

Mothers' Union Newsletter

February 2021

Dear Mothers' Union members and friends,

On January 11th I went on a train! Normally I wouldn't be so excited but until just a few months ago, like everyone, my travelling was limited to 5km from my front door. My last train journey had been on March 19th 2020 returning home in an almost empty train, after I had completed my duties at the Cathedral. This time I went to Adelaide on the Overland, an 828Km. journey full of memories, and scenery which I don't think had changed much, since last I travelled in this train, over 40 years ago. Well, the country stations largely unused are rather shabby now, often covered in graffiti and as it is now a day train, there was no stop at Ararat for breakfast of two cold slices of white toast in a paper bag and a paper cup of lukewarm thin coffee. Ah the good old days!

The countryside is rich with beautiful trees and the wheat fields run to the distant horizon. While the sheep gathered in conversation by the trainline are largely indifferent to the Overland. So much to see during a 12 hour's trip. And so much to think about... travelling once again.



I have always loved to travel, taking great pleasure in planning and packing, people watching and photographing and exploring new places. Restricted by the lockdown I found myself becoming an armchair traveller, absorbing the travelling experiences of others...seeing Northern Ireland in the 1970s through the eyes of Dervla Murphy ... a scenery of poverty and dispossession, of bombed streetscapes and deserted cities. My book adventures to India, guided by William Dalrymple, immersed me in the colour and richness of the crowded cities and towns, and of revelations about culture and tradition. I felt thankful that I had been able to travel there in safer times. But I missed the challenges that travel provides! I missed being there!

Finally, I looked at my photographs, especially those of pilgrimages to Assisi and the Holy Land. Images of peace from the church of Santa Chiara, the sacred stones of Jerusalem and gnarled olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane. More than ever these photographs reminded me of the holiness of place. I missed being there. Travelling with the intention to seek God in God's creation or to walk in

the footsteps of a holy person is an awesome experience. I guess that's why travelling purposefully through Lent will keep me on the Way. This Lent, the parish is offering a study series ... *A River through the Desert* ... which will enable us to see once again the significant places in the life of Jesus. A journey worth sharing. If you too are missing travel, consider joining this. IDC.

Mothers' Union is a gathering of women who pray



Pray for your current prayer partner, before our next meeting. Pray also for these members who are supporting family members who are ill, stressed or experiencing difficulties or ill health themselves...Pam Knight, Helene Durkin, Phoebe Wilkinson-North, Nan Rowed, Shirley Betts and Norma Schultz and Marg Tingate.

When eyes are opened

*Months sometimes go by
while we shuffle along
preoccupied with our worries,
not noticing your miracles
on every side.*

*O thank you God,
for those times of sanity
when our eyes are opened,
our tongues are loosed,
and our feet start tapping
with sheer gratitude and praise. (Bruce D Prewer 1991)*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The MU program until June 2021 is attached. You will notice a number of items printed in red ... these are church services and events which do not occur on the same day as Mothers' Union meetings. Some such as the Lady Day Service may not occur due to government restrictions on indoor gatherings. Please note that our first meeting is on **MONDAY FEBRUARY 22ND 1-30-pm.**, beginning with the Eucharist celebrated by the Ven Dianne This change is due to a prior booking of the Parish Centre.

When the Mothers' Union Committee met earlier this month, we decided to include invitations to some speakers who had to cancel due to the Corvid 19 restrictions, but there are also some new presentations and activities which we are sure you will enjoy. Please feel free to invite a friend, neighbour or another parishioner join you at any meeting. And we have a couple of vacancies in the program for later in the year ...so if you have any suggestions, please let us know.

MONEY MATTERS

Our Mothers' Union membership fee in 2021 is \$45 which is used to support the administration and programs of the Diocesan Mothers' Union such as *Mia Mia*.

Marg Tingate, our branch treasurer suggests that you choose one of these methods to pay your subscription:

- Send a cheque for \$45 made out to "St. Stephen's & St. Mary's Mothers' Union" to Marg Tingate (her address is on the MU Contacts list)
- Pay the money into the MU bank account at the Westpac Branch at Mt. Waverley. If you do this online, by internet banking, use these details BSB 033-112, Account number 276 504. Please include your Surname so Marg knows who sent the money.
- Bring your money in cash to the first meeting

If you are not confident with online banking, and prefer to go to the bank, please take a copy of the MU bank account numbers (shown above) and ask a bank employee to help you.

CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP ROLES IN MU

At the recommendation of the committee, **Bernice Weller** has been invited to lead our pastoral care program and will work alongside Elizabeth Woods who is easing out of this role after many years of service. Bernice will also keep track of those members who may be due for a long service award. Please check your membership card and let her know as soon as possible, so awards can be made at our Birthday celebrations in June.

From the Overseas and Northern Outreach letter

PNG Parenting Program

... As you all can imagine, little progress has been made on the Parenting Program project itself, as Mary Sumner House staff have been restricted in the work they are able to undertake especially work that would normally require them to travel overseas.

Please be assured, the money raised for this project has been quarantined by MSH, so it will be available for to use once the COVID19 pandemic is under control.

In conjunction with the PNG leaders, the worldwide manual for parenting will be adapted for the local content and the local facilitators will be trained. In the meantime, PNG MU leaders are drawing on the resources of programs like UNICEF that are locally available. Also their Provincial President Rose Sitae with a few other leaders have been travelling in PNG where possible, to implement strategies to address gender-based violence"

Robin Ray

*co-ordinator-Overseas and Northern Outreach Department.
January 2021.*

This news from ONO newsletter is quite encouraging as we begin this year intending to support this excellent program in Australia's nearest neighbour. At our meeting on **March 22nd.@ 1-30pm** we will be having a presentation on PNG to learn something of the challenging and diverse nation. **If you have visited, worked or lived in PNG please let Irene so we are looking for resources.**



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