

# CSC Newsletter

Volume 50 N°2 November 2018

## BLESSINGS ABOUND

Since the last Newsletter there have been several events, which we can see only as blessings - A Life Profession, four new Junior Sisters, a new Novice, a new Provincial and a new Mother Superior!

There was also the blessing of Sister Kathleen's grave and headstone, an event of great poignancy, taking place about a year after her death, according to custom.

It is good to be able to bring to mind so many blessings, in our Community and in life generally. It is so easy to get caught up in the day to day troubles, of ourselves and our world. Sometimes it feels like we are surrounded by nothing but evil, that there is little to give thanks for, only the almost desperate need to pray for release from oppression and violence, from the death-dealing emotions of anger, hatred and fear.

Going to church and to times of prayer can so easily be an attempted escape from the real world. And day by day we are individually in danger of seeing our own lives as unimportant or, worse, of no consequence at all. "If I do nothing, or do anything, no-one will notice. I will have no effect on the world around me." How wrong can we be!

If nothing else, the blessings, large or small, show us that God's grace is living and active in us and in our world, whether we recognise it or not. **We** are part of God's grace-giving to the house, the street, the town or village, the Church, the society and the world where we live.

So let us give thanks to God for the blessings of these past weeks and months and each day. May we continue to be God's grace-givers and see that gift in others!



Sister Marguerite Mae was elected the next Mother Superior of CSC, in October this year, and her Blessing into office will have been on December 1st 2018, in Christ's Church Cathedral,

Hamilton, Ontario in Canada. Please pray for Sr Marguerite Mae and the whole of CSC through this time of transition from one leader to another.

We give great thanks for Sr Linda Mary, who has led the Community so well over the last ten years.



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

## HAIL

Sister Marguerite Mae as our new Mother Superior  
Sister Heather as the new Provincial of Canada  
Sister Mary Gladys newly Life Professed in the Solomon Island-Pacific Province  
Sisters Jaquelyn, Noelyn, Naomi and Yvon Accepted as Junior Sisters in the Solomon Islands  
N/Sister Lizzie Received as a Novice in the UK

## FAREWELL

We say farewell to Sister Linda Mary who has been Mother Superior for ten years and has given great service, often to her own cost. (She contracted dengue fever while in the Solomon Islands in 2016.)

Linda Mary is still the Australia Provincial, but she is also about to retire from that position. Her successor, Sr Elisa Helen, will be Blessed on January 21st 2019, in Sydney. Bishop Sarah Macneil, Australia Bishop Visitor, will preside at the Blessing.



## A New Provincial in Canada



On September 30th, **Sister Heather** was Blessed into the office of Canada Provincial, in Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton. Photo from left to right: Br David Bryan CHC, (Srs' Chaplain) Srs Margaret (previous Provincial), Marguerite Mae and Heather, in procession.



(Left to right)  
Srs Michael,  
Margaret,  
Bp Terry Brown,  
Srs Heather and  
Marguerite Mae

## New Solomon Island Sisters

On October 20th there was the Acceptance of four Junior Sisters: Jaquelyn, Noelyn, Naomi and Yvon. Some members of their families were able to be there, with Naomi's father and mother and Jaquelyn's family coming from as far away as Vanuatu.

Fr Wildred Kekea led Evensong, with Associate Fr Ashley giving the homily. Sister Veronica, the Provincial, received the promises of the new Junior Sisters.

An evening of entertainment followed, greatly enjoyed by everyone.

Sisters Noelyn, Jacquelyn, Naomi and Yvon. (left to right)



## Life Commitment

Sister Mary Gladys made her Life Profession on October 21st and it was a very moving occasion. It began early in the day. Her family, who are from Tikopia, led Mary Gladys into Chapel. They were all in traditional dress and they danced and chanted a Tikopian song as they processed. At the front of the Chapel they handed Mary Gladys to Sr Veronica (the Provincial) with the words,

**'We, the family give Mary Gladys to the Church, to do God's Mission and His Service'.**

Sr Veronica writes:

'The Service went very well and everyone was touched by it. After the Service, we had some refreshment, followed by a feast. While the feast was going on her family presented some gifts to the Community and also Mary Gladys received some traditional painting on her face from one of her uncles. According to their culture a married woman receives such painting on her wedding day.

'Unfortunately her mother could not come because of the great distance and only one of her brothers was present, with her uncles and other relatives who live in Honiara. The entertainment went on and on until 4:30 pm. Since it was almost time

for Evensong, we decided to have it under the trees before everybody went back home.

'The day was a great blessing to us and especially for Mary Gladys and the new Junior Sisters.'



Mary Gladys was danced into Chapel by her family.



Mary Gladys with her family



Mary Gladys made her vows, binding herself to the Community. She knelt beside Sr Veronica (Provincial) Bishop Nathan Tome, the Solomon Island Bishop Visitor, received her vows.



Mary Gladys had her face painted in the traditional way for her island, symbolising her 'marriage' to God and the Community.



## A Different Farewell

Sister Kathleen died in December 2017. (see May 2018 Newsletter for details). It is a Solomon Island custom that the Grave is decorated and blessed about a year afterwards. This took place at Tetete-ni-Kolivuti on September 30th this year, when Sisters, family and friends gathered for the Blessing. Sister Veronica explained, 'TNK is now packed with Associates, friends, families and supporters. This will be my first experience since I returned from the UK, to see a huge crowd at TNK. Kathleen was well known to many and much loved by all, so not a surprise.' Afterwards she wrote,

'We had a lovely celebration for St Michael's and Kathleen's blessing of her headstone. There was a huge crowd, but we managed to feed everyone.

'The day was colourful with people. There were 80 Associates from Lord Howe Island where Kathleen was from ,and other Associates and friends from other dioceses and around Honiara.

After the celebration we had Evensong under the trees where the feasting and dancing took place. It was such a lovely, lovely day.'



## Auspicious Visitors

The Sisters in the Solomons also welcomed Caroline Welby, wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Tetete-ni-Kolivuti, and her team from Lambeth Palace in the UK, home to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The team arrived in September to lead a training week entitled "Women on the Front Line" for ACoM Bishops' wives and other women within the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM). Those taking part had a retreat, led by Mrs. Welby and the team from Monday to Wednesday, followed by reflections, sharing and discussions on topics centred around – conflict, violence, counselling, meditation and reconciliation.

The Sisters and Noviciate at TNK hosted the programme, which was a great success. The visitors enjoyed their stay and kept saying that there was no better place than TNK to have had the retreat and workshop.

The British High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands, David Ward, had lunch with Mrs Welby and her team, while they were at TNK. Mr Ward loved TNK and said he would love to go there again.



## A Canadian Farewell

There was another farewell and another milestone in the Canada Province. Sister Margaret not only retired as Canada Provincial, passing on the baton to Sr Heather, but retired from work. For the past ten years Sr Margaret worked with Canada's national Church handling letters from survivors of abuse in Residential Schools in Canada, an often harrowing experience. To mark the unstinting work she has done, there was a party in her honour. Margaret writes:

'Before the party there was a celebration of the Eucharist in the Chapel of All Saints, the Church House Chapel, with a number of my favourite hymns and a couple of surprise hymns that Paul Fehely, the Primate's Principal Secretary, remembered that I love - "All Poor Folk and Humble", that reminds me so much of Sister Mary Adela, and "Come as You Are" by Paul Gurr. Mary Michael gave me a tape of his a long time ago. I heard Paul playing it on the piano one day and he remembered that I love it.'



Margaret also retired from the Board of the St Mildred-Lightbourn School and writes:

'I served on the Board for eighteen years and the School gave me three beautiful pictures that the Grade 5 girls (10 years old) had painted and a lovely bouquet of flowers. The pictures are on the wall in my living room. From R to L Nancy Richards, Head of School, Myself, and Caroline Hogwood, Chair of the Board.'

'They were both amazing and different celebrations of two very important ministries that I will miss very much. I am looking forward to being in the UK from January to May 2019 as part of my sabbatical time.'



## Time in the UK

Sisters Mary Gladys and Priscilla, from the Solomon Islands, were able to spend about six months in the UK, including time in General Chapter. They were able to visit the other houses in the UK Province, but contributed a great deal to the Gerrards Cross. Having two strong and willing younger Sisters to help both in the house and round the garden, was wonderful.

To give a flavour of our joint experience, what follows is part of Sr Jennifer's letter to our UK Associates:

'When a large group of Solomon Island Sisters joined us at Gerrards Cross for General Chapter, earlier in the year, some of them spent many hours of great enjoyment in the garden, where much clearing up of ivy and other rampant growth needed to be done.

'One day they dug some plots in the walled garden, which till then had been almost completely grass with a huge pile of branches and ivy, bindweed etc. in the centre of the space, growing daily to monstrous proportions, till dry enough to burn.

'Some weeks later I took a photo of Mary Gladys, who is tall, standing among the beans to show how high they were growing. Priscilla faithfully watered them every evening during the rainless weeks of summer, and I took another picture of her, holding the basket that contained some of the pickings. She loved the carved statue of Mary and Jesus in the refectory, where we began to have the sweet fresh beans in our dinner every two or three days, for quite a long time.

'Then we had fierce gales, and after a couple of days our visit to the bean plot revealed a great big tangle on the ground. Priscilla valiantly attempted to get them upright again, but most gave up the struggle and sank again to the ground. They didn't stop producing beans, however, though with a little less zest at that point.'

As Jennifer pointed out, later in her letter, it seemed a bit like us; we perhaps have a little less zest for things as we get older and knocked about a bit!

Sister Priscilla



Sister Mary Gladys



**Mary Gladys** among the growing beans and **Priscilla** with some of the harvest



## Living Alone

After reading Sr Helen's article about living alone, (See May 2018 Newsletter) our UK Associate Diana Pinchin writes:

'I started to live alone aged thirty, after my father died, and now aged 57 I am well used to it. Mum and I both knew that if I continued to live in the family home we would both become too dependent on each. To start with it was very difficult but after a while new routines were established and we started a routine of having daily telephone chats. We still do most days and we live within easy driving of each other.

### Daily Routines

'The thing I first noticed was getting used to having nobody else in the house and the feeling of physically being alone. It helped that I was able to carry on doing the same job and to carry on my other social activities, as I moved very locally and this helped to ground me. To try and lessen the liveness I bought a hamster so there was another living thing. Over the years routines have changed as situations change. I am now used to living alone and having time to be myself. In fact I treasure the time I can be alone as I have a very busy, challenging and demanding job in a very large care home. However, sometimes I would value someone, or a dog, to greet me on my return home but it would not currently be fair on the animal.

### Meeting God

'It was important when I first started to live alone to have a regular time to pray and to stick to this. I continued with my prayer time in the morning before going to work (which) is very important as it focuses and settles me before my very busy day. Additionally I have an evening time of prayer as this helps me let go of the day. I take things to God in prayer, but at times you do need to talk to people face to face, or to hear another human voice. This is where phone calls can help, and I value

emails from friends as well.

Having recently made a life vow in the Anglican 'Single Consecrated Life' (SCL) has enhanced my relationship with God. I have yet to see where this might lead. This has increased a sense of community as I now belong to two, having been a CSC Associate for many years now. This is like my extended family which helps at times when I am struggling with issues of loneliness.

### Major Questions

Like Sister Helen I, too, have questions connected with living alone. My big question at the moment is, when I am much older, *will I need to move into residential care?* My mum is in her eighties and my brother lives in Italy. When the time comes, *will I be able to decide where and what care I will receive?* I do know a lot about care homes and what can happen in them, so am currently trying to pass on good practice to the next generation of carers! Even in a care home, with people around, you can feel alone if those around you are unable to speak, or well-meaning people take you to activities you don't wish to join! Also *will my spiritual needs be met in an acceptable way?*

*Would anyone notice if I was suddenly unable to contact anyone, or even died?* Some of my neighbours may notice, but *is this fair on them as they are busy with their own lives?*

Living alone has both advantages and disadvantages, as one has more space to be aware of God's presence, and can pause to appreciate nature and to pray. However, one does need to keep a balance and not become too weighed down with one's own problems and become selfish and start to feel sorry for oneself.

Following work injuries I have struggled physically for many years and had to accept the use of aids to help me, many years ago. My physical disabilities are increasing and at times I do struggle physically, which can be frustrating.

(Continued from page 7)

As I start to reach the next stage in my life I will need to make changes and accept the fact that I will slow down and probably spend more time alone, once I am not working. What questions this will bring I am yet to find out.

### **'There is always room for hope'**

'Addiction and Pastoral Care' is the title of a book written by a Priest Associate, Rev'd Nicholas Roberts PhD.

His doctoral thesis was 'Psychological and theological theories of addiction, towards an integrated study.' Nicholas has been a priest in parish ministry, in hospital and mental health chaplaincy and a consultant in psychological counselling. He was also Chaplain to the Sisters at Ham Common (UK) for a number of years. In his book, Nicholas offers: 'an exploration of the psychology of addiction; a theological understanding of desire; practical models of pastoral care and a guide to the professional resources and care available, and more.'

In his introduction Nicholas speaks of a priest friend who suffered from alcohol addiction. After a long road to recovery he would sometimes share his experiences with congregations, but '...has sometimes been criticised for talking about his personal experience in sermons in church - as if addiction is so shameful that it can't be mentioned in a sermon!'

He continues explaining his book:

'It (also) tells the story of real human beings I have known personally, whose battle with addiction has been part of my life too, as I have tried to provide support and companionship to them - and in some cases their families - over many years. I have sometimes felt much frustration about knowing how best to help them, and it can be a long, uphill battle with many false starts and setbacks along the road to recovery.'

**Rev'd Nicholas  
Roberts PhD**

Priest Associate



### **Slavery**

'...I know from experience that it is tempting to feel we have failed as pastors when the people we are trying to help find the long road to sobriety very difficult and long-winded, and yet that is true for so many people. "Cunning, powerful and baffling" is an expression that Alcoholics Anonymous sometimes uses to describe the experience of alcohol dependency. But this book also makes the important point that for many, perhaps most, people with addictions of one kind or another, there can be a way out of that particular form of slavery to substances and behaviours that diminish an individual's potential for a happy, rewarding and fulfilling life. *There is always room for hope that with the right treatment these addictions can be overcome.* I also encourage us never to see addicted people as "them" or "others" as if we were perhaps superior to those with obvious substance use disorders, such as the heroin addict.'

**'Addiction and Pastoral Care' - Nicholas  
Roberts**

Canterbury Press ISBN 978-1-84825-974-4

Editor's note:

I'm sure some, perhaps many, of our readers will have experience of their own or others' life of addiction. Nicholas's comment, '*There is always room for hope*' is something we may all need to hold onto, especially suffering from or living with addictions.

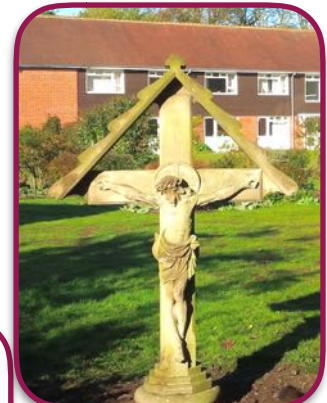


### From Kilburn to Gerrards Cross

When the Convent and Orphanage of Mercy stood in Kilburn, North London, it had a quadrangle and in the middle stood a Calvary. After the 2nd World War, when the Convent at Ham Common was bought, the Calvary, still on its tall column, was moved to the front of that house. Over the years the ashes of many Sisters were buried there. When plans were afoot to move from Ham, the ashes were taken up and reinterred in the churchyard of St Peter's, Broadstairs, the same churchyard where Mother Emily was buried. The question arose about what to do with the Calvary. Finally it was decided that just the top section, the Calvary itself without the column, would come to Gerrards Cross. So it happened. Our Lady and Child face the bigger house and the Crucifixion faces the front of the smaller house. The perspective is now very different. We are up close.



Looking up at the Calvary at Ham



The new resting place



### Impressions of Gerrards Cross from a Guest and Associate

How good it was to be back at St. Michael's, this time a two night stay. I had last visited on Sundays in August and October, 2017, to have the privilege of presiding at the Eucharist. At that time the chapel was housed in a small room in the Garden House.

How good it was to renew my friendship with the Sisters. What a delight to see all the work that has been carried out during the last year.

What a marvellous view I had of the garden from my comfortable ensuite room; what luxury - and a rocking chair too!

Despite the 'modern' features evident in the Gerrards Cross St. Michael's, there are lovely reminders of treasures brought from Ham: the beautiful tabernacle for the Sacrament, in the Chapel; the glass case on the first floor landing, containing the carved figures of St. Michael and other Archangels, the Annunciation, Epiphany and Presentation; that I used to look at as I sat in the Refectory at Ham; the

Refectory chairs with plaques on the back commemorating a host of people, and so much more.

What a delight, too, not to hear the roar of aeroplanes overhead.

As I explored the garden, at every turn there was a seat, well-situated, either to get the sun or sheltered from the wind. What a delight to find, in the sunken garden, a seat with a plaque commemorating Sister Joy. I always remember her smile.

Although the 'site' at Gerrards Cross may be new, the rhythm of St. Michael's continues; prayer and worship, and the Eucharist being at the heart of the worship. Another important aspect is the hospitality given at St. Michael's and what delicious food too!

I was just sorry not to be able to attend the Associates' Day this year, to rejoice with the Sisters and Associates in this new phase in the life of St. Michael's. May St. Michael's go from strength to strength in God's service.

Cynthia Jackson (Associate)

## Moments for a lifetime of Change

### The Damascus Road

A man with an alcohol problem about which he was obviously in denial, came to a life-changing moment in his life. It could have been a fatal moment, for himself or someone else, but fortunately it only succeeded in beginning to turn his life around. He had bought a new car and was very pleased with it. A few weeks later, however, he was driving down his local high street, having drunk too much, and the inevitable happened - he crashed his car. He was not badly hurt, and nor was anyone else, but the car was a write-off. The realisation of just how differently the crash could have ended was a 'Damascus Road experience'. He began treading the road to wholeness, away from his addiction.

(Account in 'Addiction and Pastoral Care.')

### Cooking for All

Narayan, just 29 years old, does what he's been professionally trained to do as a chef – he feeds people. Only, he doesn't do it as he once did, in the comfort of a 5-star hotel.

Each day he gets up at 4am, cooks a simple hot meal, and then, with his team, loads it into a van and travels around 200 kilometres, feeding about 400 homeless and destitute people in Madurai, India, every day.

Eight years ago, this award-winning chef with a 5-star hotel chain, was all set to go to Switzerland for a high-profile posting. But on a visit to Madurai Temple, he came across a homeless old man, eating something revolting. It was a dreadful sight that changed Narayan's life.

He abandoned his career plans and decided to spend his life and training looking after those who have no way of caring for themselves. He's provided over a million hot meals through his non-profit

Organisation - Akshaya Trust. The Trust is in the process of building a shelter for homeless people – phase one is complete, caring for 450 residents, and the plan is to extend it still further.

### Anything Anywhere

She knew one thing for certain and believed another one. The *certainty* was that her job was not right for her any longer - if it had ever been the right job. What she was to do in the future, what God might want her to do, was a great unknown. About three months after resigning her job, and while working her period of notice, she began to *believe* that the big Diocesan Eucharist planned for Pentecost Sunday that year, would be the time she would learn what God was asking of her.

The day arrived, a beautiful, sunny day, and thousands of people flocked to a local Racecourse for the open-air Eucharist. After making her communion, she silently said to God, "Alright, anything, anywhere." It was only at that moment that she realised she'd had thoughts of maybe moving to live nearer her family. She was still holding on to conditions.

On the way out of the Racecourse with a friend, she almost literally bumped into a display stand, filled with posters and leaflets about Anglican Religious Life. She and her friend picked up a few leaflets - just because they were there and might be interesting to read! At tea with her friend a little later, she noticed that her friend had one leaflet she'd missed. Her friend said, "Take it now."

When she got home she read through the leaflets and it was as she was reading the one her friend had picked up, that tears of acceptance and knowing flowed. Later that year she joined the Religious Community spoken about in that leaflet. She's still there, 34 years later!

## Pause for Thought

Since the General Chapter in May, I have found myself pondering the vows that we make at our life profession, and hopefully live out each day. My daily living of the vows, and Mary Gladys making her Life Profession on 21 October have been part of the pondering. I have recently read a book, *'In Our Own Words: Religious life in a changing world.'* in which younger women joining American religious communities today share their vision and understanding of the vowed commitment. The essays present a radical and challenging understanding of the vows today.

Last Sunday (14 October) the final section of the gospel reading was Jesus responding to Peter and the disciples, who had left everything to become his followers. Jesus said that giving up home, family members, or land for the sake of the Gospel, the Good News, will be rewarded with eternal life. (Mark 10: 28-31) This is not just applicable to those of us who have made life vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and who live in religious communities. It is for all who seek to follow the way of Jesus in their lives.

All Christian people are called to be poor in spirit, meaning being dependent on God, living simply and ethically in the use of the world's resources, and giving praise and gratitude to God for the gifts received each day. Chastity may not be a popular word nor attitude today, yet in all of our relationships, in whatever life-style we have chosen, we are called to be people who show love towards others, our neighbours. This must include those who may seek to hurt or destroy us and other people. God loves us unconditionally and Jesus showed this love to the man who came asking for eternal life, even when he could not accept Jesus' challenge. Divine love enables us to love unconditionally and to open other people, in their own way,



Linda Mary's last 'Pause for Thought' as Mother Superior, with thanks for all she has shared with us, through the Newsletter

to love others.

In seeking to obey God as a follower of Jesus we need to listen to God's call in every aspect of our lives. Through our listening we receive the grace and strength to respond to God, and follow Jesus' way of compassion, forgiveness and peace.

*The above book is edited by Juliet Mousseau and Sarah Kohles and published by Liturgical Press Collegeville, Minnesota 2018*



The Sisters in Canada, with Bishop Terry Brown



At the Melanesian Mission UK  
Front Row: Richard Carter, Bishop Willie and Kate Pwaisiho Priscilla and Mary Gladys



## Community Addresses ~



## ~ and Who is Where

### AUSTRALIA

\* = Sister in Charge

**Sr Elisa Helen**, (Provincial)

Email: cscaust@hotmail.com

PO. Box 713, Melton,

VICTORIA 3337 Ph: 03 8716 1403

elisahelen.waterhouse@gmail.com

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

**Sr Frances** The Sister Anne Court Hostel, Room 409, 182 Albion Street, SURRY HILLS. NSW 2010

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

**Sisters: Helen and Linda Mary**

29, Lika Drive, KEMPSEY, NSW 2440

Ph: 02 6562 2313

**Fiona** Cedar Place, 58 Cochrane St, Kempsey NSW 2440

### CANADA

**CSC c/o** 6 John Street, Apt 1003, Oakville, Ont. L6K 3T1

Ph: 289 396 6103

Email: sistersofthechurch@sympatico.ca

**Sisters:** Heather (Provincial), Margaret, Marguerite Mae, (Mother Superior) Michael

### SOLOMON ISLANDS - PACIFIC

**Tetete ni Kolivuti** PO. BOX 510, HONIARA

**Sisters:** Emily (Assistant Provincial),

Jessica, \* Margaret Mauvo., Neslyn,

Veronica (Provincial),

**Novices:** Marolyn, Marylin, Sylvia

**and:** Catherine Maeta (from Feb 2nd)

**On leave:** Jacquelyn, Marina, Priscilla

**Email:** veronica@sistersofthechurch.org

emily@sistersofthechurch.org

**Patteson House** PO. BOX 510, HONIARA

Ph: (677) 22413

**Sisters:** Betsy, Kristy, (UK from Mar.). Mary Garegha, Rita, Yvon

**St. Raphael's** PO. BOX 7, AUKI, Malaita

Province Ph: (677) 40423

**Sisters:** Doreen, \* Ellen, Lillian Mary, Shirley

**St. Gabriel's** GORAMANU, KIRA KIRA,

Province Fax: (677) 50128

**Sisters:** Anneth, Mary Gladys, \* Sophie

**St. Mary's** LUESALO via LATA, Santa Cruz

**Sisters:** Jennifer Clare, \* Joana, May

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

**Sisters:** Beglyn, Caroline, \* Mary Kami, Naomi

**Tasia College** Isabel

**Sisters:** Noelyn, Rosa Catherine

**Christian Care Centre** PO Box 1569 Honiara

**Sisters:** Agnes, Patricia, Phyllis, \* Rachel, Ruth Hope

**Airport House, Henderson**

**Sisters:** Catherine Tawai, Daisy \* (UK from Mar.)

### UNITED KINGDOM

**St. Michael's Convent**, Vicarage Way, Gerrards Cross, Bucks. SL9 8AT

Office of **CHURCH EXTENSION**

**ASSOCIATION** Registered Charity

(Charity No. 200240).

Email: infoUK@sistersofthechurch.org.uk

**Hospitality mailing:**

hospitality@sistersofthechurch.org.uk

**Sisters:** Aileen (Provincial), Catherine, Dorothea, Jennifer, Judith, Hilda Mary, \* Mary Josephine, Ruth, Sheila Julian, Susan

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

**Sisters:** Annaliese, Rosina, Teresa Mary\*

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

**Sisters:** Vivien

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

**Sisters:** Anita (Assistant Provincial), Lizzie, Sue\*

Editorial Team: Sisters Aileen, Catherine and Sheila Julian

Articles or suggestions to:

newsletter@sistersofthechurch.org

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