

The Grail Newsletter

The Grail
22 McHatton Street
North Sydney, NSW 2060
Tel: 9955-3053. Fax: 9954-0697.
Email: grailsydney@ozemail.com.au

August 2013

Vol. 45, No.2

Prepared in Sydney

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert
of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee
into ever widening thought and action –
Into that heaven of freedom, my Lord,
let my country awake.

From Gitanjali of Rabindranath Tagore, 1913



CONTENTS

From Gitanjali ('song offerings')	1
<i>Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Bengali Nobel Laureate</i>	
News from here and there	3 - 9
Melbourne	
Sydney	
Brisbane	
North Queensland	
International news	7
Papua New Guinea	
Gathering of Grail women, 70-100 years old	
Celebrating significant anniversaries for <i>Training for Transformation</i>	
Remembering Philippa Green (1920-2013)	9-11
<i>Eulogy at St Francis Xavier church, Lavender Bay, 26th July</i>	

ADDRESSES

The Grail Centre
22 McHatton Street
North Sydney. NSW 2060.
Tel: 02 9955-3053
Fax: 02 9954-0697
Email: grailsydney@ozemail.com.au

Sheila Hawthorn
2/105 Goodwin Street
Currajong. Qld 4812. (Townsville)
Tel: 07 4779-5931

Andrea Venier
2/25 McBean Street
Clayton. Vic. 3168. (Melbourne)
Tel. 03 9548-9432
Email: avenier@bigpond.com

Jill Herbert
14 Carawatha Avenue
Ferny Hills. Qld 4055. (Brisbane)
Tel: 07 3351-5390
Email: vidler_herbert@aapt.net.au

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

Melbourne

We begin our news expressing our deepest sympathy with Dinny Culican Ward, whose husband, Bob, has died after a long illness. No amount of time to 'prepare' for such an event can diminish the ache of loss when it happens. Dinny's strength throughout it all has been an inspiration. We pray also for Andrea Venier and her family, as they await the outcome of medical treatment of her father, Peter, recently diagnosed with a brain tumour.

On Sunday, 8th September, coinciding in the liturgical calendar with the feast of Mary's birthday, Alison Healey will lead an afternoon's reflection on Miriam of Nazareth, the Mother of Jesus, and her place and role in Catholic spirituality. This was a matter of the most intense disagreement in the Second Vatican Council. Why was this? Together we will look again at what the Gospels tell us about Mary, situate her life in the complex circumstances of the Palestine of her day and reflect on some developments in theological thinking about Mary since. The Brigidine Centre in Malvern will be the venue. Alison has a PhD in religion studies with additional studies in theology, scripture and missiology.

Selling the unit in Hawthorn, where first Adelaide Crookall and then Margaret McCristal lived for many years, was discussed and agreed on at our July Regional Group meeting. The unit will go to auction on Saturday, 14th September. As on other occasions, Belinda Anderson, an experienced and capable real estate agent and generous friend, has taken on the responsibilities of preparing, marketing and selling the unit for us. There's sadness in taking our final leave from Hawthorn Grove, from the neighbourhood and the neighbours, especially Mary and Geoff Tregear, and their daughter Julia, whose kindness is beyond telling.

Over the past few years, our Grail group has borne substantial loss, as several members were laid low with illnesses, even to death. We miss their presence greatly and have offered empathy and practical support to one another as best

we could. At our last meeting, we glimpsed possibilities for renewed outreach and activity in 2014 which we are exploring now and about which we will write more as prospects take flesh. We trust in the support of all our friends who read this.

(Melbourne Grail group)

Sydney

At our regional group meeting in August, we farewelled Ruth Crowe and Denise Whip, both of whom were leaving our shores for a while. Ruth has gone to Africa to participate in Grail events and programs in Tanzania and South Africa over four weeks (see International News). Denise is somewhere on the Danube, we think. Both will be back in September. By then, Helen MacAuley and Nour Barcha will be home, too, from their European trips. Nour has been visiting close friends in Prague. Among the countries Helen and her sisters have visited was Austria, where they attended a reunion of families of servicemen held as prisoners there during the Second World War. Their father had kept a diary which the family only recently discovered in the National War Museum in Canberra. It was only then that they learned of his imprisonment and escape, followed by long, lonely months avoiding recapture. The reunion was a deeply moving experience for them. How often are the personal stories of war kept in silence until a chance discovery like this reveals them to succeeding generations. Kay Hunt is another one on the move in recent weeks. She was, first, in South Africa for an international meeting focussed on 'Grail formation' and then travelled to the USA to visit her son, Simon, and his children.

At the same meeting, we celebrated with Mary Robertson the safe arrival of a new grandson, Thomas Michael. Thomas has brought great joy to his mother and father, Mel and David, and to his grandparents, Mary and John.

Pentecost seems a long time ago, but it is part of the period this Newsletter covers and it marked a very happy event here - the commitment of four new members into the Grail group. We welcomed and celebrated Elizabeth Lee,

Mary McDearmid, Ann Miranda and Jillian Morrison at an evening dinner, interspersed with prayer, readings and music. It was a delightful and inspiring night.

‘Food for the Soul’, our Wednesday evening of *lectio divina*, continues, 7.30 – 9 pm. Anyone who would like to come on any evening is welcome. At present we are reading from the Books of Samuel about David and discovering much to reflect upon.

The Book Club is reading Anne Michaels’ *The Winter Vault*, having had a lively discussion on Patrick White’s *Voss* the previous month. Anne Michaels is a Canadian poet who lives in Toronto. She writes beautifully; her first novel, *Fugitive Pieces*, won the Orange Prize (1997).

Norma Tracey updates us on Gunawirra:

‘The purpose of Gunawirra is to contribute to the healing of transgenerational trauma in Aboriginal families. Projects include support for Aboriginal preschools throughout New South Wales and an inner city centre in Sydney focussed on the needs of Aboriginal mothers and children. As ever, Gunawirra has enjoyed and valued the involvement of Grail members in its work. Their spiritual and physical presence brings an invaluable dimension to what we do, which I am very thankful for. Each week, Ruth Crowe and Helen Gomez bring their talents to the gatherings of mothers with their young babies at the Gunawirra Sydney centre. The women come there to learn how to observe and enjoy their babies; Helen teaches them infant massage, which is always a big success. They also learn to do pottery, cooking, photography and Aboriginal art.

Recently, we brought together in Sydney 67 Aboriginal preschool teachers from 47 different centres in outback New South Wales for two rich days of exchange with one another and with four American visitors and three of our own professionals. Ruth and Kay Hunt were there to act as facilitators of group reflection and discussion, as the teachers talked of their experiences caring for the little children who are often traumatised by domestic violence

and drug and alcohol abuse. Our continuing interactive work with these needy preschools includes follow-up telephone communication with all who took part in this program.

Two new booklets, one on *Five Big Ideas* and the other our *Annual Report*, are available to any Grail member who would like to receive them. Just call or email me and they will be on the way to you within a couple of days. Email ntracey@bigpond.net.au, or telephone 02 9427 2028.'

On 19th October, there will be an open day seminar at the Grail Centre, which we are organising in response to the strong desire among Catholic laity for change in our church on several fronts. We want to do some useful thinking together about this; and are excited about the quality of the speakers and the content of the day. Norma Tracey, a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, will speak briefly on the 'sense of loss' people are experiencing and where to ground a 'sense of meaning'. Alex Nelson, theologian and psychologist, will lead reflection and discussion based on Wesley Howard-Brook's perception that the Scriptures present us with two contrasting 'religions', which he names the 'religion of empire' and the 'religion of creation'. Alex asks: Does the distinction between these two orientations help us to understand how we respond to our calling to be Church? Finally, Rev. Edmund Campion, historian, will 'explore aspects of the Catholic story that offer a way ahead for modern believers; our challenges today are not unique'. He titles his session, 'We have been here before'.

Pace e Bene Australia, which promotes education for non-violent change, hosted a retreat recently at the 'Hermitage' in Mittagong, led by visiting USA Scripture scholar, Wesley Howard-Brook and his wife, Sue. Helen Gomez, Sheila Hawthorn and Alison Healey enjoyed a challenging and illuminating two days with them. Every day in the news we are confronted with 'empire' in our contemporary world – in nations, in corporations, in institutions, in groups and individual persons – it was helpful to spend some time contemplating this (also in ourselves) in the light of Scripture studies.

Sheila was in Sydney to join us in farewelling a much loved member of the Sydney Grail, Philippa (Mary) Green, who died suddenly on 19th July at the age of 93. Helen had gone to pick Philippa up, as usual, to do the weekly shopping. When she got no response to the doorbell, she rang Philippa's sister, Biddy Kennedy, who lives in the same retirement centre, Xavier Terrace, Lavender Bay. They found Philippa on the floor of her bedroom, where she had collapsed in the early hours of the morning. While it was a shock for those she left behind, it was Philippa's preferred way to leave this world – in her own place, spared intensive medical care in a hospital or prolonged 'waiting' in a nursing home. The church was filled for the Eucharist - the more than 60 members of her family, Grail members and friends, the community of Xavier Terrace, neighbours and parishioners. The kindness and courtesy of Philippa and Biddy were legendary. Our loving sympathy is with Bid, who, approaching 100 years, has now seen all her younger siblings go before her. We are looking forward to the party in her honour in October.

Sheila and Helen both attended an international gathering of Grail women held in Milford, Ohio, USA, this year. Sheila refers to it in the Townsville news and Helen has written about it in the International News. Helen has three siblings and several nieces and nephews in North America and was able to visit some of them travelling to and from the Grail meeting. She writes: 'Before I arrived in Milford I visited my nephew Kevin, Jenny his wife and their two teenage daughters, Michele and Ann Marie. They live in Minneapolis, a beautiful city surrounded by lakes. I spent a week with them, sightseeing and enjoying their company. After our farewells at Milford, I travelled to Montreal, Canada, to spend a week with my sister, Sybil, and her husband, Des, with whom I had a quiet, restful time before flying home'.

Anne Marie George writes a Prison Journal update: 'In the April newsletter, we wrote that work on the Prison Journal was in full swing. Now, we are very close to a final draft. The aim is to have it to the printer by mid-September and ready for sale by the beginning of October in time for pre-Christmas purchasing. Having located a low-cost but good quality print shop, we will be able to sell the Journal at a very reasonable price covering the cost of both the

'inside' and 'outside' copies. We are hoping to sell 1,000 copies in this way through our network of local Grail contacts, thereby distributing 1,000 copies to inmates. If you would like to purchase a copy, or help us to sell a few, please get in touch with the team at (02) 9955 3053 or grailsydney@ozemail.com.au Thank you to everyone who offered photos and who encouraged us with their enthusiasm for the project -we are already imagining the second edition!

Finally, as this is being written, Noella Liu, is lying peacefully in a bed in the Sacred Heart Palliative Care Hospice across the road from St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst. It is more than possible that, by the time you receive this, she will have been taken up by the angels, her familiar friends, to paradise. Her last request was for a copy of the Beatitudes. They now lie on the bed with her, so that people visiting can pray them aloud to her. Do please join us in prayer with her.

(Sydney Grail group)

[Noella has died. She slipped away in a moment, gently. We will write more about her in the next Newsletter. She is now among the blessed ones.]

North Queensland

Travelling has dominated my agenda since I last wrote in the April Newsletter. In May, I participated in the '70-100' Grail gathering in Milford, Ohio, USA, a blessed experience for me. Practically every day was a highlight, as we heard more and more of the enormous dedication and loving service of Grail women in many, many areas of need in different parts of the world during the 90+ years of the International Grail's life. It was a great experience of the depth of solidarity in The Grail. Special events for me were visiting Grailville for the first time and also the Freedom Museum of the Underground Railroad in Cincinnati. After Milford, I spent a few days with a nephew in Atlanta before travelling on to England and Ireland.

I visited and enjoyed the warm hospitality of the English Grail in their attractive new centre in Winchester. My time there included trips to the old,

inspiring Winchester Cathedral, the local Museum and the Great Hall where the Arthurian legend is perpetuated in art and contemporary memorabilia.

Memorable indeed are the lush farming districts with the healthiest Friesian cattle I have ever seen, spectacular landscapes and rugged coastlines which overwhelmed me as I travelled through Cork, Galway and Kerry in Ireland. Though I walked the 3 km wall on one side of Galway Bay, I did not see ‘the sun go down’ on it, as it poured raining in the late afternoons.

Back home, the thorough appraisal of the Multicultural Support Group’s resources and procedures continues. A new organisational structure has been adopted but some policies and procedures still need a lot of updating. Johanna Wood, Margaret and Andrew’s daughter, has been working as a mentor in a pilot Employment Experience program for refugees, which the Support Group has been managing for the Federal and Queensland State governments over the last twelve weeks.

Roberta and Paul Michna are slowly but surely getting their rain forest dwelling established. While the building of the house is proceeding satisfactorily, the connecting of adequate and convenient communication systems is presenting some challenges.

Being the front-of-house convenor for the Townsville Little Theatre in recent weeks has kept me busy. As the curtain closed on Agatha Christie’s *Witness for the Prosecution*, Elizabeth Coleman’s *Secret Bridesmaid* was ready to open. As well as the annual program of four major productions and two seasons of short plays, we are grappling with a demanding fund-raising effort to establish a permanent home for the theatre on City Council leased land.

A quiet, prayerful day was a very welcome interlude when I participated in a short guided retreat in the Ignatian tradition, led by Geraldine Ellis of the Faber Centre of Ignatian Spirituality, Brisbane. It was held in the Townsville House of Prayer where there are frequent opportunities to deepen one’s life of prayer. Indeed, the sparkling clear, warmish days we are enjoying at present

also call one into a deep connection with, and appreciation of, ‘the religion of creation’, to use Wesley Howard-Brook’s term.

(Sheila Hawthorn)

Brisbane

We have been shocked by Elizabeth Lancaster’s illness and hope Liz makes a speedy and complete recovery. She is being looked after by her wonderful aunt, Shirley Campbell, and Shirley’s neighbours have been very generous to both of them. Many of Liz’s friends were as shocked as we were, and have visited her.

A couple of weeks before Liz was laid low, she, Gloria Lazzarini and I met with a Grail member from the USA, Wendy Bayer, who was in Australia to visit family. The lovely evening did not end so well, when Gloria fell and broke a bone in her foot. While she had to spend some time resting, she is now walking and doing things again - maybe not quite running!

We have planned a special meeting of interested women on 1st September to hear from Sheila Hawthorn about the wonderful 70-100 gathering in Ohio, USA. We are also going to hear from Margaret Hounslow about a special project to help young African women. The other area we hope to focus on is the Carteret Islands. Part of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, the Carteret Islands are experiencing sea inundation and the inhabitants have to relocate. We will see a DVD in which the people go in search of a new home. We are pleased to be holding this meeting at *Lavalla*, in Rosalie, formerly Marist College.

Mary and Darryl Nelson recently celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. Jay and Dudley Scoullar have returned from the Philippines, where they go regularly to visit Jay’s family. Ann Aboud’s son, Niall, his wife Catherine and children, Lily, Sophie, Poppy and Ned went to Sri Lanka and had some interesting times. Ann writes: ‘They saw a leopard run across the road in the game park and Niall nearly fell out of the jeep. He was more excited than the children. He took a

wonderful photo and has sent it to all the other tourists who missed it. This was karma for him as when I took him to Africa when he was a callow youth it was the wet season and none of the big game was out'. Ann recently went to an excellent Patrick Oliver retreat which cleared up for her some 'sticky passages' from the New Testament.

In June, Helen Jeffcoat accompanied her 15-year-old daughter Olwen, on a trip to Italy and Greece. Brigidine College, Olwen's school, arranged an Ancient History trip for 20 girls, teachers and 5 mothers. It was a memorable time with the girls discovering so many beautiful churches in Italy. Helen took lots of photos of the beautiful marble floor design in St Peter's in Rome - inspiration for a quilt maybe! Olwen's 'best pic' of the trip was the Arian Baptistry in Ravenna, which was erected by the Ostrogothic King Theodoric the Great, around the end of the 5th century. The ceiling has a circular design of mosaics, depicting the baptism of Jesus by Saint John the Baptist. Around this central design is a procession of the Apostles, led in separate directions by St Peter and St Paul. This mosaic is a UNESCO world heritage site.

It is with great sadness that we heard the news today that Jan O'Donoghue's husband, Owen, passed away suddenly in the early hours of Saturday morning, 24th August. Owen had a bad throat infection which, as it worsened, made it difficult for him to breathe. Jan took him to the hospital but he suffered cardiac arrest a few hours later. This day was their 50th wedding anniversary and a special Mass and lunch with family and friends was planned. Very bravely, they went ahead with these special events and remembered and celebrated Owen's life.

(Jill Herbert)

International News

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

A new Grail group has been formally affirmed in PNG since the last Newsletter, a cause for great rejoicing. The women in Rabaul have been preparing for this for several years. Monica Liumene, originally from the Sepik, was teaching in Malabunga Secondary School in East New Britain and introduced The Grail to some of her fellow teachers. On the 19th April this year, five of these women made a commitment in The Grail (there are two others who will do so later in the year) and they are meeting regularly with a number of other women wanting to grow in their understanding of the vision and mission of The Grail and explore how they also might belong in this movement.

Adriana George is the Chairperson of the Rabaul Grail. Elizabeth Paisat is responsible for on-going programs of education and formation. With them, Catherine Bola, Susan Karun and Georgina Komen form the initial core group. They report that, after a week of prayer, reflection and discussion, culminating in the commitment ceremony they prepared, they 'returned to their homes and families, hearts filled with joy'.

Schola Manembe, National Team member with particular responsibility for formation, and Crescentia Lementi, founding member of The Grail in PNG, travelled from Wewak for the week. A second National Team member, Albina Namuesh, was also there representing the Grail women of Port Moresby, who have been supporting and encouraging the Rabaul women over the years.

Of course, we in Australia share the joy of these signs of growth in PNG. There are active Grail groupings of women now in the East Sepik, Port Moresby, Manus Island, Rabaul and Madang. May their work for justice, freedom, wholeness and well-being for their people be graced and Flourish.
(Based on the 'Report from Rabaul', written by Adriana George)

**Gathering of Grail Women, 70 - 100 years old, 19th – 31st May, 2013
at Milford, Ohio, USA**

Well, young women in The Grail under 35 had had an opportunity to meet.
Now it was time for those at the other end of the age spectrum.

We came from 11 countries, the 70 of us. From Australia, Africa (Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda), Europe (Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal) and North America (Canada, Mexico and USA). Grateful thanks are especially due to the organising team, Joyce Minkler, Carla van Thiel and Christa Werner.

‘There’s a place within our hearts
where we keep our favourite memories,
the ones that never fail to make us smile;
and when life becomes too hectic
it is such a special feeling
to close our eyes and reminisce a while.’

The Milford Jesuit Centre was a perfect venue for this gathering. We were surrounded by beautiful trees with squirrels scurrying among them and birds chirping all day long.

On May 19th, Pentecost Sunday, we were invited to Grailville to celebrate the Eucharist with the Grailville community and share a festive dinner with songs and stories. During the next two weeks, we shared our personal histories. An oral history team recorded the life stories of the participants.

In the sessions each day, we reflected on the blessings, gifts and fruits of our particular Grail journey. We were grateful for the internationality of The Grail and for the inspired lives and talents generously shared by Grail women in countries around the world. We discussed our perceptions of the ‘signs of the times’ and their influence on the life and involvements of The Grail. We

reflected on the present situation in our respective countries and expressed our hopes for the future.

We talked together about ageing and dying – ethical, legal and spiritual questions and decisions about what medical treatment we wanted, or didn't want, when we were approaching the end of life. We then joined in a ritual of letting go our regrets and failures.

These were some highlights of the gathering for me:

- the 100th birthday party for Janet Kalven (USA) – a joyful celebration with cake, hats, gifts, and dancing and singing by our talent-ed African sisters;
- the gracious hospitality of Grailville;
- the interesting, informative visit to the Cincinnati Freedom Centre;
- the sacred dancing most evenings in the chapel, led by Chris de Leeuw;
- the evenings of sharing stories over wine and cheese;
- the closing ritual and agape.

I was happy renewing my friendships with those I knew and making new friends with women I had read or heard about but never met before. Now that I am back in Sydney, I am grateful for the privilege of participating in this exciting gathering of Grail women who will always be young of heart.

(Helen Gomez)

Celebrating significant anniversaries for Training for Transformation

From 8th to 18th September, some 40 people from 20 countries will gather at the Grail Centre at Kleinmond, Cape Town, South Africa, for a 'Think Well'. They will share their rich experiences of working with the philosophy and methodology of Training for Transformation (TfT) and, as well, celebrate its 40th year of existence and the 10th anniversary of the Diploma Course.

Congratulations to Sally Timmell and Anne Hope and all at the Kleinmond Centre. Also to all those associated with the beginnings of TfT and its

continuing life and impact in a world crying out for justice, for inclusion and for effective ways of responding.

The aims of the workshop are:

- to develop evaluative and impact tools for TtT;
- to exchange and write 'best practices' which can cross-cut cultures and countries;
- to form country and regional teams to design an introductory course for use with potential allies, in order to build strategic partnerships and strengthen civil society.

I will be taking part in this workshop, where I hope to meet up with TtT practitioners from Asia and discuss regional linking of women from Asia, Australia and the Pacific island nations.

In late August before the workshop, I will join the celebrations in Tanzania around two happy events - the dedication in the Nucleus of the Grail of several young women; and the 50th anniversary of Imelda Gaurwa's dedication. Imelda was a founding member of The Grail in Tanzania and has been a remarkable leader, not only in her own country but in the East African region and in the wider Grail as a member of the International Presidency Team, 1993-98.

(Ruth Crowe)

REMEMBERING PHILIPPA GREEN

Born 2nd January, 1920, died 19th July, 2013

Eulogy at St Francis Xavier church, Lavender Bay



In the course of a conversation the other day, I recalled one of the characters of Charles Dickens – Mrs Jellyby, who was an enthusiastic champion of a remote tribe of people in far-off Africa, while her own children, of whom there were several, were strewn about the house with wounds and ailments that she didn't have the time to attend to – one of Dicken's many perceptive caricatures. Mrs Jellyby is a memorable image of people who find it easier to espouse causes at a distance than to engage personally and kindly with people who inhabit their daily lives.

An alternative to living like that is to confine your concern to your family or intimate circle and let the rest of the world go by. Another alternative is to respond to the challenge of the Gospel to follow Jesus in his way of both unbounded compassion for the whole world and personal, empathetic attentiveness to those present with him at the time.

Thinking about this moment when I would be talking to you about Philippa, I realised that this is what I most want to say about her. Philippa chose the way of Jesus. As a young woman, she dedicated her life to God in The Grail, which she clearly understood to mean trying, for as long as she lived, to pattern her life on the example and teachings of Jesus. She lived a long time and was faithful to her youthful vision to the end. Indeed, it seems to me that her compassionate world view together with her loving response to those she encountered in her daily life was an achievement hard to match.

Let me trace briefly Philippa's life in The Grail to give you a glimpse of the richness of her experience and contribution to the lives of others.

After completing her Arts degree at Sydney University, where she joined a Grail student group, Philippa had thought of becoming a social worker, but decided to throw in her lot (literally) with The Grail. From the formation house in Springwood, she spent some years on staff in *Tay Creggan*, the residential adult education and training centre for young women in Melbourne, and then returned to Springwood to lead the formation work there among other young women seeking to dedicate their lives as she had done.

In 1954, she joined Catherine Bagley to staff the Catholic Central Library in Sydney after training at the Mitchell Library. Both able and hard-working, they, with the help of others, grew the library and its list of borrowers remarkably and turned it into a lively place of stimulation and exchange among significant thinkers and writers and thoughtful readers. Philippa's voice made a particular contribution. Hers was a quality voice for radio and she had a regular *Books and Reading* program on 2SM and was also invited to contribute to the ABC's 'Daily Devotional'.

The Grail's withdrawal from the Library after unresolved difficulties with Archbishop Gilroy opened to both Philippa and Catherine a welcome chance to fulfil a dream they both held: to live and work in solidarity with people of another culture aspiring to lives of freedom, justice and peace. Catherine went to Africa, Philippa to Fiji.

The Archbishop of Fiji wanted Philippa to contribute in Catholic education, but she had no formal teacher training. She readily agreed to become an undergraduate again for 3 years at Corpus Christi Teachers' College in Suva, her fellow students being close to 20 years younger than herself, winning their friendship with her warmth, sense of fun and simplicity. She then took up various appointments to schools on out-lying islands. Philippa has never been a comfortable traveller by sea (or air for that matter). Her

many trips between the islands during her 16 years in Fiji were always occasions of sea-sickness. But she loved Fiji and its people and was loved in return. Her last four years there brought her back full circle to the Teachers' College but now as Dean of Students assisting the Principal, Dan Ahern, an Irish Columban now retired to Tralee, who wrote this week of their close friendship and his high regard for her.

I visited Philippa in 1971. As we walked along Lomary beach we conceived the project which became the series of biennial Pacific Summer Schools. With Philippa at the Teachers' College in Suva, Sheila Hawthorn in education in Wewak, Papua New Guinea, and I at St Raphael's Women's University College in Townsville, we were able to gather young women and men from around the nations of the Pacific for residential programs held in different locations. I think the largest of these numbered 70 in Nuku'alofa, Tonga. We wanted to give them the opportunity to make friends across those vast ocean distances between them, to celebrate their Christian faith and to contemplate together their common destiny in the region and their Christian responsibilities as adult leaders in it. Philippa played an essential role in this on-going project.

She returned to Australia in the 1970s to share the care of her aged parents. Initially, at the invitation of Cyril Hally, well-known Australian Columban and long-time friend, she worked pastorally among Pacific students at the International Training Institute in Sydney, among other things assisting them to connect with their various religious communities here and arranging hospitality for them in Australian families. Our Sydney Centre hosted numbers of them. She also spent a while in Townsville when her help was needed at St Raphael's.

Returning to Sydney, Philippa then consciously took the decision to make 'the local' the focus of her mission from then on - the local Grail, the local parish, the immediate neighbourhood, her fellow-residents of Xavier Terrace, the community of her family. I remember our talking about this at the time. It was not something she drifted into, but a clear, purposeful

choice. For those she spent the rest of her life with in all these locations, she was a gentle, supportive, encouraging presence always – as ever, humbly sharing all her resources, personal and material, wherever she found an opportunity to do so. At the same time, she maintained her awareness of the realities of the wider world beyond. She read and listened and communicated and continued to contribute her resources, especially to the Pacific region.

In your Mass booklet, you will see two poetic pieces written by the holy 12th Century Abbess, Hildegard of Bingen. They are both favourites of Philippa (and of her sister, Bidy, too). The first serves as a prologue to our celebration of the liturgy this morning and addresses all of us. Hildegard speaks directly to us with her ‘Good people, you shine with radiant light’. It’s a lovely, warm, encouraging greeting, simply expressed. ‘God hugs you’, Hildegard says. I hope, knowing Philippa’s particular affection for this piece, that you can hear her voice, as well as Hildegard’s, in this greeting to you.

The second text at the end of the booklet is Hildegard’s vision of heaven and its saints, of whom Philippa is now one, as each of us ‘good people’ will be. I’ll finish by reading it:

I saw a mighty and immeasurable marvellousness.
It had such a fierce shine I could behold it as if through a mirror.

But I knew that within it was every manner of sweet blossoming,
every manner of good aromas and lovely scents.
It was to be enjoyed with unbounded delight.

Here were the blessed, happy ones that moved God in their time on earth,
stirred God with sincere striving and just works.

Now in all this marvellousness they can enjoy the sweetest ecstasy.

(Alison Healey)

Good people,
most royal green verdancy, rooted in the sun,
you shine with radiant light.

In this circle of earthly existence,
you shine so finely it surpasses understanding.

God hugs you.

You are encircled by the arms of the mystery of God.