

CSC Newsletter

Volume 48 N° 1 May 2015

From Death To Life



Sister Ann Mechtilde
1922 - 2014



Sister Scholastica
1912 - 2015



Sister Marguerite
1918 - 2015

Well done, good and faithful servants



Sister Dorothea
still on the road
at

100

**Her incredible
cake!**



**An edition of lives lived to the
full, of commitments made, of
faith, hope and love
given in service to
God and to CSC**

This has been a strange Newsletter to put together. Three Sisters' earthly lives have come to an end, yet their memory lives on in our hearts. Another Sister continues to share her life with us and brings us much joy, with recent memories of her 100th Birthday.

Joy, sorrow and great gratitude mingle in our hearts and minds.



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

SISTER ANN MECHTILDE died on Christmas Day 2014

Annie Baldwin was born on June 26th 1922 in the North East of England and throughout her life, it remained important to her that she was a lass of County Durham. She joined the Community in 1946, making her Life Profession in 1950.

Richard Allen, one of the Chaplains in the UK, gave a very moving address at Ann's Requiem. He had come to know Ann very well over the previous four years and she had shared much of her life journey in conversation with him. It seems fitting, therefore, to make most of this article extracts from Richard's address.

Richard writes:

'Just before she was taken into Kingston Hospital, Ann sent me a Christmas card. In it, she'd penned the following lines:

'Wrestling with words
in the small hours
finding not one
that is adequate
except, perhaps,
inadequate'

'Despite brief spells in Canada and at Clevedon, Ann spent most of her community life in and around London. Only during part of the 1980's did she return home to the north-east to undertake a spell of parish ministry in Jarrow and St Helen Auckland. In spite of this work, I know Ann felt that her primary value to CSC lay in the contributions she offered to its internal functioning.

'Stringency at home had taught her how to manage financial resources, a skill that she put to good use for many years as Bursar, working alongside Sister Bernadette. She was proud of that role. It brought her into contact with the world of specialist advisers, which she seemed

to relish; so much so that two of them were guests at her 90th birthday celebrations (and one was present at her funeral).



A Poet in our midst

'In many ways, Ann's life followed something of the pattern that Richard Rohr describes in his 2011 book, 'Falling Upwards'; for it was well into the second half of life that I think she came to a greater sense of her true spiritual nature. Qualification as a counsellor in 1995, coupled with her work at St Marylebone, gave a context for her curiosity into the human condition.

'Strict instruction in the poetic art gave her a theoretical framework from which to write. Her collection, 'Sacred Space', reveals an Ann who composed within the rules of form, producing triolet and rondeau, and sonnets. Several inspired by Scripture, speak directly of a God from whom she felt her poetry emanated.

'Yet her later work shook off the shackles of these forms. Words became more sparse, carefully selected, none wasted. Her inspiration came, not so much from Scripture, as from life itself. In this, she seemed to draw inspiration from R S Thomas. Both inhabited religious worlds, yet neither found them comfortable places. To each, they were spaces of paradox and challenge, 'peninsulas of the spirit' from which God could be both glimpsed and hidden.

‘Just after her 90th birthday, when the adrenalin had subsided, Ann wrote a poem that encapsulated where she stood at that time. It is entitled, ‘Goodbye’.

Goodbye

The last consignment:
prop and stay strain
beneath the weight
of mortality.
When I say ‘goodbye’
I mean
A Dieu
The disincarnate one
the disincarnate me
we are, at end, alone
and strangers
to ourselves.

‘Yet this stranger to herself was not yet ready to go. She undertook one last task, making a final trip with Jill to say goodbye to her beloved Durham. She knew this would be the final time, but still found the courage to make it. On her return, she set about preparing for death. ‘Nothing lasts for ever’ became her refrain, crucially balanced by the rather more positive ‘love makes the world go round’.

‘From here she completed enough of the job of unburdening herself to describe the bag she’d packed in anticipation of the final journey in six brief lines:

It stood alone
with a look of something
worked at and ready to go.
Time only unmarked
withheld
NOT YET

On Christmas Day, the ‘not yet’ became the ‘now’.

‘The case was taken in hand and, with Hilda Mary at her side, Ann slipped gently from this consciousness into whatever house the cosmic Christ had prepared for her. Her final words to me, whispered but clearly audible, talked of that very love which in the end made Ann’s world go round.

‘And so, the stranger had finally become a friend to herself; all that was inadequate had been rendered sufficient; the tears of life had been wiped away and Ann finally achieved, as Richard Rohr puts it, ‘union with God and all that is’. So rest in peace now Ann with the God whom you sought, and found, in Thomas’ words, ‘little by little under the mind’s tooling.’ Amen.’

I look out
this alien house
the scene familiar:
sight no longer
fit for purpose
anxiously I await the dawn
of meaning



**Ann Mechtilde with Ruth,
her Profession ‘Twin’.
They were professed together and died
about two months apart**



SISTER SCHOLASTICA

“a truly special, remarkable and inspirational lady”

“one of your and our heroes”

“Notable, commanding, respected, impressive.”

As a younger Sister or older, Scholastica was respected and revered, loved and enjoyed, as some of the many tributes show.

Scholastica left us and this world in as quiet and unassuming a way as she had lived her life, on February 16th 2015.

The celebrant at her funeral was Bishop Christopher Chessun (Bp of Southwark and CSC’s Visitor General). The eulogy was given by Jonathan Ewer SSM, who had known her for many years, and Simon Gipson, (Head of St. Michael’s Grammar School, Melbourne), who had especially flown from Australia to represent the school at Scholastica’s funeral. Extracts from their words follow.

Jonathan SSM said:

“There was a sister at the school,” said Pat, “who was a very strong person: tall, very sporty – and you always did what she wanted.”

“She was awesome.” - she never was tall, except to a very small 4 year old.

‘Held in awe the memorable sight of her sweeping in and out of classrooms – robes flowing, back erect, head high – purposeful! Notable, commanding, respected, impressive.”

‘But her calling to religious life began to surface before that, while the family lived at Pingelly in West Australia. In 1928 they moved to Adelaide and Schol was enrolled at the sisters’ school in North Adelaide. The rest, as they say, is history. But it isn’t the

history we are really concerned with.

‘That notable, commanding, respected, and impressive sister that Pat remembered was motivated by the love of God. That’s what enabled her to do so many things, so many great things, so many good things, with a quiet efficiency that many of us thrust into leadership roles have envied. And in old age, until recently at least, remarkably agile. She was wonderfully calm and good humoured.

I should have gone to her!

‘But we still haven’t got to the core of it. She had a relationship with God which was fed by the routine of the mass and the offices and times for private prayer. She loved all that, especially if there was incense at mass. The way she swung that thurible! – 360 degree rotations without a hesitation, even in her 100th year. Yes, she loved the routine a religious house provides. But we still haven’t got to the core of it, and I don’t think we can. That core was just between Schol and God, and it was awesome. She had found the Truth. She sometimes asked me to hear her confession – which was ridiculous. I should have gone to her!



The young Scholar!

Making the world a better place

‘Some years ago she asked me ‘How does one prepare for death?’ I was silenced. Eventually I heard myself say ‘Dear Schol, you’ve been preparing for death all your life – by doing what you do, by being who you are, and making the world a better place’. Not a very satisfactory answer, I suppose, but it seemed to me that Schol did what she could; she made use of the talents God had given her; she was renewed every day by the love she shared with her sisters. That’s the best preparation for death, I think. And now I think she must know that it was. Violet Ferris, Sister Scholastica, found the Way, she learned the Truth, and she has now entered fully into the new Life that we all seek. Amen.’

Simon Gipson said:

‘The last time I was at Ham Common was in 2012 when we celebrated Schol’s 100th birthday. At the end of the afternoon, as we were about to leave, Father Mansell (then St Michael’s Senior Chaplain) said his farewells to Schol and gave her a kiss on the cheek. I followed suit, also wishing her a final “Happy Birthday” and giving her a kiss on the cheek. Schol then looked across at Jake (his 20 year old son) – who I must confess is very good looking, and taller than I am – and said: “What about you, Jake?” So he went across to Schol who gave him a big kiss on the cheek. “There!” she said. “Now you can tell your friends that you’ve kissed a nun!!”

This, to me, sums up so much of Schol: her wicked sense of humour; her sharp intellect; her ability to read and understand people; her capacity to keep in touch with the contemporary world.

‘Schol came into this world in 1912. The very same year, St Michael’s Grammar School in Melbourne, then only 17 years old, opened its first school library with 42 books. The August 1912 edition of the School Magazine describes it as “not a big library, but a big beginning.” Similarly,

Schol’s birth in February was ‘a big beginning.’

‘Schol’s journey on this earth allowed her to traverse a century of extraordinary change and historical events. When Schol was born, (in Sussex UK) Marconi was still tapping out his morse; radio, talking films, television and the internet were a long way in the future. The nation state of Australia was only 11 years old. The world was two years off the industrialised slaughter of the Great War.

‘Yet from those small beginnings, against a historical and technological backdrop so different from our 21st century world, Schol, in her own, infectious, entrepreneurial and energetic way, played a significant role in positively shaping so many others’ lives through her agency as a pivotal educational reformer in Australia. Today it is both an honour and a privilege to say

a few words about Sister Scholastica CSC and the critical impact that she has had on the Sisters’ schools in Australia.

‘Simply put, she is one of the heroes of the 120 year St Michael’s Grammar School narrative. St Michael’s would not exist today were it not for the wisdom and vision that Schol brought to the School during the 1960s and 1970s.

Those at St Peter’s Girls in Adelaide would also say that their school survived and thrived as a consequence of Schol’s astute management and leadership during the 1950s.’



Schol enjoyed a challenge and met it with panache!

'When Schol returned to Australia in 1947 after 10 years in the UK, she stepped into the role of Principal at her old school, St Peter's Collegiate. Unsurprisingly, Schol had had a very successful career at the school as a student. In her final year she was a School Prefect and Selwyn House Captain. She was also a Champion Runner, Captain of the A hockey team, a member of the A tennis team, and Captain of the interschool sports which St Peter's predictably won.

'Schol was Principal until 1955, though served as Acting Principal for 7 months in 1959 whilst Sister Gabrielle was on leave. It would be reasonable to say, that it was the decisions that Schol made in the early 50s in physically relocating the School from Kermode St, North Adelaide, to Stonyfell, then in the outer suburbs of Adelaide, that enabled the school to grow significantly in its purpose-built facilities and become the leading independent school that it is today.

'Schol relocated to St Michael's in Melbourne in 1963 where she saw a similar need for the reinvigoration of buildings and facilities. Indeed in 1965, Schol strategically argued for the rebuilding of St Michael's on a large scale. The acquisition of a number of residential properties adjacent to the School's constrained inner-city, St Kilda site, and their subsequent demolition, enabled Schol to enact her vision for a new Senior School Building, which was completed at the end of 1967.

For the Love of Mike!

'Given that the School had limited financial capacity, the bulk of the funds for the building's construction had to come from a fundraising appeal. And so, in February 1967, at a function for 450 people, Schol kicked off the campaign to transform the School. Under the banner of "Give for the Love of Mike", Schol set an ambitious target of nearly a quarter of a

million dollars, which was reached within twelve weeks!

'Following completion of the new Senior School, Schol then set forth on her next construction venture: a new school hall and chapel. The Vicars Foote Hall and the Chapel of the Resurrection were opened on March 17 1973.

Shortly after this, Schol left for Honiara and her work in the Solomons. The lay Headmistress, Mrs Margaret Thomas, wrote at the time: "We all miss her very much and had it not been for her drive, vigour and infectious enthusiasm over the last nine years, we would certainly not have the fine buildings and sports facilities that we have now." The reconstructed Junior School building, first opened in the 1920s, and refurbished in the mid-90s was named in her honour as the Sister Scholastica Building. With her typical wry sense of humour, Schol quipped that one who was known for demolishing houses did not deserve to have "this magnificent building named after her".



Still working in her late 90s!

'She was the solver of problems, whether fearlessly removing a spider 'as big as her hand' from the junior boarders' dormitory, or spearheading the school's next fundraising event.

Schol was also happy to give the girls a few surprises, too, like the time she hitched up the long skirt of her habit and demonstrated her faultless hurdling technique over the St Michael's rubbish bins!

'Schol was a model for women in leadership long before the term was coined. She will continue to be a central, significant and influential figure in the St Michael's dreaming. It is no accident that we have badged our on-line learning platform *SchoL*. After all, Schol innovatively led St Michael's into the second half of the 20th Century; it is fitting that she symbolically leads our charge into 21st Century learning.

When Mother Emily envisaged the work of the Community and the women who would forge out doing God's work, I think she had someone like Schol in mind – even down to the mischievous sense of humour.

We at St Michael's give thanks to God for the gifts he gave us in Schol. Hers was a life well-lived that allowed so many others to live better lives.'



Schol and Marg

SISTER MARGUERITE



Sister Marguerite - Sibyl Marguerette Gillham - was almost 97 when she died peacefully at Ham. Life in this world had ceased to have any real meaning for her for some time. She was more than ready to join her sister Inez. She found it hard to understand that her choice of the right moment might not come to be. One day, although feeling her life was about to end, she was surprised to find it was not to be. "It's been postponed," she said.

One thing was clear all her life - "I'm a Taswegian," she would say proudly. That's the island which has a large island off its north coast - the rest of Australia!

In 2000, shortly before the East Burwood house in Melbourne was closed, Marguerite took the great step of moving to the UK. It cannot have been an easy decision to make, because she knew she would never come back to Australia and her beloved Tasmania again. She kept in touch with family and friends in Australia and even continued the 'telephone ministry' so valued by the people she had befriended. (Aileen CSC)

Having spoken at Scholastica's funeral, **Jonathan Ewer SSM** (Society of the Sacred Mission) said he would also like to speak at Marguerite's funeral, as he had known her for a very long time.

In his eulogy **Jonathan** said:

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.' (Psalm 55)

'Some of you will remember I preached at Marg's 60th anniversary of profession in 2009. I had just been to the National Gallery and seen a painting in an exhibition - Portrait of a Woman, painted by Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo in 1525. The exhibition catalogue was quite certain of the name of the lady in the picture, for the camisole of her dress is decorated with daisies (marguerites); and she wears a collar of pearls and 'pearl' in Latin is 'margarita'. The lady has an interesting face, no longer youthful, but handsome in its maturity, and crowned by beautifully kept hair.'

'Her very smart dress has fur trimmed brocade sleeves, and she is seated on a chair that seems to be placed higher than the viewer, so that her head is inclined slightly towards you. Her gloved right hand holds the other glove and rests on her waist thus, so that she looks very self-possessed.

'As a sign of her strength of character, a chain falls from her waist, at the end of which is a dragon. That reminds you of another Margarita - of Antioch. St Margaret, you remember, was swallowed by the devil in the form of a dragon, but the cross she carried so irritated the dragon's stomach that he spewed her out and she escaped – only to be martyred a bit later, but that's another story.

'Our Marguerite presented a 20th century version of the lady in the painting. Marg had not gone to university as her blood sister Inez had done. Marg was the 'delicate' one who stayed at home. She had survived rheumatic fever as a child and in those days you didn't run any risks! She stayed at home in Hobart, as the years went by, caring for her ageing parents. Meanwhile Inez, became a teacher and then joined CSC. In time, when eventually she was free of parental responsibilities, Marg followed her sister into the community.

A great beggar!

'She came to England, was professed here and went to work with the children at Clevedon. She was good with the children: vibrant, full of beans and affectionate. She also had a gift for raising money.

In those days there were very few grants for looking after children in care, so the sisters used to blitz the shops in Bristol begging for money. Marg loved doing that and she was very successful at it. Judith often had to go with her but hated the begging part of it. Nevertheless they had a lot of fun together on these trips,

especially if they were sent away for a couple of days to Gloucester or Hereford.

'Marg was professed in those halcyon days when the practice of religion was on the up, and religious orders were on the increase in numbers and energy (but times were changing).



'In Australia, as in this country, we began to have religious life conferences – and that is where I first met Marguerite, not long after she had returned to Melbourne to St Michael's. Marg and Inez were an impressive pair at these conferences: both of them had a touch of the Spanish about them; they were very proud of their Sephardic descent and the new teal green habits suited their complexions very well. But they were not just imposing figures to look at; they both took their part in those heady discussions we had.

'Great things began to happen.

Top of the priorities was worship. We worked hard at revising the office, with new translations of the scriptures and especially the psalms. We shared with each other ideas and good practice in private prayer. Marg and Inez got involved in the charismatic movement and brought all that experience to the table.

'Things began to change as we struggled together to discover God's thoughts and God's ways. CSC gradually gave up direct involvement in the schools they had founded in Australia. The work had been vital in the 19th century, but the 20th century was demanding different focuses. In Melbourne the sisters moved out of St Michael's and built a new place at East Burwood.

Sisters like Marguerite, now liberated from the tyranny of looking after schoolgirls, were able to explore other avenues of pastoral care. They took on spiritual direction, and developed a special ministry of friendship with the clergy, who were and are in great need of that kind of support. When some of those clergy became bishops they needed that ministry even more. Even though I have never seen them, I know that Marg's address book and prayer lists illustrate what I am talking about. She had a rare talent for friendship; the messages that have been coming into Ham since Marg died bear witness to that.

'For us in SSM a visit to Melbourne usually entailed a visit to East Burwood. That's how we got to know the sisters better, and that's how SSM novices and junior professed came to be influenced by these handsome ladies, with poise and good humour, who knew how to handle dragons, especially archdeacons and bishops.

'Sadly Inez got cancer and died. Marg was devastated. It took the stuffing out of her for a while. But in time she got it all together: it was another level of learning that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are God's ways our ways.

'In the course of time the sisters decided to close the house at East Burwood. Marg and Schol opted to live in the UK. For Schol it was a returning home. For Marg it was a break with the country of her birth,



Marguerite demonstrating with the Movement for the Ordination of Women

and she suffered from homesickness for many months. However, she had chosen to come and she was determined to make the best of it.

Dame Marguerite

'One of the delights of being here was that she could join in the recitation and singing of the Divine Office. That meant a great deal to her – that and her frequent visits to the Benedictine abbey at Elmore. 'Dame Marguerite', the brothers came to call her. She got through her homesickness and her great gift for friendship was experienced by a lot of people in this country as it had been in Australia. However, from this time on, one felt that her glass was half empty rather than half full. Her smile was always there to greet you, that dignified poise which said, 'Can I help you?' but it quickly morphed into a serious look, like the lady in the picture, which indicated concern for the world and what might be happening to it.

'We give thanks for our Marguerite, elegant and re-assuring, thanks for the years of paying the cost of the pearl of great value, thanks for all those years of struggling with prayer books, and taming dragons. We give thanks for that confidence and courtesy with which she welcomed all who came through the door, looking for the higher ways of God and trying to grasp his thoughts.'

Janet Scarfe (Past President of MOW) and a great friend of the Sisters in Melbourne, writes: 'When a cathedral warden offered to escort Marguerite to a good seat in the cathedral at one of the services when women deacons had to watch men ordained priest, Marg joined MOW protesting at the back of the cathedral, telling him she preferred to "stand with the mourners". I don't know who was more astonished, the warden, Marg or me! Certainly she was proud of what she did.

Alleluia! Great Rejoicings for 100 Years of Living!



December 3rd 2014 was a celebration to remember. Sister Dorothea reached her 100th birthday. We had been reminded many times in the previous year that Dorothea was ‘in my 100th year,’ and finally the day arrived. Community, family and friends descended upon St. Michael’s Convent to celebrate with our dear Dorothea.

Richard Allen, one of the Ham Chaplains, delivered the address on this auspicious occasion. The readings were:

Isaiah 6:1 - 8 and Luke 10: 38 - 42. His opening remarks referred to a usual Wednesday Communion which has a small number of people in attendance, rather than the Chapel-full as on this day. Was it, perhaps, Richard asked:

‘an excuse to say **“Congratulations Dorothea, you made it - 100 years young!”** mind you, she’s been hedging her bets for the last six months. Every time any of us has mentioned today, Dorothea has always been heard to say “Well, I might not make it.” Like that was ever on the cards!

Now I freely admit that the ways of God are a mystery to me. But I think the Good Lord would have been on very dodgy ground with at least 20 Sisters if he’d called Dorothea home before today. Instead, we’ve been given a delightful example of how *kairos* and *chronos* time can coincide to produce a diamond-studded day of grace, at the summit of a

life that itself has been lived in the light of grace.

‘Such grace is reflected in the three figures from this morning’s readings, both of which Dorothea personally chose. Isaiah feels its touch through an act of forgiveness. He responds instinctively with open-hearted gusto. Mary of Bethany finds it by nestling in Jesus’ presence and letting his words soak into her soul. Even the slightly tetchy Martha experiences a moment of grace when Jesus gently calms her anxious spirit, as he whispers her name “Martha, Martha...”

‘Gifts of grace have marked out much of Dorothea’s life, even if its launch was somewhat inauspicious. Conceived in peacetime, she was born in Caversham (UK) into a Europe at war. Yet grace took a while to establish itself in her. Educated at boarding school following her father’s premature death, the spirited teenager was not entirely seized by faith. Apparently preparation for the monthly school Mass consisted of working out the night before how she could amuse herself during the liturgy; and we all think she’s praying when she sits there with her eyes closed!

‘But the hand of God finally rested on her shoulder at Teacher Training College, through a young priest’s inspirational tales of work in the London slums. Vocation, it seems, is stimulated in many ways. But, like Isaiah (albeit it after a little more thought), the 20 year-old Dorothea said ‘Here am I; send me!’ Ironically, CSC got her precisely because she didn’t like teaching. With the Order’s well-established heritage in schools and children’s homes, Dorothea reckoned she could face and beat her fears.....and she’s been doing it ever since. Profession followed five years later, on 25 March 1941, two days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.

'A teaching career that spanned the globe was interrupted in 1962 by another of those 'Here am I; send me' moments, when CSC elected Dorothea as the fifth Mother in its history. It was also another example of what happens when *kairos* and *chronos* time coincide. For, in the same year as this event was shattering the peace in Ham, a little local gathering was getting under way in Rome. Giuseppe Roncalli, Pope John XXIII, was opening the Second Vatican Council. The word is that, during its three years' duration, it often seemed to be looking westwards to the young Mother Dorothea for its lead!

'a bit hot one day'

In fact both organisations threw open their doors to the winds of modernity. An outward and visible sign of the change saw Sisters move from a traditional black habit to the teal of today. No doubt many of us outside the walls of the convent assume there was a theological principle behind this, perhaps even an ontological one. How wrong we are.

Apparently, the move to a lighter, brighter habit simply arose because Dorothea was a bit hot one day on a visit, in summer, to Australia!

'But this transformation was a sign of an inward and spiritual grace, a grace that saw CSC moved from the era of 'what Mother says, goes' to a more democratic system of Provincial Chapters at which all Life Professed Sisters were to have a voice. We take it for granted today, but the foundations of current Community practice owe their origin in no small part to Dorothea's vision, persistence and courage. Indeed, I might tentatively suggest that the breezes blowing through CSC influenced other Religious Communities around the time.

'The 'Martha' that was Dorothea, busy heading the Order so that others could sit and contemplate, eventually had to give way to the 'Mary,' for her good, and that of

CSC. After 14 years, the leadership baton was handed over, and the now former Mother retreated to Fairacres Convent in Oxford for six months of solitude, listening to her heart and the voice of God within her.

Put out to grass

'When she emerged, refreshed and renewed, 'Martha' was back. Another 18 years saw her in Canada, at St Katherine's in the East End of London, and finally down to Bristol to be part of a new House. Only then, in 1994, at the age of 80, was she (in her own words) "put out to grass in a nice field, near a nice common", and a life of prayer and contemplation...this time accompanied by Radio 4 and The Times. 'Martha' gave way to 'Mary' for the second and final time, an epoch that has yet to reach its conclusion.

'When, in conversation with her in preparation for this reflection, I asked her how she felt about having been a professed Religious for over 70 years, she thought for a moment and then said there'd been good bits and not so good bits; but that she'd decided from the outset that she was getting a 'package deal' when she entered the noviciate. I hope she didn't think she was buying a holiday to Ibiza! If so, it's been a long and disappointing wait.

Dorothea - meaning 'Gift of God'



‘This morning, I know I’ve been irreverent verging on disrespectful, whimsical bordering on capricious. The fact is I can get away with it. In fact, we all can at some level; for the one thing that Dorothea has retained throughout these 100 years is a considered approach that takes life seriously, but not too earnestly. There’s room for humour. Life is to be enjoyed, because grace is freely given, so long as we’re open to it and are still enough to notice it.

‘The last four years with you Dorothea have been for me a delight, full of pathos and laughter, and much else in between. Your life has been a covenant of grace from the moment you said to God “Here am I; send me!” Today, you join the elite club of 14,000 centenarians in the UK. For us here today, you’re one in a million, even if you find that hard to believe and difficult to hear.’



Dorothea with Associate Jennifer, the cake maker



Dorothea with Sisters Michael, Margaret (Canada) and Annaliese (UK)

Farewell to a Good Friend Bishop Barbara Darling 1947 - 2015

Bishop Barbara died on February 15th 2015. She was well-known and loved, as a Bishop in Melbourne and throughout her

ministry life, but for our Sisters there was another connection. Barbara was Bishop Visitor to the Australia Province of CSC, and as such was closely connected to our Sisters in Australia and, by extension, to CSC world-wide. She is sadly missed by so many people. The Anglican Church has lost one of its ‘greats’. The Very Rev’d Dr. Andreas Loewe, Dean of Melbourne, said, in his sermon in the cathedral around the actual time of Bishop Barbara’s death:

“At the bedside...I could sense powerfully how the seeds of eternal life had come to fruition in Barbara’s - ‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control’ (Galatians 5.22-23). As Barbara breathed peacefully, she shared and radiated a peace that is one of God’s gifts to us in this life, and his eternal gift in the life to come... As we give thanks for the abundant harvest of God’s gifts in the life of his servant Barbara Darling, it is my prayer for you and for me that we also might recommit ourselves to Christ, put our trust in the One who calls us to be remade, renewed and transformed in him, ‘from one degree of glory into another’, until we finally come to share his glory face to face in his presence.”



Archbishop Glenn Davies (Sydney) referred to Barbara, during her funeral service, as “a gracious, winsome advocate” for women’s ministry.

SOLOMON ISLAND - PACIFIC NEWS

Diocese of Guadalcanal and Diocese of Central Melanesia Associates' Conference.

Sister Kathleen (Provincial) writes:

'On the 20th March all the Associates from the Dioceses of Guadalcanal (DOG) and Central Melanesia (DOCM), went to Maravovo (Rose Glenda's village) on west Guadalcanal for their Conference. This was the first time the Associates have held their conference outside TNK in Honiara. They had only three days' Conference, but they really enjoyed the three days. They had an opening Eucharist on Friday, then an address by Bishop Visitor Nathan Tome on Leadership.

'Saturday Morning after breakfast, they began the conference with a reflection on the Gospel of John. On Sunday was the closing service and the admissions of new seekers. There were students from Selwyn College, Norman Palmer College, ex-Sisters and others. In the conference they chose two diocesan leaders for DOG and DOCM. The two are; Mr George Kaiaenga and Samson. About 100 turned up, including those newly admitted. It was so encouraging to see young students wanting to join as Associates.



Associates with Bishop Visitor Nathan Tome

'Among those who were admitted was Doralyn (an ex-Sister). The two Associates Coordinators, Beverlyn and Jessica really did well, though this was the first time for

them running a conference; the Associates were really thankful to them.

Experience Overseas

'Eleanor's and Everlyn's hearts were heavy as the call for boarding was announced. What an experience. This was the first time for them to go overseas. They will be at the Kempsey house for two months. Also, on the 19th of March, we were happy to receive back Anneth and Margrosa, from the UK. Thanks to our UK Sisters for looking after them in their time in the UK.



Margrosa and Anneth

'On Sunday 22nd March Sisters, Associates and two overseas visitors, Catherine and Sarah from the UK, gathered together at TNK for Sister Scholastica's Requiem Mass. Fr. Peter Noel Orudiana, a former Chaplain, presided and preached. There was a light refreshment for everyone, then everyone proceeded to the Chapter House to hear stories of Sr. Scholastica.

New Postulants

'I arrived back from holiday on Sunday the 8th of February and I was told that the date for the Postulants' admission clashed with the date for the Religious Life Sunday which was on the 15th February. So we moved the date back to Wednesday the 11th. Five turned up first, including one from Vanuatu in the middle of the back row and were admitted on the 11th.

The one who was delayed, was admitted on the 28th February.



On the back Row: from left to right - Catharine Rosa, Noelyn and Jacquelyn, front row from right to left - Yvon, Loreta and Naomi.

Religious Life Sunday

'Religious Life Sunday is celebrated by the four Religious Communities every year; The Melanesian brotherhood, Society of Saints Francis, Sisters of Melanesia and Sisters of the Church. The host for this year's Celebration was the Sisters of Melanesia. The program started on Thursday evening with an opening Eucharist. After dinner, Brother Clifton SSF gave the night retreat address for the brothers and Sisters. Friday Morning they had Fr Jonathan, a former MBH brother, for a Mission and Ministry workshop. In the afternoon they had Bp Michael Tavoia for Liturgy and worship. Saturday morning all the brothers and sisters worked together to prepared their food for Sunday's feast. In the Evening each Community put on a drama or something about their life, ministry and work. Sunday the Archbishop came with the Mission Secretary, for the Eucharist. In his sermon the Archbishop talked about Religious Vocation as a call from God to each Religious Order. And one must know the reason why she or he is in a Religious Community. He made a very strong emphasis on commitment.

'After the service we had a feast, then the Sisters presented to each Community, a basket of uncooked food, a cooking pot

and wall pictures. Everybody enjoyed the day.



CSM drama on Church workers

'I went straight to Visit St. Scholastica's house and was able to witness the blessing of their New Guest House. Also another new thing since I last saw the house was their New High Way Road, While I was there they asked me if it is possible to get two bicycles for them. This is to help them carry things like food, when sisters arrive and other things from the sea side to the house.'

**Kathleen CSC
(Provincial)**



Blessing of the new Guest House at St Scholastica's



Gathered for Requiem for Sr. Scholastica

Pause for Thought

Linda Mary writes:

Last Newsletter I shared about the seeds each Sister planted at the General Chapter Meeting in the Solomon Islands. When we left, the seedlings were planted in a special garden so they could grow and mature and bear fruit. I heard recently it was the pumpkin seedlings that soon covered the whole garden and are now producing pumpkins, many pumpkins! It is sad the other seedlings did not survive to bear fruit. Yet it indicates that the pumpkins had what they needed to enable them to grow in the climate and from the soil into which they were planted. I believe it is a situation where one needs 101 recipes using pumpkin!!!

For some time now I have been reflecting on some aspects of our life, particularly in terms of providing an environment from which each Sister can draw what she needs to nurture her daily life.

As always, the events of our daily lives are the seed bed from which we will find the resources to move from places of fear to trust, hate to love, judgment to acceptance, pain to healing, death to life.

During the last few months we as a Community have experienced four of our older Sisters dying and some of our Associates have also died. In addition, friends and people who lived close by to Sisters or were connected in various ways to the Community have died recently. It seems that the death of loved ones has been an almost daily event. In responding to each of these deaths I have found myself entering into a deeper understanding of death. There is the physical death and the other deaths that are inherent in life from which we can choose or allow our grief and pain to be transfigured into life through God's love and power.

This experience has been a fruitful journey for Lent and has drawn me to 'share both Jesus' resurrection glory, and also his dying in weakness, by which the transfiguring glory of God's love and power are shown forth.' The Rule: Dying We Live

In the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus this year may you be strengthened and upheld in all that your daily life presents to you in your journey into God's love and power.



Poem by Sr Ann Mechtilde

I had trawled the deep waters
with a net too wide
to catch the small fry.

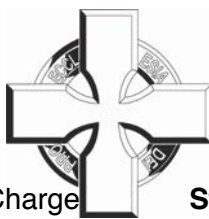
Gift or talent
each begs the prime
question: what makes
the world go round
and round: (have you
considered that beauty
lies in the eye
of the beholder?)

We swim in transparent
waters. But what makes
the world go round
and round?

Search where the tears
spring, the heart stricken,
the wounded heal
and love invincible
is crucified.

21 April 2013

Community Addresses ~



~ and Who is Where

AUSTRALIA

* = Sister in Charge

Sr Linda Mary, Mother Superior and Australia Provincial

Mail to: PO BOX 1105 GLEBE NSW 2037

Email: cscaust@hotmail.com

General Inquiries and Australian Donations for Solomon Islands, to above address

Sr Frances The Sister Anne Court Hostel, Room 409, 182 Albion Street, SURRY HILLS. NSW 2010 Ph: 02 9380 7882

Sr Rosamund 15/75, St John's Rd, GLEBE, NSW 2037

Sisters Fiona and Helen and Linda Mary

29, Lika Drive, KEMPSEY, NSW 2440

Ph: 02 6562 2313 Fax: 02 6562 2314

Sr Audrey Cabrini Residential Care, 54 Queen's Parade, ASHWOOD, VICTORIA 3147

Sr Elisa Helen PO. Box 713, Melton, VICTORIA 3337 Ph: 03 9743 6028
elisacsc@tpg.com.au

CANADA

CSC c/o Sr Margaret Hayward 6 John Street, Apt 1003, Oakville, Ont. L6K 3T1
Ph: 905 849 0225 Email:

sistersofthechurch@sympatico.ca

Sisters: Heather, Margaret (Provincial), Marguerite Mae, Michael, Rita (in Buffalo)

SOLOMON ISLANDS - PACIFIC

Tetete ni Kolivuti PO. BOX 510, HONIARA

Sisters: Emily (Assistant Provincial), Kathleen (Provincial), Lillian Mary*, Mary Gladys

Novices: Rita, Catherine, Ellen, Margaret, Neslyn, Shirley, Sophie, Joana Gere, Susan

Postulants: Catharine Rosa, Jacquelin, Naomi, Noelyn, Yvon

Email: kkapei@yahoo.com.au

Patteson House PO. BOX 510, HONIARA
Ph: (677) 22413

Sisters: Anneth, Beverlyn, Eleanor, Jessica, Marina*, May

St. Raphael's PO. BOX 17, AUKI, Malaita Province Ph: (677) 40423

Sisters: Everlyn, Grace, Kristy, Lucia*, Rachel

St. Gabriel's GORAMANU, KIRA KIRA, Makira Province Fax: (677) 50128

Sisters: Jennifer Clare*, Mary Gharegha, Priscilla, Margrosa

St. Mary's LUESALO via LATA, Santa Cruz

Sisters: Dexter, Patricia, Rose Glenda, Vivian Marie,*

St. Scholastica's BOGOTU District, Isabel Province (Mail to Patteson House)

Sisters: Betsy, Caroline,* Clarine, Jennifer Imua, Mary Kami

Christian Care Centre PO Box 1569 Honiara

Sisters: Annie, Daisy, Linco, Ruth Hope

Airport House, Henderson

Sisters: Doreen, Joanna*, Joan Yape

Sisters away studying: Agnes, Beglyn, Phyllis

UNITED KINGDOM

St. Michael's Convent 56, Ham

Common, RICHMOND, Surrey TW10 7JH

Office of **CHURCH EXTENSION**

ASSOCIATION Registered Charity (Charity No. 200240)

Ph: 020 8940 8711 / 020 8948 2502

Email: infoUK@sistersofthechurch.org.uk

Hospitality mailing:

hospitality@sistersofthechurch.org.uk

Sisters: Aileen, Catherine* (Assistant Provincial), Dorothea, Hilda Mary, Jennifer, Judith, Sheila Julian, Susan (Provincial), Teresa Mary, Veronica

82, Ashley Rd St. Paul's, BRISTOL BS6 5NT Ph: 01179 413 268

Sisters: Annaliese*, Rosina,

10, Furness Rd WEST HARROW, Middlesex HA2 0RL Ph: 0208 423 3780

Sisters: Ruth White, Vivien*

St. Gabriel's 27A, Dial Hill Rd, CLEVEDON, North Somerset BS21 7HL
Tel: 01275 544471

Sisters: Anita, Sue*

Sr Mary Josephine 112, St. Andrew's Rd N. ST ANNE'S-ON-SEA, Lancs. FY8 2JQ
Ph / Fax: 01253 728 016

Editorial Team: Sisters Aileen, Annaliese, Catherine and Ruth White
Articles or suggestions to:
newsletter@sistersofthechurch.org
Printed by PDC Copyprint, Kingston UK