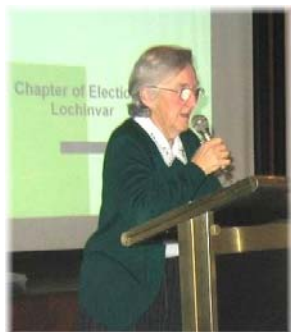


Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar

13TH GENERAL CHAPTER



DAY SIX —Report



On this second wintry day mid-Spring we gathered at Monte Pio for our first day of electing Sisters to leadership.

Welcome to the final stage of our Chapter

At 9.30 am Patricia Egan welcomed the Sisters to this final stage of our chapter and gave us further messages of prayer, including those from priests who have offered Mass daily for our chapter.

From the opening words of Patricia's welcome, we were in a space of reverent, sparse simplicity. There was no fanfare, no series of readings: the procedure was stripped of every inessential. In the waiting silence Ruth Long proceeded to our prayer-centre, and, taking up the Sacred Scriptures, solemnly proclaimed Ephesians 3: 16 -21, from the Church's liturgy of this day, Thursday, 29th week of ordinary time. We responded with the Taizé chant, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, strengthened by the accompanying sound of a mixed choir. As we waited in silence, Christine O'Connor lit the large candle on our prayer-space, and, taking light from this, lit the candle in the centre of each table. The taper struggled to keep alight, drawing our inner eye to reverence the tender flame of new life needing nurturing among us. Marjorie McLachlan then read in resonant voice:

God of Light from whom every good gift comes,
send your Spirit into our lives with the power of a
mighty wind.

By the flame of your wisdom
open the horizons of our minds.
Loosen our tongues to sing your praise
in words beyond the power of speech,
for without your Spirit
our way forward cannot be discerned.

After a few moments' quiet, mindful of and honouring the leadership of every woman in the room, Patricia formally addressed us.

Sisters, you have heard the call of the Sisters. You have reflected on the role of the Congregational Leader set out in the Constitutions and on the Mandate of this chapter. I will ask each of you, as I call your name, to respond to this question:

Are you willing to have your name go forward for





Our facilitator, Monica, then asked Patricia to light a red candle as we moved to the election, in openness to the Holy Spirit.

We sang:

'Do not be afraid, I am with you.
I have called you by name, you are Mine.
I have called you by name, you are Mine.'



After silent pondering, we moved to formal elections, and within twenty minutes the room erupted with applause. Laretta Baker accepted her election as our new Congregational Leader.



With thanks to God for all guidance, we prayed a blessing over Laretta.

The change-over to the new Leadership Team will take place on 6th January 2009

Our elected leader—Laretta Baker rsj



In recent years, Laretta has lived at Anawim House of Prayer in Wangi and worked as a Process Facilitator, particularly within religious congregations, parishes and not-for-profits. She has been particularly involved in facilitating congregational Chapters. As well, Laretta has continued an involvement with the Australian Catholic University, lecturing in the Masters of Educational Leadership program, specializing in leading educational change. Laretta's grounding in education was with the Sisters of St Joseph at Cessnock and Lochinvar.

