



mfigen newsletter

OCTOBER, 2010

LIVES OF HOLINESS: “Never see a need without doing something about it.” These are the words of Sister Mary of the Cross McKillop, foundress of the sisters of St. Joseph in Australia who will be canonized the first Australian saint on October 17, 2010. Born in southeast Australia in 1842, Mary dreamt of free education for the rural poor and disadvantaged. The fulfillment of this dream lead her sisters to ministry opportunities all over Australia where they lived in shanties, tents and mud huts teaching the poorest of the poor. Dark days followed in 1871 when Mary herself was accused of insubordination and suffered excommunication by the Bishop of Adelaide. The situation actually originated when the sisters brought to awareness a sexual abuse case in the diocese. Mary serenely accepted this punishment which also caused the temporary disbanding of her community. Realizing his error in judgment the Bishop later revoked the sentence before his death less than six months later. (We hope to celebrate with all of Australia and attend the canonization Mass this month.)



Earlier this month the church also witnessed the beatification of **Blessed John Henry Newman**. This event could not help but bring to mind our own Institute’s connections with him through his relationship with Elizabeth Hayes and Elizabeth Lockhart who both came into the Catholic faith through his influence. Elizabeth Lockhart’s brother William was in fact one of the first followers of Newman. We rejoice doubly in the lives of these holy people who have been recognized by the Church.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNANCE CIRCLE MEETING: In preparation for their Gathering for discernment of new leadership our sisters in Australia will participate in a four day retreat led by the singer Monica Brown from October 11-14. Later in the month Srs. Elaine and Margaret will attend their gathering. We pray for the guidance of the Spirit, wisdom and peace for each of our sisters there.

PNG FINANCE TRIP: After the Australian Gathering, Margaret will travel to Papua New Guinea where she will meet with the sisters responsible for finance. Since the retirement of Sr. Francois Wridgway, the need was felt to seek outside assistance with the financial operations of the PNG Governance Circle. Mr. Greg Brown, a longstanding friend of the sisters and financial

advisor in the Aitape diocese has agreed to help. Margaret will meet with him, and Srs. Schol, Lorna, Jacinta, and Clara to set up the appropriate programs and clarify the methods of operation.

FORMATION EVENTS: We are happy to welcome Leah Puri who recently was accepted into the postulancy program in Aitape. Leah is a young woman from Karaitem, a village near our sisters in Lumi. Leah has been in the Come and See program since June.

Plans are also underway for Sr. Iris Chinguel, a young professed from Piura to travel to the United States for some months to learn English. When she finishes her course she will go Papua New Guinea for a period of immersion there. We are happy that the sisters in both Latin America and Papua New Guinea are working together on mission outreach between the Governance Circles.

SOUTHERN SUDAN TRIP: On Sunday the 3rd October, Srs. Elaine and Jeanette returned from a month in the Southern Sudan and Uganda where they offered discernment workshops to the Sacred Heart Sisters and met with the regional, provincial and general leadership teams in preparation for their General Chapter. This was the first meeting of its kind for this community since the Ugandan and Sudanese segments of the congregation have so often been



separated because of multiple civil wars and terrorism. It was a wonderful experience to see the enthusiasm generated by the possibility of increased involvement in their Chapter. Elaine and Jeanette have been asked to facilitate this Chapter which will take place in January 2012.

We invite each of you to join in the Sudanese Catholic Church's 101 days of prayer for peace to ready the country for the referendum vote on 9th January, 2011. At this time it is anticipated that the Southern Sudan will vote to separate from the North where Khartoum is the capital. With Juba then its center, the South will secure its status as an independent, mainly Christian, democratic country in contrast to the Islamic North.

This is the third year that we as an Institute have been involved in this outreach in the Southern Sudan. Both Patricia Cordwell from Australia and Nuala Mulleady from the US have worked with the Southern Sudan Solidarity program. As you all know Nuala's time was quickly curtailed there because of her serious fall. Since then one of the brothers has built a cement walkway from the convent to the classroom in Malakal to entice her to return!!! Both of our sisters are missed and made lasting impressions during their presence in the country.

It is interesting to note that other congregations have taken our lead and are now sending sisters for two or three months to offer some type of assistance. We met one sister from Ireland who was returning for a second stint of three months to teach teachers English. She exclaimed that this has been the best thing she has ever done in her whole religious life! (She was 70 plus!) Perhaps one or two of you might also consider giving three months to teach English there or help in some other way. Please let us know if you feel called to offer your time and talents.

The Southern Sudan Solidarity Project which we originally helped both personnel-wise and financially is off to a wonderful start now with over 20 full time religious sisters, priests and brothers. However as a personal mission outreach we would encourage you to continue searching for ways to help the indigenous group of Sacred Heart Sisters who have become our “sister” congregation. We have helped them through the retreats and workshops offered and now they are delighted to have the gift of Sr. Helen’s presence. We have never directly aided them financially since as a congregation they are able to apply for project funding for their orphanages and schools, but we have now seen that personally and in their communities, especially the formation houses, they really struggle to maintain decent accommodation and daily maintenance. Perhaps through your parish outreaches some of you might be able to encourage financial support for their needs.

HELEN NEINI: As you know at the time of our last update Sr. Helen was preparing to go to the Southern Sudan. Her arrival was during the visit of Elaine and Jeanette who were there to welcome her. Within a few days she seemed to fit right into the community, relaxed and excited about her new mission. She will



soon begin teaching

in Usuratuna School (Arabic for Holy Family) run by the Sacred Heart Sisters, a primary school of over 1000 students. English is the medium for teaching but almost the first day in the country Helen was eagerly learning a few Arabic words! Right after Helen was introduced, children began to claim her as their teacher, the boys because Sisters *always* teach the boys, the girls because she was a sister and they are all *sisters* and the primary first graders because they were *new* and Helen was also new! Helen, we know you will do a wonderful job there! (Her new email address is neinihelen@yahoo.com)

RADU AND MIRELLA: Last month just before leaving for the Sudan, we came across an older man from Eastern Europe (Radu), his 31 year old daughter (Mirella) and their German Shepherd dog staying in a small tent in the parking lot of the Panorama super market, minutes from our house. They had lost their home, relatives and all their belongings when floods swept away their village in July. To make a long story a bit shorter, we helped them out and eventually found them temporary accommodation in a guest house belonging to Franciscan Sisters nearby. The Sisters gave Mirella a small job and are in the process of getting her working papers straightened out; she is a nurse. Her father Radu is also employed there but presently is sick due to complications from a heart attack he had two years ago. Both of them are also in need of considerable dental treatment.



We have some furniture ready to give them but at the moment they have not been able to find an apartment to rent. The rooms they are in are needed by the sisters by mid October. Surely the these Franciscan Sisters have been the “inn keeper” in this Good Samaritan story, unstinting in their generosity. Now that we are back from the Sudan we will take Radu and Mirella hunting for an apartment, or at least a room to start until they are more secure. Maybe some of you might feel called to add to this Good Samaritan story and be willing to send a few dollars to help our friends meet the initial cost of starting a new life.

EGYPT UPDATE: We are hopeful for a closure by late November to the difficulties experienced this year. There are still a few points that need to be settled before this can be done. We continue to ask your prayers and support for the smooth turnover of St. Clare’s School to the Salesian Sisters by mid 2011.

ROME/ASSISI ACCOMMODATIONS: We would like to remind you of the policy that was set for use of the apartment in Assisi. Any of our sisters are most welcome to use the house when it is free. Their family members may also be accommodated provided that the sister is present with them. Beyond that we are unable to cater for further visitors.

Here at the Generalate there are now four General Council teams in residence. Extra space is minimal and generally used only for extended leadership meetings of the four communities. In the past the Good Shepherd Sisters have been more than gracious in letting us use these rooms for visitors but at present it would be the exception rather than the rule. As always we are happy to help anyone find accommodation elsewhere in the city.