

JAMBEROO ABBEY NEWSLETTER 2010



CELEBRATING ST MARY OF THE CROSS MacKillop

At the beginning of Lauds/ Eucharist on the 17th October we were treated to a magnificent flood of light coming through our church window! This was one of those experiences which the Celtic people call a “thin place” when the veil between heaven and earth almost disappears and we catch a glimpse of God! On this particular day, we are sure we also saw a glimpse of our new saint bathed in the light of heaven...and, as always she was ready and willing to share her light with us! (see p39)

ADVENT 2009

Upon her return from Queensland, Mother Abbess shared the following with us:

Sitting in the church at Emu Park (Qld) on the actual feast of the Immaculate Conception. I was struck by the question that the Lord God asked Adam: "Where are you?" It is such a short question and can easily be passed over without a response. Where are we on our journey to God?

I was struck by the fact that this question comes right at the beginning of Advent – the season that calls us to be alert, watching and waiting for the Lord's coming and to be aware of "where" we are within ourselves.



Are we keeping vigil at every moment, for every word, every sign, every signal from the Lord that he is about to break into our lives? That he will come, the Scriptures tell us, "is as certain as the dawn" and he will come in so very, many different ways. Are we in a place where we can invite him in and sit down and sup with him? Or are we still running and

hiding from God in shame and lamenting the loss of our closeness to Him? Like Adam and Eve we can hide rather than answer; flee rather than face him; evade rather than accept responsibility for “where we are”.

At the beginning of Advent I asked us to listen again to the words of St Benedict calling us to support with the greatest patience one another’s weaknesses of body or behaviour. In the second reading tomorrow we are told to “let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near”. This is another call to us, this week, to the “greatest patience”. It is often in these little situations with one another that we will experience the Lord’s coming. He will not come in visions and splendour but in the humdrum situations of life and when we least expect him.

The third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete Sunday – the Sunday of Joy. It ushers in a week of rejoicing because now “the Lord is very near”. The first reading from Zephaniah begins with the words, “Shout for joy....rejoice and exult with all your heart....for the Lord is in your midst”. It then concludes with the encouraging words, “have no fear, do not let your hands fall limp” for God is exulting with joy over you and renewing you by his love.

So, no matter what the answer to our question, “Where are you?”, let us take heart and be filled with joy. Each day marks a new beginning, a new chance to be awake and alert to the coming of our God. So, if we are well on the way, let us keep going, like the wise men, until we reach our final destination! If we find ourselves still at the beginning of the journey, let our hands “not fall limp”, but begin anew today knowing that our God is waiting for us, ready to “exult for joy over us” and “renew us in his love.”



Julian of Norwich wrote of a God who took great delight in his creation and she invites us to delight in God in return when she says:

*“We are God’s bliss,
for God delights in us
without end,
and so will we delight in
God.”*

Let us not be afraid to answer the question: “Where are you?” because, wherever we are, whatever mess we are in, God is present - delighting in us and calling us to delight in Him, in his forgiveness, love and understanding.

During Advent Mother Abbess had the great joy of being present at Sr. Joan Moloney’s Diamond Jubilee at Tanby monastery in Queensland. Mother found this to be a deeply moving tribute to Sr Joan. The celebration took place on the Saturday preceding December 8th, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.



During the “O” Antiphons, on the eve of *O Sapientia/O Wisdom*, our oblates, Rev. Ian (Patrick) Crooks and Mrs. Margaret (Julian) Crooks, made a public commitment to the eremitical life. They promised stability, fidelity to monastic living and obedience to the Rule of St. Benedict and to the Abbess of our community.



At their Baptism and at their oblation fifteen years ago, they committed themselves to faith in Christ. Now this further step was one of deepening their commitment. Mother Abbess received their vows and welcomed Ian and Margaret as Hermits of our community. Ian and Margaret continue to live and minister in the parish of Oberon, New South Wales.

On 16 December, Sir Elizabeth delivered her last financial



Chapter. Elizabeth volunteered to give the job of Cellarer “a go” some 26 years ago and has been serving the community in this position ever since! Now, in her “late middle age”! she is moving onto the new and exciting tasks of writing some of the history of the community and working

on Canticles for the Liturgy. After yet another clear and concise delivery of the financial affairs of the community to the Chapter, she was thanked by Mother Mary for her wonderful work over such a long period and was then warmly applauded by all. (Photo above: Sr Elizabeth with her old school friend Mary Locke)



Sr Agnes, who has been assisting Sir Elizabeth for many years, has taken over the service of Cellarer. Here she is responding to our chief mischief maker, and his request for a bone, with a few kind words and a gentle pat on the head!

On 22 December, we welcomed Fr William Shudlarekosb to our community for a few days. Fr William is a monk of St John's Abbey Collegeville, Minnesota, but these days but resides at Sant' Anselmo in Rome and works as the Secretary General of MID (*Monastic Interreligious Dialogue*).

He was here in Australia to attend the Council of World Religions which took place in



Melbourne. During his short visit, he gave the community a most informative talk on inter-religious dialogue and met Sr Janice and Sr Magdalen who have a particular interest in this area.

CHRISTMAS 2009

The underlying spiritual strength of Christmas was for us, along with thousands of Catholics world-wide, Pope Benedict XVI's Christmas Vigil Homily:

“God is important –
by far, the most important thing in our lives.”
All too true were our holy father's words that we are at times
“...a great distance from the manger.
God has to prod us and reach out to us again and again...
so that we can discover the way that leads to Him.”

JANUARY 2010



January began with the arrival of our friend, Archbishop Philip Wilson, for his annual retreat during the first week of this month.

His visit coincided with our usual beginning of the year “break” and Archbishop Philip joined us for Eucharist and shared community supper each day. We were enriched by his global sharing and sense of humour. We look forward to his next visit early in the coming year.

Sr. Pragasi arrived from India to begin a two-month training course in the production of candles. Sr. Pragasi is a nun of Shanti Nilayam Abbey, Bangalore, India.

Sr. Mechtild was Sr. Pragasi's main companion during her stay with us and introduced her to the garden and the kitchen and all the work involved in each place! Sr. Mary Jennine and the sisters in the Candle Department taught her some of the basics of candle-making, dipping, carving and decorating. Sr. Mechtild was also a tour guide on a few occasions and introduced Sr. Pragasi to the



Illawarra region of New South Wales. During her time with us, Sr. Pragasi celebrated her 45th birthday. This day, January 12th, was the same day as Sr. Hilda's 60th birthday.

Mother Teresita de Silva, Sr. Pragasi's abbess, joined her for



some of her sojourn with us. Mutual sharing took place between our Abbess and Mother Teresita, and between individual sisters here and both sisters from India. We were able to give our card designs to the Indian community, by putting them on a computer for Sr. Pragasi to take back with her. In this technological age, things are that much simpler! From their community we received some very delicate and beautiful hand-crafted cards by Sr. Regina George.

On January 13th, we said goodbye to Paula Newcombe, Lay Carmelite who was going to Tanzania to spend some time helping at St. Jude's School. Paula was missioned and blessed by Fr Paul and the community at a special Eucharistic celebration.

On January 16th, Peter and Sue Stuckey celebrated 40 years of Sacramental Marriage. Surrounded by their family they received a Blessing during the Celebration of the Eucharist.



On 23 January Bishop David Cremin brought Bishop Joseph Toale, from Scotland, to see us. Bishop Toale hails from the Diocese of Argyle which is the diocese celebrating Mary MacKillop's canonisation with us. St Mary's parents belonged to that diocese before they came to Australia. It was a very relaxing visit – including much Celtic and Aussie humour!

On January 25th Heather Cross entered our community. Heather is our first indigenous vocation. She had been with us for three aspirancies during 2008/9 coming all the way from Darwin each time.



January 30th was Fr. Paul's 40th Anniversary of Ordination and we celebrated a Liturgy of Thanksgiving with Paul, his family and friends and the Lay Carmelite community. There was no way of keeping a day like this quiet. The word went round and the numbers grew.



Mother Abbess began with the following introduction: “We gather as Paul’s family, as his Carmelite brothers and sisters, as parishioners of Jamberoo, Kiama and Gerringong, and as the community of Jamberoo Abbey. We are all here today because we have been touched, in some way, by Paul’s ministry to us – both as priest and friend. We give thanks for Paul’s faithfulness over these 40 years and we pray for him, that God will continue to bless him with a deep spirit of prayer, good health, and an abundance of peace in the years ahead.

On February 2nd, we celebrated 161 years of our community’s history in Australia. This day was also Sr. Hildegard’s Silver Jubilee of Solemn Monastic Profession.



Those specifically invited by her were significant people in her life, or represented significant people.

Bishop Peter Ingham agreed to be Celebrant, along with Bishop David Cremin, Fr. Pat Fahey, Fr. John McCall, and the Very Rev Dr.

Adrian Farrelly, Parish Priest of St. Agatha’s, Clayfield, Brisbane. Sr. Hildegard shared the early years of Primary School with Adrian, and St. Agatha’s was her Parish.



Left: Bishop Peter wearing Archbishop Polding’s mitre and using Mother Abbess’ staff. (His own mitre and staff being left behind when the car was packed!)

Friends were present from her suburban Street of the 1950s: Mrs. Margaret Allan (O'Flynn), Celese, Chaille and Dawn McKenzie. Dawn, her mother's oldest friend, proclaimed the first reading, representing her mother. Brian Butler, monastic historian and friend, proclaimed the second reading.

The Presentation Sisters who made the journey from Brisbane to Jamberoo were: Sr. Agatha Freeman, Sr. Kathleen Fanton and Sr. Marguerite Bartholomew. The glorious strains of St. Kathleen's violin accompanied the sacred music.



Sr. Kathleen played Bishop Cremin's violin. Bishop Cremin says that "Sr. Kathleen brought the old violin to life and that it now sounds like a Stradivarius." (Left: Kathleen and Below: Bishop David)



A deeply beautiful piece during the Liturgy was the *Sub Tuum Praesidium* by Lambillotte, chosen because our Abbey was placed under the protection of our Lady on February 2nd, 1849. The exquisite voices who sang this beautiful piece belonged to Sr. Magdalen, Sr. Joanna, Sr. Emmanuel and Sr. Mary Bernadette. The comments by many guests were: "if only it had been recorded."

The music (on a lighter note) continued after Mass. Sr. Kathleen and Bishop Cremin played the violin. Hugh Myers sang "Fiddler on the Roof". Oblate Pat Quinn sang "An Irish Blessing". Thanks go to all who made this day possible.



Sr. Hildegard is grateful to her brother Gerard and sister, Cathy, for meeting planes and trains and making sure of accommodation for everyone. Thanks most of all for the



surprise of her sister, Margaret who was here for the celebration and stayed on for a few days afterwards.

February 11th was the Temporary Profession of Sr. Mary Bernadette (Deborah Sunarjo from Indonesia). This is a day Sr. Mary Bernadette had longed for. The cover of her booklet expresses her faith: the Cross, the heart, - and woven through both symbols, the word “love”. Underneath is her response: “Jesus, I trust you.” On the back is the scene of the first Apparition of Lourdes, on 11th February 1858. Two hymns stand out as also expressing her deepest spirit: “Lead kindly



light”, the words of John Henry (Cardinal) Newman, and of course, the Lourdes Pilgrimage Hymn: “Immaculate Mary”, which is still sung with deep faith by all who make the pilgrimage in our present age.

On 1 March Abbot Michael Kelly visited us. Abbot Michael was a monk of Arcadia and has been well known to many of us over a long period of time going back to our days in Pennant Hills. In 2008, Abbot Michael was elected as abbot of his order and now resides in Rome. It was wonderful to see him again and to hear news of his community from the many visitations he does around the world.



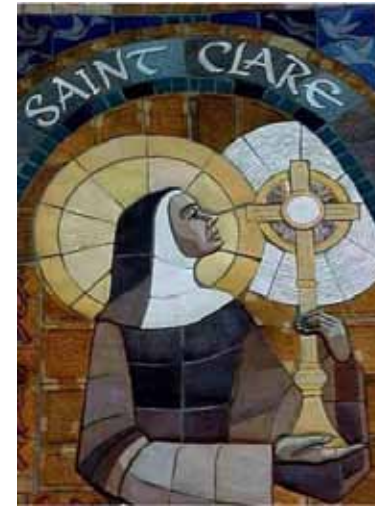
March 16th was not only Archbishop Polding’s Anniversary of death but also the day our Diocesan Cathedral (of St. Francis Xavier), was dedicated. A few of our sisters represented our community at the Mass of Dedication. Our founding father, Archbishop John Bede Polding osb, appears on the front of the memorial card printed for the Ceremony of Dedication, along with our own Bishop, the Most Rev. Peter Ingham, and the text, “The Church is the favoured dwelling place of God on earth: a temple built of living stone, founded on the apostles, with Jesus Christ its corner stone.”

On March 7th Sr Immaculata turned 91 years young! Mother and several sisters visited Sr Immaculata in “Chesalon Nursing Home” in South Nowra to join in the celebrations. During their visit, the sisters had a sing-song with some of the residents and much love and laughter was shared.



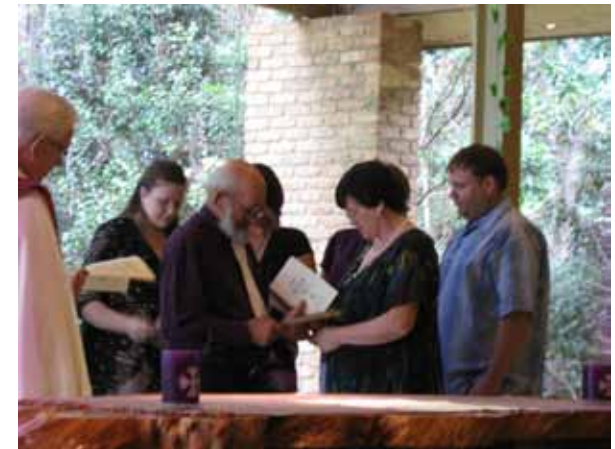
Sr Immaculata is very peaceful and happy in her new surroundings. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at Cheslon for the wonderful work that they do – always with a smile.

*To the left of the photo is Edna Sr Immaculata’s new friend.
To the right is Marjie Barnes, Mother Mary’s mother.*



On March 25th, the Solemnity of the Annunciation, Srs. Clare, Therese and Hildegard attended the Silver Jubilee of Sr. Annette, at Bethlehem Monastery in Campbelltown. It was a joyful gathering of Poor Clares and Franciscans, and of family, friends, and Sisters from other Religious Congregations. It was also an opportunity for us to visit Sr. Diana’s grave and to ask her to pray for us who are still on the journey.

On March 27th, Marion and Bob Haigh celebrated 30 years of marriage and received a blessing during the Eucharist. A while before this day, on March 10th, we had celebrated Marion’s 50th birthday.



Marion cooks for our community and guests during the week and is also a lay Carmelite so she is very much part of the community.

Our Holy Week Liturgies were as beautiful as ever. Sharing with you some photos of Palm Sunday, and the fire at the Easter Vigil.



Both these ceremonies took place at the front of the Abbey in the guestry garden.



At the end of June 2010, Sr. Janice Robertson represented Mother Abbess at the Australasian Benedictine Union held their Annual Meeting at the Southern Star Cistercian Abbey at Kopua in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand.



This was an opportunity to gather and share insights and values relevant to the communities of Benedictines and Cistercians living beneath the Southern Cross. It was the first time in the 41 year history of the Benedictine Union that we had been able to share the wonderfully warm hospitality of the Cistercian monks, companions and associates of Kopua. This was all made possible in the attractive new Guest House facilities recently completed.

Mother Angela and Mother Philippa from the two Tyburn Benedictine foundations were also present for the first time and enlightened us with the accounts of their very new foundations in Bombay (near Auckland) and Ngakuru (near Hamilton) while Abbot Brian Keogh, OCSO shared the history of the early years of the foundation of Kopua – both accounts being the subject of the Benedictine Studies Day on the Saturday. The Good Samaritan Sisters, New Norcia, Arcadia, Tarrawarra and ourselves were all present.

Whilst in New Zealand Sr Janice was able to spend some precious time with her family and friends.

SUSCIPE ME DOMINE



Sr. Gertrud, (Tina Andrea George), celebrated her Solemn Monastic Profession and Consecration on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 11, 2010. Her parents, Andrea and Steve, some of her friends and her former Parish Priest, Fr. Gary Devon OFM Cap. (St.Fiacre's, Leichhardt) were present to witness this sacred day in her life

The cover of her booklet spoke the words: “My Covenant With You.” Apart from the traditional Ceremonial, the Booklet contained deeply spiritual excerpts from writings dear to Sr. Gertrud: a hymn of *Synesius of Cyrene*; the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Gertrud*; *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*; the writings of Bl. Columba Marmion; the *Documents of the Second Vatican Council*. Bishop Peter Ingham was the main Celebrant on this occasion, and outlined, in his homily, Sr. Gertrud's journey to Catholicism, and then to monastic life.

A week before the Ceremony, Mother Abbess had given a reflection on the *Suscipe Me Domine*, as it applies in our daily living: “In upholding one another, we give one another life and encouragement. If we refuse to uphold someone in the community, then we are betraying our *Suscipe*.” When we came to sing it with Sr. Gertrud, it seemed more challenging.



*Today you will be with me.
Now come forth from exile
to the solemn tomorrow of unfading eternity.
There you will find me, Jesus, the true today of Divine
brightness,
Who am the beginning and the end of all creation.
St. Gertrud the Great*



Right: Sr Gertrud's parents: Stephen and Andrea George and "Coco".



When our Pipe Organ was re-built from 1987-89, the firm employed was that of "Brown and Arkley". Clive Arkley later moved to Western Australia when the firm divided. Almost 20 years later, Clive returned to hear the Church Organ. Doug and Chris Pitman organized the visit for Clive, his wife Julie, and



their daughter Kristin. With just eight nuns of the re-location community left, it re-kindled the spirit of that period: courage and fidelity.

Doug Pitman gave a magnificent performance on this grandest of instruments, lending his skills to the voicing. And, yes, it did bring out a few tears of joy – most especially from Clive.



On July 18th we had an in-community launch of Fr Paul and Sr Magdalen's liturgical CD. They had been working on the recording for many months and now can enjoy the wonderful fruits of their labours. The CDs include all the hymns, psalms and canticles of the Divine Office and is already proving to be most popular and helpful to hundreds of people throughout Australia and beyond. The set of CDs is available from our Abbey Book shop. Sr Mary Bernadette contributed to the Indonesian version of this CD.



We welcomed a Monastic Guest on Tuesday evening, August 3rd. Abbot Timothy Wright, former Abbot of Ampleforth, now residing at "St. Pauls Outside The Walls", stayed with us just two nights, taking in a tour of the Abbey and a discussion with some of our sisters who are interested in Inter-faith Dialogue. During his time with us, he also gave two conferences and shared the evening meal. Abbot Timothy left on Thursday 5th August, to visit St. Benedict's Monastery, Arcadia. He had come from New Norcia, where he had been able to travel to Broome and Beagle Bay. He hopes to return again and has promised to stay longer next time.

Following on from the success of last year's meeting, the Benedictine Union Formation Gathering was held here at Jamberoo Abbey, from 8th – 15th August. Participants and their formators came from Tarrawarra, New Norcia, the Good Samaritan Sisters and Jamberoo. Every effort was made to ensure that this was a lively, prayerful, educative and unifying experience for all concerned.



Special thanks go to Father Michael Casey OCSO for his presentation on "Aelred of Rievaulx" and Sr Margaret Malone, for her presentation on "The Household of God". Each of the named groups above made their own contributions by sharing on some of the monastic values. Tarrawarra called our attention to "Simplicity", the Good Samaritan Sisters to "Silence" New Norcia to "Stability" and Jamberoo "The Common Life". None of the groups hid the challenges of the lived experience! The week was marked by a depth of faith and sharing not to mention energy, life and laughter.

Right: Sr Hilda with her brother, Greg, who is a monk at New Norcia



August 15th, the Solemnity of the Assumption, was the day chosen for Sr. Caritas (Levita Rodriguez) to make her Temporary Profession.

For the cover of her Profession Booklet, Sr. Caritas chose images of the Assumption of Our Lady, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Under these images were masses of roses, her favourite flowers. Sr. Caritas made a sincere commitment to the Benedictine monastic life, taking the Benedictine vows of Stability, Conversion of Life and Obedience. We know she waited for this great day for such a long time, and her joy was tangible.



There are beautiful and deeply meaning realities in this ceremony such as: “Through all human experiences may she learn to abide with the Christ of our community.” “May her heart be touched and expanded by the Word.” And there is the mention of all those who have been part of sister’s life – her story – all who had led her to this day. We know that her deceased parents, Santan and Caroline were very present on that day.

On 23 August Frances Green entered our community. Like Heather, Frances had been with us for three aspirancies so was well known to us when the day of her entrance arrived. Frances was a community nurse for many years and is now sharing her many skills with us when we have aches and pains! Before returning to her Catholic roots she was a Buddhist nun and brings with her a wealth of prayer, experience and meditation.



On August 27th, Kath and Barry Evans visited the Abbey. Kath Evans is St Mary MacKillop’s second declared miracle. Sr Mechtild lived in Windale at the time of Kath’s illness and miracle so it was a special joy to be reunited with her after

all these years. Kath was visiting the region as a guest speaker at a special Mary MacKillop week which was organized by Fr David Catterill of St Paul Parish, Albion Park.

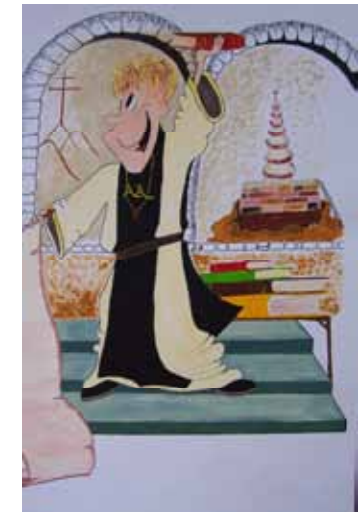


On 11 September our local Knights of the Southern Cross gifted us with a cheque for the purchase of books for our library. The Knights have had a long association with our Abbey since our arrival herein Jamberoo and we are always so grateful to them for their generosity of time and their gifts to us.



In the week beginning September 12th, Fr. Michael Casey, ocsso came to the Abbey to give a week of Conferences on the writings of St. Aelred of Rievaulx. Why St. Aelred? Because this year, 2010, is the 900th of his birth. Fr Michael brought the words of St Aelred alive for us and Sr Phyllis tried to do the same in the following drawings. The photos speak for themselves. If you need

help with their interpretation then you are either well on the way to sainthood or perhaps, need to pray to Sr Aelred for inspiration and discernment!



On September 14th Sr Therese left for six weeks with our community at Our Lady of the Desert in New Mexico USA.



There are seven sisters in the community, including sisters from Vietnam, Guatemala, Mexico and North America. The sisters have recently moved to Gobernador where they have begun building their new monastery. During her time there Sr Therese worked closely with the sisters both as a group and individually, helping them to explore day-to-day living of monastic life as a community with fidelity and authenticity. While she was with the community she joined in talks from Fr Terrence Kardong osb and a retreat directed by Fr Bede osb.

As well as seeing much of the beauty of the countryside Sr Therese also visited the Monastery of Christ in the Desert where the sisters had lived before moving to Gobernador. She was given a very warm welcome by the community there. Sr Therese is now home and very grateful to have had the opportunity to spend time with this community of courageous and faith-filled monastic women.



She enjoyed her stay very much and managed to survive the rattle snake season without even one sighting!



At the same time, Sr. Joanna was away, representing Mother Abbess at the International Conference of Benedictine women in Rome. Mother Abbess saw this as the opportunity for Sr. Joanna to spend time with her sister Verity in France. Verity's husband, Jeannot, had been critically ill for some time and Sr. Joanna wanted to be a support to

Verity in the last weeks of Jeannot's life. Jeannot was set free from this life's physical suffering on October 4th. Sr. Joanna stayed on to support her sister through the funeral and the days which followed.

The *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* (CIB) held an International Symposium in Rome at Sant'Anselmo from 8-15th September with the theme "Benedictine Women – Witnesses of Hope". The participants were 120 Benedictine nuns from 33 countries. Some of the countries participating were : Italy, France, Korea, Vietnam, Croatia, England, Germany, United States of America, Togo, Lithuania, Israel, Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Switzerland, Canada, India, Poland, Tanzania, Namibia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Belgium, Japan, Spain, Portugal, Argentina,



Mexico, West Indies, Philippines, Uganda, and the Czech Republic.

One of the inspiring papers was presented by Sr Maricarmen Bracamontes from Mexico . Her title was “The Place of Hope in Benedictine Spirituality”. She challenged Benedictine women to become “conspirators in God’s mercy”. Sr Maricarmen spelt out the ways in which Benedictine spirituality can “allow compassion to flower” and assist the development of “never losing hope in God’s mercy”.



JUBILEE

Sr. Mary Claire chose a Mass of Thanksgiving as the most



meaningful way of saying her ‘thank you’ to a gracious God who has seen her through this long journey to her Silver Jubilee. Sister came to our community in 1975, from the Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions. Soon after her Solemn Profession as a Benedictine, she generously volunteered to be one of the five founding members of our new community in the Diocese of Rockhampton, Queensland. In conditions less than ideal, these sisters worked hard for years, to become self-sufficient. Sr. Claire saw the building of new Monastery of the Transfiguration at Lammermoor, on the Capricorn Coast. She also, very sadly, saw the sale of this Monastery. She returned to our community at the invitation of Mother Benedicta Philips, in 2005 and is a faithful Nun in her dedication to prayer and work.

This was a great day for Sr. Claire, a day which brought her family together for the first time since 1969. The prayers of the Faithful were shared between family and friends: James Fitzgerald, her cousin, Monica Watts, her friend, Betty Savage (Johnson), her sister, Jade, Kai and Peta Southwood, her nieces and nephew, Diana Steven, James's sister, and finally, Sr. Anne Noonan, rndm, her novitiate companion and former Provincial Superior of Our Lady of the Missions Congregation. Sr. Anne accompanied her the day she entered our community in 1975. Other sisters from the Congregation were also present for this day.

Bishop Peter began his homily with a look back to the year 1950, the year of Sr. Claire's Profession. He gave an excellent summary of the members of Federal and State Government, the leaders of the Church in Australia, the popular songs of the time, even mentioning "Mona Lisa". He drew attention to the political situations of the time, with the threat of communism, and the reality of the Korean War.

Yes, 1950 was a long time ago. For over a quarter of our community, we knew we weren't even thought of, except by God. Some of us were infants or small children, and here was a woman who had done this amazing thing called "commitment" since 1950. What can one say?

After the Mass, and the cutting of the Jubilee Cake, Claire's brother, Peter, summed up her life from the perspective of family, saying that he was three months old when she entered the convent, and 9 years old when he first met her.



Some of us from large families could echo this scenario. In the days when we entered convents at age 18, our little brothers and sisters were often under 3 years of age. Peter's speech was deeply moving, reflecting the love and reverence of a younger brother for his older sister. Best of all was the gift he and his wife had organized: A large photograph (framed), of the last time the whole six

members of the family were together with their parents. The occasion was Peter and Sandra's wedding in 1969. Two sisters and a brother, present in the photograph are now deceased: Joan, Helen and Bob (big Bob Johnson of Melbourne football fame!) Following Peter's speech, we had a song by Cathy, Gerard and Sr. Hildegard Ryan, supported by Sr. Magdalen and Sr. Emmanuel. Then Sr. Mary Bernadette and Sr. Magdalen

led us in a singsong. That evening, Sr. Claire celebrated in a more low-key way with just us! Her family began to leave on September 24th, to return to Melbourne. The last car, with Peter, Sandra and family, left on September 25th, to drive all the way back to Bribie Island, Queensland.

On the weekend of September 25-26, a family which has been associated with our community since the 1940s came to our



cottages for a special birthday celebration. This was the Hickey family. Amanda Hickey wanted to celebrate her 70th birthday at the Abbey. Amanda's father, John Murray Hellmrich, was our solicitor from the

1940s until his retirement. Alan, Amanda's husband, worked for Mr. Hellmrich, as an articled clerk, and says he wore out his shoes running around the city of Sydney, delivering letters. A lot of these were to Cardinal Gilroy at Sr. Mary's, and concerned matters regarding our community, then resident a "Subiaco" Rydalmere, and later (after 1957), at Franklin Road, Pennant Hills. Amanda and her sister, Gay, would go with their parents to our monastery at Rydalmere, and at Pennant Hills, whenever Mr. Hellmrich had business with Mother Mildred Potts and later Sr. Placid Wilson. Whenever they drove away from the Monastery, John Hellmrich would always ask his daughters: "Well, are you going to join the nuns when you grow up?" Their answer was always a loud "No". Thank God, or we wouldn't have had the pleasure of Alan and Amanda's three adult children and their spouses, and seven

grandchildren to celebrate the weekend with us. The birthday Mass was on Saturday. This was followed by a festive morning tea and the presentation of a gift to Amanda, a gift from our community.

On Sunday after Mass we were given a treasure to remember.

Their eldest grandson, Harry, played a classical piece on guitar as a "thank you" to us for allowing his grandmother to celebrate her 70th birthday with us. Harry is a music student at St. Aloysius, Milson's Point. There was a lot of giftedness among the grandchildren present for the weekend, with the greatest being love and joy.



Sr Kym Harris from Tanby Monastery in Queensland visited us



for 2 days in late September. Kym was down here giving a presentation on Benedictine Women to a gathering of Sisters of the Good Samaritan and managed to get a few days to head south to catch up with us. We enjoyed a barbecue

lunch with her and had the chance to share various happenings in both communities.

With people gathered in Rome, Scotland, New Zealand, Australia and other parts of the world, we celebrated the great day of MaryMacKillop's canonisation on Sunday 17 October. We began the Liturgy of St Mary MacKillop at Vespers on Saturday and continued the celebrations throughout the day itself.



At the beginning of Lauds/ Eucharist we were treated to a magnificent flood of light coming through our church window! This was one of those experiences which the Celtic people describe as being in a "thin place" where the veil between heaven and earth almost disappears and we catch a glimpse of God! On this particular day, we are sure we also saw a glimpse of our new saint bathed in the light of heaven...and, as always she was ready and willing to share her light with us!

During our Gathering Rite, we had a special ceremony featuring long satin cloths of different hues symbolizing the peoples from north and south, east and west joining together in praise and song for this most faithful and courageous Australian woman.



The cloths were then placed on our altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.



Sisters Agnes and Mechtild, whose first call to follow God was as Sisters of Saint Joseph, prayed our Prayers of Intercession. Throughout the day, we had various DVDs of Mary's life playing

in the community room and we had the freedom to watch these whenever we could. After a celebratory supper, we all gathered around the TV for the live broadcast of the canonization from Rome. It certainly was a great day to be an Aussie!

The celebrations for St Mary MacKillop continued with the big diocesan Mass at the Entertainment Centre in Wollongong on 31 October. Bishop Peter, who had been in Rome for the canonisation with a large group of pilgrims from the diocese, had returned home and was the chief celebrant. Srs Agnes, Mechtild and Caritras represented us and enjoyed every minute!



You may remember from last year's newsletter that Sr Emmanuel came to us from St. Mark's Abbey, Camperdown, Victoria, for a 6 month monastic experience in a larger community. While with us, she entered fully into our life and also assisted Sr. Janice and Sr. Joanna in the Books and Gifts Department.

On 22 August, Sr Emmanuel returned to our community with the blessing of Abbot Michael King. As part of her preparation to enter our community, Emmanuel was received into full communion with the Catholic Church on All Saints Day.



Following that ceremony, she formally entered the Jamberoo community and then we joined with all the saints to celebrate both occasions with morning tea!



In early October, Sr Clare journeyed to Port Arthur in Victoria with Marion Haigh to attend the Final Vow ceremony of Sisters Martha and Julian as Canonical Hermits. You may remember from previous newsletters that Martha and Julian were resident oblates here in Jamberoo for a number of years. In 2008, they moved to Port Arthur where they now live in a beautiful little cottage called *Peregrini Hermitage*. As well as being dedicated to a life of prayer and reading, they also minister in the local parish.



The ceremony was held at St Mary's Church in Yarram and the principal celebrant was the Bishop of Sale Diocese, Bishop Christopher Prowse. It was a moving ceremony and, according to all reports, the two newly finally professed hermits looked radiantly happy! They are much loved by the local people and appreciated by the bishop and priests of the diocese. A number of their friends from Eden also made the trip south to support them and rejoice with them on the day. We send them our congratulations and the continued promise of prayer.

Friday, November 12th, brought a visitor of deep blessings to our community – Sr Edwina one of Mother Benedicta's close friends from the Sisters of Mercy Auckland, NZ. Sr Edwina Ulberg, in Australia for a brief holiday with her Samoan family, spent three and a half days with us recalling memories of Mother Benedicta (Brenda). She wanted to meet with those of us who knew her well – in her words she wanted to “meet the people and places that Brenda loved”. She also enjoyed a tour of the local surroundings and the south coast. On Sunday evening at a shared supper Sr Edwina sang a “thank you” song in Samoan. We were very honoured to have her with us. Her visit stirred up many precious memories.



Right: Sr Edwina with Sr Gertrud (who is originally from New Zealand)



Our final news entry before publication, marks a special “thank you” morning tea which we gave to Jo Wickens on 15 November.

For some years now, Jo has been quietly and patiently computerising every single

book in our library. During this time, Jo has been coming to the Abbey for days or weeks at a time and working from early morning until late evening. Each time she has left us, she has taken boxes of books with her so she could continue her work at home where her ADSL connection allowed her to work much faster than she could using our unreliable wireless internet system!

Finally, Jo’s work is complete and we are so grateful to her for all she has done for us. We are hoping Jo will continue to drop in on us and check to see how we are going with our new system. Whilst here, Jo also joined us faithfully in prayer and we promised her that we will continue to remember her with a prayer of thanksgiving for all her faithfulness to us.

Also living with us for two years duration is Sr. Anna Brennan, from Stanbrook Abbey, Yorkshire, U.K. Sr. Anna was with the Stanbrook community when they moved into their new home in Yorkshire in 2009 and then came to share her many talents with us! She is currently working in our library where she has been helping Jo with the upgrading process. She also teaches Latin classes, cooks on a Saturday with Sr Mechtild and serves in our shop.



THANK YOU

We also want to thank all those who work for us here on the abbey property. Vince Warby has been our property manager for over two years. Vince is a local farmer and has taken on this extra work which is very demanding. We appreciate Vince’s dedication to his work. He is always only a phone call away in a crisis.

Gerard and Cathy Ryan moved from Brisbane to the Abbey in May 2009. They later bought a home in Robertson, and have settled in to life in the Southern Highlands. They work as caretakers/cleaners/gardeners at our Retreat Cottages and Hermitages. They have maintained our cottages and cottage gardens beautifully, and cleared more garden areas for peace and prayer. They love their work. They love the peace of the rainforest and the song of the birds.

Zac Xuereb has joined us as our workman extraordinaire! Zac's wife, Carol, was posted to Jamberoo Public School as a Teacher, and so Zac and Carol have bought a home in Jamberoo and settled into more country life. They left country life in the west when Carol's posting came through. Zac is brilliant at his work, and ever so willing to meet the demands which are placed upon him. There is nothing he can't do, or so it seems. Carol has become an Oblate of our community. Zac's sister, Carmen Xuereb has been an Oblate of our community for many years, and other members of the family are known to us. Zac is one of 15 children, so there is no shortage of family!

Maryanne Boyd is the face you meet in our candle shop and she is always ready with a bright smile to greet customers. She has been with us for many years having first worked in our cottages. In 2009, she moved across to the Craft and as well as serving in the shop, she is also the Craft secretary answering the phone and email and attending to all the orders. She is often called "Sr Mary-Anne" when people ring her and she feels like that to us as she is very much part of our community. We are most grateful for her presence with us and for all she does for us.

Marion (mentioned earlier in the newsletter) cooks for us four days a week and her praise of God is sometimes heard throughout the cloisters as she sings hymns and cooks our meals.

CELEBRATION OF DECADE BIRTHDAYS

During December 2009 we began our celebrations for sisters who had special decade birthdays. On December 11th, Sr Ancilla (left) turned 60 and on December 31st



Sr Phyllis (right) also turned 60. As mentioned earlier, Sr Hilda also turned 60 on 12th January.



These sisters were prayed for at our daily Eucharist and then the gift of their lives was celebrated well and truly in the Community Room by our traditional "Blessing Song", followed by the giving of presents, the cutting of cakes and many hugs! (Sr Hilda also turned 60 on January 12th as mentioned earlier in our newsletter)



On 28 February, we celebrated with Sr Carmen who has been in Australia for 60 years. During her time here, Carmen has shared love, joy and her deep faithfulness with countless people. We are most grateful for her

presence with us after her many years in Kalumbaru, W.A. and her beautiful smile still lights up our days!



On 27 May, we celebrated Sr Monica's 70th birthday. As you can see, she had a whopper of a cake to mark the joyous occasion! Monica's celebrations were all in pink which is her favourite colour!

Sr Maureen Therese celebrated her 50th birthday on 16 October! As you can see from the photo, this was a joyous occasion marked by a birthday cake, presents and a frangipani lei!



OBLATIONS

Those who have made Oblation since our last Newsletter:

March 21: Carol (Mary of the Cross) Xuereb, of Jamberoo, N.S.W.

May 22: Laynie (Rita) Pullen, of Kurrajong, N.S.W.

June 14: Fr. Brian (Gregory) Mascord, of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese.

July 18: Melanie (Syncretica) Phillips. Melanie is the first Oblate to take the name of a Desert mother (amma).

July 20: Fr. Cameron (Boniface) Freese, of Samford, Queensland.

August 29: Leslie (Aidan) Whittet, of Calwell, ACT.

October 5: Diane (Frances) Greenway of Thirroul, NSW

October 27: Valerie (Margaret) Johnson of Sorrento, VIC.



We have witnessed several people enter into full communion with the Catholic Church since our last newsletter:

November 22nd, 2009: Beryl Heslin

May 26th, 2010: Oblate Margaret (Julian) Crooks

June 20th, 2010: Lyn and Mel Bedford.

These ceremonies are always inspiring and a challenge to renew our own faith.

CARMELITE NEWS

Fr. Paul attended his Provincial Chapter at the end of April, where elections took place. The new provincial of the order is Fr Denis Andrew O Carm. Shortly after his election, he came to visit Fr Paul and joined us for Mass and morning tea. It was a great joy for us to meet him.



On April 15th, the Lay Carmelite Professions took place at the Abbey, within an evening Mass. Those professed were Chris Wade and Marian Tonkes. Our congratulations and prayer go to them.

During October, Fr. Paul went on pilgrimage to Rome for the Canonisation of Mary MacKillop.



Those who have died since our last newsletter:

October 19th, 2009: Maureen Harrison, friend of Sr. Marie Gregory Forster.

December 25th, 2009: Tom Thomson, Sr. Agnes's cousin.

December, 2009: Doris Lee, (close friend of Sr. Clare Gamble).

February 26: Fr. Allan Crawford. (Sr. Therese and Sr. Hildegard represented the community at Fr. Allan's Funeral on March 5th).

February 26: Edwin Bennett, brother-in-law of Oblate Nereda (Gertrud) Blake.

March 4: Patricia Lee Jones, Niece of Oblate Nereda (Gerturd) Blake.

March 4: Sr. Diana van Baer, osc. (Bethlehem Monastery, Campbelltown).

March 21: Allan Parkinson. Allan's death closed a chapter in our history. Allan had been our handyman for over 20 years until his horrific car accident two years ago, which had left he and his wife Millie with terrible injuries. Cancer claimed Allan's life in the end.

April 28: Sr. Kathleen O'Dwyer, friend of Sr. Elizabeth and of other members of our community, over many years.

May 1: Sr. Kath Clancy, rsj, friend of Sr. Agnes.

May 1: Sr. Moira Creede, pbvm, former School Principal of St. Rita's College Clayfield during Sr. Hildegard's Secondary School years, and later a friend and teacher of theology when Sr. Hildegard was a young Presentation Sister. In this case, it is a chapter closed for Sr. Hildegard and her sadness is deeply felt.

May 7: Oblate Norma (Lioba) Long.

June 1: Melissa Hopkins (friend of Sr. Agnes and Sr. Hildegard).

August 14: Jean Fitzpatrick, aged 102 – relative of Sr. Mellitus and Sr. Sheila Mary, sgs.

August 23: Jim Barlow, brother of Von Orchard. The Orchard family have been friends of Sr. Agnes for many decades.

September 15: Joe Guest, Parishioner of Emu Park Parish, and friend of all our sister who have been at Emu Park and Lammermoor.

September 21: Keith Benjamin, brother of Bishop Raymond Benjamin, and friend of Sr. Ancilla.

September 22: Colin Gardiner, resident of Jamberoo, parishioner of Jamberoo, and friend of our community since we moved to Jamberoo in 1988/89.

October 4: Jeannot Chianea, Sr. Joanna's brother-in-law.

October 18th: Gordon Downes, farmer of Jamberoo and often one of our helpers on working bees.

We pray for our sick:

Sr. Immaculata Briglia, our most senior nun.

Mrs. Majorie Barnes, Mother Abbess's mother.

Sr. Hildegard Ryan, still struggling to get on top of the after-effects of a second round of brain-tumor surgery in April of this year.

Oblate Mary Elizabeth Locke.

Judy Williams

Betty Mather

Bill Whetham, husband of Oblate Margaret Whetham.

Judy Stinson.

Oblate Gabriele (Angelica) Harders.

John Harvey

Joe Bowers

Shirley and Alan Leech.

Sr. Rosa MacGinley, friend of Sr. Hildegard Ryan

Peter McGlinchy

Oblate David (Aelred) Russell.

THE DOG SQUAD

We've received a number of complaints that our canine friends have been left out of the newsletter of late. So, an update! Most of them are now Senior Citizens. However, they still perform their very important policing duties around the abbey.



Mimi and Brinkley, our Belgian Shepherds, were 11 on June 23rd. They have a trusted routine and keep to it. They still stay in or around the Library, never far from Sr. Mellitus.

Thea was 11 on May 20th. She is our old "faithful" and attends all our services in the Church.





Fr. Paul's little Ollie met a tragic end on September 10th. He was hit by a car in Gerringong, while Fr. Paul was working down there in the Church. Ollie is buried in our Pet Cemetery, first built by Sr. Mellitus and completed by Sr. Hildegard over the last three years.

For a number of weeks after Ollie's death, Scallywag looked for him every morning. He too was a playmate of Scallywag, and the only other dog Scallywag really liked, probably because Scallywag was two inches taller!

Sr Hildegard's dog, Scallywag was 10 on Anzac Day. He is getting bolder and braver, and of late, has appeared in the Church on several occasions. He often sits up in a vacant stall next to Mother Abbess or curls up underneath a seat. One day he came into the refectory and sat on Sr Hildegard's chair which was free at the time. (see left) And one day he was a GOOD BOY, and waited OUTSIDE the Church!



Rani continues, in all weathers, to guard that vast area extending from the Church to the end of the Infirmary Cells and occasionally she will spot a fox and alert us to the intruder. She is a beautiful dog, much younger than the others, and with much more energy. Rani misses little Ollie, her playmate in the early mornings.



DOWN ON THE FARM

Sr Mechtild is now producing jam to sell in our shop. The fruits are homegrown and the jam delicious!



Life on the Farm is increasing and multiplying: This is Bede the rooster keeping his “girls” on the job.



With a clutch of 18 new born ducklings, Mum Duck has her wings full.



We wish you
all the blessings
of this Christmas Season:
the blessing of humility,
of simplicity,
of gentleness
and fidelity.

We continue to
journey with you all
into another calendar year,
welcoming the
Presence of God
as revealed to us in
our prayer and liturgy
and in all the events
of our daily lives.