

CSC Newsletter

Volume 49 N° 1 May 2016

A Struggling Church

In January this year, Primates from all over the Anglican Communion met together to pray and talk about struggles which the Church is facing today, one being in the area of sexuality. Pages 9 and 10 quote from the Communique issued by the Primates at the end of their meeting and from the opening of a Reflection on the meetings by the Canadian Primate, Archbishop Fred Hilz.

There will doubtless be many different points of view among Associates and friends of CSC and others who read this article. We simply offer it for your prayer.

Hopefully everyone will be able to accept our Mission Statement, when it speaks of **'the dignity of every person'**; and the Primates condemned **'homophobic prejudice and violence'**.

Spirit of God fill us with love, fill us with hope, fill us with peace.

Spirit of God open our eyes to see everyone as our brother or sister.

Spirit of God open our hearts to respect all you have made, for all creation belongs to our God.

All people are God's children, loved and cherished for eternity.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.



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

CSC Mission Statement

The Community of the Sisters of the Church is an international body of women within the Anglican Communion, living under the Gospel values of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, desiring to be faithful to the traditions of the Religious Life while exploring new ways of expressing them and of living community life and ministry today.

By our worship, ministry and life in community, we desire to be channels of the reconciling love and acceptance of Christ, to acknowledge the dignity of every person, and to enable others to encounter the living God whom we seek.

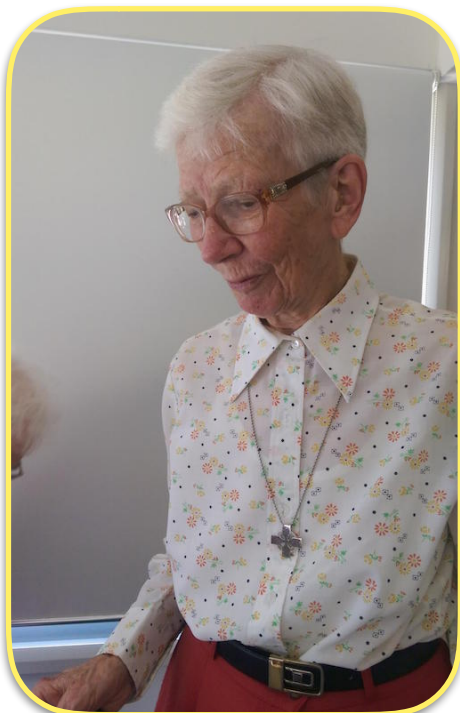
Milestones



Sister Dorothea reaches her 75th Anniversary of Life Profession!



Sister Rosamund reaches her 60th Anniversary of Life Profession!



Sister Rosamund

Sister Rosamund 60th Anniversary of Life Profession

On **10th December 2015**, Rosamund celebrated 60 years of Life Profession in CSC. A joyful midday meal to observe this event was held on 7 December in the Common Room at St John's Village where she lives.

The early date allowed Elisa Helen, Fiona and Helen to travel to Sydney and be with Linda Mary and Rosamund.

The Sisters were joined by Associates and some of Rosamund's friends from St John's Village and others with whom she works. It was a relaxed time of sharing food, a cake and conversation. Rosamund had asked for a low key event and was delighted to share her anniversary in this way.



Cutting the Cake!



Sisters Helen, Rosamund and Fiona (front)
Linda Mary and Elisa Helen (back)

Well Served!

Rosamund is renowned for her 'projects', in support of other people and other parts of the Community. Many will remember her **twenty**

years of collecting used stamps as fundraising for the Australian Board of Mission.

Her latest project is making linen into Fair Linen for altar use, for our Sisters in the Solomon Islands. It is impossible to think of Rosamund without acknowledging her commitment to others, in her projects and her personal support for people. The Community charism, of Adoration and Service, is well served in Sr. Rosamund.

The Inner Room

Sister Helen writes:

'...whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.' (Matthew 6:6)

From time to time, a few of my hens go alone behind the shade-cloth curtain on our veranda, not to lay eggs, but just to sit in its folds. Later they emerge and resume their usual activities. I have no idea why they do this!



There are times when we, too, feel an urge to go alone into our inner room, wherever that may be, and pray to God. This is not just a selfish desire to sulk or lick our wounds when others hurt us, but rather a compulsion to turn to God, like the needle of a compass seeking magnetic north.

Praying may be something we do regularly each day. Or we pray because a person we know is troubled or desperately ill. Perhaps we need to articulate a painful event in a torrent of angry words and tears, blaming God and everyone, until we are empty, silent and still. At times a feeling of great thankfulness can drive us to prayer.

Praying, as we often experience it, is not always attractive. It may feel boring, or our thoughts are rushing in every direction requiring a picture, words, deep breathing or physical walking to focus our minds and bodies.

For whatever reason and in whatever state we enter our inner room to pray, we can be

certain that God is there, ready to hold us, listen to us, speak to us, forgive us and heal us, and those for whom we pray.

Sometimes we may not know how to pray or what to pray. In these situations Paul directs us to open ourselves to God and allow the Spirit to pray through us. Then, as it says in Romans 8:26-27, the Spirit "intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

When we lay ourselves open to God in prayer, we also open ourselves to God's love for all creation and its needs. We start to see our world through God's loving eyes, even the parts we want to reject or pretend do not exist.

As followers of Christ, we can no longer limit ourselves to caring just about the needs of our biological family or our church family. While praying, we find God's whole created family, human and non-human, edging into our room with us and we begin to share in its joys, pain and suffering.

Through prayer, the Spirit unites us with Christ who enters our inner being and we are gradually changed. This change will often be a struggle as we are not always keen to give up self, die to what we want, for the sake of our neighbour. Strangely, and usually unknown to us, through our failures and successes, the unique person God created us to be develops as we give and receive God's love with others.

Wherever and whenever we enter our inner room and shut the door for personal prayer, we find it is not a solitary affair. In that room we struggle with vying forces, and needy hands continually tug at us demanding attention. Such work could be too much for us except that God's Spirit is in us and around us, continually loving, supporting and strengthening us, bringing new life through death. Amazingly, when we leave our room, even if exhausted, we can experience peace.

Solomon Island - UK Connections

Sisters Jessica and Patricia, from the Solomon Islands-Pacific Province, have been staying in the UK for six months.



Katie Drew, Executive Officer of the Melanesian Mission took the two Sisters for a few days “walking in the footsteps of Bishop Patteson”, in the Exeter Diocese from which he came.

They visited **Feniton** where he was brought up, **Ottery St. Mary** where he went to school for part of his education, **Alfington** where he was a Deacon and Curate and, of course, **Exeter Cathedral** in the heart of the Diocese.

They spent time with the Suffragan Bishop of Crediton, the Rt. Rev. Dame Sarah Mullaly, with friends of Melanesia, Companions, Associates and the pupils and staff at partnered schools. They also enjoyed visits to Paignton Zoo, Exeter Cathedral and Museum, and Katie even managed to get the sisters to touch the sea at Exmouth! (Very cold!)

Bp. Sarah writes:

“It was wonderful to meet Sisters Patricia and Jessica. Speaking to them brought alive their community and home in the Solomon Islands. There is a deep friendship between Feniton School and the Norman Palmer School in the Solomon islands which was demonstrated by the reception the children gave Sisters Patricia and Jessica. The link is a very practical way we can build understanding between different cultures. I am sure it will continue to flourish.”

Jessica and Patricia also visited Hilfield Friary, Dorset. There has been a close connection between CSC and the Franciscans in the Solomon Islands.



From left to right:
Rev. Cate Edmonds (Vicar of Feniton area), Jessica, Bp. Sarah, Patricia and Rev. Leisa McGovern (Assistant Curate Otter Vale)



Outside Alfington Parish Church



A Memorial to Bishop Patteson's martyrdom

Bishop John Coleridge Patteson

John Coleridge Patteson was born in London in 1827. In 1855, he heard Bishop George Selwyn of New Zealand call for volunteers to go the South Pacific to preach the Gospel. He went there, and founded a school for the education of native Christian workers. He was adept at languages, and learned twenty-three of the languages spoken in the Polynesian and Melanesian Islands of the South Pacific. In 1861 he was consecrated Bishop of Melanesia.

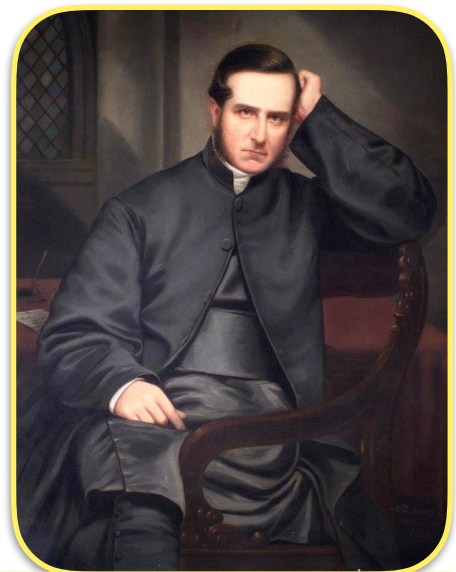
The slave-trade was technically illegal in the South Pacific at that time, but the laws were scarcely enforced and in fact slave-raiding was a lucrative and therefore flourishing business. Patteson was actively engaged in the effort to stamp it out. However, after slave-raiders had attacked the island of Nakapu, in the Santa Cruz group, Patteson and several companions visited the area. They were assumed to be connected with the raiders, because they were wearing black, as had the raiders, and Patteson's body was floated back to his ship with five hatchet wounds in the chest, one for each native who had been killed in the earlier raid.

The death of Bishop Patteson caused an uproar back in England, and stimulated the government there to take firmer measures to stamp out slavery and the slave trade in its Pacific territories. It was also the seed of the strong and vibrantly alive Church in Melanesia today. Patteson and his companions died on 20 September 1871.

Collect commemorating Bishop Patteson and those who died with him

Almighty God, who called your faithful servants
John Coleridge Patteson and his companions to be
witnesses and martyrs in the islands of Melanesia,
and by their labours and sufferings raised up
a people for your own possession:

Pour forth your Holy Spirit
upon your Church in every land,
that by the service and sacrifice of many,
your holy Name may be glorified
and your kingdom enlarged;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Portrait of Bp Patteson
in Lambeth Palace
(With permission)



← **Patteson House in the
1970s**, when CSC was
new to it's life and
ministry in the Solomon
Islands,
and
Patteson House today. →



Tetete ni Kolivuti - the Hill of Prayer - Excels in Hospitality

Last year I had the privilege of spending nearly two months with our Sisters in the Solomon Islands.

While at Tetete ni Kolivuti (TnK) the Sisters hosted a retreat for Form 5 students from Selwyn College, the large secondary school of the Church of Melanesia.

Over 90 students came with their chaplain and teachers. There were well over 100 of us staying on the hill, but unperturbed the Sisters and Noviciate found places for everyone to sleep, water for all our needs and generous amounts of food from very slender resources. We were going through a time of drought. Water for washing had to be brought in from the town. Fortunately there was one rainwater tank left with drinking water.

The young men and women students were welcomed on the Friday evening. We all gathered in the refectory where grace was sung and the TnK Welcome song before we all had supper together.

On Saturday they had two talks in chapel from Fr Philemon Akaw and one from Sr Kathleen, the Sister Provincial, on the subject of Vocation. Kathleen suggested that each student go outside and find a flower and use it to reflect on their own life. She asked them to write a song or poem in response. The poems were offered next day at the Eucharist. I was asked to read them all. There was a very rich response. Many of them understood their own uniqueness and value by the simple task of reflecting on a flower. They had been struck and moved by the atmosphere of the Hill of prayer and the silence.

The
Retreat
House
at
TnK



Sister Hilda Mary

"As soon as I crossed the boundary I felt the presence of God," said one.

School meals at the college tend to be quite sparse and simple but the children thrive on it. They have to grow most of their own food. As part of the retreat the Sisters worked very hard all day and produced a huge feast for Saturday night. Cassava pudding, that takes hours to make, chicken, fish, kumara, cabbage and rice, pineapple and watermelon all piled up on over 100 plates before all the students trooped into the refectory.

In all this food preparation no one seems to tell anyone what to do and no one fusses. Everyone just quietly get on with their tasks. Enormous saucepans are used over the open fire as well as the traditional stone ovens which take many hours to prepare and cook the food.

The students kept silence until the Saturday evening meal. I was very struck by their maturity and good behaviour.



Notice Board on the
Tetete Ni Kolivuti property,
Guadalcanal

On Sunday the truck came for the girls about 1pm but the boys remained till gone 4pm and entertained the Sisters using our panpipes and much singing and dancing.

Much of the dance music is on mobile phones and played very loudly through huge speakers, but that is mainly at their festivals....of which there were plenty while I was there.

Tetete ni Kolivuti is in a beautiful place. In the distance are tree covered mountains and all around trees and flowers. The following thoughts and poems are from the students who came for the week end. I think it all reflects something of the prayer and life of our Solomon Island Sisters and their ministry.

“The place is so quiet you can hear the birds singing. I can feel the presence of God inside me, as I am preparing for my examination coming up next week.”

“The flowers was so colourful. As the sun shines the flower become brighter, how my heart cleared was like the flower that opened and blooms.”

“A day without yelling and shouting. I am in peace with Jesus by my side. A time in the presence of God is priceless.”

“I do learn a lesson and that is sometimes in our lives we have to isolate us from the things of this world to let God speak to us about what he purposely wants us to do.”

Paradise

I don't know who I am and what to do
in the future when finishing school.

Confusion spread every where with fear.
Always longing for a miracle to show
who I am suppose to become in the future.

There is no miracle happening
Confusion spread everywhere.
Today I step into paradise, that
paradise is full of peace, quietness, love and
Beautiful angels live in it.

Great encouragement spread everywhere.
The miracle I am longing for is happening.

That paradise help me to realise
who I am and what my mistake
in life is.

Joy spread everywhere, there is
no confusion spread everywhere.



A flower with a dark red colour

A man who wants more than he imagines.
Dreams flow in his mind like a river that
never dries up.

Too many things to achieve is there room
for other essential things?

The desire of wanting more and more
keeps coming.

I think my brain will burst out.

A gentle voice comes over the hills of
Eastern Guadalcanal.

Control the flow of the river into my brain
giving peace and transforming into a dove
like the fabulous colour of dark gentle red.



Sister Kathleen (Provincial) with new Solomon Island Novices:

(left to right)

Sister Kathleen, Novices: Noelyn, Naomi,
Yvon, Jacquelyn and Rosa. They are all
living at Tetete ni Kolivuti and the
photograph shows them in the chapel
there.

Sr Dorothea's 75th Anniversary of Life Profession

March 25th 1941 was Sister Dorothea's Life Profession and here she is, 75 years later, still living the life of a Religious Sister. She may not be as physically active as she has been for most of those 75 years but is, nevertheless, as alive and passionate as ever.

Standing Out!

Sister Susan writes, of the day:

The actual day (March 25th) fell on Good Friday this year, so we decided to celebrate the great occasion of Dorothea's 75th Profession Anniversary in Easter Week.

The day began with a very special gift... Annaliese (who is a great one for finding exciting things in Charity Shops) had given Dorothea a new outfit in which she might feel truly festive - a beautiful (and rather brilliant) cardinal red skirt and jacket. At first sight, the words which came to me were something like, "Dorothea will certainly stand out!" and for the rest of the day I found myself pondering these words, then sharing them at the celebration supper.



Dorothea and Richard (former Chaplain at Ham)

From the CSC Rule:

'Faced by so great a calling,
aware of our own weakness, we need
not lose heart.

God will use all that we are and
everything in us,
for it is God, the source of holiness,
who will make us holy.'



Dorothea with Sisters Jessica and Patricia



The Celebration Outfit!

Exceptional Gifts

As a teacher, Head Mistress, Provincial, Mother Superior, and in every area of her life, Dorothea has 'stood out' and shown herself to be a woman of exceptional gifts.

We gave great thanks to God for the gift of Dorothea as a Sister of the Church for more than 75 years. We rejoiced in her friendship, wisdom, and courage. We delighted in Dorothea's great sense of fun. And we were all agreed that, even at 101, Dorothea continues to '**stand out**'. The name Dorothea, of course, means '**Gift of God**' - a most apt name!

A Struggling Church

Extracts from the Communiqué from the Primates' Meeting 11 - 15 January 2016 Walking Together in the Service of God in the World

The Communique states:

‘We came knowing that the 2016 Primates’ meeting would be concerned with the differences among us in regard to our teaching on matters of human sexuality.’

[In 2015 the canons of the church (Episcopal Church of the USA) were changed to make the rite of marriage available to all people, regardless of gender.

To our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender brothers and sisters: “The Episcopal Church welcomes you!”]

‘Over the past week the unanimous decision of the Primates was to walk together, however painful this is and despite our differences, as a deep expression of our unity in the body of Christ.’

Part of the discussions included receiving the recommendations from a working group:

‘It is our unanimous desire to walk together. However, given the seriousness of these matters, we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.

‘We have asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a Task Group to maintain conversation among ourselves with the intention of restoration of relationship, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognising the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ.

These recommendations were adopted by the majority of the Primates present.’

However, speaking more generally, the Communique states:

‘The Primates condemned homophobic prejudice and violence and resolved to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation. This conviction arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ. The Primates reaffirmed their rejection of criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people.

The Primates recognise that the Christian church and within it the Anglican Communion have often acted in a way towards people on the basis of their sexual orientation that has caused deep hurt. Where this has happened they express their profound sorrow and affirm again that God's love for every human being is the same, regardless of their sexuality, and that the church should never by its actions give any other impression.’

(To read the full communique go to: <http://www.primates2016.org/>)



Archbishop Fred
Hilz, Primate of
the Anglican
Church of Canada

(Michael Hudson
for General Synod
Communications)

Archbishop Justin
Welby, Primate of
All England and
Leader of the
Anglican
Communion



**Extracts from a Reflection on the Meeting of the Primates
of the Anglican Communion January 11th - 15th 2016
by Fred Hiltz, Archbishop and Primate of Canada**

The Anglican Communion is 'a family of autonomous Churches that understand ourselves to be "Formed by Scripture, Shaped by Worship, Ordered for Communion, and Directed by God's Mission".'

While for the most part this principle inspires our common work and witness, there are times when our capacity to abide by it is deeply challenging given the very diverse political, cultural, social and missional contexts in which we live. While being ordered for communion, we recognise that in the face of deep difference of theological conviction over certain matters of faith and doctrine the bonds of affection between us can be strained, sometimes sadly so, to the point of people speaking of a state of impaired communion.

Since returning home, I am especially mindful of the pain the LGBTQ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer) within our Church is feeling. I am very sorry. I acknowledge their frustration and that of their supporters in being made to feel like the sacrificial offering on the altar of the Church's unity. I recognise that many are angry and deeply disillusioned with the very Church in which they endeavour to live out their lives as disciples of Jesus. I know that for some it is in fact very difficult to remain within its fellowship, and that it will take a great resolve of will and courage to do so.

I apologise for the manner in which the Church has often regarded the LGBTQ community and condemned their lives with very harsh language. I call on our Church to re-affirm its commitment to rejecting anywhere in the world criminal sanctions against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer or questioning people. I call on our Church to renew its resolve in listening to the voices and the stories of its LGBTQ members as we wrestle through conversations regarding the pastoral care we are called to provide for all people. I ask the prayers of the whole Church for the LGBTQ people in the midst of the hurt they are bearing and the hope to which they cling for the recognition and sacramental blessing of their relationships.'

(To read the full Reflection go to: <http://www.anglican.ca/news/>)

Old Girl Celebrations and Memories

Beryl Dean, an Associate of CSC and Old Girl of The Old Palace School, Croydon, UK, travelled to the UK for the 100th celebration of the Old Girls at Michaelmas 2015. She writes:

'The 100th celebration at the school in Croydon was a great success and enjoyed by all. Fortunately it was a good day and after the service in the local church pre-dinner drinks were enjoyed outside before we retired to the Banqueting Hall for lunch – a magnificent banquet and much enjoyed by everyone. As the oldest Old Girl present I was asked to cut the cake and this was a great honour. After we had looked around all the new work that had been done over recent years, we departed gracefully.'

Beryl spoke of Sr Scholastica, whom she first met at the Old Palace and renewed contact with her in East Burwood,

Melbourne, Australia and was present at her memorial service at St Michael's Grammar School. She was deeply touched by the service and spoke of it again at the recent Associates' meeting in Melbourne.



Pause for thought

Linda Mary writes:

The liturgical year of the Church invites us to journey more deeply into the all-embracing merciful love and care of God for all creatures, especially human beings. In the Old Testament, mercy is expressed as God's goodness or faithful kindness given to all people who are willing to receive the compassion and grace of God.



The Aramaic word probably used by Jesus for 'mercy' in Matthew 5:7, means loving kindness or compassion.[1] It requires empathy, to be able to feel how someone else might feel. Of course this means we need to have experienced something of what they have experienced. Jesus in his relating with others reveals this deep compassion and empathy and, in his teaching calls his disciples to do the same: 'Be merciful, just as your heavenly Father is merciful.' (Luke 6:36)

Pope Francis called a Year of Mercy, beginning 8 December 2015, inviting any who wish to be on a pilgrimage, to take a journey which may not mean leaving where they are physically but rather a journey to a sacred space. Both a physical journey and a stay at home journey always have life-giving challenges because the journey is to be with God, a merciful God, for ever. Mercy is therefore the goal of this journey and to grow in mercy requires effort and commitment.

The rich man in Mark 10:17-31, who came to Jesus seeking a fuller more satisfying life received from Jesus a look which revealed the all-embracing merciful love of God. The man was challenged by Jesus not to keep more commandments but to let himself respond to God's love for him.

Many of you reading this column, and especially those who have been educated in our Community Schools, will know the hymn 'Blest are the pure in heart.' It takes one of the Beatitudes, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God' (Matthew 5:8) and explores it. The four verses tell us that Jesus came to live in lowliness so we may live within his heart and come to know the truth/reality of an undivided heart focussed on God. We need to learn Jesus' way of being poor in spirit, meek, revealing peace and righteousness and mercy, and opening the way for all to dwell deep within the mercy and love of God.

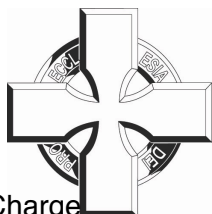
May each of us recognise the challenge of Jesus, of God in our lives, so we may grow in mercy and compassion towards all people as we respond to God's love.

[1] Lorraine Parkinson 'The Word of God According to Jesus' p.52 Spectrum Publications Richmond Victoria Australia 2011



Kingsdown Summer
by Hilda Mary CSC

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

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

elisahelen.waterhouse@gmail.com

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: Beglyn, Kathleen (Provincial), Lillian Mary*, Mary Gladys

Novices: Catherine, Ellen, Joana, Margaret, Neslyn, Shirley, Sophie, Jacquelyn, Naomi, Noelyn, Rosa, Yvon

Email: kathleenkapei@gmail.com

Patteson House PO. BOX 510, HONIARA

Ph: (677) 22413

Sisters: Beverlyn, Eleanor, Jessica*, Lucia, Rita

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

Sisters: Agnes, Marina, May, Rachel*

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

Sisters: Margrosa, Mary Gharegha, Patricia, Priscilla*

St. Mary's LUESALO via LATA, Santa Cruz

Sisters: Jennifer Imua, Kristy, Vivian Marie,*

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

Sisters: Betsy, Caroline*, Everlyn, Mary Kami

Christian Care Centre PO Box 1569 Honiara

Sisters: Annie, Dexter, Phyllis*, Ruth Hope

Airport House, Henderson PO BOX 510 HONIARA

Sisters: Anbeth*, Daisy, Doreen, Grace

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, Emily (March-August), Hilda Mary, Jennifer, Judith, Mary Josephine, 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, Vivien*

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

Sisters: Anita, Sue*

Postulant: Penny

Editorial Team: Sisters Aileen, Annaliese, Catherine and Ruth White
Articles or suggestions to:

newsletter@sistersofthechurch.org

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