



WHISPERS OF THE SPIRIT

PENTECOST 2019

COME HOLY SPIRIT

RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH

As we celebrate the feast of Pentecost – the feast of the Holy Spirit, Jesus promised to send his Holy Spirit to be with us his followers to the end of time.

As Christians, we are to live and proclaim the Gospel under the power of the Spirit. For that to happen, we need times where we renew the wellsprings of our own faith and feel re-inspired for mission.

Today we can ask ourselves – what gifts of the Holy Spirit do we bring to our church, community and family?



Vigil Guest Speaker

Fr. Richard Leonard will be speaking on the topic and will share on the theme *Come Holy Spirit and renew the face of the earth.*

In his presentation, Fr. Leonard will explore the hallmarks of a Christian faith which can be sane and relevant for us and our world...

Discernment: If faith gives us any gift, then it has to be discernment – the ability to respond to the promptings of the Spirit as we navigate our daily lives alert to demands of the Gospel and its practical application in our lives.

Mission: Christianity is not a private feel-good collective. We are sent out to live and proclaim our spirituality. What does the world look like to which we are sent; for which we pray? What questions does the world pose to us? And under the power of the Spirit, what are we offering the world right now?

VIGIL OF PENTECOST

Saturday 8 June 2019

Please see back cover for further details...



REGION OF DIVINE PRESENCE ETHIOPIA – SOUTH SUDAN-UGANDA

WITNESSING GOD'S LOVE

among the people of Badessa, Ethiopia

*Written by Sr. Josefa Twapita, SSpS
Missionary in Ethiopia*



Originally from Angola, Sr. Josefa spent some years in Australia learning English whilst completing her degree in Counselling and Formation in the Tertianship program held in Sydney.

*If you walk in the light,
as He is in the light,
we have fellowship
with one another
and the blood of Jesus
his Son, purifies us
from all sin.*

1 John 1:7

I came to Ethiopia nine years ago. At first I was assigned to one of the remote areas called Weragu. There I experienced love, care and also challenges due to the location of the mission itself. After six years, I was sent to work in Badessa where I have been working until now. But sadly this community is about to close.

As the new year began, we were all wondering what will happen to these people who for the past 17 years have been supported by the project held by the SSpS. The answer lies only in God's hands for He is the only provider for people. Yet a slight hope arises as we reflect and look back on the past 17 years.

Badessa Mission

Badessa is situated in the southern part of Ethiopia and its population numbers 1.7 million. Its people are called Walaitta and have a rich and diverse culture.

The Badessa Mission was started by our Sisters in the region, who saw the need to help the people so that

they have life and life in abundance. They were inspired by the words of the Prophet Micah which says: "This is what Yahweh your God asks of you, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

Such inspiring words helped us through the years, especially to some of us, who later came to be part of this endeavour to share the good news of God.

Since the beginning of this mission, Sisters were able to practice what the Prophet preached, act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God. For each one strives to bring justice to the people so that they live with dignity. Thus, many people benefited from the project held by the SSpS, which was dedicated to life enhancement; poverty reduction; gender sensitivity integration (literacy programs) and family/community based development; education of women and girls; health; socio cultural-HTP (Harmful Traditional Practices); water provision and food security.



I was given the responsibility to take care of the youth, especially girls from secondary to University. Most of these girls come from far villages and are brought to Badessa to continue their school in grades ten to twelve, then to University. Sisters provide the girls with weekly food, school fees and materials, and house rent.

Girls are also guided to discover their potential and inner capacities through weekly English and computer classes, and skills training such as embroidery during summer holidays. They are also given tutorials in mathematics, chemistry, physics, and Amharic (many do not know the common spoken language in Ethiopia, for they have their own local language).

Changing cultural practices

For me, it has been an experience to treasure as I learned a lot from this people and their culture. However, there are many things that I do not agree with, especially concerning the Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) of mutilation of female genitalia.

In Ethiopia these practices are carried out mostly to young girls, sometimes between birth and 15, and occasionally on adult women. In the villages around Badessa the common age is between four and ten, although reports suggests that the average age is falling in some areas in Ethiopia

Within the project we have a program which tries to teach young girls to say no to such practices since it is harming many young girls. But we still have a long way to go, due to the cultural misconceptions concerning the circumcision of young girls and women. We tried our best to support these young people...but when many return home they are still forced by their families and subjected to the practice.

We have had some success, but sadly, also a number of unsuccessful instances. Sometimes girls are reluctant to tell us the truth as they want so much to continue being part of the project.

Our hope is that those girls who were involved in this project have learned

something they can cherish and teach their children on how to say no to such violent practices in the future.

Overall, many girls reached university, and were able to complete their courses and are now working in different fields. Some are even employed in the government institutions.

Thanks to the effort of each Sister who worked in this project and other lay partners – we can say that God had blessed us with many good people who were able to overcome poverty and are now living with dignity.

As the project in Badessa mission ends, we can say that we have done our best to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God.

Thank you

Sr. Josefa



Blessing & Mission Transfer

Holy Spirit Northside Private Hospital

On Tuesday 26 March 2019, the Most Reverend Ken Howell celebrated the Blessing and Mission Transfer of Holy Spirit Northside Private Hospital to St Vincent's Health Australia.

This occasion marked the final step in the transfer of our beloved Hospital to the trusted and capable hands of our mission partner, St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA).

We were fortunate to have many of our Australian Sisters present to join the celebrations, including Sr Patricia, who was a guiding hand when this joint ministry came to fruition in 1999.

Sr Sarita, Provincial Leader, prepared a special address to mark the occasion (*right*). Following this, she went on to thank CEO, of the newly named St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside Ms Daniele Doyle, for her efficient leadership and deep commitment to carry on the mission of Jesus passed on through Mary Aikenhead and Fr Arnold Janssen.

She also acknowledged Toby Hall, Group Chief Executive Officer of SVHA, and his executive team, for their professional, sensitive and respectful approach throughout the transition.

"On this special day, as we look back with gratitude and walk forward in trust, I acknowledge the presence of Bishop Ken and all of you who have walked with us over the years.

Today I am privileged to be here to represent a long line of Holy Spirit Sisters especially those who have been dedicated to our health care ministry.

The Holy Spirit Sisters come with grateful, reflective hearts today as we pass on the ministry we have cherished so much.

We come with deep trust, as we listen to God who walks with us at this time of letting go of a much loved mission.

However we also look back today with joy and thanksgiving, as we recall the many achievements of the staff and our Sisters over the years.

We truly have seen the growth of this ministry and look forward today with great hope and trust that it will continue to grow into the future.

In the decades ahead, the executives and the management will discern how best to bring forward those qualities that have underpinned our ministry – compassion, dignity, justice and unity and giving the very best care to all in need.

Still, as with many endings, there is the accompanied pain, sadness and loss. We, the Holy Spirit Sisters, are called today to say goodbye to what has been so much a part of who we are and what we do.

We are thankful, that some years ago, the Sisters of Charity took the courageous step to partner with us in mission, merging the charisms and spirituality of two congregations, thus giving birth to this wonderful hospital we know today."



Above (left to right): SVHA Group Chief Executive Officer Mr Toby Hall, Provincial Leader Sr Sarita and Most Reverend Ken Howell.

THE MISSIONARY
IS NOT THE LIGHT,
BUT REVEALS
THE LIGHT – CHRIST.

St Arnold Janssen, SVD

Palm Island

Holy Spirit Sisters new mission



The Holy Spirit Sisters new mission on Palm Island, follows many years of pastoral and spiritual support for the people of Palm Island. Through the assistance of the Diocesan Office in Townsville, and research that is still a work in progress, a few historical facts give us a little of the background and involvement of the Catholic Church on Palm Island.

Palm Island Aboriginal Reserve

The Queensland Government established an Aboriginal Reserve in 1918 on Palm Island. The island was seen as an isolated location for ‘problem cases’ or people who were thought to be difficult to control on other reserves on the mainland.

Over the next two decades, approximately 1600 people from 40 different reserves across Queensland were moved there by the State Government.

The people of Palm Island were subject to strict supervision. No one was allowed to leave or go to the island without the superintendent’s consent. Mail was vetted and there was a nightly curfew. Relatives and friends needed permission to visit. In a way Palm Island became a penal colony.

Involvement of the Church

The Church did not get involved in any significant way with the spiritual or temporal welfare of the Aboriginal people along the east coast of Australia until the late 1920s.

Within four weeks of his consecration in May 1930, Bishop Terence McGuire, the first bishop of Townsville had visited Palm Island.

Following that visit and despite the fact that he needed both resources and staff Bishop McGuire decided to establish a Catholic Mission on the Island.

Father Patrick Moloney, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, said the first Mass on the Island on 26 July 1931 and dedicated the mission to St. Anne whose feastday it was.

By January 1932, there were at least 120 Catholics of whom 70 were confirmed. Fr. Moloney had also celebrated the first nuptial Mass in early 1932. Fr. Moloney was transferred to Alice Springs in January 1933 to establish a mission there for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Fr. William Connors arrived in March 1933 and with the assistance of a couple of MSC Brothers began constructing a presbytery.

Archbishop Kelly and the Sydney Archdiocese were instrumental in the establishment of the Catholic Mission on Palm Island. Archbishop Michael Kelly of Sydney celebrated his 84th birthday by laying the foundation stone for a convent in February 1934. A few months later he sent two sisters of the Order of Our Lady Help of Christians to commence work on the Island. They had taken up residence in St. Mary’s Convent by 11 October 1934 and St. Michael’s and All Holy Angels School (now St. Michael’s School) was opened in October 1938.

The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary 1944–2011, and the Good Samaritan Sisters from 1992–2002, and 2011–2019 have been involved in various ways with the mission on Palm Island, providing spiritual support and care, along with their hospitality and presence with the Aboriginal people.

The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, at the invitation of Bishop Tim Harris, Bishop of Townsville, were appointed to continue the work of the Good Samaritan Sisters.

Holy Spirit Sisters welcomed to Palm Island

On 14 April 2019, the Diocese of Townsville welcomed the Holy Spirit Sisters to Palm Island to begin a new community and mission. It was also the day two Good Samaritan Sisters were farewelled as they handed over the indigenous mission to the Holy Spirit Sisters. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Tim, followed by entertainment from students from St. Michael’s School, and refreshments. It was a lovely welcome by the people of Palm Island.

Today the Holy Spirit Sisters, trusting in the love of the Holy Spirit to guide and be with them, walk together to be a presence of compassionate love and care for our Aboriginal sisters and brothers.



We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Townsville Catholic Archives, for providing an article that gave the background history to Palm Island Catholic Mission.



Welcome Sr. Maria Theresia



In April, we welcomed and spent a few days with our Congregational Leader, **Sr. Maria Theresia**.

Sr. Maria Theresia was born in Germany, and along with the Congregational Leadership Team, lives in our Generalate community in Rome.

She has been the Congregational leader for the last 11 years and is responsible for the 3,000 Holy Spirit Sisters working in 50 countries of our world.

During her short visit, Sr. Maria Theresia shared with us the movement and new areas of mission today within the Congregation, in particular, the main focus of mission being with refugees and indigenous people.

Our sisters recently began a new mission in Uganda which is the largest refugee camp in the world, mainly comprised of Sudanese fleeing from their war-torn country.

While in Australia, Sr. Maria Theresia visited our recently-formed communities in Townsville and Pam Island and the Parish Ministry at Inala. After leaving us, she travelled to Papua New Guinea and then on to the Philippines.

Her short visit gave new life and impetus to our Province that is now undergoing a new focus as we move out from our Institutions.

Our new Leadership Team

Sr. Philomina Mathew takes on the leadership role in the Australian Province of Holy Spirit Sisters.

Like Sr. Sarita before her, she comes from the state of Kerala in India. Sr. Philomina made her First Vows as a Holy Spirit Missionary Sister in 1975.

After completing professional studies in India and the USA, and gaining a master's in counselling, Sr. Philomina was involved in the training and formation of younger members from all over India. In 2004, she was elected Provincial Leader of India South Province with its 140 Sisters, a role she filled for six years.

Sr. Philomina's personal focus has always been on ministry among the poor. In her time as Leader she opened more communities in various outreaches to the needy. These included a home for street children and an aged care home. Ministries among prisoners; advocacy for domestic workers, and HIV Aids centres were added to the already existing Hospitals and rural clinics.



Above (left to right): Srs Angela, Philomina, Noela and Elizabeth.

She also worked to set up education at all levels and various pastoral ministries of the Sisters.

In 2012, Philomina came to Australia to conduct the Final Vows Preparation Program for Sisters from english-speaking countries. When Temporary Visas became more difficult to obtain, she moved into Parish work. For the past two years, she has been Pastoral Assistant in Inala Parish, Brisbane.

Sr. Philomina's team members include Srs. **Noela Williamson** (Australian), **Angela Remi** (from Flores); **Elisabeth Hariyanti** (from Java).

EARTH and PEACE CONFERENCE

In our efforts to respond and understand in a positive way to sustainability and care for our earth, Sr. Claire Cooke and Trish Thornthwaite attend the Earth and Peace Conference in Melbourne.



As we arrived at Pilgrim College we were greeted by the Climate Guardians...

This group of Guardian Angels set the scene to highlight the vital role of guardianship of the earth's precious natural resources as a key focus in addressing the global threat of climate change.

The theme of *Peace, Justice and the preservation of Creation* are three absolutely interconnecting themes which cannot be separated. Everything is related and we humans are connected on a journey of pilgrimage, joined together by the love God has for each of us, including creation.

Uncle David welcomed us to his land on behalf of his people and invited us to "walk the earth together" as his people regularly "walk Country together". Indigenous historian and author of *Dark Emu*, Bruce Pascoe, shared how his people made the land so productive and sustainable over thousands of years. Bruce also spoke about a farming endeavour he is undertaking to renew Indigenous agriculture using native grains for better health and ecological sustainability.

Heather Eaton shared on Just Peace and Earth community. She shared of the relationships among justice, peace and sustainability as a crucial and viable future. What is missing, at times, is an earth-centred rather than an anthropocentric framework. She shared about how we are part of the earth and life, but we need to grow a greater sense of wonder – as wonder rather than possessions changes people. Another speaker, Mark Brett, reminded us that we can afford to leave no one behind in this work and so an adversarial approach will be counter-productive.

The conference then looked at the three pillars of violence – physical; institutional and economic violence

How can we bring about peace? I feel that it starts with acknowledging that the peace process which could include reconciliation, is an ongoing and evolving journey, a deep journey rather than a 'drive-through' approach. It is part of the rediscovering and renewing our understanding of shared history, power and responsibility as part of a new journey – one that is respectful, collaborative and engaging for the long term. We need to work together and look deeply into our history before beginning the journey of sharing our history.

From these spiritual insights we can look at our attitude, vision and hope and how we can make ethical decisions. From these spiritual awakenings we can find deep sources for peace and love and discover how these are so fundamental to our presence on earth. Through vision we breathe in the conscious life awareness and reverence. Our courage in doing this can help awaken something of the deep creativity of our diverse world. In hope, we are working toward change. To love without hope means we cease to live with love.

This left me with many questions...

- What are the principles that can guide the shift, theoretically and in practice?
- How is peace-building to respond to the cries of the poor, but also the cries of the Earth?
- How do we envision a peace that is both just and ecologically sustainable?

This leads me to the question of how to move forward with addressing some key issues...

- The relationship between Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians?
- The way we shape our economy and environment?
- Our long-standing dependence on imperial power, military alliance and use of force?
- Our engagement with the people of Asia-Pacific?



Vigil OF **PENTECOST** 2019

Come Holy Spirit
and renew the face of the earth

Saturday 8 June 2019

Commencing at 2.30pm

Concluding with Eucharist at 5.30pm

Celebrant: Fr. Richard Leonard SJ

**Holy Spirit Home, Function Room,
736 Beams Road, Carseldine QLD**



Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

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