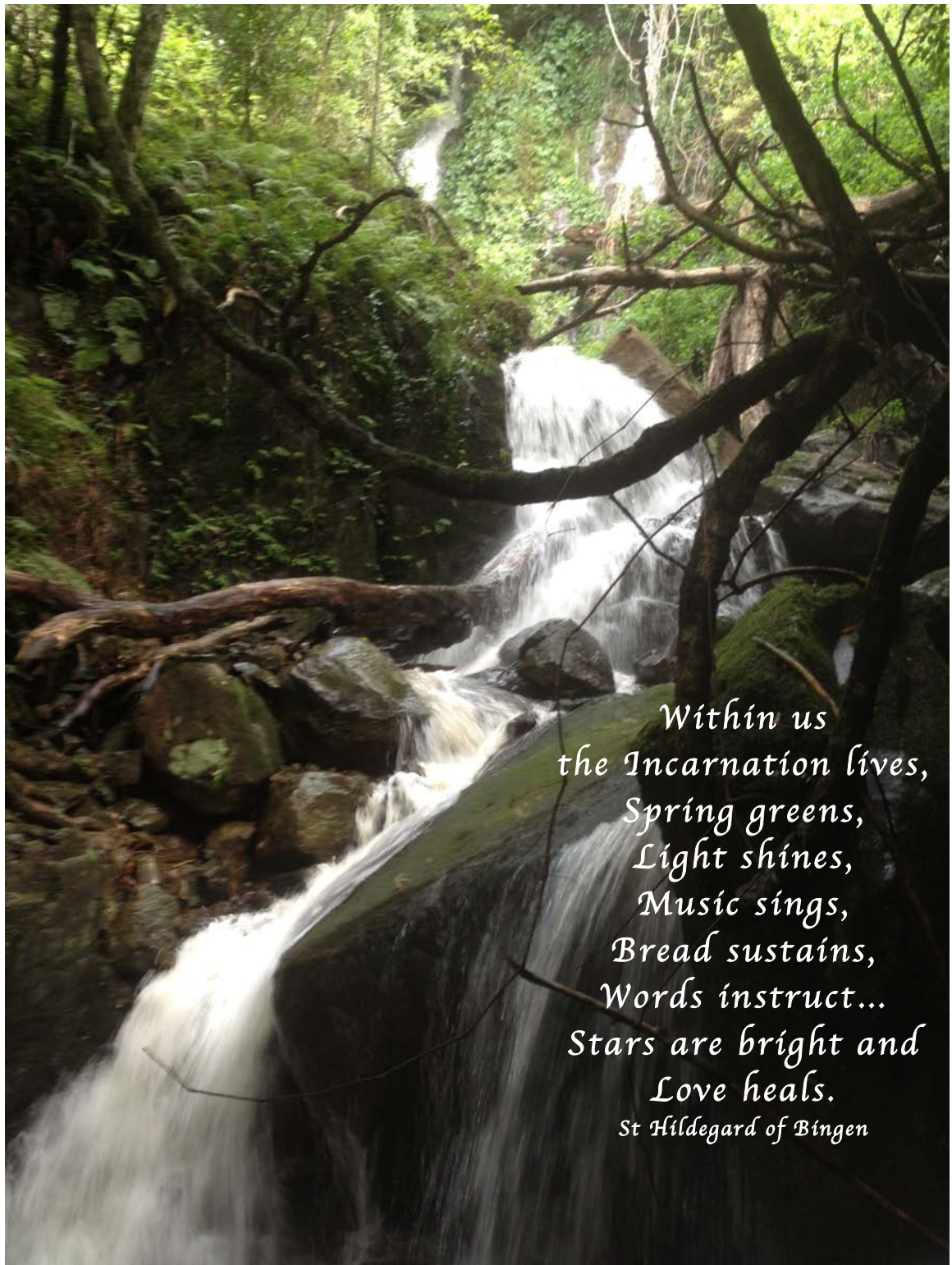


*Jamberoo Abbey Newsletter*  
2014



*Within us  
the Incarnation lives,  
Spring greens,  
Light shines,  
Music sings,  
Bread sustains,  
Words instruct...  
Stars are bright and  
Love heals.*

*St Hildegard of Bingen*

**Jamberoo Abbey Waterfall**

## 2013

Advent and Christmas passed gently. We prayed for safety as the summer heightened and



kept a close watch for bushfire danger – our bags packed, with just the necessities. We had already experienced the fires of the Blue Mountains in early October, and in the Southern Highlands, so it was all too real, as it always is in Australia. We continued in prayer for those who faced Christmas without a home.

**December 21:** Sr Carmen reached 90 years of age on this day. Though she was frail, we celebrated as much as was possible of this precious birthday.

## 2014

**January 13:** We received the gift of a piano on this day, given to our community by Mr and Mrs Barrett of Bowral. It is German made, and dates from 1880. It plays beautifully with such an authentic sound. It now resides in our community room.

**January 18:** The Scott Family gathered at the Abbey so our Sr Hilda could share in some of the celebrations (week-long!) for Mrs. Eileen Scott, leading up to her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on

Australia Day. Eileen's sons and daughters were all there: Michael, Gregory, Anne Marie, Madeleine (Sr Hilda), Therese, Louise and Louise's husband, George Cullen. Eileen Scott is a woman of deep love, prayer and generosity. Even as she approached 90, she was still going to work regularly at the local St. Vincent de Paul Store. She told us that because she hasn't got the strength in her arms to sort through



clothes and other goods anymore, she works on the cash register. We went to the Guestry to see Eileen and to rejoice with her on her birthday and in the blessing of her beautiful family.



**January 21:** Sr Agnes's feast day was the day chosen for the Community Meeting of Appointments. Mother Abbess exhorted us to obedience with a homily based on the teaching of Deuteronomy chapter 30: "Choose Life." She also drew on the writings of Cardinal Francis Xavier Van Thuan, reminding us that "there must be no conditions in the Lord's service and work", no "ifs", "buts", "hows", or "whys" added to our resolution to serve. And so, in that spirit, we received our new appointments for 2014, and said our "yes" to God's call.

**January 25:** Sr Ancilla, her brother Glenn and his family gathered at the Abbey on this day



for a special burial and memorial service for their parents, Shirley and Alan Leech. The booklet for the occasion was beautifully designed by Sr Ancilla and was a worthy tribute to her parents.

Photographs from the 1930s to the 1990s tracked the progression of the years and the symbols before the altar witnessed to the important moments of

Shirley and Alan's relationship.

At the conclusion of the service, the family gathered in the Guestry garden where the ashes were buried. A special plant and a memorial stone were placed above them. One of the most beautiful inclusions in this ceremony was an excerpt from the writings of Kahlil Gibran, ending with the words:

*Only when you drink from the river of silence  
Shall you indeed sing.  
And when you have reached the mountain top,  
Then shall you begin to climb.  
And when the earth shall claim your limbs,  
Then shall you truly dance...*



We are grateful to our Chaplain, Fr Paul Gurr, (centre) for his sensitive direction of all our special ceremonies.



**February 2:** As always, this is the Day of our Titular Solemnity. Bishop Peter Ingham came to celebrate Mass at 10.30 a.m. and stayed on until mid-afternoon.



The Bishop's Homily was centred on the primacy of God in our lives. Taking hold of the fact that this day was also the Day for Consecrated Life within the Church, he emphasized what we already have written on our hearts: "we don't want to be strangers to the enlightenment brought by Christ. A life lived without the light of faith in Christ is a life lived in darkness."

The magnificent flowers for this Solemnity were provided by our faithful Oblate, Cecilia Larkin. We never have to wonder where flowers will come from for these big feastsdays as Cecilia never lets us down!



**Cottage retreats** began in February and continued to function throughout the year, with weekend groups, Parish Day Groups and those who just want solitude for peace and prayer.



**February 23:** We organized a candle-light focus both at Eucharist and Vespers, so that we could be in solidarity with asylum seekers and with those marching in Sydney, against the inhumane treatment they receive both at sea and within the various detention centres. Our prayer was enriched by this powerful reminder around the altar in the sanctuary.



In the week leading up to **March 16<sup>th</sup>**, the Sydney-born Soprano, Melinda Parsons gave us a wonderful concert in our monastic church. Melinda was at that time staying at our retreat cottages prior to a concert scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup> at St. Benedict's Monastery, Arcadia. This year, Melinda made her first solo appearance with the Berlin Philharmonic. She has sung under the direction of many renowned conductors, and had master classes with Barbara Bonney, Elizabeth Schwarzkopf and Jordi Savall.



Melinda is both a voice teacher and a classical singer. We were the recipients of her gifted voice, before she went on a concert tour: Melbourne in April, Budapest in May, London in September. She was accompanied by organist Alan Beavis, from St. Jude's Anglican Church in Bowral. The concert was a great treat for us and we were very grateful to Melinda for sharing her time and talents with us.

**April 26:** We began our annual R & R. This time away (for some of us), and home, (for others), coincided with the renovation of our kitchen. It has been renovated after 25 years, to meet workplace health and safety standards. The work took four to five weeks, and was supervised by our handyman/foreman, Zachary Xuereb. Most of the days were long and one would often find Zac still in the kitchen at 8. o'clock at night, along with the builder. We are grateful for the way he gave himself to this project. Great patience was required while the contents of the old kitchen lined the cloisters and the contents of the old pantry took up the whole of the refectory. Somehow we made it through to the day when we had to put everything back. For some of us, it brought back memories of November/December 1989 when we moved into the Abbey for the first time. By the sixth Sunday of Easter, we were back into the monastic routine.

**May 30:** Sr Ancilla had serious surgery on her back. She can now boast of nuts and bolts and plates holding her back together. It has been a hard road for her with terrible pain.

In early June, we had some conferences, from the *Monastic Institute*, St John's Collegeville. These were organized and accompanied by powerpoints prepared by Mother Abbess.

- ❑ Sr Irene Nowell osb, on "Purity of Heart In the Psalms and the Wisdom Literature".
- ❑ Sr Genevieve Glenn osb, whom some of us know from her visit to Jamberoo many years ago. Her focus was *Lectio Divina*.
- ❑ Abbot Brendan Freeman spoke on "Community and Contemplation". All three speakers gave us nourishment in monastic prayer and theology, and the practical living of our vocation.



**July 13:** When Fr David Catterall was diagnosed with cancer in the first half of 2014, he expressed the wish to bring his parishioners together for a musical afternoon, as a way of being together with them. He asked our chaplain, Fr Paul Gurr, and our own Sr Magdalen to organize this gathering. They were joined on the day by Jen Charadia, an Australian musician and composer.



The Concert was a beautiful opportunity for the Albion Park parishioners, and Fr David's family and friends to gather with him before he faced the worst of surgery and chemo. It is Andre Rieu who says, "Music will see you through", and "If we all made music together more often, the world would be a better place." And so, all present made music together and expressed their solidarity with Fr David in his hour of need.



**June 15:** On this day, Trinity Sunday, we celebrated 25 years since the opening and blessing of our Abbey since moving to Jamberoo (Trinity Sunday, 1989). Mother Abbess shared a reflection on Blessing:



*Twenty-five years ago, we called down the blessing of God on this place, which we call our home. It is a holy place, a place where God dwells, a place where we seek God's face and touch God in the person of one another. Twenty five years ago, Bishop William Murray blessed this Abbey so it is right and fitting that today we celebrate "blessing" – the blessings of the past and the blessings of the present. Not many of us were here on that day twenty-five years ago, but that doesn't matter. What matters is that we remember, and that we bring the blessing of ourselves into these buildings and into the life that is lived within these buildings. The Abbey is a living house...it carries the names and the faces of those who have lived here but are no longer with us...it would be good to remember these sisters today too, and give thanks for all who have shared some time within these walls.*

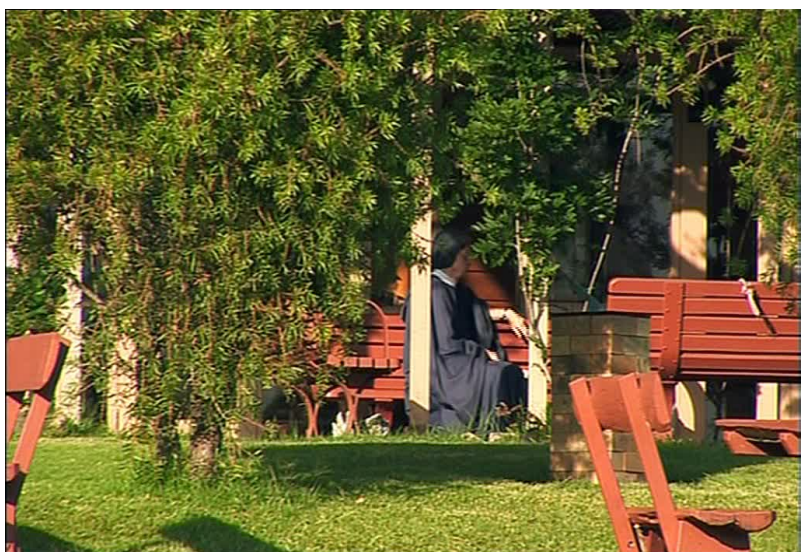
Some of the questions we were asked to reflect on were:

*How has this place blessed me?*

*Can I think of specific times or moments when I have felt its blessing touching me or enlightening me or healing me?*

*Have I been a blessing within the walls of this Abbey?*

As a community we gathered in the evening to share our answers, memories and reflections.





**June 18:** This was a day of “get-together” in friendship and solidarity with the other Cloistered communities of our Diocese: the



Bethlehem Monastery (Campbelltown).



Carmelites at the Carmel of Mary and Joseph (Varroville), and the Poor Clare Nuns at

Fourteen of us were able to make the journey to Bethlehem Monastery (this year’s venue) to share prayer and lunch and just catch up with one another. Abbess Catherine Teo was most welcoming and full of surprises. The Midday Prayer leaflet incorporated antiphons with quotations from the Benedictine, Carmelite



and Poor Clare traditions. We came away uplifted and looking forward to the next gathering in 2015.



**June 30:** This picture shows our adopted family – Alex, Danielle and Joey. Through our friend Fr Paul Marshall, of the Diocese of Parramatta, we have been able to adopt and help a refugee family. Having supported them for many months while Alex waits for the government’s permission for him to work, we then had the privilege of meeting them and putting names to faces. It was, to say the least, a joyful occasion. They had personal reasons for leaving Albania with just the clothes on their back and coming to Australia to seek their freedom. When released from detention, they ventured south and ended up in the Toongabbie Parish where they met Fr Paul. It was he who organized the wedding they wanted so badly, but couldn’t afford. The parish provided a wedding dress, the youth group organised the music and a wedding banquet was catered for by dedicated parishioners. Fr Paul did the rest for no cost. When he told us this beautiful story at Mass one morning, we then offered to do our part with some financial support which was gratefully accepted.



**July 14:** On this day, Sr Gertrud celebrated her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. We celebrated in style with her. She is our youngest Sister in community but only until next year when we will have three postulants joining us!

It was a day of deep joy for Sr Gertrud! She enjoyed every minute of it and we finished off the celebrations by watching a DVD together in the evening.

Her parents arrived a few days later to celebrate the decade occasion with her.

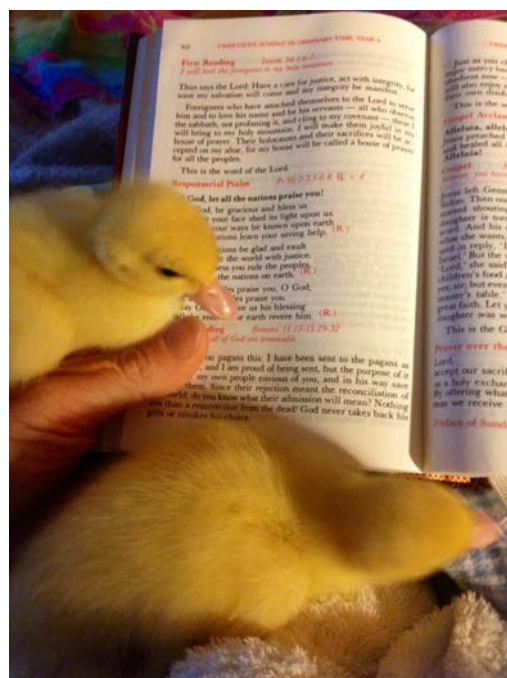
**July 17:** This was the day Flight MH17 was shot down over Eastern Ukraine. We prayed for all passengers on that flight, and especially the men, women and children of Australia. We began a week of prayer for these victims and their families left to mourn. Our prayer centred around the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and in the psalms of the Hours, where the voice of Christ is heard in his people. Every time we entered our church and passed the memorial shrine, we were confronted with the names and faces of the dead. It was a sober reminder of how the violence of war can destroy innocent lives.



**August 9:** Sr Mechtild organised an Open Day at the Abbey Farm.



A group of our Oblates, here for a meeting, were able to take part in the Open Day, and see the wonderful gardens and the produce which just keeps on coming. We're not complaining – such delicious fresh vegetables and eggs from the “girls”! The baby ducklings were a hit with the children who visited. Something new.....Lectio Divina with the ducks!









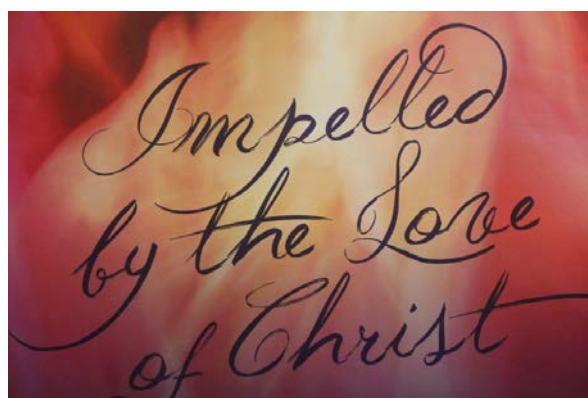
**August 9:** On this day, after Mass, Sr Carmen received the Last Rites of the Church, surrounded by all of us, and of course our chaplain, Fr Paul. We sang the “*Suscipe*” (the Solemn Profession prayer each of us sings after making vows). We also sang the beautiful old and much-loved hymn to Our Lady of Mount Carmel at Carmen’s request: “Pure as Carmel’s snows and lovely...”

**August 14:** A group of us attended the Mass at St Mary’s Cathedral in honour of the Sisters of Charity celebrating 175 years in Australia. It was a memorable occasion for the Church of Australia. The Sisters of Charity arrived in Australia ten years before we came.



It was Sr M. Baptist De Lacy rsc, who nursed one of our founding Mothers, Sr Scholastica Gregory during 1848, her first year in the Colony of New South Wales. Two Sisters of Charity and Sr Scholastica Gregory were part of a larger group (including Archbishop Polding), who visited the “Vineyard Estate” on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1848. This estate was our first monastery in the colony. It is probable that Sr M. Baptist De Lacy and Mother M. Ignatius Gibbons were these two Sisters. Another connection with the Sisters of Charity was made when Sr M. Aloysius Raymond stayed with our community. In a letter she wrote to the Sisters of Charity in Ireland, dated May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1859, she refers to her stay at our Monastery “for change of air in consequence of ill health.” While there she “had the pleasure of frequently seeing your dear sister, the Mother Subprioress.” This was Mother Scholastica MacCarthy (of Princethorpe Priory, Warwickshire), who had volunteered along with two other nuns to come to our community in 1856 to help us in our need. She was the sister of the Irish Superior General of the Sisters of Charity at that time.

Sr. Aloysius later states that she recovered through “the kindness of the good Sisters.” (Sisters of Charity Archives, A200/185-9). Another connection between our orders is that several girls, who later became Sisters of Charity, were educated in our Cloister School at Subiaco, Rydalmere.



Thus, our coming together on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at St Mary’s Cathedral, brought into greater light two early stories of women who had the courage to begin religious life under the guidance of the divine light in colonial Australia.

**August 15:** This was the day God called our Sister Carmen home. Carmen had been diagnosed with advanced bowel cancer, ten days before her death but rather than remain in



hospital for her last days, she chose to come home to be in her beloved abbey with her sisters . During this time she was cared for by Sr Joanna with the help of the palliative care nurses. Being 90 years of age, she was somewhat anxious to get to meet God and be “in Heaven” as she expressed it. It was fitting that she made this final journey on the Feast of the Assumption.

A summary of her life: Sr Carmen (Maria) Ruiz Beisti, was born on December 21st, 1923, in Calahorra, Logrouo, Spain. Her parents, Mauricio Ruiz and Maria Beisti had thirteen children, of whom only three survived – Maria, Juliano and Rosa.

Her family was a faith-filled Catholic family, a seedbed of prayer and fidelity to the Church. In this garden of faith , God planted the seed of her vocation to the religious life, and the seed grew into a beautiful flower, which opened out, when Abbot Catalan of New Norcia, Western Australia, was visiting Spain to recruit postulants for both the monks and the sisters at New Norcia. Maria Ruiz Beisti left Spain in 1949, aged 26, knowing that she would probably never see her parents again. She arrived, with Abbot Catalan, in Fremantle in February 1950. Sr Carmen was never given formal English Lessons. She picked up English as best she could over the years. When she transferred to our community in 1979, Mother Benedicta Philips sent her to English Classes. This was her first chance to learn the language properly.

Sr Carmen made her First Profession at New Norcia, on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1952, and her Final Profession on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1955. After her First Profession Sr Carmen was sent to an Institution for orphan and abandoned boys, run by the Christian Brothers at Bindoon, about a twenty minute drive south of New Norcia. Her lack of English was a difficulty for her. During this time, she worked in the sacristy, she cooked, sewed and cleaned but essentially her work was manifold and lonely. Some Aboriginal girls were given to her to help her and she remained lifelong friends with some of these.

After her Final Profession back at New Norcia, the Christian Brothers came and asked for her return, and this request was granted. All up, she spent five years in Bindoon and they were happy years for her.



When she came back to New Norcia, she was responsible, with a second Sister of her community, for cooking for all the monks, sisters and children at St Joseph's School. She also had her commitments in community, and over many years these involved laundry work, sewing and cleaning. After a number of years at New Norcia, Sr Carmen was sent to Kalumburu where the Benedictine Monks had already had a mission for years among our Indigenous people.



In the late 1970s, with the change in Government policies regarding the care of Indigenous children, the Sisters decided it was time to return to Spain. Sr Carmen had already returned in 1977, for her Silver Jubilee (celebrated in Barcelona) but when she arrived back in



Australia, her Congregation was in a state of upheaval. She was offered a place in three Congregations: the Sisters of Mercy, the St John of God Sisters, and a Group of Religious in Darwin. Sr Carmen however, was resolute: she was "Benedictine", and if she went anywhere, it would be to our community, then resident at Pennant Hills, West of Sydney.

And so, she came to our community on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1979. She made her Solemn Monastic Profession in our community on 5<sup>th</sup> June (Solemnity of Corpus Christi) in 1982.

As a member of our community, hard work was no stranger to Sr Carmen and over the years, she was involved in cooking, gardening, sewing, cleaning and caring for the sacristy. As had been the pattern all her life, she was devoted to all the more ordinary tasks that keep the wheels of the abbey turning. It was significant that all except two of us present at her funeral on August 20<sup>th</sup>, were wearing the cowls she had made. Some of us still wear her aprons!

After we had been at Jamberoo for ten years, Mother Benedicta Philips saw that it would be beneficial for Sr Carmen to return to New Norcia “in an attempt to piece the past together in a helpful and life-giving way.” Sr Hilda accompanied her. A second trip was made later when May Taylor sponsored Sr Carmen and several Spanish Nuns out to New Norcia to celebrate the “many services given to them by these sisters”. It was the first time Carmen had met with these sisters since she left them in the late 1970s.



Some of Sr Carmen’s Indigenous girls, now women in their sixties, have come to Jamberoo Abbey twice to spend time with this beautiful Sister who they describe as loving, joy-filled, kind, motherly, tender – there for them in those “growing” years.

The following Eulogy was given by Mother Abbess at Sr. Carmen’s Funeral on August.

*Last Friday, in the still dark of the early morning, as the sisters were about to arise to pray Vigils on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven, another event was occurring quietly and beautifully in Carmen’s Cell. It happened not long before the Vigils bell tolled, that Our Lady visited this little house of ours and invited our dear Sr. Carmen to her own assumption into heaven; to join her in praying Vigils with all the Saints. What a glorious way to pass over from death to life and how Carmen would have loved setting out on her final journey into the fullness of God, on Mary’s special feast day. So, it is with this same joy, love and gratitude that we gather today to farewell Carmen, to celebrate the beautiful person she was and the gifts she shared so abundantly with us. On her behalf and on behalf of my community here, I welcome you all and thank you for coming to remember Carmen and to pray for her today.*

*Just briefly I would like to tell you about a moment that I shared with Carmen just a few days before her death. It spoke to me of her simple, humble and faithful spirit, a spirit which she lived and breathed her whole life. When I went in to see her this day, she looked into my eyes and began praying a type of mantra and it went like this:*



*'I love you Mother Abbess and I love the Community and I love Jesus.  
I love my Aboriginal Children of Western Australia and I love Jesus.  
I love the people of Australia and I love Jesus.  
I love the people of the whole world and I love Jesus.  
I give my life for them all.  
All for God!'  
She recited this mantra with great joy and gladness on her face.*

*Carmen had always struck me as a very happy person. If you approached her she would always greet you with a big smile and her eyes would light up. She was happy that God had gifted her with a religious vocation. She loved her vocation and was happy about God's choice of her until the very end. Yesterday, I came across a card in one of Carmen's books and on the back she had written: 'I like our way or prayer in the community. I am well satisfied.' This happiness and satisfaction sprang from a life of very, very deep prayer and love. Carmen knew that her life of prayer and her deep spirit of joy and happiness did reach beyond the confines of the cloister and touched the people of Australia, especially the Indigenous people whom she loved and the people of the whole world. Let us hope that she will now intercede for the troubled and suffering peoples of Iraq, Syria, Gaza, and the Ukraine. Our world needs prayer. Our world needs love. Our world needs the love and prayer that were so deeply embedded in our Sister Carmen.*

*In every situation during her life it was: "All for God."*

*As she was dying, it was:*

*"All for God."*

*Now she enjoys the fulfilment of that desire to give all to God and I am sure that God is now responding:*

*"All for you, Carmen."*

*As we begin our Eucharist today, we too say:*

*"All for you Carmen...all our love, our thanks and our prayers."*

The second Eulogy was given by John Herbert, Abbot of New Norcia, who relayed messages from the older monks of his community, from the Indigenous people who loved Carmen, and who spoke both in the Indigenous dialect and in Spanish. We know that Carmen would have been rejoicing. The third Eulogy was delivered by Sr. Hilda, who summed up the events of Sr. Carmen's life. Some of this has been incorporated into the Obituary which precedes Mother Abbess's Eulogy.



**An August Pilgrimage:** Marian Haigh, who is employed to cook for us four days a week, and her husband Bob, left Australia on August 23<sup>rd</sup> for a pilgrimage to Ireland. Marian's great-grandparents came from Ireland. In 2005, she and Bob went to Ireland and found that the Celtic spirituality connected with them in the depths of their hearts. As part of their pilgrimage this year, they walked St. Declan's Way, and visited Glendalough, both places of connection and deep significance for Marian and her family. Glendalough and St. Kevin's Cross is part of Marian's family story. For, beside St. Kevin's Cross is that giant fuchsia, which the Irish call "God's Tears". At the Wildes Meadow Cemetery, where Marian's grandfather is buried, her grandmother planted a fuchsia. That fuchsia has travelled with Marian wherever she has lived, as cutting after cutting has been taken from it. As we are well aware, for the Irish, a Cemetery is a place of resurrection, and the beauty of that fuchsia at Wildes Meadow connects a family to its ancestry, and takes the same family forward to the time when all will tears will be wiped away, and there will be no more death and no more mourning, only the eternal banquet for which we all await.



**August 24:** On this day, our former Property Manager, John Deen, died in the David Berry Palliative Care Hospital. John worked on our property from 1989 until about 2006. He was recommended to us by his brother Fred, and once on board, we never looked back. Sr Elizabeth, who was the Cellarer all those years and who dealt with John's work and wages, has provided the following summary of John's work here at the Abbey:

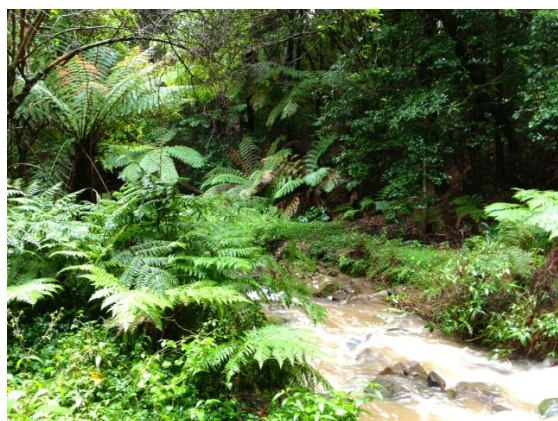


John fenced off the **Abbey Paddocks**, and put his cattle on the property. This meant that grass was kept under control and the cattle kept out of rainforest and creeks. **Bushfire precautions:** John had seen the bushfire of summer 1967-1968

go through this mountain. He replaced low-maintenance ground covers in vast areas around our buildings, with grass. Then he installed overhead sprinklers at strategic points on buildings to deal with bushfire sparks and ash. Since the "Black Saturday" bushfires in Victoria, our fire precautions have been increased. John's brother, Klass Deen, has done most of this work. **Water supply:** John got the help of Peter Raison in water divining, and he organized for a holding dam as a bushfire resource to feed the sprinklers. And now again, it is Klass Deen who maintains the pumps for the fire water and tests the sprinklers at the beginning of each summer.



**Our walking track:** John stabilized the whole walking track and made it manageable. He also upgraded the section that is open to cottage guests and made it safe for bushwalking. It was Fred Deen and his son Jason, who did much of the initial work on the rainforest walking track, building wooden bridges over deep culverts, and cementing the area from our church to

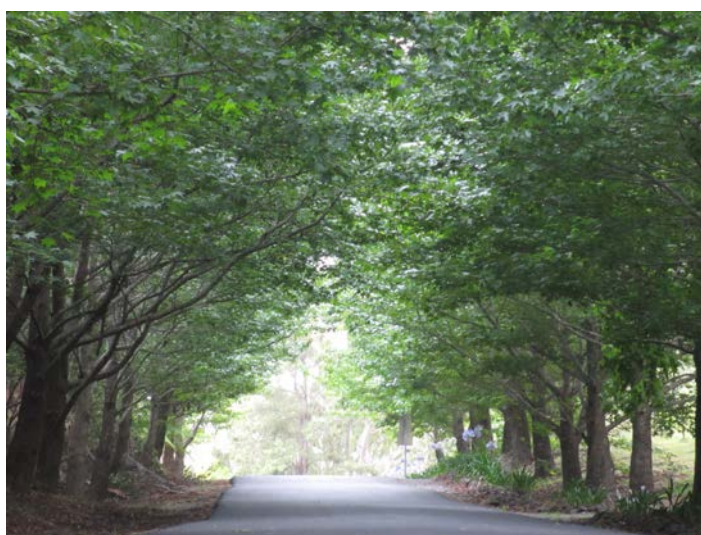


the cemetery. **Our Abbey Cemetery:** This was completely redesigned by John, and became a beautiful place with its aura of majesty...the escarpment behind and the ocean stretching out in the distance beyond the hills of Jamberoo.

**Two extra water tanks:** After the drought of the mid-1990s, we bought two extra water tanks. John managed the water supply for us and even at one point emptied the contents of the old tanks into the new tanks and re-lined the whole insides of the old!

**The front drive:** John maintained this by sealing and re-sealing the bitumen, so that the road would remain serviceable. **The holding dam, our chief source of water:** This dam, after every storm or heavy downpour would fill with debris, and need cleaning out. John relined this dam with cement, and it has never been a major problem since then.

**Personal Gardens:** Those of us who are passionate gardeners would say that the greatest gift John gave us was bringing water to our cell gardens – complete with a tap and a hose and all the connections. **Extensions:** John built the garages for our cars, and a small garage which housed Mother Benedicta's trailer for her mobility scooter. This was also an example of John's sense of humour. Mother Benedicta always joked about wanting a "Jag". John had the word "Jag" painted on the side of the trailer. Why not? A mobility scooter can be a small "Jag" if you want it to!



Sr Elizabeth kept in contact with John whenever she could after he resigned from working at the Abbey. In the end, his ill-health weighed heavily upon him as he had always been such a strong man, and it was very difficult to be brought so low physically.

John's Funeral was held on Thursday August 28<sup>th</sup> and then, some weeks later on Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> his ashes were scattered in the rainforest on our property. This was preceded by a Memorial Service organized by Fr Paul and one which brought together family members and friends of John over many years. By far the most popular reading was from the poem, "Your Church – His Bush" by Alan G. Simmons. The following is only one verse of an eight verse poem:



*His body is a river gum. Its branches are His limbs.  
His face is in the rising sun and sunset as day dims.  
His fingers are the blades of grass, His locks the cloud strewn skies  
And pools and lakes and billabongs must surely be His eyes.*

The poem was a most fitting tribute to this wonderful bushman whose world was outdoors.



On **September 7<sup>th</sup>**, Sr Maureen Therese and Sr Gertrud left for Rome, to attend the *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* (CIB) Meeting at Sant'Ansemo.



L-R: Sr Clare Condon sgs. Mary Robinson (Sr. Clare's Secretary), Sr Maureen-Therese Abbot Primate Nokter Wolf osb and Sr Gertrud.

The CIB aims at providing support for Benedictine Women's Communities throughout the world. The symposium, which is held every four years, took as the theme for 2014, "Listen With The Ear of Your Heart". During the 10 days of the meeting, over 100 participants were involved in conferences and discussions on this theme and had many opportunities to share their concerns and experiences. Our two Sisters returned tired and jet-lagged, but were full of the richness of the experience, especially their visits to the two famous Benedictine historical landmarks: Monte Cassino and Subiaco.



A full account of the CIB Meeting with Conferences and Speakers, can be found on the CIB Website: [www.benedictines-cib.org](http://www.benedictines-cib.org)

On **September 8<sup>th</sup>**, another precious person departed this earthly journey – Eric Hilton Fredericks of Jamberoo.

Why was Eric Fredericks so important in our lives? When we moved to Jamberoo in 1988 and while we were preparing to move, we were introduced to Eric and Alwyn Fredericks, two brothers of an iconic family of Fredericks, who had been in retail business in Jamberoo since the 1920s, and in the present store since 1961. Both men were, at that time, church wardens, shop-keepers in the “old-style”, and dedicated citizens of the local community.

One evening in 1988, a meeting was held in the back of the store between the two brothers and Sr Elizabeth and Sr Hildegard. It was presented to them that we wanted to shop locally, supporting the Jamberoo businesses. Costs were compared with what we had been paying in Sydney, and the Fredericks were sure they could do better than that, and they have. When we moved to Jamberoo, you could buy anything from a pair of gum boots to a pound of butter at Fredericks General Store. These brothers were part of a “great tradition” of service which continued through the 1990s and into the new millennium. Both men delivered our groceries three times a week, as well as our mail from the Jamberoo Post Office, and parcels from the Chemist. Both brothers extended the welcome mat and the hand of friendship to our community.

As Sr Elizabeth wrote in her sharing for the newer members of the community, “without these two men, our coming to Jamberoo could have been very different.” Today, Trevor and Carmel Fredericks (the next generation) and all who work at the Store which has become an IGA, still retain the historical atmosphere of a General Store in a country town, which can boast of being the home of the original Allowrie Butter Factory. In December 2012, Fredericks General Store (a Heritage listed building) was gutted out by fire. Somehow the original sign on the front of the store was spared along with the wrought iron and the posts where long ago, people would tie a horse before going inside to shop. Through the period of rebuilding,





the local community continued to support the Fredericks Family by shopping in the temporary store across the road. This is the spirit of the local community. Now, in 2014, we have a new IGA, with the precious front panel proclaiming: “Frederick’s General Store”. If you shop at Fredericks today, your purchases will probably still be packed into a carton, and carried for you to your car. This is service in the old style, one which began in 1924 with Ernest Fredericks, Trevor’s grandfather and Eric and Alwyn’s father.

Eric was born on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1921. He served our country in the Australian Army during the Second World War, being one of those posted to New Guinea. At his funeral on Monday September 15<sup>th</sup>, Colonel Ian Pullar, of the RSL, read out Eric’s Military record and brought the history of the Second World War very close. The last Post was played by Warwick Sporne (of Jamberoo), to honour this brave soul who will never be forgotten. The Australian flag was presented to Eric’s only brother Alwyn. Although frail Eric’s widow Jean was present at the Service.

Four of us joined the Fredericks Family, and over 600 people of the Jamberoo Community for this Funeral Service from the Church of the Resurrection. Srs Clare, Frances, Hildegard and Hilda were present. Srs Clare and Frances were the ones who had the closest contact with Eric and Alwyn through all those years when they managed our kitchen and cooked seven days a week. Our hearts go out to Alwyn and Merle Fredericks, Jean and family, Carmel and Trevor Fredericks, and all the Fredericks family as they move on without husband, brother, brother-in-law and uncle who was such a vital part of their lives.



On November 5<sup>th</sup> we received word to say that Jean had also passed away. Carmel Fredericks shared the following thought: “Eric will be so happy to see her. They’ll be pouring a Riesling as we speak, sitting on *Cloud 9*, waiting for their meal before they head off into eternity together. Unfortunately, we don’t have a photo of Eric and Jean on *Cloud 9*!!”

**September 8:** We had morning tea in our Guestry and said goodbye to Phyllis Nicol, who had been here since July, making work shirts for our community. Phyllis was a member of our community many years ago, and was skilled with ecclesiastical embroidery and vestment-making, working with nuns such as Sr Marie Vianney Loughnan, and Sr Maria McKenzie, in the days when our vestments were all hand-embroidered. So, fifty work shirts were no trouble to Phyllis. We are grateful for her service to us at this time, when we don't have anyone appointed to the sewing department.

**From September 22<sup>nd</sup> until September 26<sup>th</sup>,** Fr Michael Casey stayed with us and gave us a series of lectures on the topic "Monasticism: Past, Present and Future."



During these talks, he addressed the history of monasticism within the reality of world history and the issues confronting monastic communities in the present with the usual problems of fewer vocations and ageing members. He also addressed the adverse influences within present society and their impact on monastic life. Finally he presented tools for moving into the future.

As well as the wealth of scholarly information Fr Michael shared with us, he also gave us many opportunities for questions and discussion. As always, the week with Fr Michael was stimulating, challenging, informative and most

enjoyable.

**September 26:** A group of Sisters went to the Cathedral of St. Francis Xavier, Wollongong, for the Eucharistic celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Most Reverend Peter Ingham, D.D., Bishop of our Diocese. Bishop Peter was ordained a Priest on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1964. His Golden Jubilee celebrations took place at intervals throughout 2014, as different parts of the Diocese acknowledged the milestone. Our attendance at the Mass of celebration enabled us to join with the people of the diocese in praying for Bishop Peter. It also provided the opportunity to say thanks to him for the many years of love, support and guidance he has shown to our community. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful shepherd after the heart of Christ.





**September 27:** On this day, we had a visit from the Apostolic Nuncio for Australia, His Excellency, the Most Rev. Paul Richard Gallagher.

Archbishop Gallagher spent the morning with us, sharing his own life's journey and some of his impressions of Australia and our troubled world of the present time. It was a great joy for us to have Archbishop Gallagher with us and we had hoped that he would be able to visit again some time in the future. However, as we are going to press, we have just heard that he has been called back to Rome. Pope Francis has appointed Archbishop Gallagher as his foreign minister, the third highest position in the Vatican. Pope Francis' gain is Australia's loss but we are grateful that we had this special time with him and assure him of our prayers as he takes up his new position.



From Monday, **September 29<sup>th</sup>**, the then Archbishop-elect of Sydney, Anthony Fisher stayed in our retreat Centre for a week and celebrated Mass each day with us. He had just received word of his new appointment and came for a week of prayer and silence.

He took up his place as the new Archbishop of Sydney on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Prior to his Episcopal Ordination as Bishop ten or more years ago, he also made his retreat with us at the Abbey.

We assure him of our prayer as he raises his staff over the people of the Archdiocese of Sydney. May he be a true shepherd “with the smell of the sheep upon him” and always a priest of “the bowl and the towel”. (Quotes from Pope Francis)

**September 29:** After spending her Canonical year with us, Sr Agnes Le, a Novice from our community in New Mexico, left us on this day to return to her Sisters of Our Lady of the Desert. We were delighted to have her with us for the year and were very sad to see her go as she fitted in so graciously. Sr Agnes was a generous giver and one of the hardest workers we have ever known. She was a gifted painter and spent hours working in our Craft Department decorating candles for our many orders. She also loved gardening and transformed many of our gardens with her patient care and green thumb! We also delighted in her culinary skills, and were the recipients of generous amounts of seafood from her Sydney relatives. Sr Agnes Le, being Vietnamese, has chosen her name after St Agnes Le Thi Thanh, one of the 117 Vietnamese Martyrs (and mother of six children), canonized by Pope John Paul II on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1988.



Mother Benedicta to left of photograph

In November, we will also welcome Mother Benedicta Serna, the Prioress of the community of Our Lady of the Desert in New Mexico. She will be coming to our Abbey for a time of rest and renewal after many years of service to the community of Our Lady of the Desert. It will be a great joy to have her with us for six weeks.

**September 30:** Five of our Sisters left for Mount. St Benedict's Centre, Pennant Hills, to attend a three week course given by Sr Manuela Scheiba osb, from the Abbey of St. Gertrud, in Alexanderdorf, Germany. The topic was, "A Spiritual Journey Through the Rule of Benedict – Community Life and Aids For Building Community." As well as our sisters, the course was attended by over 30 people all associated with Benedictine life in one way or another. Many of the attendees were Good Samaritan Sisters but there were also oblates and members from the Cistercian communities at Tarrawarra and Kopua, New Zealand as well as people





involved in education in Benedictine schools.

The course was intensive in every way but our sisters came home raving about all they had experienced. Sr Manuela is a wonderful teacher who imparted both old and new insights on the Rule and its implications for monastic living in the twenty first century. The opportunities to meet new people, share experiences and listen to the insight of others on the Rule also provided rich nourishment and enjoyment. All present spoke of the experience as providing “a rich feast” of insight, challenge, renewal and great hope. Our sisters felt very privileged to have had this opportunity and were also most appreciative of the hospitality of the Good Samaritan Sisters and the staff at Mt St Benedict’s Centre.



L-R: Sr Hannah, Sr Maureen Therese, Sr Manuela, Sr Mechtild, Sr Naomie-Ruth, Sr Mary Bernadette

Srs Maureen Therese, Mechtild, Naomie Ruth, Mary Bernadette and Hannah attended the course. On Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup>, three of these sisters brought Sr Manuela to Jamberoo to visit the community and see our Australian abbey in its beautiful setting. After Midday Prayer, the Sisters took Sr Manuela for lunch by the sea in beautiful Kiama and for a short tour of the local area.



Sr Manuela visits our Farm

## OBLATION CEREMONIES FOR 2014:

Nazin Atalay, from New Farm in Brisbane made her Oblation on March 7<sup>th</sup> at 3.00 p.m. Nazin took the name “Hildegard”.

March 29: On this, the first day of the first Oblate Retreat for 2014, Wendy Young made her commitment as an Oblate of our community. Wendy took the name “Mary” after Mary of Bethany. A surprise visit from Wendy’s friend, Oblate Pam Hassell, made the day complete.



Some transfers also occurred this year: Rosalie Jacques, a resident of South Australia, transferred her Oblation from St. Meinrad’s Archabbey, Pennsylvania to our Jamberoo community, and Oblates Tim and Elke O’Donnell transferred from our community back to a Benedictine community close to them in the U.S.A.

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, Paul Griffiths renewed his Oblation on his 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.



In early March we asked our Oblates (who live in reasonable proximity to the Abbey), to volunteer to help with gardening, cleaning and managing the shop on weekends.

We are grateful for all those who volunteered and who are still helping out as we approach the end of the year:

Merilyn Caruana,  
Cecilia Larkin,  
Clare Sydenham,  
Ewa Komorowska,  
Dot and John Touzell.  
Laynie Pullen,  
Claire Lanigan,  
Judith Pickering,  
Annie Howard.

We are grateful for all their help given so lovingly.



**Jamberoo Abbey Staff:** We would also like to thank the wonderful members of our staff here at Jamberoo who are such a support to us and give well over and above all that is required of them.



L-R: Vince Warby, Zac Xureb, Maryanne Boyd, Petrina Warlow-East, Maria DeSousa, Sandra Sewers, Marion Haigh, Ben Dean.

During March this year, Vince Warby, a third generation Jamberoo dairy farmer, and also a part-time worker at the Abbey, called in to say “hello” after a number of weeks. Vince was recovering from serious surgery on his back. He was sensible and did all the right things advised by his doctor, so now he is back helping us to keep the gardens and grounds in order. Prior to his back surgery, Vince had maintained our walking track and been responsible for heavy external works. He has been especially alert to overgrowth close to buildings and long grass which are a fire hazard and can also bring the snakes in summer.

**Our Canine Family** now numbers only two, Rani and Polly. Chalk and Cheese, yes, but left to themselves they really do get along quite well! Rani is a beautiful older girl now. She is so well cared for by Sr Magdalen who is faithful to that daily walk, and the loving attention Rani appreciates.



Polly’s problem is “little dog syndrome”! Her most recent venture was to try and take on a very long adult python which was sunning itself by the fence. Thankfully, from the lump seen inside it, the python had recently eaten and was satisfied so dear little Polly might just have been spared to live another day! The python was helped to relocate with a good dousing of water leaving Polly to be at peace in her garden again.



**R.I.P. Let us Pray for those who have died since our last Newsletter:**



December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013: Oblate David Aelred Russell

January 3 **2014**: Anthony Dalseno, husband of Sr Agnes's Niece.

March 21: Sr Kath Nolan, rsj, friend of Sr Agnes

June 8: Fr Philip Jebb, Monk of Downside Abbey and friend of our community over many decades.

July 9: Ann Pendagast, historian and writer, former friend of Sr Marie Gregory (d. 2003). Some of Ann's research is still used by Sr Hildegard in Community History Classes.

July 14: Kathy Forde, dear friend of Sr Antonia

July 17: The thirty-eight Australians who lost their lives on Flight MH17, shot down over Eastern Ukraine.

August 15: Our beloved Sister Carmen

August 19: John Francis Benson (Jack) – father of Oblate Dorothy Touzell. While Jack's funeral took place in Western Australia, another Mass was celebrated for him here at the abbey on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

August 24: John Deen (Property Manager for many years).

August 28: Abbot Michael King, of St. Mark's Abbey Camperdown, also a friend of our community over many years. Mother Abbess and Sr Hannah represented our community at Abbot Michael's funeral.

September 8: Eric Hilton Fredericks, an iconic character of the local Jamberoo community, and our friend since we moved to Jamberoo in 1988.

September: Billy MacMaster, Sr Mechtild's uncle



September 24: Linda Conroy, Chatswood Parishioner, aged 62. Linda was a frequent guest in our Retreat Cottages.

September 28: Terry Brooks, husband of Margaret Books and friend of Sr Agnes.

Duncan Munro: Loved friend of Sr Therese and her family.

Kathleen Lawler and William Harold Hubert Lawler: both these persons were members of Sr Ancilla's mother's immediate family.

**Let us Pray for those who are sick:**



Oblate Mary (Elizabeth) Locke, friend of our own Sr Elizabeth.

Judy Stinson, friend of our community.

Fr Patrick Fahey, osa, Community friend

Warren Aron, Nephew of Sr Mary Claire

Joan Miskin, friend of Sr Mary Claire

Hanny Adhidarso, Sr Mary Bernadette's Uncle

Ellen Nora Connors, friend of Sr Mary Claire.

Frances Gilmour, sister-in-law of Sr Therese

Sr Rose Murphy, cgs, community friend.

Von Orchard, friend of Sr Agnes

John Murphy, friend of Sr Agnes

Fr. David Catterall, Parish Priest of Albion Park and a dear friend of our Community.

We have a number of Oblates who are seriously ill, or in nursing home care, and they would appreciate your prayer support.

*“Good People,  
most royal greening verdancy,  
rooted in the sun,  
you shine with radiant light.”*  
St Hildegard



Outlook from Jamberoo Mountain at Sunrise

*The Community of Jamberoo Abbey  
prays that you will  
“shine with radiant light”  
during 2015!*