

CSC Newsletter

Volume 50 N° 1 May 2018

The smaller house at Gerrards Cross, UK, contained 8 people for about fifteen months, then the number went to 9. By the end of March some of us had moved into the bigger house, still being refurbished, and discussions were getting tense. In the week after Easter a tenth UK Sister joined the Gerrards Cross family and a much bigger influx was rapidly approaching.

General Chapter was about to happen, and we had to have beds for the expected total of 28 Sisters. Wherever you looked, Sisters Hilda Mary (Sister-in-Charge at Gerrards Cross) and Susan (liaison with the builders) could be found huddled with anyone else with ideas, talking of rooms, beds, curtains and the 101 other things which were needed to provide for our Sisters coming to the UK from Australia, Canada and the Solomon Islands. When Linda Mary (Mother Superior) arrived in March there wasn't a bed for her at all! Our friends at Burnham Abbey (Society of the Precious Blood) stepped into the breach, as they have done so many times in the process of the UK's move from Ham to Gerrards Cross. Linda Mary was able to stay with them for a few days. It was a great improvement on the idea of a tent on the lawn, especially as there was snow on



Gathered for General Chapter
After the opening Eucharist, with Bishop Christopher (Visitor General to CSC)

the ground. We would have found things all very difficult without the help of our SPB Sisters. Thank you!



Solomon Island Sisters visiting
St Augustine's, Kilburn
Where CSC began



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



Goodbye Sister Kathleen

1968 - 2017

It was a great shock for our Solomon Island Sisters, and indeed for the whole Community, to hear that our beloved Sister Kathleen died at the beginning of December 2017. She was aged only 49.

She gave so much to the Community and those around her and is sadly missed by everyone who knew her.

‘To know Kathleen was to love her.’

From the Eulogy given by Kathleen’s sister Sheila, at the funeral:

Sr. Kathleen was born in Pelau Village, Ontong Java on the 4th November 1968 and was the first born in the family.

She grew up in a very disciplined, loving, closely united family. Kathleen was a very loving, gentle and humble girl, but was an unfortunate child who was born with Asthma.

In 1983, when Sr Kathleen was 15 years old, our family moved to Honiara, because our dad had employment here.

Her interest in joining a religious order and wanting to become a Sister started in 1984. In 1987, she informed the family of her interest to become a sister. At that time, CSC was not very well known like today, especially for us in the remote outer Islands. It was her uncle, late Moses Keahi who encouraged and assisted her with her application to join the Community of the Sisters of the Church.

The decision to join the Community was not an easy decision for the family at first. The reasons were: she was the first born, and in our custom, she was the leader and had the responsibility to make decisions concerning the family.

However, she responded to the call, and our family decided to let her go and join the Community, thinking she would one day return home. However, she made her decision to take her Life Profession. Our

Family and relatives accepted her decision for Life Profession and decided to let her go and allow God’s call for her life.

Sr. Kathleen spent much of her life in the Community. Our family always depended on her and always sought advice from her whenever there was a problem in our families. She always encouraged and advised us on things concerning our spiritual lives and the importance for our families to live in peace and harmony with one another.

In October 2016, she was very sick and stayed with my family in our home at Kingdom hall, Honiara. In 2017, she decided to spend time with the family while on leave.

She never stopped working though, but conducted Family Bible Studies, worked and assisted different groups in the local community at Lord Howe Settlement. She led retreats and headed our Church programs.

Towards the end of October 2017, she decided to go home to attend the Inter-Island Conference of CSC Associates from our three Islands (Luanua; Pelau; and Tasman). Again she was instrumental in helping out the Associates. People from our villages also sought help from her. She helped the sick, comforted those who had lost their loved ones and solved family problems and advised the youths.

She decided to travel to PNG to see her uncle (mum’s brother) in Rabaul. On the 28th November 2016, she boarded a ship.

The Ship arrived in Port Moresby on Saturday 2nd December, where she was attacked by Asthma on Sunday 3rd December. Unfortunately, medical attention was not available, and she was rushed to the Hospital but she could not make it. She passed away on the way to the Hospital at 4:30am on 4th December 2017, a month after she turned 49 years of age.

For the family this is a gap that we cannot fill; Kathleen is irreplaceable. Kathleen my Sister, you will be missed by all our families, relatives and friends. Your memories will always be treasured in our hearts.

Sr Veronica writes:

Sr Kathleen joined the Community on 5th February 1988. She became a Postulant on 28th February 1889 and then made Novice on 17th February 1990. On 6th February 1993, she was accepted as a Junior Sister and then made her Life Profession on 13th October 2002.

From 1997–1999 she was part of the Formation Team at TNK. She then became the Sister In-charge of St Raphael's House in Malaita.

She stood courageously

There was an incident in Auki during the height of the Ethnic Tension when she stood courageously against the militants intending to destroy a family and their business near our House. She protected them and gave them accommodation at St Raphael's until they were safe to return home.

In 2004, she was the Sister-In-Charge of Patteson House in Honiara. Sr Kathleen was elected as Sister Provincial for September 2004 to October 2010, after which she had a sabbatical time, mostly in UK. In 2005, she was nominated to attend a Conference for Women at the United Nations in New York, where she spoke about the status of women.

From 13th October 2013 – 13th October 2016, she was again the Sister Provincial for our CSC Province. Kathleen was called to be a leader and the Sisters respected her.

She was very much loved by everyone and walked alongside them, encouraging

Sisters in their vocation. Kathleen was courageous and had a lot of confidence in herself. She often stepped out of her comfort zone whenever there was a need. She travelled widely around the world, including the Holy Land.

She had a very dry sense of humour and was a humble and happy Sister. This Province has lost a very outstanding Sister and we miss her.



Kathleen contributed to a book entitled 'Lifting Women's Voices', which reflects Kathleen's life:

O Lord, give courage to all women in times of fear and frustration.

Bring the light of your peace in every situation of their lives.

May the fire of your love give courage and strength to women throughout the Anglican Communion.

May they be like queen Esther, brave and strong to help their fellow women,

and like the blessed Virgin Mary, who humbly bowed to your will for her.

May they be strong to build your kingdom here on earth.
Amen.

PREPARATIONS AND BEGINNINGS

Will we ever be ready in time? The kitchen is not together; we don't have enough bedrooms. Will we have a room to meet in? There will be almost thirty of us. It was all a little hair raising. Many prayers, much holding of breath and in the end all was more or less well! Yet....

Everyone had somewhere to sleep, the kitchen was made useable, if not finished, and the lovely old dining room become our meeting room. Meanwhile we had set up yet another chapel in the large building which has been in the process of being renovated for a bit over a year. It was good that some of our Solomon Island Sisters had arrived who could help

transfer all that was needed, to the chapel.

So we had a place to worship, to sleep, to cook, to eat and to meet. What more could we ask?

Meanwhile, wonders had been achieved in the garden and during Chapter, as spring unfolded, we had the joy of seeing many

trees and shrubs that had

been freed from brambles, burst into blossom. A wonder for some of those from the Solomons who had never experienced Spring before.

Linda Mary had arrived in England in March. While some of us were very involved in all the physical preparations, she, Aileen and Catherine were busy getting the timetable for Chapter organised and all the other business necessary.

Suddenly April 28th was upon us. Chapter was to begin on April 29th, but before we began our meetings, the whole Convent was blessed. Brother Sam SSF came for the day and he and Linda Mary with all of us singing and praying did a splendid task

of making sure every nook and cranny was well sprinkled with holy water and censed and blessed. It was a very joyful occasion followed by a lovely lunch in our new new refectory over looking the garden full of sunshine.

On the Sunday we had a Eucharist, at which Bishop Christopher presided, to officially open the General Chapter. Twelve Sisters had come from our other provinces, Linda Mary from Australia, three from Canada and eight from the Solomon Islands. We shared news and happenings from all the Provinces, received Linda Mary's report, met in small home groups, and did much of the usual Community business.

We had been so long in anticipation of General Chapter. All the nail biting and wondering if we would ever manage was suddenly over. Some of us were also able to celebrate part of Ascension Day with a visit to Burnham Abbey to see the Sisters who have been such a splendid support to us through all our time of moving not least housing many of our precious vestments and not quite so precious shelving, not to mention housing Hilda Mary and other Sisters awaiting rooms to be ready at St Michael's!

Now, sadly, most of our Sisters have returned home and we look forward to the next phase of our new life here at Gerrards Cross. There is still much to do in the house. One wonders when it will ever all be complete, but a place is always a work in progress like each one of us. The God we trust, has brought us thus far and we hope for all sorts of new life, new beginnings, new creativity, building on all that has gone before. We have received many blessings. My little stock phrase at the end of each day is "There have been more blessings than set backs." All manner of thing will be well. We look forward to many of you visiting us in the future to share this beautiful place.

Sister Hilda Mary



GENERAL CHAPTER April 29th - May 6th 2018

The **CSC General Chapter** brings together as many Sisters as possible from the four Provinces and countries in which we are based. The host Province will obviously have more Sisters present than the visiting Provinces, but the idea is to gather together as many of us as possible to talk, maybe to make decisions, to learn together, to share worship and times of relaxation. General Chapters usually occur every three years, but this gathering was four years since the last one. We had hoped it could be in 2017, but the refurbished buildings at Gerrards Cross, UK, were nowhere near being habitable.

By the 11th hour St. Michael's Gerrards Cross had room for most of our Sisters. (Two had to sleep in the West Harrow house.) Two other Sisters had bedrooms, but without curtains! Everyone took it in good heart, though. It must have felt like a kind of upper class camping.

The kitchen was functioning and our new Refectory was in use so, whatever else happened, CSC had nourishing food to sustain us.



In the Refectory, after the opening Eucharist. CSC does not always wear the habit, outside the Solomons, but it was felt important to show our unity on all levels as Chapter began.

'A Chapter marches on its stomach!' Hilda Mary



Sisters Mary Gladys, Hilda Mary and Jennifer Clare, with Jennifer the cook

Srs Ruth Hope and Teresa Mary show great concentration on the task in hand.



Sister Marguerite Mae writes:

'On Thursday, Annie, Jennifer Clare, Ruth Hope, Anita and I drove down to Broadstairs. We were fortunate with the weather but had slightly cooler weather by the sea than some of the other Sisters who opted for an outing closer to Gerrards Cross. En route, the acres of bright yellow fields of rapeseed were unlike anything the Sisters had ever seen. After a welcome lunch kindly provided by our Associate, Hilary Kendrick, we went to St Peter's Churchyard to look at our Sisters' graves. For our Solomon Islands Sisters, it was their first time in England and they were thrilled to be able to visit Mother Emily's grave. We tidied up her grave with the help of a bush knife expertly wielded by Annie and the rest of us weeding.

It wasn't all work and eating though. On the Thursday of general Chapter we had a free day, when some Sisters took advantage of the time to visit places. Some went to a Model Village nearby and others went on a boating trip on the River Thames. One group went to Broadstairs and visited Mother Emily's grave and those of other Sisters.

Of course it was a good opportunity to do a little 'spring cleaning' of the graves.

‘After a group hug, a prayer, and singing St Michael’s Hymn, we went to see the other five graves of our Sisters and did some tidying there too.

Afterwards we drove to the seafront to see the site of the first St Mary’s (where Mother Emily died) and St Mary’s II. The Sisters were excited to see the sea and the chalk cliffs, also, the wind turbines – another alternative energy power. The sea proved to be a very different experience. It was very cold – not like the Solomons. After tea and choruses with Hilary, we drove back to Gerrards Cross for a late supper.

Our Sisters from the Solomons felt it was a great privilege to go to Broadstairs and that the mission and ministry of the Community came alive for them there.’



Srs Annie, Jennifer Clare and Ruth Hope, discovered the UK sea and Solomon Islands sea are a world apart in temperature.

A Labour of Love

If, as Sister Hilda Mary said, ‘A Chapter marches on its stomach’, we are doubly indebted to two of our UK Associates for helping the General Chapter keep marching. Jennifer Lewendon, who used to be our cook at Ham Common, offered to cook for us at General Chapter. She was ably assisted by Janet Datta, who used to volunteer at Ham. I think there must have been times when they wondered if they were doing the right thing. It was an incredibly tiring week for them both. The photograph says it all!



Do I really have to put my feet on the ground again?

Jennifer Lewendon relaxes after a hard day at the cooker.



Sisters Doreen, Priscilla and Vivien who went on the Thames boat trip



Sisters Dorothea and Mary Josephine, ably helped by Priscilla and Annie

We may come from different countries and cultures, but General Chapter shows we are one Community, one body, and it isn’t just the habit that joins us together.

April 28th 2018 - The Day of Blessing

Brother Samuel SSF, CSC's Chaplain General, and Sister Linda Mary, CSC Mother Superior, combined forces and blessed the Gerrards Cross house.

At times it had felt as though the day would never come that we were occupying the house and could bless it into service.

Not everything in the house is completed, and one area is still under construction or being refurbished, but it is now inhabited, and we will be opening to guests on June 5th this year. Some boxes are still waiting to be unpacked and some rooms are just stores of furniture for other rooms, but the end is in sight. Enjoy the photographs!



The kitchen was sprinkled with Holy Water and Censed

Jennifer and Janet, two Associates, paused in their cooking



The beginning of the Guest Area, upstairs, is blessed

On the wall is the original Altar Frontal from the first Convent and Orphanage in Kilburn, London



Brother Sam sprinkling the area where the Archives, library, a one-to-one room and the guest laundry are.

The boxes are filled with Archive material.

Sisters, all this is a beginning, a time for vision and hope, a time to step out in faith, resting in the hand of God who cares and loves, hopes and dreams, and draws us ever onwards in the mystery of the divine.

Liturgy of Blessing



Chapel and Sacristy on the move Before the blessing, Chapel had to move

Sisters Annie and Jennifer Clare share the load, but Sr Doreen finds things move better on the head!



Some Thoughts from General Chapter

General Chapter Prayer

O God, you called Mother Emily
to live in love and service to you
and all creation.
Grant that inspired by her example and
assisted by her prayer,
we may proclaim by word and action
the presence of Jesus,
to all who seek paths that lead to you.
Bless our Community,
that we may be given grace to live faithfully
in the spirit of Mother Emily
and so be transformed.
We ask this in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

The Aims for General Chapter 2018:

to share our personal and Community
stories, our differing cultures and ways of
relating;
to deepen our call to mission, ministry and
our witness to live in the way Jesus lived
his life on earth;
to experience decision-making in matters
that affect the life of the whole
Community.

Extract from Linda Mary's Community Report:

'Our vocation to be people of reconciliation can only be achieved as we become who we are meant to be. In embracing wholeheartedly the ethos or essence of the Community we will reveal God and God's all-encompassing love for all people. Our obedience to the will of God will bring us into a deep self-realisation, but our religious life is not about self-realisation, it is about self-transcendence. Self-transcendence is not something we can do. Rather it is accepting that we need to let go, and let God change us.

The Rule reminds us:

Christ becomes love in us, and thus we are transformed, our hearts enlarged, our affections purified. We will discover that there is only one love, which embraces God, ourselves and our neighbour.'

From the **Solomon Island Report:** 'At TNK we host retreats most weekends. TNK is in high demand from groups and individuals having retreats and conferences. We wish the Retreat House was complete, to accommodate more people coming to us. On March 23rd-24th we had more than 100 from the Men's Fellowship and some women who joined them for their retreat. This is a great need at TNK and I humbly ask you other Provinces to support us to complete the building this year.'

We had two days of inspiring and helpful input and workshops from Peta Dunstan, a great supporter of Anglican Religious Communities and probably the most highly informed about them.



The unfinished Retreat House at TNK

LIVING ALONE

You may think it odd that a member of a Religious Community should write about Living Alone, but the days of Convents containing a hundred Sisters are long gone. Changing circumstances mean that quite a number of Religious live alone.

Sr Helen writes:

‘At present, we six Sisters of the Church in Australia are all living alone, or at least not usually with another Sister. Elisa Helen has been living alone since 2000, Rosamund entered St John’s Village at Glebe in 2003, Frances moved into an Aged Care Facility in 2014 and Fiona in 2017. When not visiting other houses in the Community, Linda Mary is at an apartment in Sydney or shares the house at Kempsey with me. After experiencing living alone at Kempsey on and off for the past year, I have been reflecting on how it changes the way I live the Religious Life.

‘The first change that I noticed was my saying Morning and Evening Prayer each day. About once a week, two or three other people join me for Evening Prayer in our chapel, but otherwise I am by myself. I started by saying all the canticles, psalms, Bible readings and prayers as set out in A Prayer Book for Australia and the lectionary, even singing a hymn. This, I believed, was a link with the rest of the Community in Australia, but was it? Did everyone else say Morning and Evening Prayer in full? After a while, I felt this practice was unsatisfactory and too wordy. When I was tired, saying it all was just a burden. I still try to say some of Morning and Evening Prayer, for example, a New Testament reading, a canticle, collect and intercessory prayers.

Flexible Prayer

‘Often I find it helpful to sit quietly for part of the time, perhaps looking at a picture or icon, or listening to what thoughts might come into my head. Instead of identifying these thoughts as ‘wandering’, I think of them as possibly God speaking to me. For me, individual worship needs to be flexible and vary with my physical and mental state. Sometimes the discipline of

saying familiar canticles and prayers is of benefit, but other times it is not.

God uses other people

‘Living without someone with whom one can discuss ideas, decisions and health problems is difficult. Yes, one can talk to God about them, but it is not the same. God uses other people to minister to us, and be served by us. Members of our own families, people we live close to, our local church congregation all become important and part of an ‘extended family’ that is supportive. Phone calls and emails shared with other Sisters become valued when face to face contact is not possible. For me, having some friendly chickens and a small vegetable garden also helps!

‘My ministry has changed in several subtle ways since living alone. Praying for people I hear about or meet, who are in need, seems to have become more important than before. Perhaps they are another ‘family’ to which I feel I belong, and for which I can accept responsibility? I now find that I share certain things with others who live alone; not just the frustration of sometimes being unable to buy small quantities of vegetables(!), but concerns such as personal health.

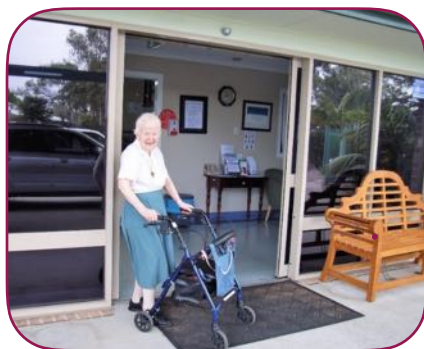
Lonely questions

‘If I suddenly was unable to contact anyone, or died, would anyone notice? There is also the safety issue, how safe are elderly people living alone? I do not want to live in a house protected by bars across the windows and a security alarm, even though our house in Kempsey has been broken into twice during the past six months! Neighbours become important in these cases, but may not always be at home. I know there are aids available to reduce some of these anxieties, but do I want to accept them?

'At present I have come to terms with my fears by trusting God.

Living alone has advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages is being more aware of God's presence, able to pause at any moment to appreciate the beauty of nature or to pray for someone in need. It is a different but valid way of living for me, which seems to require continual changes and adjustments. I wonder how other Sisters, Associates and others have experienced the unexpected riches, along with the difficulties of living the Christian life alone? '

Sr Fiona
returning to
Cedar Place
after a visit to
the Bupa Aged
Care Facility



Of course, some ways of living may mean you live with others but, perhaps in terms of our faith, you might as well be living alone. You may be in a nursing or care facility, so there are plenty of people around, but you feel cut off and can't have good conversations about your faith, or indeed about anything of importance.

Sister Helen has written briefly about our **Sister Fiona**:

When Sister Fiona moved into Cedar Place Aged Care facility, there was a change in the way she ministered to the other residents. She was no longer a visitor going home in an hour or two, but a fellow resident, although she feels that some expect more from her because she is a Sister. Even when visiting residents at Bupa, a nearby Aged Care facility. It made a difference to be living in a similar situation.

Sister Helen CSC

Do you live alone?

Sr Helen has wondered how many others associated with CSC live alone. Very many, I suspect.

Do you have a story to share?

Please let us know. Perhaps we can include your story in another Newsletter. If so, please contact:

newsletter@sistersofthechurch.org

or by post to Sister Aileen at the
Gerrards Cross house
(See back page)

70 Years an Associate!

Entry in Toronto House Diary 1946-1950 -
"March 5th Shirley Taylor admitted as Companion, before Fr. Brain's Instruction"

We had a eucharist and party at Holy Cross Priory on March 7th (2018) for our Toronto Associates, to celebrate Shirley Weller's 70th anniversary of association with the Community. Fr David Bryan Hoopes OHC, our Chaplain, was the celebrant and gave Shirley a special blessing at the end of the eucharist. The other OHC brothers joined us for the party. Shirley shared with us some stories of her long association with the Community which began in the time of Sr Dominica.



Shirley attended a school on Bloor Street, near the convent on Ulster Street and used to have breakfast after Mass with the Sisters before going to school. After leaving High School, she had a summer with Miss Hasell's Sunday School by Post Vans out on the prairies – quite an adventure. At one point she wrote to her mother from Alsask (a small place on the border of Alberta and Saskatchewan) and her mother thought she was in Alaska! Shirley had been a faithful member of St Paul's, Runnymede, but after meeting the Sisters switched to St Martin-in-the-Fields, a much higher church!

TNK CALL



Unfinished Business

The Retreat and Education Centre
at Tetete-ni-Kolivuti

Sister Veronica's plea to the other CSC Provinces, came to the Sisters and we are responding as best we can.

If you would like to help us support the retreat and conference ministry at Tetete-ni-Kolivuti, donations can be made via our website, or be channelled through the UK Province account.

Please make cheques payable to the Church Extension Association, marking the back of the cheque TNK.

Please make sure we know your donation is for TNK in the Solomon Islands.

Pause for Thought



The Sunday after the General Chapter ended I was asked to preach at the Eucharist. When I began to ponder the readings set for the day I realised they

connected with the theme of the General Chapter, and gave further impetus to our reaching out to the changing world.

In the reading from Acts 1: 15-17,21-26, Luke goes to great lengths to show through symbolism, that continuity is important for the early Christians. For him, this continuity is about being connected to the God who was known in the past, and can be known in the future, as the God who seeks to bring hope and liberation, through the gift and life of the Spirit.

The reading from I John 5: 9-13 is not an easy one, perhaps because it is deeply earthed in the time it was written. This does not mean it is not applicable today when looked at from a positive angle. The author, at the end of the reading, affirms eternal life not as something which implies denying our humanity and Christ's humanity, but as something which affirms

and expresses itself in and through the humanity of Jesus and our humanity. Rather it is life lived out in human and divine relationships of love, in our commitment to God and others.

The Gospel reading (John 17: 6-19) is the prayer Jesus prays for those who have entered this relationship with God and Jesus. They belong both to the Father and to the Son, sharing the relationship and also the task which the Father gave to the Son. Jesus was sent into the world and they too are being sent into the world - to reveal the love of God for the world and all people.

The prayer reveals the concern Jesus has for those who seek to live in this relationship and witness to the power of God's love and of the Spirit to the world -

1. They will know hostility, rejection from the world, but today the greater concern may be conformity to the world with its prevailing values and norms.

2. They will be tempted to give up, to lose the holiness of life lived truthfully in God's grace and love.

3. There is a possibility of disunity and we know of this in our times, not only in areas of faith where there is conflict, but also in areas of values, attitudes and priorities.

The challenge is great. Yet, the prayer also seems to call all who seek to live in the relationship of love to be people of integrity, to live in the Eucharistic vision of peace and justice now. Also to recognise that our unity is in God and what God is doing; so is our holiness; and God so loved the world...

Community Addresses ~



~ and Who is Where

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Printed by PDC Copyprint, Kingston UK