



WHISPERS OF THE SPIRIT

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CHRISTMAS: LOVE INCARNATE

“What the world needs now is Love...” is a song that echoes the ache in our world for change...for a world where genuine Love is the activating factor of transformation. But...it is not merely human love and kindness for which our world yearns; rather, it is something greater, something super-natural. It is a Love that has its genesis in the Divine Love incarnated in Jesus himself.

Until all strata of humanity become transformed by a genuine love of God and others, we will see very little change in our struggling world. Still, we have many inspiring 'messengers' who sing, or have sung already, the 'song-of-God's-love-toward-humanity' among us. These singers (or saints), through their extraordinary witness of dedicated loving service to others, have made Love real and possible within our human experience. Think of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta whose total life was an expression of God's love for his suffering children. In Teresa's life, we are witnesses to a sense of fresh hope and possibility that Jesus' love does effect change in the world's approach to the most needy...and to one another. What a mystery!

Christmas takes us deep into the realms of mystery---God-becoming-one-of-us (Emmanuel). Jesus, the Divine one, in taking on our human nature and dwelling among us, reveals the loving and compassionate face of God to a troubled world. This Divine gesture of Love invites, and indeed, urges us to be more than we are, too. Truly, we are called, as Christians, to become 'Love incarnate' for our world.

Can we do this? Are we able to respond positively, wholeheartedly and faithfully to this call to love and to be ministers of love to those in our sphere...our families, cities, nation, world? It is our Christian vocation, our mission...to be one with Jesus, and, in his name, to also be LOVE INCARNATE.

*Teree Spencer,
Resident at Holy Spirit Apartments.
Aspley*



Working with the Youth in Fiji

Ilisabeta Vonokula Northern Region Youth President FIJI



It is indeed a great honor for me to contribute to this magazine and share about the Youth Ministry here in the Northern part of the Archdiocese of Suva, Fiji. The Archdiocese of Suva is divided into four regions, and they are the Western, Central Eastern and the Northern region.

The Northern region has six parishes and three pastoral areas and it is where the Holy Spirit Sisters are and where Sr Adriana is coordinating the Youth Movement at Regional level and in one of the parishes. Our Regional body was inactive for the last three years and this is when Sr Adriana was called in by the Northern Clergy to organize the youths. She started in November 2010 and here

we are in October with so many achievements and also challenges that we are still facing and trying to learn and improve as we move along.

As the Regional Youth president it wasn't an easy task to revive the regional body as the parishes were also dormant. We were very grateful to Sr Adriana who during the month of March organized a Leadership Workshop and invited all Executive Committee members from the six parishes and also the three pastoral areas. Since it was a workshop we could not accept more than 60 participants, but it was a great success with youths coming from the most remote areas of our Region. We were also able



to build up the northern youth group with a better understanding on how we were going to work together as a region and use the skills that we have learnt to help revive our parish groups. This was to be the first in our region and this was also the turning point.

Sister's idea is to empower the youths who are very fortunate now to at least be given the chance to be heard, learn, share our views and organize our parish youth groups. It is not easy because we belong to a culture where the youths are not heard and being empowered is not in the list of the upbringing.



We are often told that our time hasn't come and that simply means that you are not allowed to talk or to ask. There is also lack or no proper formation at all on Youth Ministry at all levels and this includes the Church Leaders. It has really been a big challenge but we are very grateful that we have Sr Adriana with her experience and gifts that she is sharing with us, and we still have a lot to learn in terms of her formation program for the youths. We are often afraid to commit and be consistent in the youth group as in the back of our minds we know that we don't have the support and that nobody would listen or believe in us as that saying goes that our time hasn't come.



Now it has changed. We know that now there is someone with us who is not just expecting things from us (cooking, cleaning, weeding, farming, mixing kava, etc) but also forming us with the necessary skills. We know now what is expected of us, and as we are learning, we have also started to believe in ourselves. We know now that we have to stand up, ask questions, learn and act. We know now that we do not need to wait for the future to come, since only if we live our present to the full and grab all the opportunities that come along, we will become the persons and leaders that our God, our Church and our country hope for.

Reflections on my Ministry in Papua New Guinea

Sr. Jadwiga Faliszek S.Sp.S.

It is already three years since I started my new ministry in Enga Province in Papua New Guinea. As a nurse educated in Australia, it was a big adjustment to this new environment, new people, new languages and a remote rural Health Centre.



We provide a variety of services for up to seventy inpatients at the Centre. The dominant sicknesses include tuberculosis, typhoid fever, HIV, pneumonia, malaria, skin diseases and, very often, injuries from tribal fights and domestic violence. Up to one hundred patients are treated in our clinic daily.

Our biggest concerns are for mothers and children. The maternity care and clinic services are also provided out into the villages. Screening antenatal mothers twice weekly gives us the opportunity, to prepare really assist them.



We must teach them basic hygiene, which is difficult because of lack of running water, convenient basic housing etc.

Working without a doctor is a big challenge. It calls on all our skills to be able to help our people when they are in need. Working with the local nursing staff gives me a great opportunity to learn to understand the culture better. Language is the significant barrier, but a smile or simple gesture of acceptance can work

miracles of healing. I feel that most of the people in our area really appreciate our presence and service of our sisters).

Diamond Jubilee Reflection

Sr. Kathleen Collins S.Sp.S.

Ten years ago as I wrote a reflection for my golden jubilee of religious profession, I found the words flowed from my computer. Today as I prepare for my sixtieth anniversary of profession, I find that there is only one word that keeps coming to my mind -- *mystery*. And that mystery is the secret behind the coming together of the many pieces of the jigsaw I name my life's journey. And that mystery is the God of my life.



The jigsaw continues to grow. Each piece is crafted uniquely by the love of God interacting with my responses/reactions to the myriad experiences that have formed the foundations of that jigsaw. Some of the pieces hurt, as the 'finger of God's right hand', the Holy Spirit, ensured they were placed in the right place for them. Some were inserted in a collage of dark pieces, throwing into relief -- by gentle but brilliant light -- the reality of the meaning of the journey of my life. The jigsaw is the ongoing maturing and enrichment of my life's faith journey. This jigsaw is not rectangular or square it is round as it is encircled by God's loving care for me. One day it will be finished, and faith tells me that it will be a hymn to the glory of God.

I thank God for the 60 years in which I have been blessed, guided and enriched by the missionary charism of the Servants of the Holy Spirit. In this, I have had my mind blown wide open by the multinational and multicultural experiences of community living. I thank God for the wonderful women who have been part of that journey and in their own way have helped with the crafting of the pieces of the jigsaw.



Golden Jubilee Reflection

Christa (Marie) Murphy SSpS

It's really hard to believe that I've been a Holy Spirit Missionary Sister for fifty plus years. Where did all those years go? They've gone so fast - filled with so many different experiences, with so many people, in so many places. And my deepest feeling as I think about them is *Gratitude*....my simplest prayer is *Thank you, loving God of my life*.

Thank You, God, for my beautiful, loving parents, my brothers and sister, and my big Irish clan of relatives. Thank You for my widowed and quietly wise mother, who so generously affirmed me when, at 26, I said 'I just have to give this vocation a go!' We had grown to be more like sisters over the years. 'But please don't let them send you overseas!', she said.



Thank You for the many, many women who have been part of my life since then, especially those who've challenged, supported, believed in and loved me even if we didn't agree all the time. I can never thank You enough, God, for the gift of Community for the way my sisters have helped You to 'melt and mould me' into the kind of woman You've desired me to become.

And Thank You for the multitude of experiences that have grown me, with different people in different places and cultures through challenging me, delighting me, teaching me, changing me, using me 'for your own kind purposes'. And in all, with all, and through all, it has been Your Spirit of Love and Life singing her song in me and through me, moment by moment, day by day....a Song of joyful Surrender, and all-embracing Love.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Sr Matthia, SSpS

Fifty years of many beautiful and life-giving memories!

To-day I'm looking back with a grateful heart through life's journey.

Indeed it has been a journey with its high and lows and at times not without pain, but joy was at the dawning.

To-day as at so many other times, I thank my parents for the gift of life.

For nourishing me;

especially my mother, through her deep faith, her loving care and prayerfulness, which might have instilled in me the calling to religious life.

Even so, every calling comes from God.

I thank my brothers and sisters, seven of them, who have always supported me.

A very big Thank You goes to the sisters who nourished, guided and walked with me in my early religious life.

To each and every sister who has been part of my journey to this very moment. Thank you for accepting me and allowing me to be.

Last, but not least, thank you to all my friends here in Australia and around the world. All of you have been, and still are, graced moments in my life.



For the many lives I have touched, knowingly and unknowingly, I pray for God's continued blessing and loving care.

Once again, a big Thank You to each and everyone. I hold all of you in my heart and pray that God will continue to guide, lead and bless you on your journey.

50 years, a time for celebration and thanksgiving. Please join me in my thanksgiving prayer, and with Mary, I say, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord."

With a joyful and grateful heart to God and each one of you.

Sr. Rainfredis Wehry 104 years 'Young'

Being the oldest living member of the world-wide Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters is an honor Sr. Rainfredis Wehry is very proud of. She's a peaceful soul, who's still very interested in everything that's going on around her, including all the comings and goings of the Sisters.

When she left Germany in 1932 to fulfill her dream of being a 'far-away' missionary, she expected to be there for the rest of her life. She said "Goodbye" to her loving parents and nine siblings, believing she would never see them again. Maybe because she came from such a big family, Rainfredis has always loved children, and had a special gift with them. She devoted her loving energy to the orphans who were brought to the Sisters, and relished every moment. Then she and many others were forced to leave their beloved Chinese people in late 1951.

Rainfredis was one of five Sisters who came to Australia early 1952 and all carried within them the hope of returning some day to China. That day has still not come!

She eventually did some Nursing training, and was a much appreciated Staff member of Holy Spirit Hospital, Wickham Terrace until 1965. By then, Holy Spirit Home at Aspley was up and running and needed someone like her in its Infirmary, so she moved to the Aspley Community and Nursing Staff at the Home. Being the out-going person she is, she quickly made friends and lovingly cared for the sick Residents. In the mid-eighties, she gave up active Nursing, but has been a regular Pastoral Visitor ever since (although slowing-down these days).

When you meet Sr. Rainfredis, you know she's a 'happy person'. And the roots of that happiness are found in her family story. *"We had a great family at home with ten children, a happy family, a very happy, content family"*. And deep within those roots lies a strong, simple Faith in a loving, generous God. In June 2012 she will celebrate the 80th Anniversary of her religious commitment to this loving God.





The Tertian Program

Sarita Kurikattil SSps, coordinator of the Tertianship Program, introduces the sisters in the group of 2011. Sarita is conducting her 8th such program. She cannot recall the number of nationalities she has been privileged to work with, but she is continually reminded of the universality of the Church.

There are six sisters from five different nations in this group. The richness of the national heritage brought to the group also brings its own learning processes. The inter-cultural living prepares the candidates for the missionary environment many will be involved in after their perpetual Vows.



Michaela Leifgen SSps

Michaela was born in Germany. She has an older sister and younger brother. Michaela joined a 'lay missionary' group and worked in Brazil for 8 months before entering the convent. Since becoming an SSps she has studied journalism and worked on a diocesan newspaper for 2 years. She tells us of her experience in coming to Australia; "The chance to come to Australia was given to me by the Congregation, and I enjoy it. I'm delighted especially by Australian nature, animals and landscape. I was surprised how many different cultures are living here and I am still trying to find out just what is typically 'Aussie'".

Veronica Sari, SSps

Veronica is from Madang, on the north coast of Papua New Guinea. She is the youngest of 10 siblings, all of whom are married. Following her formal education she worked as a receptionist with the Summer Institute of Linguistics for three years before entering the convent in Alexishafen near Madang. While she is enjoying the program in preparation for her final commitment she is slowly growing accustomed to the different ways of Australia.



Juliana de Andrade, SSps

Juliana says "It is a wonderful experience being in Australia. The people are very friendly and the environment is just beautiful". There are many differences from her home country, Brazil, where she was born in 1980 and where her parents and younger brother still live. Before entering the convent she worked in a pharmacy and was very active in the local parish community. The sisters she met when she was 16 years of age made a significant impression on her and she began to think about becoming a sister.



Tetiana Bogoslavets, SSpS

Tetiana was born in Ukraine in 1984. She has three sisters and no brothers. Her father is Russian Orthodox and her mother is Catholic. After secondary school she studied Physics at University. She admired the life and work of some sisters who were parish workers in her area and by the time she was 18 years of age she had decided that she was being called to a vowed life.

Debra-Mary Ncube, SSpS

After seeing the dedication of the Sister Youth co-ordinator in the Diocese in Zimbabwe where she was born, and others who gave their all to assist the less privileged she had a special Taize Prayer experience. Debra-Mary felt the call to religious life. She left her job as a sales assistant and a credit clerk in the fashion industry to join the SSpS. Of Australia she says, "I am very much mesmerized by the beauty of Australia and its people. Most of all I am enriched by the diverse cultures within the church and the wider society."



Monika Steinberger, SSpS

Monika brings several years of cross cultural living and experience to the preparation for final vows program. She spent a year as a lay person in Paraguay and three years in Papua New Guinea as a young religious. These experiences have built on her home life spent in Germany where she studied Theology and worked in Pastoral Support in the parish before answering the call to religious life. She worked in her home parish for two years as a pastoral worker. She hopes to return to Papua New Guinea after her final commitment ceremony.

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