



COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY NAME



Winter 2021
Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE...
we find out about a new Julian group, and look back upon our Community's work in Papua New Guinea.

Contents:

| | |
|--|---|
| Letter from Sister Carol | 2 |
| Questions or Ideas? | 2 |
| From the Archives: CHN in Papua New Guinea | 3 |
| Oblates' News | 4 |
| Associates' News | 4 |
| Friends and Companions of Julian in Australia | 5 |
| Reflections: • Autumn—harvest, letting go | 7 |
| • The river of life | 7 |
| 'New in the Library' | 8 |
| Prayer days 2021 | 8 |

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Photography: Sr Avrill CHN,
Philip Harvey, Dennis Mills, Amanda Witt

The Mary Garden

Inspired to create a 'prayer garden' of beauty and privacy, Kezha created our 'Mary Garden'. His design incorporates good shade for our hot summer days and recycled materials from our old garden, including an archway, with the native *Wonga Wonga Vine* gradually climbing its way around.

Plants include the exotic *Canna Lily*, from the only genus of flowering plants in the family *Cannaceae*. It would have travelled here via Europe from its native South America. Others include the *Duxfield Blue* which will put on a spectacular display of violet spikes of flowers from late spring.

Kezha, originally from Nagaland in northeast India, is the Chaplain for our Spirituality Centre and our head gardener. He has recently completed his PhD and has served as a missionary and a lecturer. "To me, any kind of work is ministry," he says, "I believe in working in peace and harmony for the betterment of people."

The presence of the Mary statue and the beauty of this little private garden point us to God. As Kezha says, "Just as the wind blows, God is present everywhere, not just in the church."

Throughout history, we have used art to help biblical characters come to life, to tell

their stories through statues, paintings and stained-glass windows. The work of skilled artisans was how the average person learnt these, as most people were unable to read and write until the 1900s. Nowadays, images such as the Mary statue offer us a focal point for prayer and reflection.

As you rest on the garden bench, you may like to reflect upon Mary's extraordinary personal journey.

A young unmarried woman is visited by an angel, in the middle of the night who tells her she will become pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Realising the privilege of this announcement, she sang a beautiful song to God.

Let's consider the events surrounding the birth of her child: the steadfast support of her fiancé Joseph who does not desert her, her cousin Elizabeth who knows who her unborn child will be, the story told by visiting shepherds and great Magi from the East. Then there were the strange words of the elderly Anna and Simeon at her baby's dedication: a sword would pierce her very soul.

Mary and Joseph endured much during those early years. Travelling over 150 km

Continued on page 6



Before—a solitary Mary on the lawn.

After— the 'Mary Garden', private and beautiful.



Dear friends,

After losing a whole year it is strange to be back to normal, whatever that is for each one of us. I am sure we all hold in our prayers the people of India, Brazil, USA and other countries as they battle to control the COVID virus. Some of our Sisters have had their first injection and others have appointments in the near future.

A number of our Jessie Traill paintings were included in a recent exhibition at Brighton Town Hall. It was called, *Her Own Path*, bringing together the works of four early 20th century women artists—Margaret Baskerville, Jessie Traill, Norah Gurdon, and Janet Cumbræ-Stewart, all of whom have links to Bayside, and were trailblazers in their own way. Through innovation and tenacity, they had success in their craft at a time when men dominated the field. I did not manage to see it but I heard it was very good.

An Ecumenical Conference in Canberra is being organised in November by the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture entitled '*Ancient Futures: the Renewal of Religious Life in the Australian Church.*' Three of our sisters are planning to attend. There will be speakers from traditional Religious Communities and from new Emerging Communities as we all discern the future to which the Holy Spirit is calling us.

Sr. Valmai and I had a very happy visit to Adelaide to catch up with our Oblates and Associates there. One of our Oblates, Prue Donovan, has organised a Program called The

Quickest Warmth Program which is a wonderful support for many people. Prue is prepared to come to Cheltenham to speak with our Oblates, Associates and other interested people about it, which I think would be a great idea. The date for the meeting will be on the website when we organise it. One of our Oblates, Jenny, returned with us to stay as an *Oblate in Residence*, a program we hope will be used by other Oblates. Jenny has an article in this newsletter.

Our Spirituality Centre continues to attract a number of groups and individuals; in fact we are finding more people are asking for time out especially using the Hermitages. The team would like to hear from small groups who may wish to use some space during the week rather than weekends which fill quickly. Liz has produced updated pamphlets for the Spirituality Centre and is now updating our Community leaflet, as our move to Esther House impacted so many aspects of our lives, including change of address. We have been living in Esther House for over three years and I thank God for the guidance we have received for our lives together and that of the ministries of our Community. We continue to seek that guidance for the future that all we do may be for His glory and the spreading of his Gospel.

My love and prayers to you all

Carol CHN

Do you have a Question or Idea for us?



Would you like to pose a question? The best ones would be of a spiritual nature; not theological or controversial ones, please.

Or, perhaps you have an idea for our newsletter? A new topic or other suggestion?

Or a short article you would like to offer us? Please keep this to a maximum of 500 words and include a photograph, if possible. (Please note: not all articles will be published.)

Send your questions, ideas, suggestions and articles to our editor Liz Johnstone on ljizjohnstone@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

From the Archives: CHN in Papua New Guinea

On 21st January 1951, the first small band of Sisters from CHN arrived in Papua. This was a tragic day for the country as Mount Lamington erupted, killing thousands.



Holy Name School, 1960's

for the missionary women in Dogura. They saw a far more pressing need: there was no secondary education for girls. They persuaded the bishop to permit them, somewhat reluctantly, to establish Holy Name School.

The Sisters encouraged the girls to achieve their potential. This was not popular with the boys and the school aroused the suspicions of Papuan men. Sister Faith persevered, with a co-operative and creative approach to the task. The school flourished and grew, with significant academic success. Indeed, many of the women leaders in the country were educated at Holy Name School.



Headmistresses

Sister Hilary served as a teacher there in the sixties, when Sister Margaret Anne was headmistress.

CHN withdrew from the school in 1976, handing over to indigenous management. It is now co-educational, with about 700 students and 28 teaching staff.

In 1960, two girls from the school approached the headmistress, Sister Faith, to request a religious community for women in Papua. She felt the Papuan church was not yet ready, so the girls trained as teachers.



Cooking PNG style

Their interest remained strong and in 1963 Sister Faith, then Mother Superior of CHN, helped them to establish a simple Community on the

outskirts of Popondetta. The idea was not to replicate CHN but to be a Melanesian community.

The Isuga people generously gave them land at Popondetta, a good food-growing area. The Isuga and Killerton people cleared the land, made gardens and built a small bush dwelling. In 1964, Sister Helen and the first aspirant moved in. Life was very cramped and primitive, and they grew their own vegetables and cooked on an outside fire. More young women joined, some from the Torres Strait Islands. Local Franciscan brothers built a chapel for them.

The two-storey Convent was built in 1968 and is still in use today. In 1971, Sister Helen returned to Australia, leaving Sister Valmai in charge. The policy was to gradually enable the CV Sisters to become self-sufficient. When Sister Valmai left in 1978, CV was under the leadership of their own elected Guardian.

They became known as the 'Community of the Visitation', recalling Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth during her pregnancy. Their mission is ministering to women, children and families. They are known for their generous hospitality.

Sister Avrill spent three years at the Community helping Sister Valmai, as well as later teaching for a short time at Holy Name School. Sister Josephine Margaret has also served in PNG, before and after joining CHN.

CHN continues to have a strong link with the CV Sisters and exchange visits whenever we can. These visits are always mutually beneficial.

Sister Carol, Valmai & Andrea celebrate 50 years with Sister Beverley & the CV Sisters, 2014

These visits are always mutually beneficial.

These visits are always mutually beneficial.



Original chapel, now destroyed by white ants



The convent



Sisters Carol, Valmai & Andrea celebrate 50 years with Sister Beverley & the CV Sisters, 2014



OBLATES' NEWS by Sister Valmai



The Victorian/Melbourne Oblates have been rejoicing that their meeting programme has been able to begin again this year. On the 23rd February, the Oblates' lunch, postponed from 2020, began the year with a very happy time of fellowship. On 20th March, the Reverend

Robyn Boyd led the Lenten Quiet Day. Both of these were written up in previous Newsletters.

However the Oblates/Associates combined meeting, planned for 5th June, has had to be cancelled because of the present and unforeseen lock down, making us realise how fragile our plans are still in 2021. This has now been rescheduled for Saturday 26th June and Bishop Brad Billings is still able to be the guest speaker.

Over a weekend in April, Sister Carol and I

made a very enjoyable visit to Adelaide to spend time with our Oblates and Associates there. We both enjoyed the hospitality of Oblates for the two nights we were there, Carol with Jenny at Burnside and I with the O'Donovan's at Evanston Park. The Saturday spent with the Oblates and Associates was a very happy time with worship, lunch and a sharing of news.

On our way out of Adelaide on Sunday we had a treasured time with Bishop David and Oblate Marion McCall. Knowing how very ill David was, we were pleased that he was able to chat with us for the time we were there. Sadly, it was only a short time after that he died. His funeral at St. Peter's Cathedral was a simple and moving tribute from his own family and his church family.

Oblate Jenny Francis returned to Melbourne with us and spent 4 weeks sharing our life in Esther House as a first Oblate in Residence. Her account of this time is below.

Being an Oblate in Residence, by Oblate Jenny

When Sr Valmai spoke about a new venture, Oblates in Residence, I promptly said, I'd love to do that! I had had a longing to reconnect with the Sisters: it's like going home to see the family.

The Sisters welcomed me with open arms and gave me a comfortable room in Esther House. I enjoyed wonderful meals, even bread-and-butter pudding! It took several days to settle in to the routine of four Offices a day, plus Mass. Living with the Sisters is different from visiting as a guest. I looked in awe at them one day in chapel and thought, "How do you do this plus other work you are involved in?" I'm inspired by their dedication to this life of Prayer and Hospitality to many different people. It is the hallmark of CHN, to care for others who often return time and time again.

I've helped with the dishes and answering the phone. I expected to do more but the Sisters allowed me to 'soak' up the atmosphere, especially in chapel and have time with God in a way that one doesn't at home.

Highlights include church at St. Matthews and walks in the gardens – the labyrinth, eucalypts beginning to flower and the Mary Garden, statue now cleaned and the garden turned into a little grotto. I've been shopping with a Sister and enjoyed the

companionship of the Sisters.

This experience has allowed me to see more clearly and revalue what I do

have - caring neighbours who help each other in the lockdown, friends at church, and phone and email, to keep in touch with others. Waving to someone across the road and making sure the ones who live alone are safe and have what they need. I've enjoyed driving people to appointments. And been repaid by a homemade cake or a cup of coffee. It's a continuation of the hospitality I've been given at CHN, from what I have learnt and experienced here in the name of Jesus.

Being an Oblate in Residence has renewed me in my prayer life and given me time to reflect during this period of uncertainty about the future for myself and my family, due to the pandemic. I know I need to rely on God, who is with me and those I love. This strengthens me to continue, despite what life gives me and when it all seems too hard.

The generosity of the Sisters, to allow me to share their life, is truly a gift and I would encourage others to try it. Thank you.





Associates' News by Sister Avrill

On 10th April about ten Associates eagerly gathered for their first Quiet Day since April 2019. Our leader was the Revd. Colleen Clayton, Vicar of St Matthew's, Cheltenham. Colleen's theme was "Seeking Treasure", and she did indeed give us much treasure to ponder on over the course of four short reflective sessions followed by questions for meditation.

Some of you who were not able to be there may like to follow the pattern of the day in your own homes.

The first session was called "**Treasure in a field**" and the scripture passage on which it was based was Matthew 13: 44-46, about the treasure hidden in the field and the pearl of great price. After Colleen's reflection, the questions which she left with us were: 1) Do you know what the treasure is? 2) Does knowing make you more willing to give up what is necessary to buy the field? 3) What is the field? 4) What is the risk involved? 5) What is your experience of the Kingdom?

The second session, "**The gift of the magi**", was based on Matthew 6: 19-21 which ends with: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". The questions for reflection were: 1) What is your greatest treasure? 2) Where did you find it? 3) When did you realise you had discovered it? 4) What do you do with your treasure? 5) Under what circumstances would you give it up?

For the third session, "**Where your treasure is**", we revisited the scripture passages already studied, and the questions were: 1) Where is your heart? 2) What is worth giving your heart to? 3) What is the Kingdom of heaven for you? 4) Where have you glimpsed it? 5) We pray for God's Kingdom to come. For what are you praying? 6) What do you do to make God's Kingdom come?



Revd. Colleen Clayton

In the fourth session, "**Treasure in clay jars**", we explored 2 Corinthians 4: 7-10. Colleen gave us some modelling clay with which to make our own clay jars, and we found that most of our efforts contained cracks. Then we reflected on these questions: 1) Where are the cracks in you? 2) What is your response to those cracks? 3) Can you imagine how your cracks might become things of strength and beauty? 4) Can you imagine how your cracks might let God's light in?

A very fruitful day concluded with the opportunity to share our insights.

Avrill CHN

If anyone has not yet booked in to our Associates' Retreat from 10th – 12th September and would like to do so, there are still places available. When booking, please supply your phone no. as well as your name. The cost is a suggested donation of \$210 for the weekend.

Rest in Peace

On 30th May, 2021, our Associate, **Beryl Barter**, passed peacefully to her rest. Beryl had been a CHN Associate for 28 years, 13 of which were spent as Secretary, a role she filled diligently until 2017. The Associates were a very important part of her life and she faithfully attended meetings until prevented by ill health, first open heart surgery and then cancer. As she grew frailer her son lived with her and cared for her until she went into palliative care. She remained cheerful and happy, and was always glad to receive phone calls. Physically small and slight, she had a stout spirit and a strong faith.

May she rest in peace.

On 13th June, 2021, our Priest Associate, the Revd. **Trish Byrne**, died after a long illness bravely borne.

Trish was ordained in 2010 and served first as Assistant Curate and then as Assistant Priest at St Augustine's, Mentone until 2017, after which she continued to serve with Permission to Officiate for a time as her health allowed. A very faithful priest, maintaining her spiritual life was of great importance to her, and she used to come to CHN every month for a Quiet Day, usually spent in one of our hermitages, as well as regularly celebrating the Eucharist for the Sisters. She was admitted as a CHN Associate in 2008.

May she rest in peace.

The Mary Garden *(continued from front page)*

during the pregnancy, for a Roman census, they found no place to stay. So, Mary had to give birth in a stable, laying her newborn babe into an animal trough. Learning of an impending massacre, the family fled to Egypt, in the night.

Losing the 12-year-old Jesus in a busy festival in the city of Jerusalem, they searched anxiously for him for three days, only to find him sitting amongst the teachers in the temple. Mary's response was to treasure these things in her heart as she watched him grow older and wiser.

She was with Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, at a wedding in Cana. (John 2:1-10) When they ran out of wine, Mary appealed to her son. Jesus then quietly performed his first miracle, turning about 700 litres of water into fine wine.

It seems Mary carried a life-long stigma that Jesus was illegitimate (see Mark 6:3; John 8:41). We assume that she became a widow before Jesus' ministry because only Mary and Jesus' brothers are mentioned at the wedding, not Joseph. We know, from all four gospels, that Mary had four more sons and also some daughters. How did she feel when they seriously misunderstood Jesus, tried to restrain him, dishonoured him at home and did not believe in him? (Mark 3:20-21; 6:3-6; John

7:5)

There was the day when Jesus was talking to a crowd, and Mary and the family wanted to speak to him. How did she feel when Jesus responded, "*Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?*" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "*Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*" (Matthew 12:48-50)

Surely the worst moment of her life was at the foot of Jesus' cross as he died an early, unjust and excruciating death? Was this the sword that pierced her soul?

Mary was among the disciples in the upper room after Jesus ascended into heaven. She was among the 120 who were baptized in the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 1:14-15; 2:1-4)

John took Mary into his home after Jesus died (John 19:26-27) Many scholars believe Mary lived out her years in John's home, either in Jerusalem or in Ephesus. Perhaps she was part of the Ephesian church where young Timothy ministered?

There is much to ponder. Mary's humble and obedient faith is a model for all of us. Her journey of faith was not without struggle and pain.

Friends and Companions of Julian in Australia

Friends and Companions of Julian in Australia is a newly formed group for those interested in sharing readings and reflections on the work of Dame Julian of Norwich. Central to its formation is the Revd Barbara Lumley, a retired minister from the Newcastle Diocese. She had conducted a Julian Meeting for contemplative prayer, which ran for 16 years, and this new group was her way of reconnecting with the conversation. Contact was made early last year with Howard Green, Secretary of the Friends of Julian in Norwich. He wrote to all the Friends in Australia, encouraging them to organize an Australian group.

Most Friends who joined wanted some sort of reflection about Julian or her teachings. The group was fortunate to have Sheila Upjohn belonging to the group, an important author, born and bred in Norwich, who has spent much of her working life promoting Julian through speaking, art and writing. The group's first meeting was via Zoom on the 9th of November 2020, with about a dozen in attendance. The Friends had two recent celebrations of Julian's Feast Day, the 8th of May in the Anglican year. One celebration was in

Brunswick, a service led by the vicar, Bishop Lindsay Urwin. The other one was at Christ Church St. Laurence in Sydney led by its rector, Fr. Daniel Dries. Both services used hymns written over the years, inspired by Julian. Sheila Upjohn gave a talk about Julian at the end of the Sydney service.

The Friends now have a monthly Zoom meeting, using the first Monday of each month. If you are interested in joining the Australian Friends of Julian, or seek further information, you are welcome to contact Barbara Lumley via email: bmlumley9@gmail.com

For information on the UK Friends, visit www.julianofnorwich.org



Statue of Julian of Norwich, West Front of Norwich Cathedral, sculptor David

Autumn, a season of harvest and letting go: a reflection

Reflect upon your recent time of lockdown restrictions.

Who or what helped and nurtured you? People? Events? Rhythm of life? Books?

Can you recognize any growth or maturing in your relationships, and in your understanding of people and situations?

What harvest do you bear, that you can further develop, that you can share with others?

Do you understand yourself better? Do you need to know more? Are there things you hope to let go of, to be freed from?

Bible references which may be useful:

- Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8
- Isaiah 61: 1-4
- Jeremiah 17: 7-8
- Matthew 13: 23
- John 12: 24
- John 15: 1-17
- Psalm 23: 1-3

Which passage has a message for you?

Go for a walk outside.
Allow yourself to be found by something.



Shirley Hirst from Pixabay

Spend time contemplating this object. Listen to what it has to tell you - is there something you are drawn to at that moment, that impressed or impacted you? Hold it and look at it, 'hear' what it's saying.

Consider *'What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?'* (Psalm 116:112)

Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection, April 2021, by Sr. Josephine Margaret, CHN

The River of Life: a reflection



Photo by Pigsah Davidson

The River of Life

She flows gently, following her course, content, giving life to others.

Disaster! She hits rocky ground, breaks into pieces, loses direction.

Lovingly she is guided back, slowly becoming whole and continues her journey, sharing herself.

As she enters the desert, life is drained.

All hope seems gone. Will she survive?

Carol CHN

We all have a journey in life whether we are Christian or a non-believer and each person's journey is unique to them. There are the rocky times and disasters but also times of peace and still waters. Our journey is one of growth. As Christians we know that we have a God who is with us through all those rocky times. We wish sometimes that he would just take them away and make it all better but our God is one of love and wants to see us grow into a fuller person and unless we have these difficult times we will never grow.

Consider your own journey
Where were the rocky times, the calm waters?
How have you grown through these?

"When you pass through the waters I will be with you." (Isaiah 43: 11)

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Excerpt from Day of Prayer and Reflection, May 2021, by Sr. Carol, CHN

New in the Library by our Librarian, Philip Harvey

'The Ministry of Women in the New Testament' by Dorothy Lee (Baker Academic, 2021). At the launch of this book at St Mary's North Melbourne in April, Bishop Kate Prowd identified reasons why it needed to be written now. To begin with, because of what we know today about the place and role of women in the early church and throughout church history. Recent scholarship has expanded our knowledge immensely; this knowledge must be put into sensible order. Then, the book is required because of the upsurge of opposition to women's leadership.

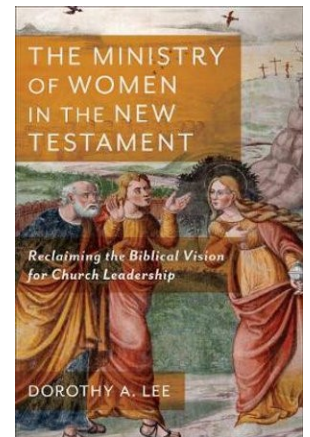
"As they say, those who forget history are destined to repeat it," she said. "We all need to be reminded of the significance of women in Jesus' own ministry, in Paul's ministry, in the early church and beyond, if we are not to fall victim to the new opposition claims that God does not authorize women in church leadership. We have to know the story, and be able to refute these spurious claims. Dorothy's book does indeed tell us this story."

The stories of the women in the New Testament are one of the inspirations and pleasures of this book. They are told in terms of their relationship to Jesus, which is one both of following (discipleship) and ministering. Their different personalities shine through. We are made to see just how many women, named and unnamed, are around Jesus; that they constitute a large proportion of his followers, many of them with

prophetic and leadership roles. Her scholarship is able to outline the variety of interpretations brought down to us by tradition, including strong affirmations as well as blind spots, biases, and downright prejudices.

Her thorough handling of recent critical developments brings us all up to speed in our understanding of the New Testament women. As well as consolidating her argument that ministry is why so many of them are there in the first place, her approach invites reflection on their lives, their meaning in the biblical context, and their all-important relationship with Jesus. She assembles a big picture of women's ministry, catholic and evangelical, while acknowledging the presence of counter arguments and the reasons for patriarchal narrative.

Evidence is then presented for women's ministry in the early church. Culture and tradition are essential factors in interpretation of Scripture, then as now. Dorothy shows how these debates are not new, like some outpouring of modern feminism alone, but have their own continuity, their own connections with the church through time focused very much on how we read the Gospels.



Days of Prayer and Reflection 2021

The Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name Invite you to Days of Prayer and Reflection at the Spirituality Centre, Cheltenham, from 10am—3 pm.

The Eucharist is celebrated at mid-day and there are opportunities to sit quietly, to use our library and to wander in the gardens.

Some input is given, and suggestions for using the silence.

BYO lunch. (Tea and coffee are provided.) There is no charge for these days but a donation towards costs is appreciated.



Be still and know that I am God.

REMAINING DATES FOR 2021 *

1 July
5 August
2 September
7 October
4 November

For further information, contact Sister Josephine Margaret, CHN, on 03 9583 2087, or by email jmwarne@bigpond.com

* Subject to COVID restrictions