you will find God in all things.”

Father Adolf Nicholas, Superior General of the Society of Jesus

“When we love a brother or a sister, we love God because each person is an icon of God.” Mother Lakovi, Abbess of the Monastery of St John the Forerunner, Akritohori, Greece.

Quoting St.Seraphim: **“A quiet peace in the soul and thousands will be converted.”** Archimandrite Savva. Monastery of St Nicolas of Gomel. Belarus

The talks and photos can be found by going to www.taize.fr/ and searching :Taizé 5-12 July 2015 week of Reflection on the Relevance of Religious or Monastic life.

“...the fact of feeling weak and vulnerable, not heroes, not perfect people, allows us to recognise around us the everyday miracles of the Holy Spirit.”

Little Sister Maria Chiara. Superior General of the Little Sisters of Jesus

“It is through our humanity that we are called. We don't have to be powerful and in control to be spiritual and in depth in Christ. We need to believe that God comes in search of us. God comes in search of our unconditionality.” Brother Michael Perry. Minister and Servant of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans)

It is by placing emphasis on the gospel of grace in its simplicity and freshness that we can move forward with a light step, as witnesses of a joy of the Gospel.” Brother Richard of Taizé

50 Years and Counting!

On January 29th, 2015 the Canadian Sisters, former staff and volunteers, gathered to mark **50 years** of employment of our beloved **Etelvina DeFaria**. Her sisters Anna, Connie and Odilla and daughter-in-law Dorina, were also able to be there.

Etelvina first came to work for us in 1965, a young, new immigrant from the Azores. Over the years she has become a part of our family, and we of hers, sharing weddings, funerals, Professions. She's had brief times off for babies and knee surgery, but has kept us clean and organised through thick and thin, with help from her family.

Thank you Etelvina and keep up the good (if challenging) work!

Etelvina



News from the Solomon Islands-Pacific Province

Sister Kathleen leads Retreat

Sister Kathleen writes:

Six of the Third Year Novices from the Society of Saint Francis and I boarded their truck to TNK for their Retreat. (TNK - CSC house Tetete ni Kolivuti)

After compline they began their retreat which was based on the Three Vows: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

The Novices found it a real challenge and there was deep input from each one of them. On Saturday night they read the poems and songs they had composed.



Sister Kathleen, Brother Lent and the SSF Novices

Land Ceremony at Auki

When St Raphael's house at Auki on Malaita, was opened in 1993, CSC was given permission to build the house on land owned by Mrs Irene Atako. This year there was a custom land ceremony, handing over the land to the Sisters. During the handover Ceremony, we also remembered the late Sr Muriel who was the pioneer of St Raphels house. She was the one who came into contact with Mrs Irene Atako, Mr Jonathan's Mother, at the time that we were looking for a piece of land in Auki for our house. It was very moving as we remembered her. Sadly, Mrs Irene died on the Sunday after the Ceremony.



Mr Thomas Bebeu at the land ceremony

The occasion was attended by the Diocesan Bishop and his wife, Deputy General Secretary Mr Thomas Bebeu, Lands Officer Mr Simon, our Former Chaplain Fr Michael Bebeu, Auki Parish Chairman, Head Sisters of CSM, SSF Brothers, MBH Brothers, Associates, Sisters and Jonathan Malai the land owner.



Auki Associates

Church of Melanesia Youth Convention

CSC Novices and Postulants, and Sisters Eleanor and Joanna, took part in the week long 'Anglican Church of Melanesia Youth Convention in June.



Sister Hilda Mary Experiences Greenbelt

She writes:

‘What is Greenbelt? - Greenbelt is a **Christian Arts Festival** that has been running over the August bank holiday week end for 42 years. It began in a green belt area north of London, hence its name.’

Greenbelt of course!

‘Where can one start the day with a Sufi teacher chanting the names of God, go to exciting and challenging theatre pieces, hear some of the best Christian speakers and end up with beer and hymns in the ‘Jesus Arms’? Greenbelt of course.

‘The Franciscans have been setting up camp there for many years and over the years others have joined them for the week end. They have a chapel tent, refectory tent and large kitchen tent. Individual tents are provided for us to sleep in. Morning and Evening prayer and Compline happen daily and Eucharist at 12.30. We all helped with food prep etc.

ARC (Anglican Religious Communities) had a stand this year and were able to meet and talk to many people about Community life in the Anglican Church and new and emerging communities.



A Popular Event

‘It is hard to know how many were there this year but it was over 8,000. There were lots of families with young children and teenagers. It gives such a sense of hope to be with so many people full of faith and with smiling faces, and to be in touch with many who are working to make a difference in our world when we are faced daily with so much bad and sad news.

The Bright Field

‘The theme of this years festival was **‘The Bright Field’** based on R.S.Thomas’s poem of that name. (See Page 11)

The poet, Malcolm Guite was there and gave a wonderful talk on the poem. One of the themes of the weekend was environmental issues and the crisis in climate change that we are living through now.

‘The Eucharist on Sunday, which was for everyone, was led by Br Sam SSF from Hilfield Friary and Lindon from the Pilsdon Community, It was about the care of the earth and giving thanks for our world and was very moving. Bishop Libby Lane from Stockport (UK) and Bishop Pushpa Lalitha from South India presided.

‘Of course there was also all the music and bands some of which are very prophetic, challenging and make one think as well as being entertaining.

‘And did it rain? Of course, and there was lots of mud. What a delight to see children playing in it! And yes, queues for the loos, but those things seem so minor compared with moments of great beauty: the full moon, sunsets over the trees, friendship, laughter, the challenge of many of the speakers and encouragement, and hymns and beer. There must have been over four or five hundred people singing lots of the old favourite hymns in the ‘Jesus Arms’ including, at the request of the hard working bar staff, ‘O come All Ye Faithful!’



A Challenge for CSC - Sisters and Associates from a Michaelmas reflection by Linda Mary

During the liturgical year we meet accounts of angels – archangels and angels – fulfilling their role and purpose of worship and service as messengers in the created order.

Mother Emily desired deeply that each Sister in the Community, and the Community as a whole, would work and pray to the honour and glory of God and be an instrument for the coming of God's reign on earth.

She realised that this two-fold aspect in our life was mirrored in the life of the archangels and all the angels. So 'she placed the Community under the patronage of St Michael, the chief archangel, and all the angels, pointing us to a life of worship and active ministry, of mingled adoration and action.' In *The Rule of the Community*: She tells us that like the angels, while we labour for others, we still adore God, and whatever our activity, if we are true to grace we may, like the angels continually behold the face of God.'

Today as we celebrate St Michael and the other archangels and all angels we remember who they are. Their main function is to worship God, and their other important function to be messengers of God. The name of each archangel tells us who they are and the message they carry is a source of blessing to the person to whom the archangel comes or with whom they journey.

Michael: means and calls out, '**Who is like God?**'. Michael is the supreme defender/protector of the mystery of the being of God, the mystery that is beyond all imagining.

Gabriel: The '**Guiding strength** of God or **Wisdom** of God'. In the OT Gabriel interprets Daniel's dreams and in the NT is the angel of Annunciation, bringing news of the birth of both John the Baptist and Jesus.

Raphael: '**Healing power** of God'. In the Book of Tobit, Raphael is the companion, guide and protector of Tobias, son of Tobit, during his journey.

Uriel: '**Light** or **Flame** of God' and is the one who accompanies Enoch on his journey to Hades.

Sariel: '**Command** of God'. The one who, with Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, lead into the battle against the powers of darkness.

Raguel: '**Friend** of God'. The one who accompanies Enoch to heaven. Enoch is doubly blessed as he has two different archangels accompanying him on his journeys.

Remiel: '**Mercy** of God'. Remiel, with Uriel, is present at the time of judgement.

These messengers of God brought their particular attribute of God to those to whom they were sent by God. Today, in our time, they can challenge us to be people who reveal the goodness and delight of God, and to be faithful to the message God gives to us. In all our relationships and life situations the message with its quality of truth and blessing will give glory and praise to God.



Linda Mary writes:

Pause for Thought

Some months ago I read Miroslav Volf's book 'A Public Faith' and then I re-read it. Why? Because I found it both challenging and deeply fulfilling as I endeavour to live in hope and love in the world today. In a world that so needs to know and experience the power and forgiveness of God's love. In God's creation – human and non-human – so the deepest and truest meaning and purpose can be brought to life. In each person as they become truly human, living in the gift of God to them, alive, flourishing and with a sense of happiness and satisfaction.



Hope is one of the Advent themes. It tends to focus on the coming of Jesus in human form at Christmas. When God's '...all-powerful word leaped from heaven...' (Wisdom 18: 15 NRSV) to become enmeshed in our human frailty and brokenness. In time, Jesus, took it to the cross so all may find release, reconciliation and wholeness. This is the hope now and in the future when Christ will come again to bring all creation into the unity and being of God.

Love is another Advent theme often tied into the response of Mary to God's request carried by the angel, Gabriel, to her. Her love and willingness to be open to the power of God's love enabled the Word to be incarnated within her – birthed from within her.

In the Gospel reading from Mark 10: 17-31 (NRSV) the man who rightly believed that the most important thing he needed was 'eternal life' came to ask Jesus for this gift. He kept all the Commandments and yet his life did not satisfy him. 'Jesus looking at him, loved him...' (v. 21) with the all-embracing merciful love of God looking deep into his eyes and life. The man was challenged by Jesus not to keep more commandments but rather to let himself respond to God's love for him.

Volf ends the chapter, 'Human Flourishing': 'That, I think, is today's most fundamental challenge...to really mean that the presence and activity of the God of love, who can make us love our neighbours as ourselves, is our hope and the hope of the world – that this God is the secret of our flourishing as persons, cultures, and interdependent inhabitants of a single globe.' (p.74)

References: The paragraph, 'In the Gospel...' stems from a sermon by Sr Helen.

Volf, Miroslav: 'A Public Faith – How Followers of Christ should Serve the Common Good'

Brazos Press © 2011

**Jesus Christ, Love of all loving,
you were always in me and I did not
know it. You were there, and I kept
on forgetting you. You were in my
heart of hearts and I was looking
elsewhere. Even when I remained
far from you, you kept on waiting
for me.**

Br Roger of Taizé

The Bright Field

R. S. Thomas

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the
pearl of great price, the one field that had
treasure in it. I realise now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.



* = Sister in Cr

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