

FCJnews

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FCJ COLLEGE BENALLA

CELEBRATING
120 YEARS
1900–2020

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL MRS JOANNE ROCK

For 120 years, FCJ College Benalla has been providing families in local and remote areas an excellent education. Through two world wars, and now a global pandemic, FCJ College has remained committed to ensuring our graduates are well-equipped for their futures,

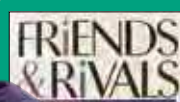


A VIRTUAL
200 YEARS
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

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DR BRENDA NIALL AO
FRIENDS AND RIVALS



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FCJ COLLEGE
BENALLA
CELEBRATION

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A Virtual 200 Years Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the FCJ Society

This version of *the Magnificat* is sung by the FCJ Sisters at significant ceremonies, and is known to many past students throughout the world.

It was originally written by Dolly Bramley as part of her music studies. Dolly was a past student of St Aloysius Convent School in Somers Town London, now known as *Maria Fidelis* Catholic School FCJ.

The school has a proud history as it was founded in 1830 by the FCJ Foundress Marie Madeleine d’Houët.



See the FCJ Sisters sing their music video at:
[youtube/OPd6J-07zY4](https://youtube.com/OPd6J-07zY4) or
fcjsisters.org/news/17544/

Pictured above: Together with FCJ sisters from around the globe, the *Magnificat* music video is sung to share and celebrate the Founding of the FCJ Society.

The Singers are from the following countries:

- Australia
- Belgium
- Canada
- England
- Indonesia
- Ireland
- Malta
- Myanmar
- The Philippines
- Romania
- Scotland
- Singapore
- United States.



Sr Alphonse Klemptz fcJ 1874–1946



collections.museumsvictoria.com.au

Rose Marie Klemptz was born at Talbotville, Gippsland, Victoria on 23 October 1874 to parents Rudolph Augustus Klemptz and Margaret O'Donoghue. She was the youngest of eight children. Her mother died the same year aged 39 and her father the following year aged 47. Both her parents were non-Catholics. Despite the strong objections of an older sister, Rose was adopted and brought up a Catholic by a good Irish bush mother in the picturesque Crooked River Valley of Gippsland, not far from Talbotville.

Sister never tired of thanking God for the great graces of this adoption and to the end of her days retained many traits of speech and manner that betrayed her Irish foster mother's good training.

Sister entered the FCJ Society at Richmond at the age of twenty-two in February 1897. In August 1900 she went to Benalla with the new community to look after the convent farm, returning to Richmond for a retreat after which she made her vows on 9 January 1902. In 1922 she spent two years at Genazzano and then went again to Richmond in January 1924. In 1928 she returned to Benalla for the next eighteen years.

❖ She did most of the milking herself – not with a milking machine either. There was a great demand for Sister's butter... ❖

Sr Alphonse was a most capable woman, especially during the foundation years at Benalla where she had charge of the laundry, kitchen and farmyard. Over the years her vegetables and fruit provided a most welcome variety to the tables of the children and community. When she was praised she would say, 'God gave them'. She had a most extraordinary love of all living things which responded in a very remarkable way to her care. She also had fowls and ducks which she looked after. She did most of the milking herself – not with a milking machine either. There was a great demand for Sister's butter most of which she sold to the local storekeeper. She had a wooden stamp with which she would impress a rose on the butter, her trademark.



Jack Bourke, a local identity recalled: 'Sr Alphonse was extremely knowledgeable, a practical and capable woman. At one time it was said in the town that by her dairy produce she kept the convent on its feet. She started off with one or two cows but very soon increased the number. As the numbers grew Sister was obliged to rent a paddock out towards the Reef Hills. Sister did not spend her days looking after the cows but did an amount of work in the house such as cooking and washing. She also had a very good vegetable garden and orchard'.

The Crawford children when being driven to school would meet Sr Alphonse, followed by Con, the convent dog, while driving her cows out of the paddock on the Mansfield Road. On the way back after school they would meet her again bringing them home. While out there she would go around the paddock and if a calf had been born she would pick it up in her apron while the mother followed after her.

Sister put a great deal of work into getting her cows and bulls ready for the Benalla Show and this was rewarded by the prizes she won. At one show one of the bulls played up. Sister just walked up to it and led it away much to the amazement and horror of all the men looking on.

In 1939 Sr Alphonse had a stroke. In less than two months she was back at her post doing most of the work. Five years passed before her next stroke and as she showed no improvement, she was admitted to St Benedict's hospital in Melbourne and finally after a month, the community at Genazzano welcomed and cared for her. She was never heard to utter an unkind word and was always most keen to be of help. On Sundays she spent her leisure moments reading the *Messenger* and the *Annals of the Sacred Heart*, 'to improve my knowledge of religion'.

Aileen Ryan fcJ

Pictured above left: *Mrs Aldridge milking a cow*. Gippsland, Victoria, circa 1930. Negative.

Above: The wooden butter stamp with a rose design.



Dr Brenda Niall AO *Friends and Rivals*

Dr Brenda Niall AO, one of Australia's foremost biographers, literary critics and Genazzano alumna has this year published her ninth biography *Friends and Rivals*. In this remarkable volume Dr Niall looks at four Australian women writers of the period from the 1890s to the 1920s: Ethel Turner, Barbara Baynton, Henry Handel Richardson and Nettie Palmer. These women don't make a group in the usual sense, but they have in common their single minded ambitions as writers, in a period that was not particularly welcoming of creative women.

↳ ...her writing dares to venture into the complexities of group biographies. This of course offers the potential of looking at life from different perspectives as the interaction between people raises questions that need to be asked and answered. ¶

Pictured above: Dr Brenda Niall AO.

Through the central motifs of reinvention, patronage and support, Dr Niall teases out the problems unique to each writer but which linked them inextricably. Governed by London publishers, Turner had to suffer the ignominy of having her manuscripts unilaterally censored for colonial slang and an occasional critique of white colonialism. In the light of this, it is fascinating to read that *Seven Little Australians* contained such references that were removed by the British Publishers, Ward and Lock in the 1896 edition, and were not restored until the centenary edition of 1994. Pandering to the tastes of the British Sunday School market assured socially acceptable content and steady sales. In spite of this frustration and her desire to write adult fiction, Turner soon realised that financial independence and fame were a worthy compromise and that she was fortunate to have a supportive husband and family.

Baynton's seminal work, *Bush Studies* (1902) was also published in Great Britain but not until she was in her forties. Her grim and angry portraits of the privations of bush women served to challenge the Bulletin/Lawson/Patterson myth of Australian mateship in the unforgiving environment of the antipodes. As a twice divorced, titled grande dame, Baynton's sources were bewildering and remained fictional until after her death. However, during her lifetime she was shrewd enough to mine her husbands to reinvent herself and promote her creativity.

Ethel Richardson, under the *nom de plume*, Henry Handel Richardson manipulated her male name and the devotion of her scholarly husband

JG Robertson, to ensure the publication of her trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney* as well as earlier books.

When he died, Richardson depended on the support of a young Italian woman Olga Roncoroni, whom she both befriended and nurtured to ensure that her household continued to revolve around her career. The patronage and support of both of these pivotal figures in Richardson's life contributed substantially to her success. The fourth member of the quartet, Nettie Palmer though,

appears to have sublimated her desire to be a successful novelist in order to promote the works of her husband Vance Palmer. Instead, she directed her energies into becoming a successful critic and promoter of the emerging Australian literary scene. In doing so she was happy to work in tandem with her husband and draw stimulus and inspiration from him.

Dr Niall recounts the origins of her latest work from a moment of surprise when first reading Turner's diaries as part of the research for an earlier book. Turner wrote about a shopping expedition in Sydney with Barbara Baynton. This was no mundane shopping trip as they were choosing diamonds for an anniversary gift from Turner's husband. The success of *Turner's Seven Little Australians* had accorded her fame and financial security, yet by the time of this auspicious shopping venture, she was a sedate Mossman matron with a family and a successful husband. Baynton was a rich, sharp-tongued widow of well-hidden origins. It wasn't easy to see what brought these two women together.

Yet Dr Niall found one common bond. Both women felt strongly about society's treatment of unmarried



mothers, and they worked together for an institution that enabled these mothers to keep their babies without the stigma that was so common at the time. The source of that dedication to an unpopular cause was she believed her most important find in *Friends and Rivals*, because it forced her to examine her subjects' childhoods. Turner was discreet about her parentage; Baynton invented hers.

Henry Handel Richardson is best known as well as the most gifted member of the quartet. In reading her letters, Dr Niall was interested in tracing her edgy friendship with the critic Nettie Palmer whose generous promotion, after a shaky start, included putting Richardson up for the Nobel Prize. But there was always an obstacle to the friendship between the two women. Nettie was a devoted and self-effacing wife to novelist Vance Palmer, but she could never get more than a few polite words about his novels from Richardson, who found them boring and unreadable. Palmer's critical writings favoured works with a strong national flavour. Richardson wasn't interested in literary nationalism; she felt that she wrote in the European tradition. Nonetheless, Nettie Palmer's work paved the way for Australian literature to become an established and valued component of university English courses.

↳ ...her writing dares to venture into the complexities of group biographies. This of course offers the potential of looking at life from different perspectives as the interaction between people raises questions that need to be asked and answered. ▸

Richardson's version of her first meeting with Palmer, written for private consumption, is sharp, witty and unkind. Palmer's description of the same scene is bland, written for public readership. For Dr Niall, the two accounts offered a visual image of the two women, facing one another, but at a distance. Richardson's face is in shadow. Palmer faces the light. Such a



Above: 1. Henry Handel Richardson. 2. Nettie Palmer. 3. Ethel Turner. 4. Barbara Baynton.

perspective illuminates some of Dr Niall's approach as a biographer. She always sees her subjects visually, hoping to catch a mood or image that will suggest the individual. All of her biographies raise the question of home, as she endeavours to place her subject not only in their social context, but in their geographical and physical landscape. In doing so it is inevitable that her writing dares to venture into the complexities of group biographies. This of course offers the potential of looking at life from different perspectives as the interaction between people raises questions that need to be asked and answered. This breadth of vision demands that she often modifies or radically alters preconceived views

about a single character by posing previously unasked questions.

For Dr Niall this is most often her starting point. She asks: 'How do I see my subject and how can I shape that life?' Her biographies extend beyond solitary portraiture and linear catalogues of neatly packaged lives, into quests to understand other people, and to make sense of the world we inhabit.

There is also the wish to celebrate a life well lived, and the contrary impulse to reveal uncomfortable truths. Certainly *Friends and Rivals* celebrates the resourcefulness and tenacity of four remarkable women, and in her own body of work one cannot help but feel that Dr Niall has proved a worthy inheritor of their legacy. Reflecting on the process of biography, Dr Niall sees it as 'a matter of border crossings into other lives, unlike my own and thereby enlarging understanding.' In her book *Life Class* as distinct from her biographies of others, she explores her 'own archive' including her years at Genazzano.

The hallmarks of Dr Niall's body of work are meticulous scholarship that reflect both insight and substance. In acknowledgement of her contribution to Australian Literature, she was awarded The Centenary Medal for Services to Australian Society and the Humanities in 2001, while in 2002 she was the recipient of the Queensland Premier's Literary Award for *The Boyds: A Family Biography*. Further to this in 2004 Dr Niall was made an Officer of the Order of Australia and in 2016 received the Australian Literary Society Gold Medal for her acclaimed biography; *Mannix*. It is therefore no surprise that *Friends and Rivals* has been shortlisted for this year's Queensland Literary Awards and is long listed for the Sydney based Nib Literary Award.

Carol Rosenhain and Anne McIlroy

The Communications Committee members thank Brenda for her willingness to work with us on this issue of *FCJ News*. We look forward to her next biography and wish her continued success and enduring recognition.

FCJ College Benalla celebrates 120 years

Four past pupils remember their time at FCJ College Benalla.

In the beginning

The work of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) began in France in 1820 and was brought to Australia in 1882. It was these sisters whom Dean Davey (Parish Priest) approached to come to Benalla. And so on 14 August 1900 the FCJ nuns established the Convent of Our Lady of the Angels.

The arrival party consisted of: Mother Berchmans Hughes, who was the superior, a diminutive lady from Cork, Ireland; Mother Josephine Bolger (26) from Wexford, Ireland who was to take care of St Joseph's Primary School; Mother Teresa Meyer from Harrogate, England who taught music and singing at the Convent; Mother Mary Bernard Hoare (28) from Victoria; Mother Agatha Barry (28) who also taught at St Joseph's Primary School; and Sr Alphonse Klemptz who was to operate the convent farm. They were accompanied by the Provincial Mother Xavier MacDonald who only stayed a few days to oversee the settlement.

The course of studies included English, French, Latin, German, Italian, Mathematics, Music (Organ and Piano), Dancing, Painting, Calisthenics and Domestic Economy. There were many options open to pupils. What brave women they were to leave their homeland, travel to such a distant land, and set up a Convent and education facility in a remote rural town. Most would never return home or see their family again. We have these and the women who have come after to thank for the great education that Benalla and district community now enjoy.

Early in the year 1900, Dean Davey bought four acres of land on which were two rather small wooden buildings. As these buildings were inadequate for the proper requirements of secondary



“The building was completed in 1903. The convent was now able to provide adequate rooms and facilities for students. Also it provided boarding facilities for young ladies to attend the Convent.”

schooling Dean Davey put them up for auction. Mr D Ryan purchased one at 69 Pounds and Mr E Ryan the other at 17 pounds. The buildings were bought and removed in 1902.

On 4 May 1901, Archbishop Carr laid the foundation stone of the Convent for which 3000 pounds had been subscribed. Later in 1901, an architect, CW Vanheems and a contractor H Hennison, were called in to estimate the cost of the new building. The cost was 5520 pounds. To earn money a bazaar was held on 25 October 1902 but only grossed 550 pounds. Eventually the necessary money was raised and a new brick two-story building was built. The building was completed in 1903. The convent was now able to provide adequate rooms and facilities for students. Also it provided boarding facilities for young ladies to attend the Convent. The Convent at this time was an all-girls' school and did not become co-educational until much later, when it became known as FCJ College.

Lyn Tanner



An early boarder
Maureen Hoare's mother

Alice Ursula Anne Reynolds attended Convent FCJ as a boarder in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Her family lived on a farm at Sheens Creek, near Euroa. Her grandfather called her Nancy and this became her name. The Convent FCJ was held in great esteem throughout the North-Eastern district of Victoria. Nancy's mother told her that the nuns at Convent FCJ would make a lady of her. She enjoyed her life at boarding school greatly. A then novice and long-time friend was Mother Winifred Dando fcj.

Nancy delighted in going home from Benalla to her family and to her beloved horse. A keen horse-rider, Nancy rode her horse every chance she could. In 1931, Nancy and her brothers were involved in the search for the 'Southern Cloud' aircraft that mysteriously crashed en route between Melbourne and Sydney.

Nancy's time at Convent FCJ ended when she was 16 years old. Her father died following surgery in Melbourne. Her mother bought a house in Wangaratta so that Nancy could train as a nurse at the District Base Hospital. Nancy always hated the long, heavy plaits of hair and cut them off with a bread-knife the day she left the Convent. In the 1950s, Nancy's daughter Maureen (née Gorman) Hoare attended the Convent and went on to Genazzano Convent, Kew.

Maureen (Gorman) Hoare



A reflection of my time at FCJ College Benalla February 1967 – December 1972

In February 1967 I became a student at FCJ College Benalla and completed my secondary education there in December 1972. Reflecting on this period in 2000 whilst on the school's centenary celebration committee, I noted that my time at FCJ College Benalla bookended two significant events in Australian history: 3 February 1967 hanging of Ronald Ryan (the last person executed in Australia); and 2 December 1972 election of the Whitlam government.

Although it's almost half a century since I was a student at the school, I still remember my time with a great deal of affection and gratitude. It had an enormous impact on developing the adult I became.

I can thank Mrs Moya Ginnivan for my passion for studying history. She was my Form 4 (Year 10) history teacher and it was in her class that I first studied the French Revolution. In 2013 I was fortunate enough to complete the Marie Madeleine Pilgrimage. Whilst in France I thought how much I would

Top left: Maureen Hoare's Mother Nancy
Below: Convent FCJ students and staff in 1907.
Right: Boarders Fee Slip.

have loved to ask Marie Madeleine d'Houët the following questions:

- When you were only eight, were you anywhere near Paris when the Bastille was stormed?
- Where were you in 1793 when your king and queen were guillotined and what did you think of when you heard the news?
- What was it like living through the terror in 1794 under Maximilien Robespierre?
- Finally, what did you think of that Bonaparte chap and his decision to go to war with the rest of Europe?

It was Mrs Ginnivan who taught us that we needed to learn from history's mistakes so that they wouldn't be repeated again.

The French Revolution heralded liberty, fraternity and equality. One of things that I took away from my time at FCJ College Benalla was that I was no better than anyone else, but, no one was better than me. Incredibly empowering.

Shirley Kimball (now Sr Shirley) reinforced the importance of being a participant and not a spectator (and that there was no 'i' in team). We were expected to make a difference when we left school in our workplaces, sporting clubs and local communities.

Sr Agnes Bourke perhaps because she remembered what had happened when a democracy was destroyed in Germany in the 1930's, emphasised the importance of taking our rights and responsibilities of living in a democratic society seriously.

“I will be ever grateful to her for being the one that ultimately led me to arguably the greatest writer of them all, Leo Tolstoy.”

Sr Margaret Mary Kennedy introduced me to the great 19th century Russian writers in Year 12 English Literature with our study of Fyodor Dostoevsky's 'Crime and Punishment' and Anton Chekov's 'The Cherry Orchard'. I will be ever grateful to her for being the one that ultimately led me to arguably the greatest writer of them all, Leo Tolstoy.

We all owe our teachers and where we went to school an enormous debt. I know I do.

Vincent Branigan



continued next page



FCJ College celebrates 120 years continued

My time as a boarder at FCJ College Benalla

I was ten years old in 1953 when I began school at the Benalla FCJ Convent as a boarder. I was to remain as a boarder until I left to matriculate at the end of 1959. I was fortunate as my sister Kaye came to board at the same time and our other sisters Colleen (deceased) and Elizabeth came later. Having siblings together was a huge support, but being the eldest I felt the pressure to be strong to support them. Many of the boarders were homesick and we cried ourselves to sleep, but with time we became used to the routine.

Sr Margaret Mary Kennedy fcJ was in charge of the boarders and remained so all the time we were there. We became firm friends and remained so until she died. Sr Margaret Mary also had a great affection for my mother and, of course, this was returned. It was the birthday custom for the parents to provide a birthday cake and other treats for the girls who shared the birthday table. Our mother loaded up suitcases of cakes for the whole boarding school and the Sisters as well. She drove all the way from Swan



Above: 19 October 2003 Benalla school reunion held at Genazzano. Florrie Quinane (seated left), with daughters (standing from left) Suzanne O’Kane, Kaye Kennedy, Colleen House (deceased), Elizabeth Quamil, Seated (centre) Sr Margaret Mary fcJ and Sr Imelda fcJ (former teacher).

Hill to Benalla four times a year so our birthdays were always looked forward to.

We were fortunate our parents chose Benalla FCJ College for the solid grounding we received for life. We were taught that the motto of the foundress, Marie Madeleine d’Houët was that to educate a girl was to educate a family. I have always remembered this and passed it on. It was a very important mission. So we grew up believing that women were equal to anyone and could do anything they wished. This meant we were given a very rounded education which included an emphasis on music and physical fitness, as well as the humanities. Our Catholic faith was central to our lives at school.

One of my earliest memories is Mother Patricia teaching us a poem titled *There are Fairies at the Bottom of the Garden* some

sixty-seven years ago. I still remember Mother Bernadette sharing her love of history with us and Mother Clare taking us on excursions to show us geographical features of the district. Mother Imelda and Mother Flavia imparted their passion for music to us.

Every year the Boarders put on a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. This involved much practice and learning the dance routines. Elaborate costumes were designed and sewn by the Sisters. All the dances were choreographed by them. Mother Clare would have done very well on Broadway. The performances were always enthusiastically acclaimed by the parents. No event was complete without a heartfelt rendering of our school song.

We were always regarded as part of the FCJ Family, such that when in England my sister Kaye and I made contact with Mother Winifred Dando in Kent who was delighted to see us. She had been our Reverend Mother at Benalla in our very early school days. We did not realise at the time the sound education we received that would set us up for life or

the friendships that we would maintain for a lifetime. *Pro Deo Semper.*



Suzanne O’Kane (Quinane)

Kathleen Mary Ride A Benalla girl

Sr Kathleen Mary Ride fcJ, from Benalla is the first Australian FCJ to be recognised by the Queen.

Kathleen Mary Ride was born in Benalla and educated by the FCJ Sisters at the convent school there, known at that time as Our Lady of the Angels Convent. After leaving school she worked for some time at a general store in the town. In February 1945 she entered the FCJ novitiate and took the name, Sister Perpetua.

Five years of study and preparation followed in England after which she taught the infant classes at Richmond and OLGC Deepdene followed by Benalla.

In 1980 she was given responsibility for the establishing of the FCJ Archives at Richmond. A little later she

established the Association of Catholic Archivists for Victoria.

In 1986 she went to Edmonton Canada where she gained much experience in archival management. Sr Kathleen Mary was in charge of the FCJ Provincial Archives, Richmond for 25 years

All the FCJ Sisters in Melbourne joined with Sister on Tuesday 22 September at a party to celebrate her significant 100th birthday.

Aileen Ryan fcJ



The grace of companionship in my life's journey



It was such a blessing participating in the Formators' Course in Rome, a program organized by the UISG (Union International of Superiors General). It was a great opportunity for learning about myself, sharing and working together with others and gaining new knowledge of formation. The program ran for approximately five months (February – June 2020). Irene fcJ and I were privileged to be with many religious sisters from different congregations and nationalities. Indeed, it was a privilege to be with people from all walks of life. This experience enabled me to gain deeper self-knowledge and the feedback from personal assessment, the mentoring program accompanied by sharing, helpful input, prayer and reflection was a wonderful experience.

📌 This time of uncertainty was an invitation for me to be more flexible and enabled me to live with an open heart. 📌

God's surprises happened during my learning and living in Rome! There was the unexpected situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and like everywhere in the world we experienced 'lockdown' in Italy. These circumstances brought me into deeper personal reflection of the meaning of life and reassured me that God oversaw everything!

This time of uncertainty was an invitation for me to be more flexible and enabled me to live with an open heart. We were living with great uncertainty and deep concern as so many people were dying daily in Italy. We lived in a spirit of prayer and solidarity each day with all people who were suffering and affected by Covid-19. Every morning there was an awareness of new signs of life, including the gift of 'breathing', which we so often take for granted.

Sr Irene and I lived at the convent of the Sisters, Poor Servants of the Mother of God (SMG) in Rome. I felt at home and very much part of the community. There was a deep sense of sharing and caring for each other especially during lockdown.

A part of my reflection on Palm Sunday, 5 April 2020 reminded me of how the grace of God's companionship and conversation with Marie Madeleine, really gave me new energy and hope in this uncertain situation. I kept trusting in God totally.

After this course I was missioned to Indonesia to accompany postulants. God has done everything for me. I am grateful for God's providence and protection along the journey which continues to the present day!

Maria Sunarni fcJ

Pictured above (top): Group photo of all participants after the opening mass with the celebrant Cardinal João Braz de Aviz (Dicastery of Religious life, Vatican). (Below): Narni receiving her certificate after the closing ceremony, it was presented by Sr Jolanta UISG President (left) and Sr Pat Murray UISG Executive Secretary (right).

Sr Patricia Mary Grogan fcJ (1915 – 2001)

Patricia Mary Grogan was the third child of six children born to Michael and Gertrude (née Lynch) Grogan. She was born on the feast of St Patrick in Tungamah, Victoria and baptized in St Joseph's church Benalla on 10 April 1915. Her missionary zeal was influenced by two of her brothers who became missionaries, Kevin SJ in India and Gerard CSsR in Singapore and The Philippines. Patricia's other siblings were Joe and Madeleine, both of whom were married, and Mary who remained single.

Patricia attended the local State school until she was nine when the family moved to Melbourne where she continued her education at St Joseph's Primary School in Hawthorn and at Vacluse FCJ Convent in Richmond. She completed her studies to Leaving Honours after which she spent a year in student teaching training with Mother Veronica Lardner fcj.

Patricia entered with the Faithful Companions of Jesus in 1932 and sailed to Europe to join the novitiate in Belgium. In 1936 she moved to *La Chassotte* in Switzerland to continue her academic studies at Fribourg University where she was awarded a *Diplôme de Français* in 1939. Her studies were interrupted by the outbreak of World War II and she was asked to lead the non-Swiss sisters across France. They were able to catch the last boat sailing for England from St Malo. (An account of this journey, titled *Come at Once* has been written by Sr Clare O'Connor fcj.)

In 1945 Sr Patricia returned to Fribourg to complete her studies: Education, Geography and French (1947) and Philosophy and English in 1949. Equipped with the completion of her studies in Switzerland she was missioned to Turin where it was hoped that she would take over the principal-ship of the *Collegio*. To meet the requirements of the Italian government, this required further studies and the need to take out Italian citizenship. Former students during this period of Sr Patricia's life wrote: 'We admired her young spirit, her great respect for people, her ability to challenge young people to reach high standards in their studies and in life.' About to relinquish her Australian citizenship for the sake of the Kingdom, she was 'spared' this loss and recalled to England to become the Principal of Sedgley Park FCJ Teacher

Training College in Manchester. Here she was plunged into an educational scene with which she had to make herself familiar, 'Through it all she always radiated a smile and ease of manner'.

Those were times of great change, uncertainty and stress in many areas of life and included many changes in education. At Sedgley there was a major building programme to update facilities and accommodate increasing numbers; there was the newly extended programme of studies with the introduction first of the three year diploma and then the BEd, accompanied by the growing rapprochement with Hopwood Hall College. At the same time, student power was on the increase and more freedom given to them.



Above: (left) 'Madre Regis' (right) Sr Patricia.

At Sedgley Patricia planned the liberalization of rules, which affected the life of the students, including later times for returning to College and the introduction of a cafeteria system to replace formal refectory meals. 'All was carried out with professionalism, taking advice from specialists, visiting other establishments to see their planning and inviting personnel from other colleges to consult about future developments.'



(Top left) Pat aged seven with Madeleine. Top right) Pat at school at Vacluse. (Centre) With her mother prior to leaving Australia in 1933.

Above: The future Sisters Patricia and Dolores with Dr Mannix 1933.

At the same time Patricia served the FCJ Society as a member of the commission for the revision of the Constitutions. 'Reflective, at times quizzical, she could, at first sight appear fond of 'red-herrings' but in reality this sprang from her openness to things new, her desire to look at every facet of the topic'.

While in a leadership role in Paris, 1976, she worked indefatigably and



Pictured above: Sr Patricia Grogan fcJ. From left to right: *Psalm 8* Patricia wrote, is my Psalm. Patricia the Missionary. Below left: Patricia with her sisters, Madeleine (left) and Mary (centre). Below: Fr Bernard Hurault and Patricia in Manila.



enthusiastically for the Cause of Marie Madeleine d’Houët, foundress of the Faithful Companions of Jesus. She led pilgrimages and contacted descendants of Marie Madeleine. This led to Sr Patricia writing an account of the life of Marie Madeleine –‘God’s Faithful Instrument’.

Having celebrated her Golden Jubilee of religious profession Sr Patricia looked for further opportunities to be involved in some facet of education and with the blessing of the General Superior set off for the Philippines in answer to a request from Fr Bernard Hurault, a Claretian priest, to translate the Christian Community Bible from French into English. Fr Bernard writes: ‘I have a great debt to her and cannot forget the three years of work with her, her wisdom and spirit of faith. Living here in Manila working like a slave, she fulfilled a great task for evangelization.’

The Tablet magazine, 22 October 1988, recounting something of the history and development of the Christian Community Bible, which it refers to as a ‘Liberation’ Bible, speaks of the prose as ‘strong, fair and dignified, free from stylistic quirks and colloquialisms and hails it as the clearest example yet of the shift in the source of evangelization from the rich to the poor world.’

In 1993 Sr Patricia returned to England for health reasons where she resumed her study into the life of Marie Madeleine d’Houët until 1998 when she moved to Redriff, the community missioned to care for those in failing health. Three years later Sr Patricia died, on 25 August 2001.

In spite of living all her religious life as a ‘missioner’ overseas, Sr Patricia never lost her love for Australia and all things Australian. After the changes of Vatican II she had the great joy of visiting her family on a number of occasions.

Sr Patricia’s studies of the life of the FCJ Society founder, Marie Madeleine d’Houët, her lifelong ministry in education and her work in translation of the Christian Community Bible from French into English form her greatest legacy. Their fruitfulness lasts to the present time.

Rosemary Crowe fcJ

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Bringing hope through planting

Sr Meita fcJ from the Yogyakarta, Indonesia community shares her love for creation and her hope with neighbours in need because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Many people have experienced the great impact of the current pandemic, including some families of disabled people whom I accompany. At this uneasy time, one of my activities has been to support them by donating plant seeds, saplings of avocado and small catfish.

The father of one of these families has lost his job. I have been helping the family by planting with them watercress and mustard greens, and developing a small catfish farm with which they are able to meet their daily basic needs.

In their limited space, watercress and mustard greens were planted in plastic recycled packaging or unused containers, and the small fish were put in buckets.

They use poly bags when they grow bigger. Four families have received avocado saplings. Our two *Companions in Mission*, Indah and Erlin, helped me to deliver the saplings.

Written to mark the Season of Creation which starts with the World Day of Prayer for Creation 1 September and ends with the Feast of St Francis of Assisi 4 October. Pope Francis is calling us to 'hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth'. We FCJs want to engage with the Season of Creation to live out our 2019 General Chapter call.

✚ I thank God for the generous heart of our *Companions in Mission* Indah and Erlin who made it happen. I am grateful for these families' hope, great desire and increased awareness of how to reuse whatever they have...they participate in taking care of our common home. 7

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