

Jamberoo Abbey Newsletter



2016

Photo: Advent at the Abbey. Illawarra Flame Tree in background

2016

The Year of Mercy

Our newsletter begins with the opening of the Holy Door to usher in The Jubilee Year of Mercy on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For our community, this Solemnity links us to our founding father, Archbishop John Bede Polding, and the significant role he played in the promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, being present, and influential in the deliberations under Pope Pius IX.

The Jubilee Year began ten days into Advent, 2015. And so, there were two great beginnings of a new Liturgical year, both of which brought the challenge of entering fully into the outpouring of Divine Mercy, as it comes to us through Jesus, who is “merciful like the Father”. (Pope Francis).

Some of us were able to attend the Ceremony of the Holy Door, at our Diocesan Cathedral in Wollongong. Early in the Jubilee Year, Mother Abbess began her teaching, reminding us that Pope Francis suggests that we choose and make holy a special door:

“Choose a door which can be a ‘holy door’ for you this Jubilee Year, reminding you to direct your thoughts and prayer to God as you enter [through that door].”

It could be uplifting for all of us if we in some way decorate the outside of our cell (bedroom) door, so that as we pass along the cloisters, these doors with their images or symbols of God’s mercy, will keep us anchored in the spirit of this Holy Year.

MONASTIC CEREMONIES & ANNIVERSARIES

God blessed our Community with a number of Monastic Ceremonies, spaced over the end of 2015 and the first half of 2016.

Two Clothings

On December 8, 2015, Yujin Lee was clothed in the Monastic Habit, and took the new name of “Stella” after Isaac of Stella, whose spiritual writings speak to her heart. Identifying also with “Our Lady, Star of the Sea” (*Ave Maris Stella*), she has chosen a one of Our Lady’s “days” for her own Feast Day: the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – August 15



Christine Dorothy was clothed in our Monastic Habit on February 6th, and took the new name of “Petra” after one of her favourite Saints – St. Peter. Her feast day is June 29th, the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.



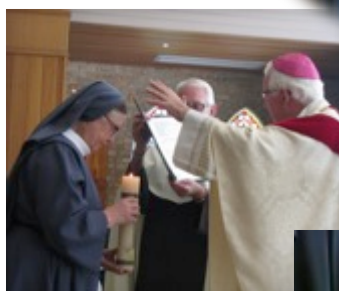
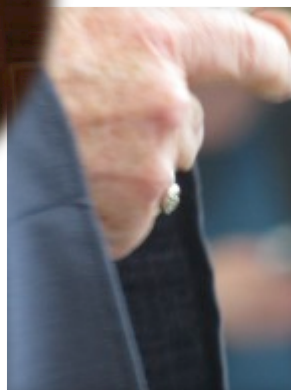
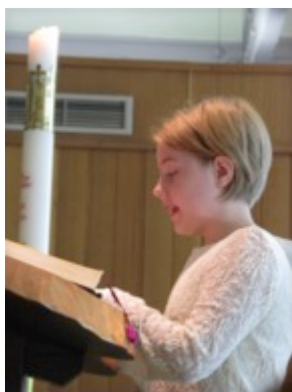
Solemn Profession

Sr Hannah Massy-Greene made her Solemn Monastic Profession on our Titular Feast – The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. Bishop Peter Ingham was the celebrant.



Sr Hannah's grand-daughter, Bethany, proclaimed the first reading with great confidence and reverence. Two of Hannah's adult children - Pip and Alex - were present with her on this beautiful day however, the other two, - Georgie and Jeremy - were both overseas and were not able to attend. They were, however, sending their love and support on the winds! Georgie who lives in Cambodia with her husband and beautiful three-year old daughter, Jemima were able to visit later in the year. Sr Hannah's Solemn Profession was an occasion that bonded us together in the joy of the Lord and the spirit of the Jubilee Year – God's loving mercy.

Mother Abbess had addressed us during first Vespers the evening before: *On this wonderful feast of light, we celebrate our Foundation Day – the day on which our community was officially founded in 1849. This year we have the added blessing of Sr. Hannah's Solemn Profession and Consecration. Tomorrow we will walk with Hannah as she comes to the Temple of the Lord to make the offering of her whole self to God. We will be beside her, adding our light to hers and setting our Church ablaze with light, love and dedication.*



Sr Clare Gamble celebrated her Silver Jubilee of Monastic Profession on February 8th. The actual date should have been the Feast of St. Scholastica (February 10th), however as the 10th happened to be Ash Wednesday this year, we celebrated with Clare before going into the Lenten Season. Clare renewed her vows at Mass before all present. Her sister Annette and niece, Clare travelled from Melbourne to be present with Clare for the celebration along with Narelle Herald and a number of her close friends.



February 8th was also the day Maurie and Heather Jamieson from the Albion Park Parish chose to renew their wedding vows. Fr. Paul composed a meaningful ceremony of blessing, renewal and prayer. They both joined us afterwards for the feast which combined Sr Clare's celebration with theirs.

Fr Paul also supported another young couple, Mary and Ross who came to the Abbey to renew their wedding vows.



Two Entrance Ceremonies:



Janice Boddice from Chinchilla in Queensland, entered our community on the Feast of the Visitation, May 31st. It was also Sr Elizabeth's Feast Day so we were doubly blessed on the day. Janice is a great outdoors person and she arrived complete with her bike and walking boots both of which she has put to good use! She has now taken over as the personal trainer of Sr Hildegard's dog, Polly! A few of us could, no doubt,

benefit from the same help!!

Before coming to the Abbey, Janice had brought her parents to meet us and look around what would become her future home. It is always wonderful to have this connection with the families of our sisters and we look forward to many more visits over the coming years.

Krishmalie Perera from Sydney, NSW entered our community on the eve of Trinity Sunday, June 5th. Trinity Sunday is the annual anniversary of the opening and blessing of Jamberoo Abbey in 1989, by Bishop William Murray so it was a wonderful day for Krishmalie to join us.

Her whole family came with her to see her safely into the Monastery, and have had more visits since then. There is always music and lots of laughter when they come!

On this day we had an electricity outage so the ceremony was surrounded by candlelight - beautiful!



MONASTIC GUESTS

Sister Theodora from Durban, South Africa, accompanied by **Sr. Veronica**

McCluskie, sgs, paid us a visit on Sunday the 7th August. Some of us who had been privileged to attend meetings of the International Communion of Benedictine Women, had already met Sister Theodora.



Fr. Michael Casey was here for a week, from August 28th. He gave our annual Retreat on “The Journey to God” and was inspiring and challenging. He has a way of bursting the bubbles of unreality. Once again, we are grateful to him for all that he shares with us.

DECADE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Sr Mary Bernadette was the first to turn the decade this year.

She celebrated her 50th birthday on

January 15. Sr Mary Bernadette is originally from Indonesia and is a delight to have in our community.



She has just been appointed Sub-Prioress.

This year, both Sr Magdalen and Sr Mechtild reached the 60

mark. Sr Magdalen's birthday fell during the third week of our annual holiday. Sr Mechtild's birthday was anticipated because it fell during our annual retreat.



Sr Magdalen's cake was a musical affair complete with a large treble clef, 60, and candles!



Both birthdays were given full and fitting ceremony with the cakes being a special feature. Mother Abbess decorated them both. It seems that if all else fails, Mother Mary will be able to find work decorating cakes!!



Sr Mechtild's cake came complete with farmyard chickens, ducks, fresh vegetables and fresh fruit all made from marzipan. Hours of time had gone into both cakes and they were enjoyed by all.



Just an Ordinary Life!

Sr Elizabeth Funder celebrated her 90th birthday on October 26. Elizabeth entered our community when it was resident at “Subiaco”, Rydalmere, in 1947. She had been a child of the depression years, seen her parents trying to cope and provide money for her education (St. Vincent’s, Potts Point), and then at Sydney University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree on May 24, 1947. Sr Elizabeth had been a member of the Newman Society at Sydney University, and on one of the trips to “Subiaco” with the Society, the seed of her monastic vocation was sown. Her life-long companion on the journey was Sr Marie Gregory Forster who entered a year before Elizabeth in 1946.



Sr Elizabeth has been a loyal member of our community since she entered. Mother Mildred Potts was the Prioress at that time, and Elizabeth appreciated that Mother Mildred had a firm grasp on monastic theology and Christology, grounded in the Scriptures, the Rule of St. Benedict and the teaching of Blessed Columba Marmion.

Throughout her monastic life, Sr Elizabeth spent time in Paris, working for the A.I.M. (Aid to International Monasteries), at the John Main Centre in Montreal focusing on meditation and spiritual direction and at St. John’s Collegeville, Minnesota where she completed a number of courses on the monastic life.

It was there that Sr Elizabeth obtained Sr Cecile Gertkin's accompaniment to the Gregorian and Ambrosian hymns. These are still used by our community today. All Sr Elizabeth's letters written home during her time in Paris have survived and are stored as treasures in our archives. In 1989, Sr Elizabeth also visited 59 monasteries, throughout the world with Mother Benedicta who was the abbess at the time. After her experience at the John Main community in Montreal, Elizabeth began offering Christian Meditation to community friends and other interested persons while we lived at Pennant Hills, west of Sydney. When we relocated to Jamberoo, with the assistance of Se Clare, she continued this work of prayer which developed into a weekly commitment and is still continued today.

Sr Elizabeth has been our Prioress for over thirty years, being appointed to the position just before Sr Moira Bradshaw died from leukaemia. Sr Moira was Prioress before her. As Prioress, Elizabeth has been true and faithful to the daily-ness



of the monastic life, and a "wisdom" figure for those of us who have lived with her. Since Sr Elizabeth retired Sr Maureen Therese is now the Prioress. We give her our support and love as she carries this office of service in our community.

Preparations for her 90th birthday went on for a number of weeks – and rightly so! We had a request for two beautiful hymns at Mass on the big day. Elizabeth asked for Bishop

Charles Davis's hymn, "Sharon", composed for our community in circa 1850. The second hymn was the beautiful setting of the *Sub Tuum Praesidium* in the 1925 St. Basil's Hymnal.



The Festal Morning Tea began at 11.00 a.m. with special guests being Alan and Amanda Hickey, our solicitor and his wife. Sr Elizabeth, as Cellarer of our community for more than 20 years, had worked closely with Alan especially during the time of our relocation from Pennant Hills to Jamberoo. After the relocation, Alan continued his careful watch over our community, as Elizabeth continued to seek his advice on many issues affecting our living in the area of Jamberoo.

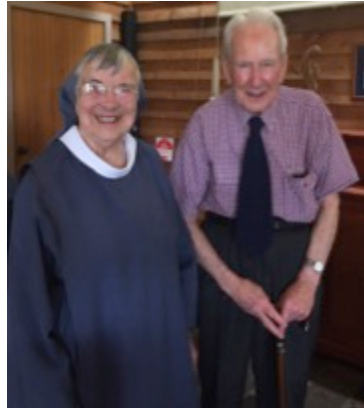


Other special guests were Mr and Mrs. Brian Goodsell, who had looked after us so well during our search for land on which to relocate the Abbey. We had many meals at their home in the Southern Highlands, and their generosity and care was lavished on us. Susie had made a delicious cake for us, and dare we say, with a good drop of alcohol in it!



While we were in the midst of celebrations, the front doorbell rang, and Sr Therese went to answer it not realizing that another old friend was on the doorstep. This was the Most Rev. Bishop Bede Heather, our Diocesan Bishop and friend when we lived at Pennant Hills. Sr Elizabeth was overwhelmed by the appearance of Bishop Bede – her dear friend.

Both Bishop Bede and Elizabeth have corresponded by mail for a long time and Bishop Bede has made an occasional visit to our Abbey here. His visit was a very special birthday gift.



Also at this mid-morning celebration, Mother Mary showed us the power point presentation she had made of Sr Elizabeth's life, beginning with her baptism in 1926. Mother Mary had taken months over this beautiful and "heritage-listed" presentation! It is a treasure to have and hold. She had sorted through nine decades of photographs, dating back to the years in Subiaco of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. It was a work of love. Morning tea merged into dinner, and we were still chatting at 4.00 p.m.

The evening brought a concert, prepared by our Sisters in



Formation: Sr Stella, Sr Petra, Janice, and Krishmalie. The ring-ins were Sr Mary Bernadette with her electronic organ, Sr. Hildegard who thought she was still able to strike a few chords on the guitar, and Sr Caritas who gave us her voice

and encouragement for the musical items.

The Program included: *I Am Australian* (The Seekers), *It's a Small World* (Disney)
Turn on the Sun (Nana Mouskouri)
O With What Joy (Gregory Norbert, osb)



Sr Stella then read from *The Wound of Love*, Carthusian Novice Conferences – beginning with Jeremiah 17:7-8, and moving into an amazing story of an acorn which journeys through all the stages of growth until its “being expands and opens, attracted by the light”. This long reading was the perfect description of one such as Sr Elizabeth who has expanded and opened over so many years, attracted by the light of Christ, “breathing her joy in prayer...bending before the storm, then standing upright, obediently embracing the annual rhythm of the life and death of the seasons [of human growth].” Elizabeth is indeed “a witness to permanence in the flux of time.”

The concert ended with “Happy Birthday” sung in five languages, all the languages of our beautiful Asian Sisters, and our own English.

Just when we began to put our instruments away, and wind up for the night, Sr Mellitus, who will be ninety next April, announced that she had prepared a poem to read. We were then treated to two poems, the second being the most familiar to us:

Tangmalangmaloo by John O'Brien.



Our dear friend Tony Abela turned 70 this year. Tony has helped with our finances for many years now and is so generous with the time and care that he shows to our community. We owe him a deep debt of gratitude.



THANK YOU TONY.

November 21 was the tenth anniversary of Mother Mary's election as Abbess. This day is also *Pro Orantibus Day* - a day of prayer for those whose vocation is to pray. A couple of weeks before this celebration Mother celebrated 40 years in monastic life!



A special feature of the Mass on this day was a gift to us by Sr M Bernadette and Sr Petra. Petra is a cellist and Mary Bernadette an organist. Both sisters played a very sensitive rendition of the beautiful hymn "On this day, O Beautiful Mother" It brought back prayerful memories for many of us.



THANK YOU



In August, we had a celebration to thank Sr Clare for all the years she has served us in her appointment as First Chantress. She has been organized, focused, and faithful for over thirty years. You can still hear her younger voice on both CDs which we recorded in the 1990s: "Our Land Sings Praise", and "In Prayer I Shall Lead Them".

Just when Clare was probably enjoying the rest from this



responsibility, she was asked by Mother Abbess to take up the task again but just for a short time, in order to meet an unexpected situation. This she did with generosity and graciousness.



Later in the year our Sr Frances retired from her service to us in the Refectory. Frances has been an extraordinary refectorian and gave of her time willingly and cheerfully. Frances also spent many years, with Sr Clare, in our kitchen. Both are outstanding in their response to all that is asked of them.

Frances is always there to give that beautiful and gracious smile – no matter what is asked of her.

WEATHER EXTREMES

Relentless rain and extensive interior flooding occurred in June. We were inconvenienced, yes, but not as badly off as those who didn't have a roof over their heads, or no dry ground for their livestock. In January we prayed for the victims of bushfires in Western Australia and South Australia, then Victoria. In June, we gave our prayer to flood victims.

On Saturday 28th May, we had an indoor fire drill with the expert help of the Albion Park and Jamberoo Rural Fire



Brigade. Some of us managed to sit through it all and drink tea. Others did all the work – practising CPR (on dummies) and rescue procedures, managing fire hoses, and fire extinguishers. So

many people are good to us, and this is another example of how our local people look after us.

Right: “Injured” nun, Sr Maureen Therese, being accompanied to the ambulance! Smoke inhalation & cardiac arrest – all imaginary of course! There’s the “slacker” above taking a rest from her injuries while we fight the imaginary fire!!



OUT AND ABOUT



Last September (22 –25) Sr Hilda was invited to be a guest speaker at the *Ignite Youth Conference* in Brisbane. This conference has been a continual feature of the Church's life in Brisbane for many years, and is an initiative of the Emmanuel Community. Each year it has been consistent in its growth both in terms of numbers of young people attending and the variety of guests speakers.

Sr Hilda was invited to speak on the subjects of prayer, the accompaniment of the saints, the place of Scripture in our lives. She was also asked to deliver a keynote address on the personal relationship that each has with God.



It was an exploration of the reality of the love of God in their lives and the ways in which that love can be nourished. The young people were invited to meet Jesus then and there in that auditorium and make their own response to the message he was giving them. They also took time to respond to various Scripture passages which also held a personal message for each of them. The hope is that having met Jesus their hearts would be expanded and the present and future which holds so many fears for them, would be embraced with utter confidence in the God who is lovingly with them.

Sr Hilda was especially grateful for the kind and generous hospitality of Hilary (an Oblate of our community) and Brendan Scarce who hosted her while she was there.

You will see from this photo that the young people could pick up a photo below and have a selfie with Pope Francis, Sr Hilda or Fr Rob Galea – I wonder who was the most popular?!



Mother Abbess was away most of October visiting various places in Melbourne. Mother spent time at the Cistercian Monastery, Tarrawarra Abbey, Yarra Glen. Sr Hilda accompanied her to Tarrawarra. One of the aims of this visit was to discuss the possibility of Formation classes being shared between our communities. The monks were very welcoming and both Mother Mary and Hilda felt very at home as they shared the common monastic life with the monks. It was a heart warming experience.

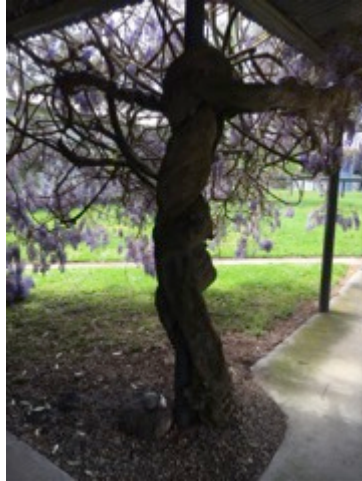


Later in December Mother Mary went to St Benedict's Monastery at Arcadia for the same reason. The sisters in formation will now have teachings from some of the Benedictine monks of Arcadia and the monks of Tarrawarra as well as the teaching they already have within their own community. Once again we were shown the best of Benedictine hospitality. These ventures were made in response to the Letter of Pope Francis *Vultum Dei quaerere*.



Prior David Orr with Sr Elizabeth

Whilst at Tarrawarra Mother Mary noticed this beautiful scene. It is the wisteria vine twisted around a pole. Doesn't it look like the figure of Jesus on the Cross? Very moving experience.



Whilst in Victoria Mother also visited Anna Prifti the icon writer who painted our Icons for the Church – The Christ of Sinai and Our Lady of Vladimir. The icons have arrived thanks to our oblate and friend Catherine Eaton.

We will now organize for the blessing and installation of these beautiful icons in our Church.



INTER-FAITH SHARING

Mustafa & Lubna Chaudhry

On July 17, Srs Ancilla and Joanna attended the open day at the Uthman Mosque in Oak Flats. The Uthman Mosque is the Illawarra's newest Mosque. In early October, Mustafa Chaudhry and his wife Lubna, from the Muslim community, came to the Abbey and we shared about the one great reality in our lives: prayer. Mustafa and Lubna also shared with us their family story.



Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo

On August 24th we were blessed to have an afternoon of conversation and sharing with Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo and her assistant Aileen Barry. Jetsunma is the founder of the Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery in Himachal Pradesh, India. The monastery was founded to give young nuns the opportunity and the space to realise their intellectual and spiritual potential. Jetsunma had herself experienced the lack of formal support in ongoing education and spiritual formation once vows had been taken. Her sharing was characterised by real warmth, humility and laughter!



We were interested and delighted to explore some of the many similarities between our different cultures and faiths which become very evident in the day to day living of monastic life. We talked of our daily horariums of prayer, expressed in chant, and the necessity of living a balance of work and prayer, of service of community and one another and the living of a common life based on monastic vows. Jetsunma was very familiar with the Rule of St Benedict and delighted us with

examples from the Rule which she found applicable to her monastery in India.

Most of all we shared warm understanding, love and much laughter in the stories of monastic life. What we find challenging and what is joy filled; the compelling desire to move deeper into relationship with God and how this noble motivation plays out in the very human weaknesses we all share and which become evident when we live so closely together.

The afternoon passed all too quickly and after an exchange of gifts Jetsunma and Aileen headed back to Sydney. Hopefully they will return to us for more sharing of our different yet very similar spiritual paths as we live them in our monasteries.



BENEDICTINE NEWS

At the Congress of Abbots in Rome this year, Abbot Gregory Polan was elected as Abbot Primate. Abbot Gregory is currently the abbot of Conception Abbey in Missouri, USA. He replaces Notker Wolf who had been the Abbot Primate since 2000. Abbot Notker was a charismatic leader, full of wisdom, passion, life and music! He visited our abbey in 2003, gifting us with his skill on the flute. In fact he broke the silence of the cloisters by walking along with his flute and lavishly sounding the most beautiful, light-hearted melodies – everything joyful is the best way of remembering Notker Wolf! It was Notker Wolf who pioneered the international meetings of Benedictine Oblates. Some of our own Oblates have attended these meetings, and been deeply enriched in their calling to the Benedictine life.

Abbot Gregory is a Scripture scholar. In recent years, he completed a new translation of the Psalms known as the



Revised Grail Psalter. This translation has been approved by the US Bishops and is now used in the Liturgy there. He has been Abbot of Conception Abbey since 1996. The abbot primate is not the superior general of the Benedictine order, but rather Primate of the Benedictine Confederation. His duties are to represent Benedictine monks and nuns at international gatherings, promote the unity of the abbeys and priories around the world, and serve as a liaison to the

Vatican. We welcome Abbot Gregory as the new Abbot Primate and we support him in prayer.

OBLATES

The following Christian men and women deepened their commitment to Jesus, by becoming Oblates of St. Benedict:

November 14th, 2015:



Kathleen (Catherine) Daysh of Trinity Beach, Queensland
Brenda (Joan)Williams of Mount Martha, Victoria
Felicity (Benedict) Giles of Cronulla, New South Wales.
Robert (Robert of Molesmes) Hamilton of Bellowongarah,
New South Wales.
Monica (Augustine) Hunt of Forster, New South Wales.
Rose (Francis) de Angelis of Canberra, ACT

December 5, 2015



Sandra (Julian) Cooper,
of Hoppers Crossing,
Victoria.

August 2, 2016



Neville (John) Feeney
of Brisbane, Queensland

August 10, 2016



Sandra (Seraphim) Temple, of Wodonga, Victoria.

September 10, 2016

Beryl Topliff of Melaleuca Lodge, Cowes, Victoria.

November 19, 2016



Julie (Elizabeth) Connah of Macquarie, ACT

Lucy (Lioba) Sneesby-Tooth of Lismore, NSW

Helen Anna Howard of Berry, NSW. Helen is known to us as Annie, and is often here helping out by preparing a few buckets of potatoes, or polishing the timber in the church. In Annie's words, the church is a bit like the Harbour Bridge - once you've finished, it's time to start again!

Judith (Anne) Kendall of Toongabbie, NSW

Oblates Marilyn Caruana, Dot Touzell (and her husband John), are also faithful volunteer workers at the Abbey: cleaning, gardening and cooking. Thank you – we are very appreciative of all that you do.

December 11

Our oblate Cecilia Larkin and her husband, Peter, celebrated 40 years of marriage on Sunday, December 11th, joining us for



Mass. Before we finished, Fr. Paul sang a beautiful blessing over them.

Our gratitude to Cecilia and Peter Larkin is unbounded. If Cecilia is not arriving with buckets of flowers for Christmas, Easter, The Assumption, or Christ The King, she (and sometimes Peter) are working away

quietly in the Abbey gardens. Cecilia has refurbished more than one garden, doing very heavy work, and in the heat of summer. Everywhere she works she leaves a garden of surprises. We are so grateful.



ANOTHER WEDDING

August 8th Heather Cross (who had been a novice in our community) married David Sicari. After the wedding they came to the Abbey for a blessing. We wish them a life of deep happiness together.



CARMELITE GATHERINGS

Carmelites from Timor-Leste gathered at the Abbey on Tuesday 18th April. This was a meeting organized by Fr Paul. It was a chance to integrate more fully with these committed Religious and share our understanding of God's call to religious and monastic life in these first decades of the 21st century.



The second gathering was held later in the year with Superiors of the Order of Carmel and Discalced Carmelites: the Adelaide



Carmel, the Kew Carmel and the Varroville Carmel. And again, the sharing enriched us and encouraged us in our fidelity to the monastic vocation. Blessed Columba Marmion said in one of his Letters: "Fidelity is the most delicate flower of love."

RETREAT COTTAGES – 2016

Our Retreat Program for 2016 began on January 15th, with a retreat on Christian Chant. This was followed closely by a Day of Prayer, focussing on 2016 with Jesus.

Other retreats and days of prayer included “Youth – Encountering God”; two retreats for Oblates of our Community; a Lenten Retreat, and Day of Prayer for the Year of Mercy; retreats on Centering Prayer, Caring for the Earth, Art, Praying with Icons, a Retreat with Our Lady; a Retreat focussing on God’s Wisdom, and an Advent Retreat.

Sisters who led these retreats and days of prayer were: Sr. Hildegard, Director of Oblates, assisted by Sr. Hannah who both led the Oblate retreats, Sr. Hilda who led many retreats on Prayer and Spirituality, Sr. Mechtild who keeps our small farm, led the retreats on Caring for the Earth, Sr. Magdalen led the Christian Chant and Centering Prayer weekends, and Sr. Veronica shared

with guests on the Art Retreat. Sr.

Veronica has also given talks on

“Bees and St.

Benedict”, an

interesting

comparison

between the life

and community of

bees, and the life in

a Benedictine

monastic community. All retreats were the fruits of our own prayer during the Jubilee Year of Mercy.



OUR EMPLOYEES:



Zac Xuereb, is still our “Zac of all trades”! Here he is dipping the Paschal candles. He is never lost for something to do, and we are sure that when he gets in his truck to go home, he lets out three cheers!

Jennine Lennox has been a good friend of the community’s for many years and she makes all our candles. (Sallywag helps of course) How many thousands? We have lost count! Together we are managing to light up most parishes and schools throughout Australia!



Vince Warby is still working here in the gardens one day a week. Vince is not working with dairy cattle any longer. On Sunday, 6th November we paid tribute to Vince’s father on the first anniversary of death. George Warby was greatly loved by his family, and this was evident in the effort all made to be at Mass on November 6th. Afterwards, we shared memories and were there in a spirit of solidarity with



Vince's family. Please pray for Betty Warby, Vince's mother, who is in Nursing Home Care.



Maryanne, Petrina, Sandra, Maree, Marian

Maryanne Boyd is still working in our Shop four days a week and is greatly valued by all of us. She is so patient on the telephone and in the shop – a shining example to us all.

Marian cooks our meals three days a week and also supplies a tune or two whilst doing so! Thank you Marian for many enjoyable meals. Marian is especially good at desserts!!

Petrina Warlow-East works in our Cottage Office, taking retreat bookings and ensuring our guests have an enjoyable and prayerful stay with us. Petrina had a hip replacement this year, but is now back at work enjoying being able to walk freely without pain again.

Maree & Sandra

Petrina is assisted by Maree and Sandra, who clean and stock the cottages and hermitages with supplies. They do a wonderful job!

Lee-Ann Wein works in our Craft Department painting candles. Lee-Ann is a very gifted artist who paints Australian native flowers on the candles. She also is our bee-keeper and cooks for us on Fridays.



Birdie, a friend of Lee-Ann's, also helps in our Craft Department. She is an expert carving the candles but also helps with sticking and dipping and whatever else is needed.

Susie Goodsell is working in our shop on Thursdays and weekends. This enables our shop to be open seven days a week. Her husband **Brian**, does some volunteer gardening from time to time. Brian Goodsell was our Real Estate Agent for much of the time when we were searching for a new property on which to settle (1986-87). Jo Wickens & Sue Stuckey both work in our library.



Jo brought our library into the 21st century a few years ago and



has been wonderfully generous in the time that she has given to this cause.

Sue helps out once a week in keeping the library up to date.



Ben Deen resigned to take up work elsewhere. He finished half-way through September. We will miss him.

John Downes, Jamberoo Dairy Farmer, terminated his contract for the agistment of his cattle after many years as he is now retired.

Michael Deen has taken up property manager and is now grazing his cattle here. He is off to a good start with the clearing of all paddocks and the checking and mending of fences. It is good to see the cattle grazing peacefully on the property again. Thank You to all our employees who do a wonderful job here at the Abbey.



OUR CANINE FAMILY

Rani. Sr Magdalen had the very painful task of returning beautiful Rani to God. This took place on Wednesday July 20. Our Vets, Mark Weingarth and Aine Seavers came to the Abbey and carried out the procedure with peace and dignity. A few of us gathered to support Magdalen. These occasions are never easy and the pain lingers on. Rani sleep on in an eternal slumber in your Godly care as all creation awaits the fullness of liberation.

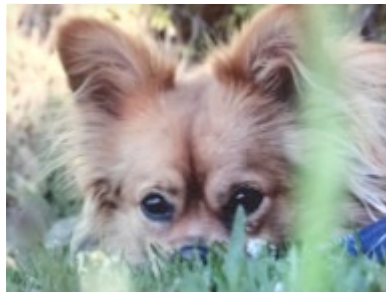


Keira & Bella. When Sr Magdalen rang “German Shepherd World”, to tell them of Rani’s passing, Sharon Munns, our friend of almost twenty years, offered to replace Rani at no cost to us. So, this is Keira, almost five months old, full of the delights of young life! Sr Magdalen is looking after her. Sharon also gave us the gift of Bella, a five year old dog retired from breeding. Sr Hannah takes care of Bella and Bella takes good care of her younger companion, even though she is not Keira’s mother. Usually people are afraid of German Shepherds, but these two are such gentle and playful giants.

Milly & Mercy. Lee-Ann Wein, who lives here on our property now has a second little pet. We have called her “Mercy” in honour of the Jubilee Year of Mercy and because her rescue by the RSPCA, from her circumstances of cruelty, was also an act of mercy. She is a combination of Tibetan Spaniel and Pug. It will take a long time before she can relate to all of us because she is so frightened however, with Lee-Ann’s love and care, she is coming along in leaps and bounds. Lee-Ann now has Milly (left) and Mercy (right and snuggled in). They are here during the day and return to their hermitage in the evening.



Polly is still the queen of the castle. She accepts the other girls with a degree of reluctance, and at times is not an example of Benedictine peace! The one dog she accepts without any hesitation is a visiting Guide Dog, called Reuben. He comes with a guest and community friend. Polly seems to sense the importance of his work.



We were sad to hear that a few of our friends faced the hard decision to return their dogs to God, doing the last act of kindness for them, in illness or blindness and other old age-related problems:

Sr Barbara Molloy, pbvm, said “goodbye” to her little Scamp. Oblates Alan and Amanda Hickey said “goodbye” to their “Bella”

Susan and Paul Jamieson, said “goodbye” to their beautiful Charlie.

Oblate Kathy Proctor said her “goodbye” to Gracie.

Matilda Warlow-East, received news that “Teddy”, her beautiful horse, had died in the paddock where he was grazing. The other horses were seen to be standing around Teddy as if in mourning.

We were able to find a dog for Oblate Mary Locke, of Beecroft. Mary and our Sr Elizabeth were at school together at St. Vincent’s Potts Point in the 1930s and early 1940s. Mary is on her own a good part of every day, and wanted a small dog in whom she could confide, and who would just sit with her while she prays.



So, we found **Thomas**. At least his name was Thomas, until Mary re-named him Ben after St. Benedict, and after her last dog. The first morning after he arrived, he stayed in bed with Mary and had morning coffee and biscuits and read the newspaper. Later they had breakfast together. He has his own chair in the lounge room - only right and proper! Mary is comforted by his small presence and devotion.

Don’t underestimate the power of these little creatures to help and heal us. They make sure we keep moving, and get us out of the house into the fresh air where we can receive and breathe the beauty of nature.

ABBEY BEES



Here at the Abbey there is a gentle hum that moves around the property. It is the sound of our bees feeding. Sometimes it's a rainforest plant, sometimes in the Abbey farm or gardens, and sometimes a eucalyptus tree. Wherever the bees are harvesting nectar and pollen, the plant is literally humming. It's wonderful to walk around the property and hear it.

As Christmas approaches, we have 12 Kenyan Topbar Bee Hives filled with happy, healthy bees. Most of our bees this season were donated by Eric McAuley. All our Kenyan Topbar Hives were made by Albion Park Men's Shed and Illawarra Woodworkers Inc. They are all beautifully crafted from hardwood timbers, and our bees love them. We have held our second beekeeping training course with training provided by Adrian Iodice from *Beekeeping Naturally*. Adrian's love for bees is contagious and his knowledge is so very helpful to our beekeepers, Lee-Ann and Sr Veronica.



Many thanks to all who are involved with our bee project, especially to those who have donated equipment or sponsored a bee hive. You are all an important part of working the conservation of Honey Bees here in Australia.

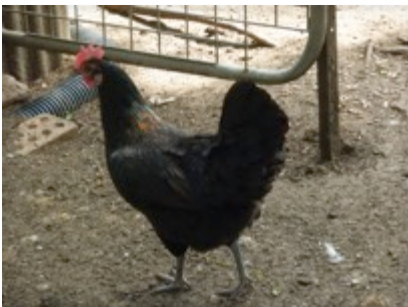


DOWN ON THE FARM



This year Sr Mechtild has introduced a chicken trampoline to the farm! While it looks like a personal training venture it really is there to protect “the girls” from overhead predators. They love getting out into the fresh green grass and in the shade. We have some new characters as companions:

Meet Johnnie, Olive and Gloria the resident feather dusters. Dear little creatures set for a life of sheer bliss mothering the new chicks in the farm.



This is Impidora, Impy for short and so named for her character. She is the only bird we have ever had who knows how to get in and out of a secure area and is quite happy to have a full day of solitude turning soil and leaf litter in the

bush, in the garden or wherever it appeals to her. Many a day Sr Mechtild has gone to the farm expecting to find she has been taken by a fox or an eagle but no, there she is in the pen, waiting for her breakfast and looking up at her with this look of “Here I am! What’s your problem?”

The vegetable garden has had its time of plenty during winter and spring but with little rain this summer and lots of wind, it has been a struggle to keep the moisture to the plants but the fruit trees keep producing. The citrus are only now finishing and the passionfruit and blackberries are about to bear in abundance.



SOME OF THE WILDLIFE AT JAMBEROO



King Parrot –
aka King Alfred or Alfie



Cockatoo



Python



Rainbow Lorikeet



Kangaroo



Kookaburra –
keeping an eye on dinner!!!

FROM THE CHURCH

Looking out from one of the clear glass panels
in our stained glass windows



R.I.P.



Such is the Kingdom –Daniel Bonnell

December 3, 2015: Oblate Maxine (Francis) Pickering.

December 11, 2015: Fr Patrick James Fahey OSA, dear friend of our community.

December 31, 2015: Von Orchard, friend of Sr Agnes.

January 23, 2016: Peggy Neumann, friend of Sr Agnes.

February 3, 2016: Evy Adhidarso, Sr Mary Bernadette's aunt.

March 16, 2016: The Most Rev. Raymond Benjamin, dear friend of our Community.

August 21, 2016: David Massy-Greene, brother of our Sr Hannah.

September 5, 2016: Mary Patricia McGlinchey, of the Jamberoo Farming community and a special friend to us. Her husband Peter, a retired dairy farmer, was one of the Knights of the Southern Cross who helped plant the trees on our beautiful drive and who came year after year to help with clearing and gardening. All these wonderful Knights are now ageing and are retired.

September 26, 2016: Frank Van Gestel, friend of Sr Hildegard and the Sisters who were once at the Benedictine Monastery at Lammermoor Beach, Queensland.

We went to the funeral of Sr Joan Fanning, on October 27th, at the Carmelite Monastery, Varroville. It was important for us to be with our Carmelite Sisters at this time of farewell for one so loved as Sr Joan.



She had been Prioress at the Dulwich Hill Carmel, and then again at Varroville, after the Dulwich Hill Carmel had merged with the Parkes Carmel. Our Carmelite Sisters were in the midst of this merger and relocation when we were relocating and building at Jamberoo. Sr Joan brought her community to Jamberoo for a day of sharing. Those of us who remember this event recall the encouragement and support we received in that visit so long ago.



November 3, 2016: Oblate John Delaforce.

November 20, 2016: Keith Higlett, friend of Sr Agnes.

November 23, 2011: Depak Kepak, (Jamberoo Postmaster).

PLEASE PRAY FOR:



Healing –Daniel Bonnell

Jane, daughter of Oblates.
Alan and Amanda Hickey.

Louise, sister of our Sr Hilda
Scott.

Sr Patricia Lord, Our Lady's
Nurses For The Poor and
good friend to us over many
years.

Peter Moore, Sr Hildegard's
cousin.

Fred Hassell, husband of
Oblate Pam Hassell.

Annette Slade, niece of Sr Frances.

Helen Cox, friend of Sr Clare.

Daniel Bonnell and his wife. Daniel has generously allowed us
to use his magnificent images in our prayer and ministry.
Many of them appear throughout this newsletter.

Terry Soanes, friend of Sr Agnes.

Oblate Mary Locke, friend of Sr Elizabeth.

Betty Pollock, friend of Sr Mary Claire and the Johnson Family

Claire McCarthy, daughter-in-law of Oblate Mary McCarthy.

MOTHER ABBESS' REFLECTIONS

A few Reflections for you during these holidays!

Mother Mary continued her teaching as the year unfolded. The following is a summary of some of the riches we received throughout the year.



Fourth Sunday of Lent 2016

As we journey towards the last weeks of Lent, leading us to Holy Week, it is a good time to stand back and reflect on the burning bushes in our lives, the meeting places with God, which invite us to notice and look more closely.

Sr Macrina Wiederkehr, in "Seasons of Your Heart" says that "taking off your shoes is a sacred ritual. Whether you take your shoes off symbolically or literally matters little. What is important is that you are alive to the holy ground on which you stand and to the holy ground that you are." So, what shoes do we need to take off before the burning bush of this Holy Week? Taking off our shoes before God allows us to become vulnerable, more sensitive, more open and freed. We realize that the world around us is holy and that God is near.

Continuous prayer is the Burning Bush that turns our work into prayer, makes the secular sacred, brings Christ into everything that we do and transforms and purifies our lives...if we live in this spirit of continuous prayer we will find that the little things that annoyed us no longer matter and that we are able to respond positively in difficult situations.

Easter 2016: *Let us pray: ‘Let Him Easter in us, be a Dayspring to the dimness of us.’ (GM Hopkins) Let us walk gently as we sing our alleluias, as we go through our days, as we journey on the road with one another.*



The road to Emmaus –Daniel Bonnell

And let us be joyful, allowing all the external signs and symbols, the readings and psalms, the hymns and canticles, the candles, water, music and movements, to be like healing balm, leading us towards that great invitation to go deeper into the mystery of the Risen Christ who dwells with us, appearing to us again and again, seeking only that we RECOGNIZE Him and allow our own hearts to resound with those glorious words: “It is the Lord.”

R&R 2016:

Quoting the poet David Whyte: *To rest is not self-indulgent, to rest is to prepare to give the best of ourselves...this is the time to stop what we have been doing and come home to ourselves in a new way - walking along the road with Jesus and being renewed by his presence. It's time to allow ourselves to be healed and blessed.*

After the Paris Terrorist Attacks:

Quoting Warsan Shire, the Somali-British writer and poet –
Later that night

*I held the atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the
whole world
and whispered,
Where does it hurt?
It answered,
Everywhere, everywhere, everywhere.*



Jesus the Boy –Daniel Bonnell

The question, “Where does it hurt?” can apply not just to the atlas, the world, but to each one of us, to our sisters in community, to our community as a whole, to those who come here for a retreat, to our families – we could go on widening the circle. If the words of the poem were expanded, we could easily ask, “Who hurts?” And the answer would be “Everyone, everyone, everyone.

I invite each of us to ask the question: Where does it hurt? Where do I hurt? What pains me? Where do I feel vulnerable, afraid, broken? Where do I need God’s mercy in my life now? In naming those hurts, let us open them to God, thus allowing the fullness of God’s mercy to meet us and anoint us.

Pentecost 2016:

During the final week leading up to Pentecost, we heard some inspiring Patristic readings. Let us reflect on some of what we heard:

St. Basil the Great: Like the sunshine which permeates all the atmosphere, spreading over land and sea, and yet is enjoyed by each person as though it were for her alone, so the Spirit pours forth her grace in full measure, sufficient for all, and yet is present as though exclusively to each one.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: There is a new kind of water...living, leaping water, welling up for us. Just as the tree puts forth roots when it is watered so we too put forth roots in holiness when watered by the Holy Spirit.

June 25:

Building on the words of the author Clariss Pinkola Estes, in the book by Judy Cannato, “Radical Amazement”, Mother Abbess expanded thus:

Be spark-throwers. We all know that at times we struggle to light up but...we can take heart from the characters of the Gospel stories.

Each of them struggled at times, and no doubt, it was in those times that they supported each other; when one was down, the fire of the other urged them on. Let us, when we are down, look to others in the community, draw near to them, stretch out our hands and hearts towards them and feed from their warmth.



The Beautiful Mess –David Bonnell

In response to: *Vultum Dei Quarere* of Pope Francis.

The Church, through its latest document to enclosed nuns is bringing us back to our defining call of the Benedictine life: the true seeking of God. This document tells us to “exclusively seek the face of God”, and “to find and contemplate God in the heart of the world”. Let us take note of the first word of our Rule: “listen carefully”... “listen with the ear of your heart”.

*Wishing you the grace of a
light-filled Christmas!
May the Star of Christmas lead you on your
journey through another Year.*



Daniel Bonnell

*Thank you for your prayers throughout the
year and the many ways you
enrich our lives.
Blessings from all of us
in the Community of Jamberoo Abbey.*