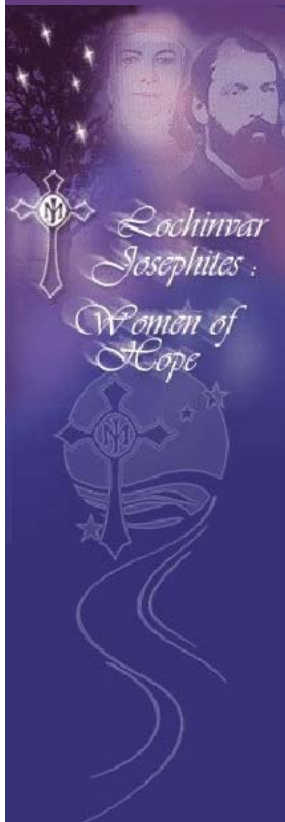


Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar

13TH GENERAL CHAPTER



DAY FIVE —Report

On this wet almost wintry day, over sixty of us gathered in the Therry Centre, East Maitland, to begin our last phase of this Chapter. Patricia Egan, Congregational Leader, welcomed us and mentioned the further emails, greetings and floral arrangements received since last week. Monica Cavanagh gave us the plan for the day and Monica Barlow led us in Morning Prayer, to which we responded, singing 'To the glory of God let us sing....'



Four sisters, two Chapter members and two others,

shared their experiences



of the Chapter to this point. Speaking of her experience as a moving through the seasons, Anne Moylan now finds herself in spring. With each season we have to let something go and be open to what is new. 'Sometimes it is dark in the unknowing, sometimes it is light, in trust in the Spirit.' Kathryn McCabe shared her experience by images: stepping up to the plate (as in USA baseball), the plate of God's space for us (not our chosen place); stock taking (what is God asking of me/us at this time and what return shall I/we make?); the long paddock, the long walk of the drovers; kite surfing, going where the Holy Spirit takes us.

Anita Conroy appreciated the invitation to participate through this whole year. She was very grateful to receive the Leader's report and attached material for her own reflection. She paid tribute to Dorothy Woodward's graphic with the Chapter prayer and reminded us of the next line in Philippians: 'if there is some point on which you see differently, God will make it clear' (Phil.3). Through the progressive website reports she has sensed an emerging unity and common vision.

Norah Creigh also highlighted the strength she found in the Chapter prayer and Dorothy's sketch, referring to praying this daily in community and in her fortnightly Theological Reflection Group and in Congregational Days. She felt 'the gentle, positive, emerging Holy Spirit in all these meetings'.





Norah was especially grateful to the Leadership Team, facilitators, prayer assistants and all who have helped by 'huge generous hearts, filled with love and respect for all God's people.' Her hope was 'that this love would shine for all to see' and 'that God would bring to a happy conclusion the good work we have begun.'

Ellen Royan, Carmel Moore and Virginia Bourke,

as commissioned by the Chapter, then presented us with their drawing together of all that the Chapter has generated. After a day struggling with the massive amount of material and a night's rest, they discovered the next morning a unifying framework.



'Where is your song, my Lord?
Sing us your song, My Lord.'

The music and words sounded the keynote of all the Lord has done for us. Ellen had hardly begun singing these words when the whole gathering took up the melody in full voice. There was a sense of a bubbling spring welling up among us. There was reference to Numbers 21:17. After the people had moved from desert camp to desert camp, past the gorge and the new frontier, they came together summoned by God's promise to give them water. They sang, 'Spring up, well; sing out for the wellspring.'

Virginia pointed out that when this document is refined, we hope to include many quotations from the Constitutions. Carmel emphasized that what they sought to do was be faithful to what had been said, give it a structure, reflect all and add nothing.



The responses to what these three sisters presented were warm and appreciative. There was recognition of a unity and a strength that had emerged out of all we had been through. There was a sense of a song 'of an emerging tomorrow and not of a dying yesterday'.

One comment was:

'There is a biblical integrity in what you have presented.'

Monica then led us to prayer and naming, in solitude and silence

'Who will help us to live into and beyond this document?'



Patricia Egan first shared with us all that she as Leader has been called to do apart from the mandate in the Constitutions. She listed these under the headings of Pastoral, Legal and Ecclesial duties. What she said would have sent any designated leader racing to join Elijah under the furze bush or even further into the desert. (Don't forget the unexpected raven will bring bread for the journey.)

