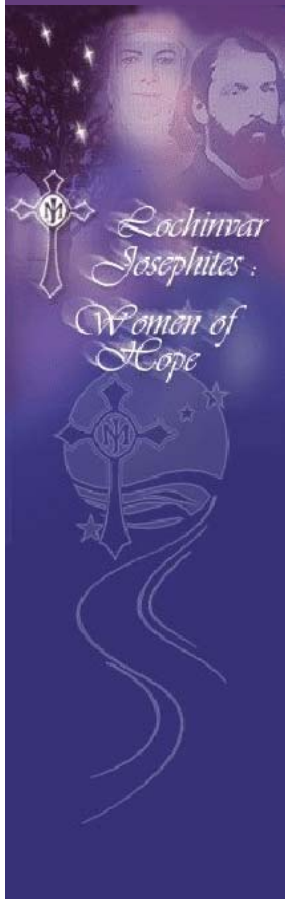


Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar

13TH GENERAL CHAPTER



DAY SEVEN —Report

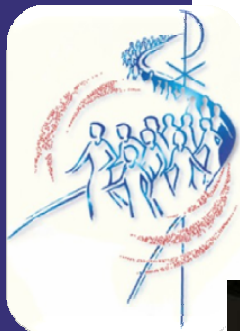
On this radiant day, in the shining after driving rain, we gathered at Monte Pio Conference centre for our last day of chapter. With the end of the day beckoning us to Lochinvar, ten minutes up the New England Highway, we set to the tasks before us.

After Patricia Egan's welcome, we opened our day with Morning Prayer. Rich harmony and full hearted singing drew us to stronger unity in God as we sang the refrain:

'We are many parts, we are all one body
And the gifts that we have we are given to share.
May the Spirit of Love make us one indeed,
One the love that we share, one our hope in despair,
One the cross that we bear.'

Again, as yesterday, we took our reading from the Church's Liturgy of the day, Ephesians 4: 1 – 6. Marie Hughes, Patricia Boland and Maureen Salmon each read a section, and to each we responded singing the refrain, 'We are many parts, we are all one body...'

Concluding with a prayer to the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts and direct us, we proceeded to complete the elections begun yesterday.



We elected four councilors to join Laretta Baker



...our new Congregational Leader, on the leadership team.



Ellen Royan Michelle Connolly Ellen Shanahan Marie Hughes

The room resounded after these elections with our singing
'Where is your song, my Lord,
Sing us your song, my Lord',
and we greeted our new team members.

How has this Chapter been for you? Responses in tea breaks on the



'Life-changing'.

'A very satisfying and peaceful end to some challenging days'.

'A transformative experience. It has broadened my knowledge and experience of the congregation, and built deeper relationships'.

'I felt it was a great responsibility to be there. I felt it was of great import, of real importance for the future.'

'There was a feel of it being sacred, and the feel of it being practical, for the here and now. There was a quiet discerning atmosphere, then facing the reality of what was to be done.'

'There was a real sense that we are called to be really for each other, to walk together'.

'Having seven whole days, out of the fortnight, sharing, praying, listening together has been a powerful experience. I treasure it and go home knowing many Sisters more truly than I did before'.



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After elections, we refined the chapter statements and the material presented by our writing group and commissioned them once again to refine these statements, which, we realize, are to be lived and worked out in practice in an unfolding and often unpredictable future.

Patricia Egan declared that the chapter was now closed, sincerely thanked the facilitators and all members for their participation and invited all to our chapel at Lochinvar for a closing ritual, followed by afternoon tea and barbecue.

When we arrived, we found many Sisters already in the chapel waiting for us, so that about seventy of us were present for this significant event of gratitude to God and each other for a journey walked together.





Closing Ritual followed and Patricia's thanks to the facilitators, who, as Patricia said, worked magnificently, though they both came at cost to themselves, and for bringing out the song in our hearts. The team thanked the Planning Committee (Virginia Bourke, Marie Hughes, Ellen Shanahan, Jeannine French and Patricia Boland), the Reference Committee (Laretta Baker, Kathryn McCabe, Ellen Royan and Michele Connolly), the Liturgists (Carmel Pilcher and Monica Barlow), and the Chapter Assistants (Margaret Anne Geatches, Marjorie McLachlan and Jan Tranter.)

In her response, Monica noted that chapters were meant to be an experience of faith and that her participation had truly been a faith event. She told us again that when we were all gathered on the first day and in a difficult struggle to unity, we sang the third verse of our Lochinvar hymn in a harmony that really moved her. She told us she was no musician, but was struck deeply by this harmony. In our singing, she said, she heard different voices, but affirmed us by her experience that these voices can sing in harmony, and reminded us that often someone outside a group can best recognize its strength.

Christina also thanked us for letting herself, a New Zealander, feel welcome and discover 'the lost province of Lochinvar'. She concluded confirming Monica's sentiment. There is a Peruvian saying' said Christina, *the women dance to heal*, and told us with conviction, 'Sisters, you sing to heal'.

**'Give us grace to stand unflinching
Against the storms that loom afar,
Give us love and power and wisdom,
Bless the souls of Lochinvar.'**

