

Jamberoo Abbey Newsletter

2015



Artwork: Mary Southard csj

*From the depths of the mystery of God,
a great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly.*

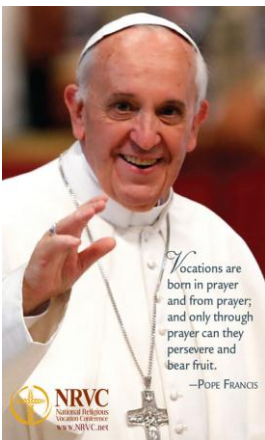
*It is the spring that will never run dry,
no matter how many people draw from it.*

Pope Francis

Year of Mercy

2016

Year of Consecrated Life



The focus for our Community journey this year has been “The Year of Consecrated Life”, declared by His Holiness, Pope Francis. On January 5th, Mother Abbess led us in discussions on just how we could highlight this holy year both individually and as a community.

When Bishop Peter Ingham (our Diocesan Bishop) came for his annual visit on our Foundation Day, February 2nd, he emphasized the primary expression for all those given to God in the Consecrated Life: “Our real and deepest joy is our calling. The Gospel is our absolute Rule. We are called to be a shining and living Gospel.”

This was already our starting point: to be faithful to the vocation we have professed to live, a ministry of prayer and worship at the heart of the Church.

Mother Abbess exhorted us to renew our commitment to the Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina, work, communal activities, and to Benedictine values such as mindfulness, silence, peace in the way we do things, and consideration of others at all times.



In the spirit of this Year of Consecrated Life, one of the major projects undertaken was the building of a new website. We have Mother Mary to thank for initiating this project and our friends at Fraynetwork for creating such a warm and welcoming site. Mother’s determination and creative giftedness brought the project to its fulfilment and we are now rejoicing that so many oblates, family members and friends are logging on to our website and finding there a spiritual space. You can join us by going to www.jamberooabbey.org.au or our Facebook page facebook.com/jamberooabbey

We also worked on the idea of producing our own version of the song dedicated to The Year of Consecrated Life. Srs Magdalen, Mary Bernadette and Hannah and our chaplain Fr Paul Gurr, spent many hours at a recording studio to record this beautiful song.



The lyrics are based on Pope Francis’ exhortation to the consecrated religious of the world to “wake the world with dawning joy”. The music was written by Steven Warner. The instrumental backing has been provided by Fr. Paul, who as many know, is an experienced recording artist. You can enjoy it by going to the Fresh Words section of our website www.jamberooabbey.org.au

You can also find various reflections on our site. Some of them are updated every week. These too can be found in the Fresh Words section and are another response to the Year of Consecrated Life. A number of Sisters provide these sharings: Mother Mary, Srs Hildegard, Antonia, Hilda, Veronica, Magdalen, Mechtild and Caritas.

On a community level, one of the highlights of this Year of Consecrated Life, has been welcoming



two new postulants - Yujin Lee and Christine Dorothy. Yujin is originally from South Korea and Christine is from Indonesia. Yujin entered on the eve of Foundation Day and Christine entered on the eve of Trinity Sunday, the annual anniversary of the opening of our present Abbey. Both postulants have already enriched our community and we thank God for their presence with us. Their sincere seeking of God is evident in the way they respond to the daily

Monastic Horarium. Yujin has also been involved in the farm gardens and has created a herb garden which she has called the “Sophia Garden”. Christine has undertaken a new garden close to the refectory and is making it into a beautiful place – the touch of one who cares.

As an extension of our ministry of prayer and worship in this special year, we had a number of retreats and pilgrimage days. Sisters who contributed were Srs Hildegard, Hilda, Magdalen, and Veronica.



Dr Cynthia Borgeault came to our Cottages just before our annual holiday and gave a week of input on Centering Prayer. Those in attendance met for conferences and centering prayer exercises. This workshop had been organized through the Christian Meditation Network. It was fully booked out as Cynthia’s workshops and retreats usually are. A few of our Sisters were able to attend and said it had been an inspirational experience which had enriched their prayer.

Within community, we welcomed Fr Michael Casey ocso, who came to us in early August and gave conferences on the vow of obedience. His challenging approach rather revolutionized the concept of “the will of God”. Michael spoke about “**being** the will of God”, rather than “**doing** the will of God”. He supported his teaching with the Sacred Scriptures, philosophical, sociological, historical and theological literature. Whatever Fr. Michael does in his classes leads to authentic on-going formation, as we digest his wisdom in the months following.



Our retreat in September was given by Fr Bernardo Bonawitz ocso from Brazil. Fr Bonawitz is Abbot of his community. The mark of his conferences was that they were rooted in the reality of his own lived experience. He spoke as one who had lived, suffered and triumphed – beginning with his conversion from Judaism to Catholicism when he was a young man. Every example he gave was a story from and for “real life”.

Immediately after the retreat, we celebrated with Beate and Derek Stellar on the Silver Anniversary of their Marriage. Family and friends gathered to support Beate and Derek and we all joined with Fr Paul when he prayed a special blessing over them. Beate is an Oblate of our community and Derek comes to our Cottages regularly for days of prayer.





October 3rd brought another ceremony – the baptism of Thomas William Okenall, the grandson of oblate Laynie Pullen. Sasha Dominique and Colin Trevor, came to the altar with their son, along with the godparents, Sarah Donnelly and Michael La Roche. All grandparents were present, and even Thomas's great-grandparents, whose generosity helped with the party afterwards. Fr Paul excelled himself – at least that was the opinion of those of us

who witnessed the occasion! Thomas didn't cry, even when the water made contact with his head! What really brought a few tears was when Fr Paul took Thomas into his arms, let him rest his little head on his shoulder and serenaded him with a beautiful song of blessing. As Sasha later said: "it was sublime!"

October 28: This was the day our Poor Clare Sisters from Bethlehem Monastery came for a visit, bringing Sr Bernadette from Indonesia. We had morning tea together, and then some of the Sisters went to visit our farm. Abbess Catherine Teo blessed the new statue of St. Francis which has been placed in a refurbished garden near the refectory.

The statue came from the home of Eileen Scott, Sr. Hilda's mother, following Eileen's death on August 12th. Eileen has been such a regular visitor not just to Hilda but the whole community over many years and we are very sad that she is no longer with us. The statue in our grounds will remind us of the many happy hours we spent with her and the Scott family. May she rest in peace.



VISITS FROM FRIENDS IN 2015

February 4: Sr Genevieve Harrington, osb from Kylemore Abbey, Ireland stayed with us for a few days.

She was in Australia to visit her family. Those of us who knew her had the chance to catch up with how things are going for her.



In the second week of March: Our dear friend Archbishop Philip Wilson came for his annual retreat. He was happy to be here again with our community. We are another “home” for him and it is always a joy to have him here with us. Our prayers are with him at this present time.

July 6: Our refugee family, Alex, Danielle and little Joey came with Fr Paul Marshall for a visit. Little Joey got down on the floor with a yellow teddy bear and was determined to give the bear to Polly, our smallest dog! Polly wasn't really sure how to handle the situation so she ducked for cover!



Later in the year Archbishop Christopher Prowse from the Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocese came for a week's retreat. At the end, he asked us to pray with him around the altar and then to continue to support him in prayer. We will certainly do that as we pray for all our Australian bishops every day at the end of Midday Prayer. Their task is not easy.



A NEW WORK PROJECT



As many of you have heard, we have begun to keep bees at the Abbey and are hoping to have our first harvest of honey and beeswax soon! With a world-wide shortage of bees and therefore honey, Mother Abbess thought that this would be a good monastic industry to begin. With the help of our oblate, Lee-Ann Wein (who lives here on the property) and Sr Veronica the project has begun. We are grateful for the donations from oblates and friends who have given us enough money to purchase additional hives. We have also had training days given by Adrian Iodice, from "Beekeeping Naturally" who is an expert in the field. The new hives are currently under construction by a volunteer group. Hopefully before the end of 2015, these hives too will be in business...or should we say, "buzziness"!



In the meantime, we are also selling jams and pickles from our farm produce. Oblate Dot Touzell and her husband John are busy making jams and relishes and pickles. Thank you, Dot and John.

OUR OBLATE COMMUNITY

Our Oblate community was enriched this year by the reception of the following persons:

February 21: Alice-Anne Macnaught. Alice Anne took the name Hildegard.

July 1: Sarah Louise Kirsop. Sarah took the name Emmanuelle.

July 1: Rev. Sharon Baird. Sharon took the name, Lioba.

July 19: Elizabeth Mary Anne Arblaster. Elizabeth took the name Benedicta.



There are several oblates who are dedicated helpers here at the Abbey: Lee-Ann works in our craft department, in our kitchen and has started up the bee project. Laynie works in the Abbey Shop some weekends. Marilyn and Ewa are given to housework and we can't thank them enough. And finally, there are the gardeners: two oblates, Cecilia and Dot and her husband John who keep the gardens under control. First of all, they get them under control, then they face the on-going mammoth task of keeping them that way! As we all know, NO garden is maintenance-free. Even native gardens need care. So, gratitude abounds in our hearts.

REST IN PEACE

We light a candle for those who have died since our last Newsletter:

December 7th, 2014: Dianne Mary Bookallil, community friend of many decades.

December 14th, 2014: Oblate Valerie (Mary Cecilia) Proverbs

January 19th, 2015: Fr Paul Hanbridge, community friend

February 2nd, 2015: Oblate Fr Ronald (Bede) Harden

February 19th, 2015: Imarni Rochelle Cavalier, the newly born child of Matt and Rochelle Cavalier. Fr Paul presided at this

funeral, providing a space for the parents, immediate family and many friends to come together and grieve. Matt and Rochelle carried the little coffin from the church to the hearse, while the words of a beautiful poem resounded in our hearts: "And though our hearts are broken and your life was far too short, we thank you, sweetest angel, for all the love you brought."



March 13th, 2015: Oblate Pamela (Dominica) Rice

April 5th, 2015: Sr Rose Murphy cgs, friend of our community.

April 21st, 2015: Jean Jones, cousin of Sr Claire

April 24th, 2015: Iain Gauld, Project Manager during the building of Jamberoo Abbey. Iain was an engineer who brought vast experience to the task of both helping us find the right property on which to build and then supervising the building of the Abbey. Mother Benedicta Philips (Abbess at the time), described Iain as a person of great integrity. Not only did he carry out his work with expertise and experience but he was also there for us through the next thirteen years when problems arose, some more serious than others. He remained a close friend of our community even after his retirement to Brisbane with his wife Sybil and his family. He was a dedicated family man, proud of the achievements of his children and thrilled at the arrival of two grandchildren. He loved his dogs and was a keen cross-country skier, making the journey to the snowfields for decades. We weren't the only Religious Order indebted to Iain Gauld. He was associated with the building of St. Vincent's Medical Centre in Sydney and worked with the St. John of God Sisters in Perth, accompanying them to America to visit the Mayo Clinic. After Mother Benedicta died, he kept in close contact by phone with Mother Mary and Sr Elizabeth. His visits were less frequent as illness took over his life. We will miss him as a friend of almost 30 years and as one whose spirit is etched into the Abbey and its surrounds.

August 9th, 2015: Oblate Peter Guy. Peter took the title "of the Cross" after St. John of the Cross.

August 12th, 2015: Mrs. Eileen Scott, mother of Sr Hilda. A large group of our community were able to attend Eileen's funeral at Meadowbank church in Sydney to support Sr Hilda and her family at such a sad time. Eileen was 91 years old, a devoted mother and grandmother, a faithful Catholic, a true Christian, a generous worker at St. Vincent de Paul, and a passionate gardener.

August 22nd, 2015: James Patrick Troy, brother of Sr Mellitus.

September 3rd, 2015: Carole Soanes, friend of Sr Agnes.

October 4th, 2015: Hanny Adhidarso, uncle of Sr Mary Bernadette.

Paula Kinnane, friend of Sr Ancilla

Ron Boag, and Billy MacMaster, uncles of Sr Mechtild

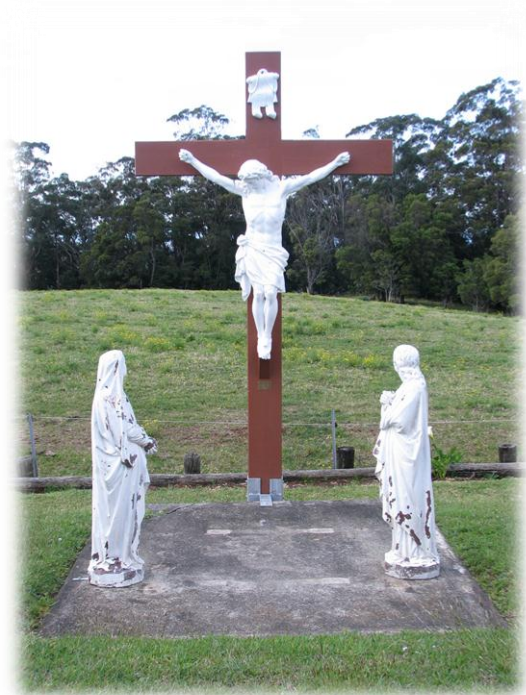
Rowan McIndoe, friend of Sr Joanna, and Rowan's son, Michael.

Frances Gilmour-Larsson, Sr Therese's sister-in-law

Grace Hand, Sr Clare's cousin.

November 6th, 2015: Vince Warby's father.

WE PRAY FOR OUR SICK FRIENDS



Bishop Ray Benjamin, friend of our community.

Christie, friend of Sr Ancilla.

Mary Locke, oblate of our community and friend of Sr Elizabeth.

Peter Moore, Sr Hildegard's cousin.

Sam and Peg Dodd, Sr Ancilla's great uncle and aunt.
Bill Manly, brother of Sr Agnes.

John Murphy, Von Orchard, and Margaret Collard, friends of Sr Agnes. (John Murphy continues to pay for the Catholic Leader to be sent to us weekly. Those of us from Queensland love to read it).

Shane Oscar, friend of Sr Claire.

Annie Howard, oblate novice.

OUR EXTENDED FAMILY

Last, but not least in this edition of our annual newsletter, comes news of our canine family. At one point we had seven dogs but now, sadly, only two remain.

Rani is showing her age, and is battling the pain of arthritis. Our vets Aine Seavers and Mark Weingarth are doing all they can to relieve her pain.



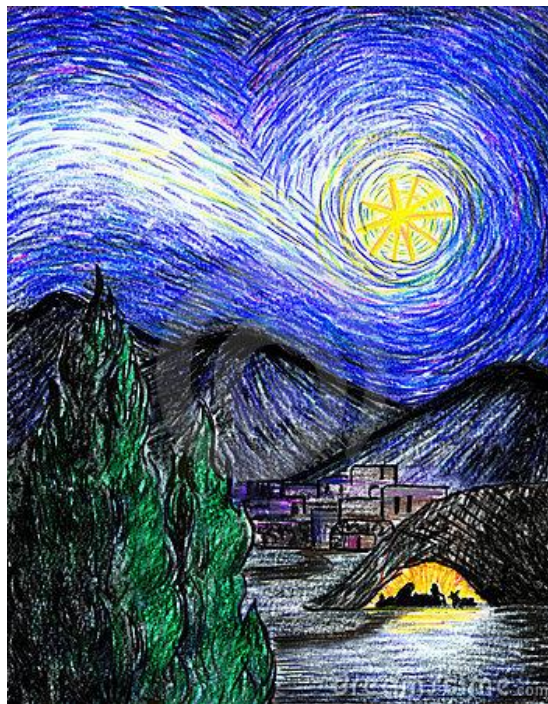
Polly is now five, and just as self-willed as ever. She doesn't often misbehave in church, however which shows she is a monastic dog! She is there at the Office during the day but finds it difficult to get up for Vigils! She's taken to climbing on to the organ seat and often pushing the organist along a bit so that she can be more comfortable! She's only fallen into the pedal board once in

twelve months creating quite a stir as her paws crept over the pedals during the singing of Vespers.

THE FOLLOWING EVENTS MISSED OUR 2014 NEWSLETTER

November 16th, 2014: Erica Downes was received into the Catholic Church at our morning Mass. Erica was accompanied by her husband Stephen and their baby son, Leo . When Fr Paul first began celebrating Mass at St Matthew's in Jamberoo many years ago, Stephen was just a boy. Years later, he was the celebrant at their wedding and on this day, two years later, he was able to receive Erica into the Church. He has certainly shared important moments of their journey with them. Stephen and Erica were surrounded and supported by family and friends – a day of great blessing.

November 19th, 2014: At the end of their retreat with us, the Augustinian students sang Christmas Carols for us after Vespers as well as a beautiful hymn which incorporated the words of St. Augustine, "Late have I love you" and "our hearts are restless until they rest in you." We have a special bond with our Augustinian brothers so it is always a pleasure to welcome them to Jamberoo.



Christmas blessings to you, our friends and families. We assure you of our prayer during this holy season and during the coming Jubilee Year of Mercy. May the mercy of our God enfold our world during the current refugee crisis and bring peace to all areas of violence and unrest.

If you live close to the Abbey, Christmas Midnight Mass is preceded by the traditional Monastic Vigil which begins at 10.45 p.m. The singing of carols takes place in the short space before Midnight Mass. All are most welcome!