



# WHISPERS OF THE SPIRIT

PENTECOST 2011

VOLUME 21 NO. 1

## Celebrating the birthday of the Church



On the day of Pentecost we remember and celebrate with the Church throughout the world the coming of the Holy Spirit amongst the early believers.

We recall the events as we heard them described for us in the reading from Acts.

We celebrate the fact that, in the power of that Spirit, so many people have lived extraordinary lives, so many have lived lives of wholeness, and so many have been freed from lives of bondage.

We give thanks for people in whom we have seen and experienced the presence of the Spirit, and remind ourselves that the Spirit is there waiting to be freed in our lives, too.

Jesus had told his disciples that he would be leaving them. But instead, He promised to send the Spirit to enable them for the very thing he had prepared them for: to go out into the world and tell everyone the good news about His great love and what He had done for them, and that they were to carry on what He had begun. Growing out from their personal and very special relationship with Him, they would walk, talk, heal, minister, and be imbued with the power of the Spirit to become true disciples, challenged and changed. The Pentecost experience filled them with new vitality, new power and confidence.

But Pentecost did not end there. It is still with us for it is a never-ending story. It didn't happen just once. It happens over and over again whenever people live empowered by the Spirit of Jesus. But, if it is not rooted in our own experience, then it is only a flame that will soon flicker and die. We may learn to speak in tongues, we may wish to live guided by the Spirit, we may search for community, but if the Spirit has not burned a path down into the depth of our experience, then Pentecost still awaits us.

Pentecost is also about freedom. It is about the Holy Spirit setting people free. Not the kind of freedom that means no more responsibility or suffering, not freedom from having to make decisions, but a freedom to live in the truth of the promise that we are truly loved and we can live changed lives. It is freedom to move in the lives of those from whom we are divided or alienated, or those we have hurt or been unjust towards, and those who have hurt or been unjust to us.

As we embrace Pentecost, the Spirit sweeps us into a reconnection with life today. It is time for risk-taking, to allow God's Spirit to breathe new life into each of us. So let today and every day be our Pentecost, when we free the spirit and begin to live in the power and love of that same Holy Spirit which descended in tongues of fire on the first Pentecost, the Birthday of the Church.

- Sr. Josapha Lergessner S.Sp.S.





### **The Death of a Loyal Co-worker**

Robert (Rob) Ellis, brother of our Sr. Rosmina, died in late April in Brisbane. Rob was the first Lay Administrator of our original Holy Spirit Hospital on Wickham Terrace in Brisbane. He took over in 1979, after being the Building Supervisor for our 'New Look' H.S.H of the late Seventies.

The Sisters unanimously chose him, because of his leadership, people-oriented and practical qualities; his ability to tune into the movements and needs of private Health Care and his sincere Catholic Faith.

By the time he retired in 1995, the Hospital had developed into a highly regarded, 192-bed Acute Facility, with top-quality Surgical, Medical, Nursing Staff and allied health personnel. The Sisters acknowledge his great contribution to our HSH story.

The presence of so many former HSH Staff and Doctors at his Funeral Mass is a testimony to the high regard in which he was held by all who had met and worked with him.

### **Prepared for Lifelong Commitment**

Five women, each from another country, came to Australia in 2010 for a special time of preparation before professing final vows. As we get a small glimpse into the life of each, by reading their own accounts of their stories, we can only marvel at the ways of the Spirit. These women are professional women, some with years of experience, who have heard the call of Christ to his service. That call is clear to each of them, but is not always easy for them to explain to others. Simple events become very significant in their understanding of their relationship with God, just as simple happenings make or mar any human relationship. Their appreciation of the leadership and companionship they have known in these months, through the spiritual direction, guidance and gentle caring of Sr Sarita, encouraged them to take the final step into a life of dedication within a congregation of international membership.

In these times when, in many areas of our lives, permanency of commitment is not highly valued, the commitment of these women calls us to reflect on our commitments in life. Let us call on the Spirit to strengthen our purpose in life to whatever call we may have sincerely followed.



*The Sisters in the tertianship.*

*From left: Sr Anastasia, Sr Sarita (coordinator), Sr Rose, Sr Rosalie, Sr Lucy, Sr Clarissa*



### **Sr. Anastasia Lee S.Sp.S.**

My name is Anastasia Lee and I was born and grew up in the Capital city of Korea, Seoul. I have two sisters and two brothers; I am the second youngest. My father came from North Korea and my mother from South Korea. They were both Catholic and gave us a good home training. After leaving School I began working and I was in charge of accounting for a company for about 10 years. In my spare time I loved listening to music and also I love singing. When I was working and was stressed, I always listened to music. After a few minutes I would feel comfortable.

One day when I was reading a Catholic Newspaper, I read an article about a prayer meeting. I phoned a convent. I couldn't attend at the time because I was very busy. After a few months I remembered the article of the song prayer meeting. I attended this song prayer meeting twice a month for 2 1/2 years. It was at the prayer meeting that I came to know the S.Sp.S. Sisters and their work in Seoul.

I joined our Congregation in 1998. I have had many experiences of Jesus in my life from ministering in social work. I worked in an HIV/AIDS shelter for two years, and then assisted for three years caring for small children from broken homes.

A special experience of mission for me was one spring, six children wanted to do an adventure themselves. The children planned the adventure in a meeting;. It was a secret for them.

One day a sister who was living with them knew about the planned adventure and talked to me about that. We thought it was a good idea but we both worried about the safety of the children as they were all young. The oldest was 10years old and the youngest child was only 6 years old so I wanted to join them travelling.

One day, while having dinner, I carefully said "you are going to go on excursion". The children were surprised because this was their secret. I continued to say "I couldn't go travelling alone because my father was very strict so I envy your travelling" and then I looked at the children and I said "I want to join your excursion." They looked at me with pity and then they asked me to go along.

They continued to discuss the trip. The children asked me to be the leader for them, but I wanted them to do it themselves. The travelling was really enjoyable and we made many friends. After a few weeks, when we were coming back from a concert, the first child told me that "I am sorry because I thought you were a spy but you weren't a spy, so I'm really sorry sister." I smiled and I said that I thought in my mind "I was a spy. Well, kind of!"

I am going to go back to Korea in July. My dream for the future is to continue to come to know myself and to help others to inner freedom in their heart and to find their true identity. I want to help those who have lost their identity and inner freedom.

### **Sr. Rose S.Sp.S.**

I am known by the name of Rose Birungi SSpS from S.W. Uganda, Mbarara Arch diocese. My position in the family is tenth of eleven, five girls and six boys of which five boys were called back into eternity and six of us remained. We are farmers by nature.

We have a strong catholic background. My mother was called into eternity 2009. My father is still alive. We Ugandans we honour very much the martyrs of Uganda. Through their intercessions, I received my call to become an SSpS.



Ten years back, I was doing some office procedure studies in Botswana and I came into contact with the SSpS there working for the poor and needy at the same time as teaching in the schools. I was inspired by their way of caring for the poor and also giving their extra time and attention to the students.

Naturally, I have a special place for the poor and needy in my heart but that experience with Sisters increased my love for them more. The Sisters' compassionate love for the poor and the students was so tremendous that I felt a strong move to be one of them.

1997- 1998, I worked with the Sisters as a volunteer. I also enjoyed their company any time I met them for faith-sharing in different groups in the parishioners houses. Their presence with the people was a great witness for me.

I joined the sisters in the year 2001 in Ghana-W.A . where I had my initial formation. I made my first vows in 2004. In 2006, I got a mission appointment to PNG. for Cross Cultural Mission Experience which I found quite enriching as far as our mission work is concerned.

After two years and seven months of CCME, I returned to Botswana my home Region. 2010, I received my permission to come to Australia and prepare for my final vows. At the moment, I have completed eight months in the preparation program which I am finding very enriching as far as my spiritual growth is concerned. I treasure this preparation very much. I am very grateful to God and to my sisters. May God's blessings overflow in all, including my family and May God grant eternal rest to my beloved mother and my brothers.

My dream for the future is to work for the poor in Botswana and elsewhere that I may be needed.

O God, bless the poor and marginalised in society. AMEN.

### **Sr. Rosalie S.Sp.S.**

I am Sr. Rosalie S. ZOSSOU, from the Republic of Benin, in West Africa, a country colonized by France. It was called 'DANXOME' ((in the stomach of the snake) according to the traditional history of the country. It was also called "Dahomey" by the French. Later, it became the "Popular Republic of Benin" and recently, in 1990, a democracy, the first in West Africa.

I am from the South in the legislative capital called "Porto-Novo". This is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional city. The four dominant groups are the Gunus (46%), the Yoruba (13%), the Nagots (12%) and the Fonu (12%).

I was born and grew up in a rural parish where there were white missionary priests. Their simple life inspired me to become one day like them, living in a remote area among simple, non-educated people; sharing their lives, with close connections to nature.

This experience was the beginning of my vocation to religious life. To serve God like these "White Priests," the SMA Fathers, ( the "Societe des Missions Africaines), always there, dedicated, available to all without distinction or discrimination, has always been my longing.

I got to know about the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters through the Divine Word priests and brothers, who were in northern Benin. At that time, in 1997, true to their mission, they were only in the remote and deprived areas, but there were no SSpS with them then. But I felt at home with them, because being in the



remote villages with simple people was what I was looking for. When I heard the SSpS did this also, my discernment led me to join them....

The following is one of my experiences after joining the SSpS. There was a 77 years old lady living near our Regional House in Togo. She has only one daughter, who lives in the USA. She belongs to the royal family in Togo, where belief in traditional gods is very strong. She had been a business woman, a baptized and confirmed Catholic, with the name of Philomene. She was forced by her relatives to take on their traditional beliefs. Since women do not have a voice in our African tradition, she obeyed. She left the Catholic Church about 1973, and was initiated into how to serve the gods.

As the days, months and years went on, she eventually found herself alone in following these gods. Finally, she felt abandoned by all, even her own family, and she became like a mad woman, crying, shouting and insulting everyone, especially in the night. Nobody could sleep with all the noise she made. One day, one of the Sisters said she would call the police if she didn't stop shouting. Then she shouted even more. What to do to help this lady come back to real life?



I questioned myself many times and asked myself 'What would I do for her if she were my biological mother? What could I do to help her experience more her dignity as a woman?' A mother is the same everywhere, and can never be bought in the market. So it came to me that our first priority is for women and children. Then, as I scheduled my time for home visitation, I decided to spend more time with this old lady.

But she was very beautiful inside in her heart. I never thought she could be such a nice, gentle mother. I started spending time with her, just being there and listening to her, becoming like her own daughter. In the night around 1 o'clock when she started shouting, I would go beside her along the road, talk and pray with her, and bring her back to her own house. I did this nightly duty for almost a year.

I couldn't always understand everything when I visited her, as she spoke Ewe, her local language, and I had only learnt it a little through doing Adult Education with the people. So I arranged with our Assistant Parish Priest, who was from Togo and knew more of the language and tradition, to visit her with me. (He is in the picture where we are collecting all the traditional gods). While we were with her, she made us visit all her nine shrines and she explained how she had to offer sacrifices to all her family gods, as well as her own.

It was amazing to see and hear this poor lady every day doing such things and worst of all, not being able to rest or sleep during the night. At first, she thought I was visiting her to convert her back to the Catholic Faith, but that wasn't my goal. I wanted to give her back her dignity as a normal human being, a proper woman.

Our just being with this lady, caring for her dignity, listening to her, giving our time to her, transformed her completely. One day, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010, she called me and asked if it is still possible to regain her Faith. So I answered surely, Jesus is always there, waiting to welcome you back. That was the first time I used the Story of the Prodigal Son to tell her about God's love for all of us. She was so happy, and asked if I would call the Parish Priest for her. With the agreement of the family, the priest helped her to undergo some kind of exorcism with the Parish Charismatic Renewal Group. Then all the gods were collected and brought to the Parish ground. She had regained both her dignity and her Faith!

Where to after Final Vows? I am appointed for Sudan, a country torn apart by war for over fifty years. People in the South are craving for education, health care, pastoral care. Actually, the country is not yet settled after the January 2011 Referendum (when the Christian South voted for independence from the Muslim North). It is still undergoing the process of reconstruction after so many years. Going to such a situation, I have at times a fear of being caught up in wars. But, beyond the fear, it is with great hope that I go to share my life with my brothers and sisters in the remote areas of that newly Independent country.



## Sr. Lucy S.Sp.S.

I am from Papua New Guinea and my birth place is Aitape in the Sandaun Province. I am the second born from the eighth siblings. I have six brothers and one sister and both my parents are still living.

What inspired me to become an SSpS is the word 'Holy Spirit'. It was once in the work place that I received a phone call from a sister asking me about an order for books that were purchased by the Religious Education Coordinator. The voice was soft, gentle and very calm. I felt peace talking to the person on the phone. After the break I went over to the Religious Education Department and chat with the RE coordinator. I asked him about the person who called and he said "She is a Holy Spirit Sister". The word Holy Spirit was just enough to put a flame in me. I was driven from deep within and said "This is what I want to be. I want to be a Holy Spirit Sister". This much was the beginning of my journey to the religious life.



One of my significant mission experiences was helping someone whom I never expected would come to say thank you. I was helping a boy of 15 years of age to find a home. The time I gave to listen to his story and make some phone calls was not enough for me. I had pain that I couldn't do anything more than that. Even though I brought this boy into my prayer, I felt down because I couldn't do more than that. Three weeks later on a Monday morning while having my breakfast there was a door bell and it was for me. I went and greeted the caller. The boy ran to me and held my hands with tears and joy in his face said "Sr. Lucy I want to thank you for what you have done for me, I am safe now and I am going home." I was voiceless and the tears came down. He said thanks again and went in the 25 seater bus and off he went. I watched the bus when it took off till it was out of my sight. It brought joy to me that someone came to say 'thanks' even though I thought I had not done enough. Yes it was not enough but it was just enough for the boy to go home peacefully. I can only trust what I do is just enough and not to doubt myself. It's a conversion experience for me and to trust that a simple gesture of help brings blessing for others and myself.

After my tertiary program I am returning back to Papua New Guinea. I don't know what the future will be but I am ready to be sent to any community. My dream is to live peacefully, have a non-violent approach to situations and trust and believe that there is goodness in every person. I want to be an instrument of a non-violent approach to myself and to others.



*Sr Lucy with her students in PNG*



## Sr. Clarissa S.Sp.S.

I am Sr. Clarissa A. Canedo from the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) - Phillippine-South Province where I grew up. I am youngest among the three girls. My mother, who was already a widow when I was in my early teens, was the one who single-handedly sent us to school. The death of my father led me to face life squarely. Joining a Charismatic Group in our place has helped me a lot in terms of dealing with the loss and to know God, not only as a Father, and Jesus but also as Presence Spirit. After I finished university, I worked in a cargo area near the airport as a cargo agent. During that time, I started to question life and which path to take. I am privileged that the work has given me space to look back from my past, to reflect and to look deeply within my heart. I realized that I longed to offer my life to God since I was a small kid. That was the time during my first confession when I had a beautiful experience. I kept it in my heart and I almost forgot that special event in my life. The looking back on my experience helped me to make a decision to follow God's call for me to be a sister. After asking permission from my mother and through her guidance, I went to visit the Holy Spirit Sister's convent near our place. Later on I was introduced to their vocation animator and after a few meetings with her, I was advised to join their "Come and See" program for a month. I really enjoyed my time being with Sisters. I was just struck by their simplicity and how unassuming the Sisters were and how they treated each other and their staff as equal. I felt at home with them and right there and then, I knew that I have found the one I was looking for.



One significant and unforgettable experience of mission was with a little kid in the classroom where I was assisting the teacher at the time. The poor girl made a poo in her underwear. Frightened and anxious about her plight, she called me to the comfort room and whispered her problem. And so together with the other teacher aide, we washed her up and brought her back to her room. While going back, she asked me not to tell her classmates about what happened to her. I gently nodded my head as a sign of our agreement. We went back to the classroom and I continued to help the other kids. Suddenly, she just came to me and asks me "Are you an "Ate" (from our local dialect which means sister) or a nun?" I just smiled at her. The next day she came to me again and said "I know who you are. You are an "Ate". I was just so struck by the child's comment. From that simple thing that I did to her, she saw me as someone one with her and not as someone who is above her. I am deeply grateful that I touched the kid's heart and until this time, I am still awed with that experience and I am hoping through my presence I will still be able to touch people's hearts through being considered as one with them.

After my tertianship program here in Australia, I will go back to my home country. I dream to work with women especially the marginalized ones in our society. At this time they are still struggling for equality and respect for their rights as women, not only from men but also from their fellow women. I hope that through working with them, together we will be able to claim once again our dignity as beloved daughters of God.

## HOLY SPIRIT BOONDALL

Construction has begun on the latest Holy Spirit Care Services Project in Aged Care. HOLY SPIRIT BOONDALL will comprise a Multi-level Development of one hundred and twenty-eight Retirement Village Units, plus a ten-bed Nursing Centre. There'll also be a Chapel, a Community Centre, and other facilities to be enjoyed by the Residents.

The "Village" is situated next to Nudgee College on old Sandgate Road, Boondall and hopes to be ready for its new residents sometime 2012. Much interest has already been expressed by folks looking for Retirement living. The Holy Spirit Sisters and Holy Spirit Care Services Board and Executive are excited to be able to extend our commitment to the Retired and the Aged. From our 'humble beginnings' of 1962 in Aspley/Carseldine, with 80 Hostel Beds plus Infirmary, we now have our very extended facilities at Carseldine and Holy Spirit Cairns, as well. And we love doing it!

*(If any Readers want to make enquiries about the above, Contact is Pam Powell 3263 0375).*



## *Pentecost Novena Prayer*

Transforming Spirit of God, Come!  
You who pray in us, through us, with us, for us, and in spite of us. Come!

Kindling Spirit, Come! In flame our waiting hearts.  
Shine your light into the places of deepest darkness and uncertainty  
in our fragile world.

Anointing Spirit, Come! Great Compassion and Softener of our Spirit,  
Be the common ground on which we walk,  
Be the common heart from which we talk  
Be the common breath that heals, restores and blesses.

Transforming Spirit, Indwelling Presence, Come!  
Fire of Life and Love, awaken in us the possibility for new life,  
new vision and renewed energy.  
We thank you for your sustaining love that enables life  
To be created each day.

Transforming Spirit, Fire from within,  
Bring the power of transformation into our lives.  
When our spirits sag and our lives crumble,  
Be comfort and strength, warmth and healing.  
Penetrate deep within us.

Transforming Spirit of Pentecost, You are our deepest hope.  
Blow us inside out with your mighty wind  
Make us blaze with your power  
Come, change us, transform your world. Amen

Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters | PO Box 129, Aspley Qld 4034

Editorial Committee:

Phone: (07) 3263 0310 | Fax: (07) 3263 0306 | Email: [sps1@holyspirit.com.au](mailto:sps1@holyspirit.com.au)  
[www.arnold-joseph-100.net](http://www.arnold-joseph-100.net)  
[www.worldssps.org](http://www.worldssps.org)  
[www.ssps-usa.org](http://www.ssps-usa.org)  
[www.holyspiritsisters.org.au](http://www.holyspiritsisters.org.au)