

The Vine

Lay Carmelite Newsletter for Australia & New Zealand

Volume 27 Issue 2 June 2016

THEIR JOURNEY – OUR JOURNEY THEIR STORIES – OUR STORIES



ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

*“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road
and opened the Scriptures to us?”*

Editorial

Peter White TOC



Blessings and Greetings to you and your Lay Carmelite Communities.

In this Issue of The Vine, we have articles on the 2016 Carmelite Chapter as well as updates from our Lay Carmelite Communities and more information about the International Year of Mercy.

In addition, I have been in contact with and received correspondence from Lay Carmelite Communities in the Philippines and Ireland.

Brother Agedo Bento visited his homeland of Timor-Leste and he has prepared a story for us on that visit.

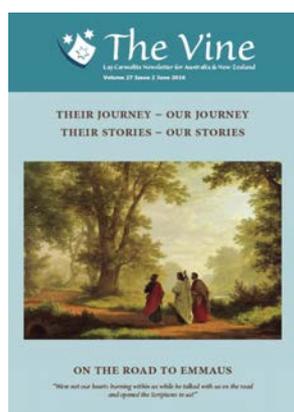
Also, I sat down with and discussed an ABC Moral Compass story on “end-of-life” choices with Lay Carmelites, Joy and Russell Darby.

Finally, you may have heard about the “coward punch” death of Patrick Cronin. He was a past student of Whitefriars College and I have an Article edited from the Eulogy given by a close friend at his funeral.

This and other stories and news are included inside as we share our journeys and our stories.

Please enjoy and share with those on your life’s journey.

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Robert Zund, 1877

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The Carmelites

Australia and East Timor

community • prayer • action

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Lay Carmelite Provincial News

Fr Paul Gurr, OCarm, Provincial Delegate

Pentecost Day has come and gone this year. Happily the Pentecost event isn't confined to one day of the Liturgical Calendar. On the day of Pentecost, according to St Luke, the Holy Spirit seized upon the scared apostles and they began to preach the news of the Resurrection in one language that all could understand.

A Provincial Chapter is a wondrous gathering! Every three years members of the Carmelite Family gather to review their lives together, plan for the future and celebrate our fraternal lives together. At our Provincial Chapter in Ormiston at the end of April, we engaged a young woman to be a translator between English and Tetum – the native language of Timor-Leste. Her presence was a Pentecost event. She enabled a two-way conversation between ALL members of the Chapter. For the first time the friars of Timor-Leste were able to 'speak' what was on their mind. For the first time we [English

speakers] were able to understand what they were saying, and they were able to understand what we were saying. One language, diverse cultures. One Province ministering in two countries. Praise God for this wonderful gift of language. We [English speakers] grasped the depth and commitment of the Timorese to the way of Carmel and were wonderfully enriched by it.



The Holy Spirit descended like tongues of fire upon us and we began to speak in tongues which all could understand. The Word of God is alive and active among us.

We also strengthened the conviction that Lay Carmelites are an integral part of the life of Carmel in the Province of Australia and Timor-Leste. We mourned those who had died since our last Chapter and we rejoiced in the abundance of new life both among the friars and in the Lay Carmelites.

World Youth Day 2016

Lay Carmelite Communities may wish to consider sending an email to the head of the organizing committee in the Polish Province, Fr Marcin Siemek, OCarm, at msiemek@gmail.com expressing prayers and wishes of support for this event.

The next World Youth Day is taking place in Krakow Poland from 25 to 31 July. The event, which is at the invitation of the Polish Carmelites, will be held at our community residence in the centre of the city. Prior to the official events of the WYD, the Polish Province invites all Carmelite groups to participate in a special Carmelite Day on July 27th at their monastery in Krakow in the presence of Mary, Lady of Hope. Information, registration forms and all other inquiries including if you wish to participate in this one-day Carmelite event, please visit www.sdm.karmelici.pl



Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity to be Canonised



On 4th March 2016 the Holy See Press Office announced that Pope Francis has approved the decrees that will lead in the coming months to the canonisation of Discalced Carmelite nun Elizabeth of the Trinity. This will be decided at a gathering of cardinals currently set for 20 June 2016.

Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity was born Elisabeth Catez in France in 1880. Her famous prayer "Holy Trinity, Whom I Adore", is quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. She died at a young age in 1906 with a great reputation for holiness and a deep spiritual wisdom conveyed in her writings. She was beatified (declared 'Blessed') by Pope John Paul II in 1984. The miracle paving the way to Blessed Elizabeth's canonisation relates to a Belgian woman, Mary-Paul Stevens, who had been suffering from the incurable Sjögren syndrome. She was cured in 2002 after making a pilgrimage to Blessed Elizabeth's Carmel in Dijon.

National Lay Carmelite Council News

Chris Wade TOC, Moderator



I pray most earnestly that all our communities will grow in love for one another, becoming a powerful sign of the love of God who nurtures and sustains us. I have been invited to accept reappointment as the Moderator for the next three years and the Provincial Council has appointed Paula Newcombe from Jamberoo

community as Secretary. The remaining two members of the National Council will be elected at the Lay Carmelite Assembly to be held in Jamberoo in July. I hope all communities are discerning nominations to send to the National Council.

The Provincial Council has also approved a name change for the Lay Carmelite National Council of Australia (LCNCA). We are now to be known as the Lay Carmelite National Council of Australia and New Zealand (LCNCANZ). It's a mouthful, but I am delighted that our brother and sisters in NZ have achieved this recognition.

There has also been a visitation by the Moderator and Provincial Delegate to Lay Carmelites in Perth where members remain committed to Carmel and to each other. The time there was most welcoming and enjoyable.

Most recently, the LCNCANZ met in Adelaide and visited the community there. Congratulations to Michael Kelly who made his Final Profession during Mass at the community meeting.

LCNCANZ agenda items included a new design for the Lay Carmelite scapular and reports from the Provincial Delegate, the Treasurer, the Bookshop and the Moderator. As always, the major items centered on the communities in both countries. Also, planning for The Lay Carmelite Assembly in Jamberoo in July 2016 and the Asia/ Pacific Regional Congress to be held in Vietnam in February 2017 also occupied much of our time. The next LCNCANZ meeting is planned for 12 to 14 August.

Patrick Cronin (24/9/1996 - 18/4/2016)

More than 2000 people have heard how football, family and friends helped shape the life of Patrick Cronin, the 19-year-old who died after an alleged one-punch attack at a Diamond Creek pub on 18 April 2016. It was, perhaps, a mark of his knockabout appeal that mourners at his farewell would fill two halls to capacity at Whitefriars College at Donvale.

Fr Michael Gallacher led the Catholic service at Whitefriars College and a number of Friars and lay persons attending the Carmelite Chapter in Ormiston, Brisbane made an early departure to be able to attend the funeral.

In his eulogy to Patrick, close friend Nick Eggelton said "Our year level at Whitefriars was a very tight-knit group and we're all struggling with the loss of such a great character and friend in our lives. Together we've all experienced grief and sorrow like we've never felt before. It's changed all our lives forever and we've all had to grow up emotionally in the last week. I think I can speak for the rest of his close friends at Whitefriars that it's been an honour to have been able to know Pat and to share in friendship with him in our journey through school and life. I know that I'll take him with me through the rest of my life and cherish having been friends with such a kind, funny and gentle person."

Patrick died in hospital after he was allegedly coward-punched in a pub brawl. Andrew Lee, 32, has been charged with Patrick's murder. Donations can now be made to the Pat Cronin Foundation, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd. Account Name: Pat Cronin Foundation, BSB: 633000 Account: 157314436. All proceeds will go towards "education, awareness and changing behaviour around the world". (Source: Herald Sun 26 April 2016)



Cronin family before the tragedy

Carmelite Provincial Chapter News

Peter White, TOC



For those Lay Carmelites attending the Chapter, we felt a great sense of belonging and being included in the Carmelite Family. The Carmelite way of contemplative discernment within a group that is increasingly multi-cultural instilled great joy in and to all that participated.

Among the issues discussed were ways of strengthening and developing the Carmelite Family in Australia and Timor-Leste, a new vision for the Province which fully includes Carmelites living and working in Timor-Leste, Finances, Structures of Governance and the election of a new leadership team (Prior Provincial and Provincial



Back Row: Fr Bruce Clark, Fr Hugh Brown, Fr Aniceto Maia Da Costa, Fr David Hofman
Front Row: Fr Paul Cahill, Fr Fernando Millían, Fr Benny Phang

Paul Cahill on his election as Prior Provincial and Frs. Hugh Brown, Aniceto Maia Da Costa, Bruce Clark, and David Hofman as members of the Provincial Council. In particular we offer special congratulations to Fr Aniceto as the first Timorese Carmelite to be elected to the Council and assure them all of our prayerful support. At the same time, the Adelaide Community wishes to offer its grateful thanks to our previous Prior Provincial Fr Denis Andrew and his Council for the support they gave the Lay Carmelites throughout Australia and also reassure them of our prayerful support in their ministry among God's people into the future."



Council). The results of the election were: Prior Provincial: Fr Paul Cahill, O.Carm. (Parish Priest, Wentworthville, NSW); First Councillor: Fr Hugh Brown, O.Carm. (Parish Priest, Port Melbourne-Middle Park Parish, Vic); Second Councillor: Fr Aniceto Maia da Costa, O.Carm. (Prior, Fatuhada, Timor-Leste); Third Councillor: Fr Bruce Clark, O.Carm. (Regional Prior, Hera, Timor-Leste); Fourth Councillor: Fr David Hofman, O.Carm. (Prior, Middle Park, Vic)

The following message from Keith Belton and the Adelaide Community conveys the thoughts of all Lay Carmelites. "The Adelaide Lay Carmelite community members wish to congratulate Fr



Lay Carmelites, Oby Emerchete & Peter White with Prior General & President of the Chapter, Fr Fernando Millían Romeral

Jubilee Year of Mercy

An edited account of an article by Joshua J. McElwee about the book, "The Name of God is Mercy" - an interview between the Pope Francis and Andrea Tornielli.



"Only he who has been touched and caressed by the tenderness of his mercy really knows the Lord," Pope Francis says. He continues. "For this reason I have often said that the place where my encounter with the mercy of Jesus takes place is my sin. When you feel his merciful embrace, when you let yourself be embraced, when you are moved -- that's when life can change, because that's when we try to respond to the immense and unexpected gift

of grace, a gift that is so overabundant it may even seem 'unfair' in our eyes."

Pope Francis first came upon the idea of a year for mercy before he was pope, during a roundtable meeting with theologians as the archbishop of Buenos Aires. "The topic was what the pope could do to bring people closer together; we were faced with so many problems that there seemed to be no solution," says the Argentine pontiff. "One of the participants suggested 'a Holy Year of forgiveness.' This idea stayed with me."

Outlining what the church should be doing today, Pope Francis states plainly: "We need to enter the darkness, the night in which so many of our brothers live. We need to be able to make contact with them and let them feel our closeness, without letting ourselves be wrapped up in that darkness and influenced by it. Humanity needs mercy and

compassion. Jesus goes and heals and integrates the marginalized, the ones who are outside the city, the ones outside the encampment. In so doing, he shows us the way.

Francis speaks about having a niece who married a man in a civil wedding who had previously been married and had not obtained an annulment. "This man was so religious that every Sunday, when he went to Mass, he went to the confessional and said to the priest, 'I know you can't absolve me but I have sinned by doing this and that, please give me a blessing,'" says the pope, adding: "This is a religiously mature man."

One of the most poignant moments of the book comes when Tornielli asks Francis if there is anything a person has to do to obtain God's mercy. The journalist references Scottish writer Bruce Marshall's novel *To Every Man a Penny*, in which a priest wants to offer absolution to a soldier sentenced to death. When the soldier says he is not repentant for his sins, the priest asks: "But are you sorry that you are not sorry?" When the soldier replies yes, the priest offers the absolution. Francis replies. "It's a good example of the lengths to which God goes to enter the heart of man, to find that small opening that will permit him to grant grace. "God waits; he waits for us to concede him only the smallest glimmer of space so that he can enact his forgiveness and his charity within us."

Who is the Carmelite Family?

Carmelite Constitutions, Chapter 2, Article 28, The Carmelite Family:

The many and various embodiments of the Carmelite charism are for us a source of joy; they confirm the rich and creative fruitfulness of our charism, lived under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit - a fruitfulness to be welcomed with gratitude and discernment. All individuals and groups, whether institutional or not, which draw their inspiration from the Rule of St. Albert, from its tradition and from the values expressed in Carmelite spirituality, constitute the Carmelite Family within the Church today. This Family includes ourselves and our brothers of the Teresian Reform; the women religious of both branches; affiliated religious congregations; the Third Orders Secular; secular institutes; individuals affiliated with the Order through the sacred scapular; and those who by whatever title or bond are affiliated with the Order; those movements which, though juridically not part of the Order, seek inspiration and support from its spirituality; and any man or woman who is drawn to the values of Carmel.

We pray for all Lay Carmelites who are sick or are in need of our prayers, in particular:

Vera Cleary (Wollongong), Vince Gurr (Brother of Fr Paul), Christine McCarthy (Distance Member of Coorparoo), Mary Cox / Noel Cox (Wollongong), Pam Dewhurst (Jamberoo) and Grahame Sievers (Wentworthville) (now in Palliative Care)

Journeying to Timor-Leste

Many Lay Carmelites and Carmelite Communities support the work being done in Timor-Leste. Br Agedo Bento shares his experience of a trip home to Timor-Leste in December 2015.

On 30 November 2015, as part of the Carmelites Formation Program, my Timorese brothers Januario Pinto, Martinho Lemos and I went home to Timor-Leste to be part of a Reception for new novices and the Profession of some brothers, for a family visit, and, for Martinho and I, it was also a time for a Retreat. When we arrived in Dili, what was immediately apparent to us were the many physical changes - the roads are getting better, new traffic lights, many new buildings, electricity lighting the city and many shopping centres.

In Hera on 5 December, there was a Reception for new novices and some brothers made their profession. It was a wonderful experience and also joyful for me to be present for the celebration and to congratulate, support and welcome them as brothers in Carmel.

After the celebrations I returned to Dili to prepare for travel to my hometown on 6 December. Home for my family is in the village of Uma-tolu. This is in the District Viqueque, and the Sub-District of Lacluta. Buses are the only public transport that can take passengers to the Districts. The Bus driver drives for 10 hours to arrive at Viqueque. I then wait for other public transport, known in Timor as "ANGGUNA". It is the small truck that carries passengers to the village in the rural area. So I wait for a half an hour and catch the ANGGUNA to my village in Uma-Tolu where my family lives.

One thing that I will not forget in all of my life was the welcome I received. When I arrived, my mom and all my family members and other relatives were there waiting to welcome me. I was amazed to see so many people in the house. I asked my mom why today so many of our family come together here? She replied "All the family members gather here today to welcoming you because you have been away so long. We all missed you so much." At the same time every elder of my family came along and kissed me on my forehead and all the brothers and cousins shake hands with me. In Timor, being kissed on the head and shaking hands are the sign of welcoming with love. I have no words to say - I only shake my head and smile with a heart full of joy. This was one of the most joyful experiences in my life.

The following day, 7 December, I organized with my brothers and family members to build my mom

a new kitchen as the existing one was in very poor condition. We finished it in one week to the delight of my mom. Apart from having fun with family and building the kitchen, I was asked by the Parish Priest to help him to give a Retreat for the local Junior high school and senior high school students and some of the youth groups.



I am still in formation to the priesthood, so I was very glad and happy to have this opportunity to be able to celebrate Liturgy of the Word in two very rural places (Ahic and Wekfia) on Christmas Day. There is no any public transport so I went there by motorbike. I was very excited to be with the community to celebrate the Christmas with them. I was about to meet people that I had not seen since 1999 when Timor-Leste just got Independence from Indonesian illegal occupation for twenty-four years.



Now I suddenly appear with brown habit and white cloak at the altar saying the Liturgy of the Word. What made it particularly special was that after the Liturgy, so many people approached me just to say hello and to express their appreciation. I remember someone saying "We are proud of you and also we are proud to see someone from this village standing at the altar to celebrate Liturgy of the Word with us."

During the last week of Advent, I gave a Retreat in Lacluta based on the Mark's Gospel that says "prepare the way for the Lord" (Mark 1:3) The theme I chose for the Retreat was "Clear your heart to be the house for God to dwell in and stay in forever."

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Lay Carmelite Community News

Gold Coast

Silas (Norm) Harding, TOC

On the Gold Coast, a new community is starting to form under the stewardship of Silas (Norm) Harding TOC. Fr Paul Gurr and Christine Wade received four new members – Selen Petrovic, Scott Rose, and Ravee Karuppiah and his wife Suramya Durwearachchi there on 24 April. Carmel Weston, Oby Emerchete, Rossy Minata and Peter and Mary White (Coorparoo Community) attended the Reception to show support for the new Group. This was a cause for great rejoicing with people from Filipino, USA and Sri Lankan cultural origins.



Central Coast

Terresa Hassett, TOC

I hope you are all keeping well, and nice to be experiencing cooler weather - it has been a very hot & humid summer. In the lead-up to Easter, six of our Community participated in the Lenten program at St Luke's Anglican Church, run by Rev Penny, a wonderful lady. Last year Fr Anthony started a wonderful formation course on the spirituality on St Teresa of Avila, We are now doing one on St John of the Cross, both very interesting, Thank you Fr Anthony, a great mentor. Good news our Prior Maureen Dries is doing really well, and

back on board. Eleanor Matthews is keeping us up to date about our distant members Zelda Bickerstaff who is also going well. Once again I would like to Congratulation Eleanor on her special birthday and thank her for being a great inspiration to us all, she had a wonderful memory and history of our community, being the background of collecting stamps that are sent to Middle Park to raise funds for Timor-Leste and also keeping in touch with our non attending, and distant members. We thank you Eleanor, we also have another one of our sisters, we would like to congratulate Emily Bridgette who last year celebrated forty years as a scripture teacher, a true Carmelite. God Blessing to you all.

from page 7

I reflected on how our heart is like a house that is not clean because we are preoccupied with so many things that drive us away from God. Our heart can become like a house that has no space for God to dwell in. So we need to clean that house so that God can dwell in it. I didn't image that so many young people can listen attentively when I spoke to them. Most of them came to me after the session to say thanks for what I have presented and for talking to them. This Retreat also opened my eyes to how important it is to teach the word of God to the young people who are the future of Timor-Leste.

I am very glad that I had the opportunity to talk to them and encourage them during the retreat. Reflecting on this, I prayed "Thank you Lord for giving me this opportunity to teach them your love."



I returned to Australia with wonderful and joyful memories. I also feel refreshed and very enthusiastic on my journey in Carmel. I thank all those people to have helped and continue to help and support me on my journey.

(EDITOR NOTE: 15 August is the 15th Anniversary of the Australian Province taking responsibility for Timor-Leste Carmelites)

Lay Carmelite Community News

Adelaide and Wollongong Communities

Ann Baumber (Woolongong), TOC

This story is a bit complicated! It is about Annie Barry and Ann Baumber and the similar names can make it hard to follow. Annie is the mother-in-law of Ann's sister Julie. Annie is a member of the Carmelite Community of Adelaide; Ann is a member of the Wollongong, NSW, Community.

They have known each other for 35 years or more, but it wasn't until 2014 at a family wedding that they discovered that they are both Carmelites. Ann had seen Annie's photo in *The Vine* and recognized her straightaway. At the family wedding they discussed their Carmel experience. Ann has been a member for 11 years, but Annie beats that by at least 10 years, having joined back in the early 1990s. So now they have something else in common to discuss when they meet at family functions.



Annie Barry and her mother, Edith

On 9 March this year was at the 95th birthday of Ann's mother, Edith in Adelaide. The photo is of Edith and Annie on that day. An extra highlight is that the two women share three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren and most of these special people were able to attend the party. Edith was in great form and told us she is going to live until 100 and receive a letter from the Queen!

Rockhampton

Daphne J Smith, TOC

It was decided by all instead of the usual monthly meeting, December's meeting would be different, so why not finish the year by going out to lunch with our spouses and friends (see photo). Yes, there are a few faces missing, Paul was down in Melbourne, Coleen had car problems and June was sick. It looks like we have two more people who are hoping to join our Community with God's Blessing. We would also like to thank Fr Gurr, OCarm for writing the novena prayer to Blessed Titus Brandsma for this special occasion, and also for us to use whenever and whatever occasion we

are in need of it. Thank you, Father Paul. The "Holy Spirit" certainly inspired you that day, and thank you to the Carmel family around Australia for your prayers, please keep them going as the whole family have a long road ahead of them. I remain yours in Carmel.



Melbourne Community

Maria Goral, TOC

At their first meeting for the year on 3 March, the Community took time to celebrate Stephen Kirley's 80th Birthday.



Lay Carmelite Community News

Adelaide Community

Keith Belton TOC & Angela Zakarias TOC

On the 20-22 May, the Adelaide Community welcomed the National Council. It was the first meeting the Council held in Adelaide and the first visit of new member Paula Newcombe. We also warmly welcomed a number of our distance members who made a special effort to be with us for the day. Fr Paul Gurr, our Provincial Delegate led us in our day of reflection at the Passionist Fathers Retreat Centre. The Congregation provided the necessary requirements for the celebration of



L-R: Annie Barry, Angela Zakarias, Michael Keely, Maureen Ellis, Anna Vnuk (obscured) Frank Vnuk, Keith Belton

the Eucharist and the wonderful lunch during the day. A special thank you for their kindness and support of the Lay Carmelites.

During the Eucharist, Michael Kelly was Finally Professed in the Third Order, taking another step in the journey of his allegiance to Christ. Our community and indeed the whole Order rejoice in Michael's commitment to Carmel and his acknowledgement that the Carmelite path to transformation in Christ is a worthy avenue for such an end.

International Lay Carmelite News

Irish Province

Marian Moran T. O.Carm, Moate Chapter, Westmeath Ireland (www.laycarmelitesmoate.ie)

Thank you for your invitation to submit to The Vine. The National Annual Visit of St Therese of Lisieux relics to Knock Basilica was well attended by our Carmelite Third Order Members.

A special Holy Door – in the form of a white, 'Arch of Mercy' – has been opened outside the Chapel of Reconciliation at Knock Shrine for the Year of Mercy. The pilgrimage offered an opportunity to walk through Knock's door of mercy.



450th Anniversary of the Birth of St Mary Magdalene de Pazzi



To mark the 450th anniversary of the birth of St. Mary Magdalen de'Pazzi, the Apostolic Penitentiary has granted that all Carmelite monasteries be places where people may obtain a plenary indulgence between 2 April, 2016 and 25th of May, 2017.

Anita Renehan recalls, "When I was doing my formation in the 1950's, we were instructed that Mary Magdalen d' Pazzi was the Patron Saint of Lay Carmelites. Devotion to her was strongly fostered. Hence my delight, together with Fr Bruce Clark and Caroline Garrett, at visiting the monastery in Careggi, Florence in 2002, and viewing her incorrupt body in a glass case beneath the altar. When I was leaving Rome after my time as International Secretary, I was presented with a First Class relic of S. Maria Magdalen d' Pazzi".

Lay Carmelite Community News

The End of an Era - Mary Longworth TOC (14 Dec 1930 - 3 January 2016)

Keith Belton, TOC

In the early hours of Sunday 3 January this year, Mary Longworth, a member of the Adelaide Lay Carmelite community entered eternal life. In the final months, Mary lived in the Philip Kennedy Hostel, a residential hostel named in honor of a former Bishop of Adelaide. There she devoted time to arranging her own funeral liturgy and spending her vigil to eternity preparing to meet her God. With her death the last Lay Carmelite from the former Carmelite parish of Pennington Parish ended an era of a Carmelite presence that began in 1902.

The Longworth family had been living in the Pennington (Port Adelaide) parish from Mary's birth and together with her sister Margaret, brother Bill and her mother and father formed a family unit that was extraordinarily supportive of the Carmelite friars when the parish was under their pastoral care.

Fr Paul Knuppel began to rebuild the Lay Carmelite community in the Pennington parish in the 1950's. Mary responded to his invitation to begin her journey in Carmel and remained faithful to the call of Christ to her death. She embraced the Order's charism with her life of prayer. As a faithful member of the Adelaide Lay Carmelite community, Mary rarely missing a gathering of its members



Mary Longworth (far right)

and fittingly served the needs of her parish without murmur as they emerged.

Of special interest to her was the welfare of the Broken Hill Lay Carmelite community. Mary was prone to go up to Broken Hill when the Lay Carmelite community there would go on a weekend retreat at the old school house in Silverton a town out from Broken Hill. Von Victory, a former Prior of the Broken Hill community, has described Mary as a true Carmelite, totally absorbed by her love of Carmel and as much a part of the Broken Hill County as she was of her Adelaide community,

May her gentle soul now rest in the Good Lord's eternal presence together with the innumerable Carmelite saints who have gone before her.

Special Birthdays and Anniversaries

Stephen Kirley (Melbourne) celebrated his 80th (3 March)
Frank Vnuk (Adelaide) celebrating his 90th.
Frank and Anna Vnuk are also celebrating 60 years married this year.
Sue Stuckey (Jamberoo) celebrated her 70th (23 May)
John Periera (Adelaide) will be celebrating his 90th (6 June)
Margaret Bowdler (Toowoomba) will be celebrating her 90th (13 June)
David Green (Adelaide) will be celebrating his 60th (9 July)
Giselle Perrett (Wentworthville) will be celebrating her 60th (10 July)
Hugh Morrison (Melbourne) will be celebrating his 70th (13 July)
Peter Cody (Melbourne) will be celebrating his 90th (16 August)

Special Anniversaries of Profession

Bridget Ryan (Warwick) 50 yrs. (17 April)
Mary O'Keefe (Wentworthville) 55 yrs. (1 June)
Kathleen Armstrong (Wollongong) 25 yrs. (25 June)
Margaret Gunning (Central Coast) 25 yrs. (16 August)
Fr Wayne Stanhope, OCarm - 40th Anniversary of the Solemn Profession (12 June)

The Final Journey

Joy Darby, TOC, Russell Darby, TOC & Peter White, TOC

Truly, truly, I tell you, when you were young, you dressed yourself and walked where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. (John 21:18)

I sat down with Russell and Joy Darby (Lay Carmelites, Coorparoo) to discuss a recent Channel 2 program “The Moral Compass”, which addressed the question of end-of-life choices. Russell and Joy both have extensive nursing experience. Joy has worked in palliative care and Russell is a past Director of Nursing and has lectured in nursing and conducted medical research.

“The storm before the calm” is the term Russell and Joy introduced me to in describing dying. “Making that emotional transition from survival and recovery to the realisation that the end of life is eminent is a frightening time.” Joy and Russell’s experience is that “having a strong faith – whatever that may be for the person - helps make that an easier transition.”

Joy described her time as a palliative nurse saying “staff are aware of the clinical signs that the end-of-life is near by observing breathing patterns and bodily function and realize that attention now must focus on making the person as comfortable as possible”.

In the Moral Compass, Andrew Denton says “the person at the center of the dying, is the most important person. I think it’s crucial to remember that. It is also the time when their wishes need to be respected”.

This led our conversation to the topic of Advanced Health Directives or AHD’s. Russell describes it this way. “While most people identify a “will” as essential to have so that your final wishes are fulfilled following your death, the public are often not aware of preparing a “living will”, also known as an Advance Health Directive. This is a formal way to give instructions about your future health care. It comes into effect only if you lose your capacity to you’re your own decisions at this time”.

[EDITOR NOTE: It is important to clarify what

an AHD addresses. It can be general (e.g. that you wish to receive all available treatment) or specific (e.g. that you wish to decline a certain medical treatment). It enables you to appoint an attorney for health and personal matters. It includes information that health professionals should know, including health conditions, allergies, and religious, spiritual or cultural beliefs that could affect your care.]

Both Joy and Russell see great value in AHD’s. “In this way, the person can communicate their wishes and needs in the final stages of their end-of-life journey. It also means their loved ones and medical personnel can know and respect those needs.”

Being present during those final stages of life, Russell and Joy described what they often observe. Two situations they described resonated with me. The first of these is how family and friends sit with and speak lovingly even though all outward signs are that the person is not responding. “Hearing is one of the last senses to fail,” they tell me. “The importance of this cannot be understated. The conversations held in the presence of the person can and may often register in the subconscious of the person. Loving, merciful and respectful words may well provide additional comfort the person needs at this time”.

The second situation is stories about how people can sometimes cling to life allowing people one last visit. “We both hear about and have seen people who have died just after a family visit, or someone who has travelled a great distance has seen the person, or they have received the last rights and communion for the last time. They seem to want to, in their own way, be there to have a final farewell or be prepared for what is about to happen. It is very comforting to witness.”

Finally, I asked about the emotional toll it takes on medical staff. Russell explains it this way. “In the past, nursing was learning about the medical techniques needed to do the work. Now, you learn about ethics and respect and mercy. While humanizing the task does not make it easier, we can now see where it is a great privilege to be present to provide comfort and support someone making their end-of-life journey.”