



RURAL SCHOOL OF FAITH LEADERSHIP DUBBO 12th—15th August 2011

Disciples under Australian Skies

WHAT WE DID AT THE RURAL SCHOOL



As in 2010 the Conference of Josephite Leaders sponsored the Rural School of Faith Leadership in Dubbo for women from rural and remote areas. This year there was added excitement when the women renewed acquaintances as many were returning from last year's gathering. They were joined by five newcomers to our Rural School. Our participants came from Ardlethan, Lightning Ridge, Mudgee, Murrurundi, Tullamore, Walgett and from Gunns Plains in Tasmania and Murray Bridge in South Australia. It was an inter-generational mix of women from mothers with young families to grandmothers. The formation sessions reflected this year's theme of *Disciples under Australian Skies*.



Anne Dennis, one of the Indigenous women from Walgett welcomed us to country at the start of the gathering. Our speakers included Fr David Ranson from the Catholic Institute of Sydney who spoke of the sacramentality of all of life under the title of *The Australian Sacrament*. He also opened our eyes to the way the Australian environment blends with our Christian tradition in *The Liturgical Rhythm*. As David said it is about *Seeing the Seasons as they are, allowing them to draw us into themselves, to speak the truth of the Christian Mystery In their own way*.



Sr Lynette Young rsj viewed the spirituality of Australian women through the lens of St Mary MacKillop and other women. Sr Carmel Drew looked at Mary, the Mother of God through reflecting on some of the paintings in Marie Farrell's book, *She Who Believed*. Dr Jenny Geraghty took the topic of *Wellbeing* and touched on such issues as good diet, exercise, the importance of meals and knowledge of one's medication.



As well as the enriching conference sessions the women enjoyed the community aspect of the gathering, the sharing of experiences, the prayerful times, the walks along the river, the meals together and the participation in the local parish's Eucharistic celebration.

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