

FCJnews

Newsletter of Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus
Province of Asia-Australia
Spring 2010



Celebration and thanks to Sr Barbara Brown-Graham

from FCJ Sisters and
Companions in Mission

“Your great availability
for mission has been an
INSPIRATION to us all.
WHATEVER has been
asked of you,
or whatever SACRIFICES
have been entailed,
you have responded
with OPENNESS
and GENEROSITY.”



Welcome
to Sr Judith
Routier fcJ

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That they
may face the
rising sun

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Genazzano FCJ College
Reconciliation Covenant
– Fire Carrier Program

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WELCOME TO SR JUDITH ROUTIER FCJ
THE NEW PROVINCIAL

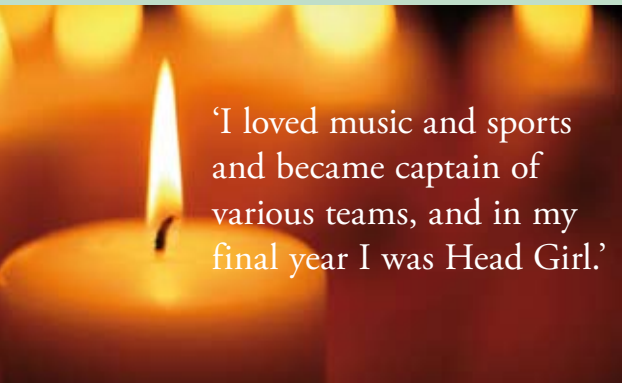


Born and raised in Jersey, in the Channel Islands, I attended the local primary school. A French priest, who taught us catechism, arranged for a scholarship at FCJ convent for my secondary schooling. I loved music and sports and became captain of various teams, and in my final year I was Head Girl. When I joined the FCJs I had to leave my beloved island and go to England, but I had the joy of returning to make my first vows in 1974.

I received a Bachelor of Education degree from Manchester University and then taught in a primary school in London for six years. In 1984 I went to Sierra Leone in West Africa, where I taught in a secondary school and was later appointed Diocesan Catechetics Coordinator. I was also involved in a Development Education Training program and after the war broke out in 1990 I was asked to be Diocesan Development Coordinator. Unfortunately the situation deteriorated so much that in 1995 we had to leave the country. The following year I worked as a liaison with Sierra Leone for Concern Universal, a development agency near London. After this I completed a Masters in Applied Theology, and in 1998 was missioned to the Philippines.

Initially I worked with a cooperative in mountain villages, but moved to Maasin in 2000 where I worked for the diocese, training facilitators for Basic Ecclesial Communities and planning pastoral activities for the diocese and the parishes.

I began my term of office as Provincial of the Asia-Australia Province on 1 July 2010.



Celebration and thanks *continued from front cover*

This 'thank you' address was given by Maureen Martin fcJ

'You can take the girl out of the country, but you cannot take the country out of the girl.'

Barbara, it is my pleasure and privilege to express our gratitude to you for all you have done for us and all you have been to us during your eight years as Provincial.

I can imagine it was rather a daunting task, after your many years in Indonesia, to take on the leadership of the Province with the prospect of a new configuration: Asia and Australia coming together as one Province. You needed to prepare our Sisters for this challenge. You had to encourage each one to accept the proposal and build up relationships and companionship between Sisters of very different cultures. I'm sure that we would all agree that you were the right person to make this happen, and you made it happen most successfully! It has been one of the greatest blessings for us here in Australia to see as part of our Province these young Sisters, full of life and energy, who have taken on our spirit, who have enthusiasm for their ministries, who are committed to making the Society known and loved wherever they can, and who bring us new life and a future, even though we are all moving on!

Another very significant achievement during your term as Provincial was the establishment of the Ward-d'Hoüet Board, which had long been in the planning for our ministry of education. With the co-operation of others you are able to see this Board now in operation, under the name of the FCJ/Loreto National Education Board. Under your leadership also, FCJ College Benalla is about to become an incorporated body, as Genazzano College has been for a number of years.

Shortly we will all sing a song that brings in many aspects of your life as our Provincial leader. But one thing that stands out is your unfailing good humour and cheerfulness! Whatever burdens of leadership you carried, these were never imposed on those with whom you lived and worked. In this you certainly earned our admiration! You have the ability to brighten any gathering with your presence, which will certainly be missed at the Province Centre, as will your passing visits to the Richmond community, as you waved or knocked on the window en route to the composting bin to keep the worms well fed!

The saying is, 'You can take the girl out of the country, but you cannot take the country out of the girl'. You are never happier than when you are pruning, planting, picking flowers or working the soil! Your culinary efforts are second to none – scones, soups, jams and other titbits! These treats will be much missed by those who have benefited from them!

Your great availability for mission has been an inspiration to us all. Whatever has been asked of you, or whatever sacrifices have been entailed, you have responded with openness and generosity! Your companionship with Jesus, your family (your first formators), your FCJ sisters and others is paramount in your life, and your trust in God working through you is always evident!

So as you come to the end of your term of office, Barbara, know that our hearts are full of gratitude to you for the wonderful years of dedicated service you have given to the Province.



Maureen Martin fcJ and Barbara Brown-Graham fcJ

Parish Ministry



Helen Buckley fcJ

In February 2009, I joined the staff at the Richmond Catholic Parish as a Pastoral Associate. From 1976 to 1996, I taught in various schools and from 1997 to 2003 I worked in reception at ConneXions, a program of Jesuit Social Services caring for young

people with drug and alcohol addiction and subsequent mental illness.

In 2005 I was fortunate to be accepted into the residential program at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, where I completed three units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). From 2006 to 2008 I was a pastoral worker at Cabrini Hospital Malvern.

It is a privilege to be part of a great team at Richmond, ably led by the Parish Priest, Father Stan Lim SJ. My role is varied and I enjoy the different areas that are part of my ministry. Father Stan believes that we have a responsibility to look after the elderly and sick members of the parish who can no longer make their way to the church and who have contributed to the parish for many years. I visit elderly parishioners in their homes and those who have had to leave the parish to reside in nursing homes and hostels. On Fridays I work in Epworth Hospital Richmond taking communion to the Catholic patients. I also visit members of the Sudanese community in the Elizabeth Street flats and have recently joined a group that is teaching Sudanese mothers how to read to their pre-school children.

Another enjoyable part of my ministry is the parish sacramental program for First Reconciliation and First Communion for children who do not attend Catholic schools is. It gives me the opportunity to put my 'old' teaching skills to practice!

Sr Helen Buckley fcJ



Popular Helen Buckley fcJ

Palliative Care



Benedicta Quinlan fcJ

My ministry is in palliative care in the western suburbs of Melbourne as a member of the Mercy Palliative Care Team. The mission at Mercy Palliative Care (MPC) is to follow Jesus in His mission of mercy through the delivery of health, aged care and community service. MPC is a not-for-profit, home-based palliative care service which provides free professional support to patients, families and carers.

Mercy Palliative Care and the Royal District Nursing Service work together to assist people to remain at home if they wish.

At Mercy we care for the whole person: physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially. We care for patients of all ages, cultures, creeds and nationalities. Part of my role is to network with these diverse groups to meet the spiritual needs of patients and to keep them connected to their spiritual roots.

We care for around 300 patients and in the past three months the team has travelled over 51,000 kilometres visiting patients and families. This represents 7.5 trips to Perth! Alongside the nursing staff we have an Allied Health Team, which provides practical and emotional/social care. This team offers counselling, music therapy, pastoral care and grief counselling. We also have about 100 valued, dedicated and committed volunteers.

After the death of a loved one the family is offered bereavement support. I participate through support groups, information sessions, individual counselling and memorial services.

My privileged role in pastoral care is one of companionship and accompanying the terminally ill and their families in the final days of a loved one's earthly journey, to bring comfort and hope for the future. It is a time of touching the sacred within, 'God is touching us'.

When a person is ill he or she has time to reflect on their life. They can often be disturbed by some of the things they did or did not do during their life. Many patients and family members find it helpful to have someone 'outside their circle' to speak with and share their thoughts, concerns and fears.

An Australian man I met in a nursing home, who was not a Catholic, asked if I could get a Vietnamese priest to visit him. He had fought in Vietnam and wanted to ask forgiveness of a Vietnamese representative for the things he had done to the Vietnamese people during the war, as he realised the people he fought against were just like him, following orders. They were people who had families suffering because of the war, children left without fathers and wives without husbands.

I was able to grant his wish. Two days later he died peacefully.

My role is to meet the people where they are at and allow them to confide in me, knowing that they will not be judged in any way. Confidentiality is paramount in all our work. I thank my God for the many blessings, gifts and opportunities I have been given to enable me to walk with so many beautiful people as they draw closer to their God to a new and wonderful life free from pain and suffering.

Sr Benedicta Quinlan fcJ

'God is touching us.'

Getting to know Sr Denise Mulcahy



Angel Denise

Big sister Betty watches over the Angel

Name:	Denise Mulcahy fcJ
Family:	Fourth of five children
Place of Birth:	Brighton, Victoria
Education:	Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Arts

'I came to an even greater love of the FCJ charism, and to a deeper understanding of its relevance for the church and the world.'

All my schooling was at Genazzano FCJ College, Kew, known at that time as Genazzano Convent. My earliest remembrance of school was being an angel in a nativity play, dressed in white, with white wings almost bigger than myself!

I became aware of a call to the FCJ way of life when I was 12, but it was almost 10 years later before I entered the novitiate. Whilst I may have envisioned religious life as a life of prayer, of living in community, and engaged in teaching (hopefully piano teaching), I soon embarked on a different journey of ministry, which has given me a kaleidoscope of opportunities, and has resulted in my living away from Australia for many years.

The most memorable years of ministry for me have been the years when I was a formator (even though this role was demanding at times), and the longer period in the ministry of general secretary. In the latter appointment, after the initial steep learning curve, I came to an even greater love of the FCJ charism, and to a deeper understanding of its relevance for the church and the world.

As general secretary, I was not only enabled to acquire new skills and gain new experiences, but I was also stretched and challenged by the demands of ministry. I loved the variety of work that made its way to my desk, as well as the wealth of contacts over the years, whether by phone, e-mail, or through attendance at numerous meetings and gatherings.

A chance remark by a friend attending a concert urged me to audition for a local small choir, and singing in this choir, and playing for many rehearsals and sometimes for the concert performances, was a great joy for me for many years. Contact with choir members led to requests to play the organ for church services on a regular basis in the area, not only for the Catholic Church, but also for the Anglican and the United Reformed Churches.

Back permanently in Australia now, and after a delightful semester auditing courses at the Adelaide College of Divinity, I am living in the FCJ house in Richmond. One of the ministries that has opened out for me is working as a volunteer doing secretarial work in the office for the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), and thus I am actively engaged in a justice issue highlighted in the FCJ General Chapter Decree 2008.



Denise in a familiar role, playing the organ

The Genazzano FCJ College Reconciliation Covenant – Fire Carrier Program



The Fire Carriers symbol at Genazzano FCJ College

At each assembly at Genazzano FCJ College the gathered school community acknowledges the land on which the Wurundjeri people are the original custodians. Throughout the curriculum, in liturgical celebrations and particularly with the Year 10 Kimberley Exchange program, Genazzano students are reminded that all inhabitants share a love of this land and a wish to live in harmony and understanding. The students learn about the sacred tie of 'country', which is earthed in each Indigenous soul. They learn that the Indigenous connection to land, as hearth and home, is central to identity.

When former prime minister, Kevin Rudd, made his historic 'Sorry' speech on 13 February 2008, it was a watershed moment in the history of Australia, a moment charged with poignancy for citizens, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. In this national apology to the native peoples of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands the seeds were sown for a greater acknowledgement of the misdeeds that were perpetrated on the original inhabitants by our colonial forebears in the mistaken notion of Terra Nullius.



A message stick in the chapel is a constant reminder that more needs to be done for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Together with the Genazzano and Australian flags, the Aboriginal flag flies high in the school grounds, also a reminder that the commitment to reconciliation is at the core of the college's endeavours. To this end Genazzano, in collaboration with the Catholic Education Office Melbourne, The Opening the Doors Foundation and the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, have recently initiated the Genazzano Reconciliation Covenant

to carry and pass on the flame of reconciliation. Broadly, the aim of the covenant is to:

- learn about Aboriginal spirituality (reflection)
- demonstrate an awareness of cultural perspectives (learning)
- participate in practical and justice activities (action).

One of the practical actions of this covenant was the recent commissioning ceremony of the students selected to become Fire Carriers. The potent and universal symbol of fire was used to commission the students to carry out the message of practical reconciliation in their daily lives and in the wider community.

Vicki Walker, from the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, spoke of the importance of keeping the flame alive, so that the many Indigenous stories are acknowledged as central to the beating heart of this continent. She reminded the audience that fire is at the heart of Aboriginal culture: it is the symbol for calling people together.

Indigenous students stood proudly on the stage, aware that their heritage was truly being celebrated. Each one of them is a fire carrier of their own heritage, but on this day a number of other students were publicly recognised as Genazzano's keepers of the flame. These students recited a blessing prayer that is over 40,000 years old: it comes from the people of the Kimberley and invokes the Spirit of Fire to bless the bearers.

At Genazzano, 'sorry' is more than a word; it is an action. Reconciliation is a lived reality in the students' lives as they learn to honour and appreciate our Indigenous peoples, their stories, spirit and culture, as central to the Australian story.

Ann Rennie

'She reminded the audience that fire is at the heart of Aboriginal culture: it is the symbol for calling people together.'



Benalla comes to Melbourne

In the last week of Term 2 the Year 9 students of FCJ Benalla travelled down the Hume Highway to sister school, Genazzano FCJ College, in Melbourne. The trip was the culmination of many months of planning — a response to an earlier brief visit from Genazzano girls on their way to camp at Harrietville, in north-east Victoria.

At its heart the trip aimed to foster the relationship between the two schools and a greater awareness of the similarities in both schools, even though their locations and settings differ significantly. After more than 110 years of mutual existence the two schools, thanks to this year's trip, are much more aware of each other in tangible ways.

The trip was also an opportunity for students at both schools to develop personal relationships with each other. Many Genazzano families offered a great welcome, opening their homes to the unknown boys and girls of FCJ Benalla. A variety of activities ran over the two days, which allowed the students to get to know one another better, as well as explore the aspects of their schooling experience that they would like to share with the wider members of the Genazzano community.

The students made many new friends and had to bid a sad farewell as the Benalla students departed for home. The thought on many students' minds seemed to be, if only we could do it again.



Year 9 students at Benalla and Genazzano join together

Alumni reunion – Sunday 29 October 2010

10.45am Mass at St Joseph's Church

1.00pm Dinner at the Bowling Club

2.00pm Meeting at the Bowling Club

2.30pm Tour of the College including the new VCE Centre



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FCJ Missions

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E-mail address: If you have an e-mail address please send it to the Province Office, secretary@fcjasau.org.au