

## KEEPING QUIET

Now we will count to twelve  
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth  
let's not speak in any language,  
let's stop for one second,  
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment  
without rush, without engines,  
we would all be together  
in a sudden strangeness.

Fishermen in the cold sea  
would not harm whales  
and the man gathering salt  
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,  
wars with gas, wars with fire,  
victory with no survivors,  
would put on clean clothes  
and walk about with their brothers  
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused  
with total inactivity.  
Life is what it is about;  
I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded  
about keeping our lives moving,  
and for once could do nothing,  
perhaps a huge silence  
might interrupt this sadness  
of never understanding ourselves  
and of threatening ourselves  
with death.

Perhaps the earth can teach us:  
as when everything seems dead  
and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve  
and you keep quiet and I will go.

Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) from *Estravagario*,  
Editorial Losada, Buenos Aires, 1958 (tr. by  
Alastair Reid, in *Extravagaria*, Jonathan Cape,  
London, 1972).



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# NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

## Melbourne

We recently received the sad news that Colleen Lewis has passed away. (See *In Memory*, p. 7.) Because of Covid-19 restrictions at the time, Colleen's funeral service was a small private one for close family members only. However, a Memorial Service was held on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> December in Mark's parish church, St Peter's, East Bentleigh, giving us a welcome opportunity to pray with Mark and the family in gratitude for Colleen's loving presence among us and to wish them strength and peace in their loss.

Andrea Venier, who would normally be writing up Melbourne news, fell recently – unfortunately on 24th November which was her birthday - fracturing her foot and wrist. As I write, she is waiting for the bones to heal before beginning a period of rehabilitation. So, it will still be some weeks before she can resume her former activity. After a very difficult and demanding year of teaching at a distance via computer Andrea was looking forward to some rest in the holiday period, but not this enforced immobility.

As Australians know, the Victorian health and government authorities imposed very strong and prolonged restrictions on Melbourne dwellers to lower the COVID-19 infection rate. Melbournites responded admirably and over 2-3 months the number of cases dropped to zero. Congratulations for the community spirit that made this possible!

There is not a lot else to report. Our planned gatherings and activities came to an abrupt halt in March this year. We will speak to you again in March next year,

Meanwhile, we wish you all a blessed Christmas and New Year.

*Genieve (Genny) Grabau*

## Sydney

The seminar in March with Eva Cox on our society's critical need for trust-building was intended to launch a year's program of action. Then COVID-19 became a pandemic, a global focus of unceasing attention that displaced many of our plans for 2020. With the aid of *zoom* we were able to maintain a number of our regular activities with small gatherings. So long as we calculated 4 square metres per person, we could welcome 12 people in our meeting room. Just recently the regulations have eased to allow double this number to 24. So we have resorted to hybrid meetings – gatherings + *zoom* - and continued with:

- our weekly *lectio divina* on Wednesday evenings, our current text being the Gospel of Matthew;
- monthly meetings of our regional Grail group for prayer and planning;
- 'Circles of peace' reflections;
- monthly Book Club conversations;
- the Tuesday morning program of meditation and sharing of insights based this year on Richard Rohr's *The Universal Christ*.

Much of our monthly meeting time we have given over this year to a process of discerning the longer-term future of The Grail in Sydney in regard to the vision and mission of The Grail and the use of The Gail Centre. In the new year we will move into strategic planning. We are grateful to Liz Lee for her guidance through the months of discernment together. At our last meeting of the year we drew up a tentative list of programs for 2021 and now wait to see what will be possible.

The Book Club tried different ways of coping with COVID-19. For a couple of months we each read a book of our own choosing and exchanged our reviews by email. That was a stimulating exercise. Only in the first two months and the last two were we all able to meet in person.

Printing a new edition of the Personal Journal for distribution among men and women in our correctional centres was a project that COVID-19 did not hinder. And those of us in the Journal team enjoyed the challenge when one of the pastoral workers at Long Bay asked for more copies. For this third issue we printed 4000, double previous printings, as we found interest and cooperation in Queensland among both those engaged in prison ministry and Grail members. (See p. 9.)

Of all the *zoom* events this year, I found two particularly memorable for their quality of presentation and significant content. The Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) celebrated 20 years. I have represented The Grail in the Working Group for the whole of this time. It was a wonderful upbeat variety of speeches, archival film footage, music, and tributes from organisations and individuals here and overseas, expressing their appreciation for the research, analysis, public education and campaigning of AFTINET. We were pleased to receive a greeting from Mary Boyd from her office in the Mackillop Centre for Social Justice on Prince Edward Island, Canada. We didn't forget to conclude with a toast to AFTINET with a bring-your-own glass of wine.

Another network The Grail has been part of since its inception in 2003 is the Faith Ecology Network (FEN), an initiative of the Columban Missionary Society, now convened by Anne Lanyon. FEN is a multi-faith network seeking to promote action for a healthy planet informed by both faith and science. *Diversity* was our theme for the year of 2020. We organised a memorable webinar with the title, *Deep Listening in the natural world*, beautifully presented by Andrew Skeoch, a professional sound recordist. Andrew told us how he came to commit his skills to recording the sounds of nature, a tale that resonated with experiences I had had and my friends had told me of. An indigenous man in the outback drove Andrew out of town deep into the bush and pulled the car up in a rocky place with a vast view. Andrew asked, *Are we going for a walk?* *No*, his Aboriginal companion replied,

*you're just going to sit over there on those rocks. OK, said Andrew, so that I can tune in to nature. No, said his friend, so that nature can tune in to you and know whether it can trust you.'*

Dear friends, may this Christmas and New Year be full of blessings for you all and for our world.

Alison Healey

## Brisbane

### Retreat

This is the fourth year that we have had an annual retreat at the ToCH house at Bongaree on Bribie Island. We were there over the weekend of October 30 – November 1. The house is spacious, is only a block from the beach and has meeting areas and a large garden. We welcomed several friends and friends of friends who joined us; and some members of the local parish came during the day. Kevin Treston and Janet Galos were our two guest presenters.

Kevin's talk, based on his book, 'Sayings for the Soul', was about meditating with mantras and sacred sayings. 'Now I have put my words in your mouth', (Jeremiah 1:9). Learning about traditions of prayer in different religions was both interesting and worthwhile.

Janet gave two sessions. The first discussed the importance of the culture in which Celtic Christianity emerged with a particular examination of the prayer, the 'Breastplate of St Patrick'. In the second session, we considered some important qualities of monastic spirituality from the late 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries. This spirituality can inspire us today. Janet's sessions were illustrated with many pictures of locations of monasteries, burial sites and historic churches in Ireland and Scotland. She had us all thinking that our next retreat should be a pilgrimage to Ireland led by Janet!

On Saturday afternoon we had a practical session with Helen Jeffcoat learning how to

make wax fabric wraps. These can be used, and re-used to wrap food instead of plastic. Bees wax is easily available; in addition, you need a square of 100% cotton fabric, baking paper and an iron. If everyone does a few small things to reduce waste it will make a big difference.

That night we joined the 'Big' Grail meeting (see International News, p. 9). The house didn't have wifi so we used our phones. As a result it seemed a bit 'little'. But the reality of us all meeting at the same time across many locations, with many contributing, was warming and uniting.

Sunday was All Saints day and the Grail's Foundation Day and we remembered our Grail sisters who have gone before us. Jill Herbert had prepared a liturgy which we enacted in the garden. It began with Joyce Johnson Rouse song, 'Standing on the Shoulders'.

I am standing on the shoulders of the one who came before me.

I am stronger for their courage, I am wiser for their words.

I am lifted by their longing for a fair and brighter future.

I am grateful for their visions, for their toiling on this earth.

We are a small group with many personal challenges. Who knows what next year will hold, but we will work together with the Grail vision in our hearts.

### **Visit to the North**

Judy Brown recently took the opportunity of a visit to far North Queensland for a family function to contact nearby Grail women there and also promote the third edition of the Grail's personal Journal for prisoners (see p. 9.. She flew direct to Cairns and then made her way back south.

Judy and her niece had a delightful lunch at Roberta and Paul Michna's incredible rain-forest hideaway, together with Margaret Tranter, come from her home on the Atherton Tableland. Margaret had exciting news that, earlier in the year, the Street Naming Author-

ity in Canberra asked permission to name a street after her parents, Henry and Elaine Tranter, to honour their contribution to the community and agriculture, especially on the Atherton Tableland. Grail women who worked in St Raphael's College, Townsville, and appreciated greatly the Tranters' unflinching hospitality, are delighted at this memorial of them. Margaret's daughter and young family including a very young baby are currently staying with her in Milla Milla, so life is very full for them both. We have just heard that Roberta's mother in Gympie who has been very ill has died, We send our deepest sympathy to Roberta and the family.

In Townsville, Judy, Helen Morlin and Consy Sakaria 'had a cuppa' at the House of Prayer. Both women are really busy, with family needs very much to the fore. Judy later met also with Joan Neal, who lived in the first Grail house in Townsville for university undergraduates.

For the first time, 1000 copies of the Journal are being given freely to prisoners in Queensland correctional centres through Judy Norris, who has oversight of the prison ministry of the Catholic church in Queensland. Judy Brown has accepted responsibility for selling a matching 1,000 to fund those gifted. For sales and orders, please contact Judy (0407 580 174) or Elizabeth Lancaster (0407 738 582).

In both Cairns and Townsville Judy introduced the Journal to Prison Chaplaincy coordinators, giving them a sample copy, as well as a Grail brochure. Rev. Karen Allen of the Anglican church in Atherton is keen to access the journals. All those Judy met with gave their support to the Journal project and bought or ordered copies including the Coordinator of the Townsville House of Prayer.

### **Seminary education in Papua New Guinea (PNG)**

Mary Mennis was asked by Cardinal Archbishop John Ribat msc of Port Moresby to write a history of the Catholic Church in PNG for use in the education of students for the priesthood in the national seminary. Mary has

just completed the first part of this assignment. It has been a massive job as she illustrates the lectures with photographs and interviews she conducts with people from PNG. She never stops working and at our last Grail meeting she interviewed Maggie Jenatsch on her history with The Grail. The Cardinal has also asked Mary for copies of all her books for the seminary library. Her work will live on for many years and contribute significantly to the perceptions and insights of future priests in PNG.

### **From our families**

Reto Jenatsch, Maggie's husband, will shortly retire from his position at St William's Parish. We wish him health and happiness.. Josephine Vidler, Jill and Pat's daughter, was admitted as a lawyer this week. It was Jill's god-daughter, Nicole Cullen, who moved Josephine's acceptance. Our congratulations and best wishes to Jo for whom this was the culmination of 6-7 years of study and training. Ailsa Paterson, Helen Jeffcoat's daughter, will move to teach at MacKillop Primary School at Andergrove in Mackay next year.

*Helen Jeffcoat, Judy Brown, Ann Aboud*

## **Townsville, North Queensland**

On Friday 19th October. I attended the Valedictory Dinner at Saints Catholic College to present the annual Grail Award. Saints Catholic College is a merger of St Raphael's Women's College (a Grail project 1964 – 99) and St Paul's College for men (formerly directed by the Franciscan Fathers). The dinner was held in a grassy area of the College grounds in accordance with the Covid-19 distancing regulations. The setting was spectacular. The buffet main meal, dessert and drinks were set out attractively under a lovely cool evening slightly humid but with a light breeze. The atmosphere was buzzing with the excitement and chatter of young people all anticipating the occasion with enthusiasm. The valedictory celebration is always a very special occasion as it recognises the achievements of all involved – the students, of course, but also

their teachers and the many, many others in the interconnected institutions that support them materially, intellectually, spiritually. It highlights also the personal relationships, the commitment, discipline and hard work that make these achievements possible. The Grail Award goes each year to the resident student recognised as having contributed most to the community life and spirit of the College.



The 2020 Grail Award was presented to Morgan O'Reilly, a second year student in Medicine from the Sunshine Coast. Morgan was very happy and excited to have won the award and gave me her email address so that we can keep in touch in 2021. Also at the dinner whom I was happy to meet, was Louise Vella, Director of Catholic Identity and Indigenous Education Services. Louise was a student at St Raphael's College where she became a friend of Sheila Hawthorn. Louise was also keen to keep in touch with me and gave me her email contact.

Louise, Bishop Harris. other special guests and I had a very enjoyable evening at the College.

Deborah Pennington has a permanent address now in Brisbane:

119 Terrace Street, Paddington. Q4064. She continues her guidance work with the Queensland Education Department now at Bellbird State High School.

May I take this opportunity to wish all readers of the Newsletter a happy Christmas and a blessed 2021!

*Consulata (Consy) Sakaria*

## In memory...

### Victoria

*Colleen* and *Mark Lewis* played a significant part in the life of The Grail in Melbourne. They celebrated their marriage at 'Tay Creggan', the Grail centre in Hawthorn, where Colleen was a resident in her early adult years. Since then, she has been a long-time Grail member, who gave much of her talent and loving care to those in need in her local community. Mark has been a generous friend and, as a chartered accountant, a discerning adviser. In recent years, they moved together into an aged care centre as their health declined. In October this year Colleen died. May Mark and the family be filled with the Spirit's gifts of strength and peace.

At the time of writing we hear of the death of *Kevin Dunne*, husband of *Irena*. Kevin suffered grave illness during his life that called for extraordinary endurance from them both. Finally freed from it, they enjoyed the following years at their apartment, a haven of hospitality for all who were fortunate enough to know them. *Irena* has been an invaluable Grail member in Melbourne for many years and *Kevin* a regular participant in Grail programs. We shall miss his gentle presence greatly and pray God's blessings on *Irena* and the family.

*G. Grabau*

### New South Wales

On 6th and then 15th June, two long-time friends of The Grail in Sydney died. *Rev. Noel Connolly* of the Columban Mission Society had been ill with cancer for some time; *Sister Sophie McGrath rsm* left this world quite unexpectedly. Columban priests have always been supportive friends of The Grail and *Noel* was one of these, a theologian and missiologist who enlightened and inspired with his insights. *Sophie* headed up the Golding Centre for Research in Women's History, Theology and Spirituality within the Australian Catholic University. She and I had known each other since our secondary school days at Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta. *Sophie* held a PhD in History and only a week before she died rang about the *Rosemary Goldie* archive that was in her keeping temporarily at the Centre. She had negotiated with the archivist at the Catholic Institute that it be held permanently there and our archive team decided that whatever relevant material we had we would lodge with the Institute also. We send our sympathetic greetings to the Columbans and Sisters of Mercy.

*John Tracey*, husband of *Norma*, died after an extended illness in late June. It was *John's* wish that he spend his last months at home and *Norma* gladly did all she could to make this possible, although there were unavoidable short spells back in the hospital for some sustaining treatment. *Norma* is a Grail member in Sydney, a social worker and psychoanalytic therapist, known internationally for her work in trauma and intergenerational trauma in aboriginal families. The Sydney Grail Book Club particularly will miss *John's* kindness and generous hospitality whenever we met in his home. Now he is in blessed rest. We pray that *Norma* continues to find joy in life even as she grieves her loss.

## Queensland

We acknowledge with sadness and deepest sympathy for his wife, Win, the death on 30th November of *Rod Manning*. Win and Rod have been close friends of The Grail all their adult life. Win was a resident in 'Ballybrac', the Grail house in Mackay, when Rod, a young journalist, was one of a group of young men and women who regularly played tennis on the 'Ballybrac' court, Rod worked on the Mackay 'Daily Mercury' for forty years (he was editor 1980-97), during which time he also became a very capable historian. He was applauded nationally with a Walkley award for the quality and integrity of his journalism. A man of faith and great personal warmth, we give thanks for his good life among us.

*George Kearney*, founding Professor of Behavioural Sciences at James Cook University, Townsville, retired to Brisbane and died there in July 2020. George and his wife, Jacqueline, known always to us as Jacquie, became valued friends and colleagues of Grail members of staff at St Raphael's College. Jacquie and I enjoyed each other's company when, for a few years, we were members of a team teaching a course, 'Education and Minorities', to 4th year Education students. George accepted an invitation from the then Principal, Gloria Lazzarini, to represent the University on the College Council in 1982 and served staff and students well in this capacity for nearly 8 years. We remain grateful to both Jacquie and George and send our warmest greetings to Jacquie and the family

*A. Healey*

## East Sepik, Papua New Guinea

We received the sad news from The Grail in Wewak that *Sabina Ewwa* died in the local hospital on 3rd August. In recent years she was suffering failing health and reduced mobility. Sabina's first experience of The Grail in her region was the 'Women in the Pacific' program arranged by the Australian Grail in Townsville, North Queensland, in 1989. There she met women from 6 Pacific nations. As well as Australians and Papua New Guineans, there were participants from Samoa, Kiribati, Vanuatu and Fiji – 35 in all. It was an exciting introduction to the vision and mission of The Grail in the context of diverse cultures.

Sabina was fortunate to participate in other international Grail events: a spirituality program in the USA led by Carolyn Gratton, a 3-week Bible study of the *Song of Songs* hosted by the Brazilian Grail in 1996 and, most recently in 2019, she was a PNG delegate at an International Council meeting in Tanzania.

Sabina was fully employed as a secretary in the Division of Culture and Tourism of the East Sepik Provincial Administration. At the same time, she was very active in the Wewak Grail group, filling several administrative roles, as well as helping to run the Grail house where she lived for many years. Sabina also served a term in the National Leadership Team. We offer our heartfelt sympathy and prayers to the PNG Grail, especially those in the Wewak regional group who lived and worked closely with Sabina.

*Sheila Hawthorn*



## *The journal*

This 80-page A5 sized journal contains beautiful photographs and inspiring quotations from across cultures and times. Blank pages allow you to write and draw whatever you want.

For every journal sold one copy will be given to an inmate in a correctional centre, or a political or social refugee.

This personal journal is a wonderful gift for yourself and others, and purchasing a copy is an expression of solidarity and care for a person detained.

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## International Grail

### **The 'Big Meeting'**

The first of November is the Foundation Day of The Grail, the feast of All Saints, and on 1st November this year we celebrated our 100th year. We were going to have 'a Big Meeting' in Brazil. It became 'a Big Meeting' on *zoom* instead, carried off with Brazilian *joi de vivre* and technical know-how to the enjoyment of hundreds of us gathered in groups or singly and tuned in to computers and phones in all six continents of the world.

There were greetings and readings and prayer and song. The program began with delightful drumming from East Africa and was to have ended with dancing from a group in Papua New Guinea, but, sadly, when the time came, transmission failed and we were sorely disappointed that we missed this contribution from our nearest and dearest neighbours. Still, our final collective exchange of goodbyes and good wishes, all at last unmuted, was a heart-warming and poignant few minutes, as, across vast distances, friends called to friends long unseen.

It was a very good decision of the International Leadership Team (ILT) to push on with the Big Meeting no matter the difficulties. It renewed our spirit of unity in diversity and encouraged and strengthened our commitment to The Grail's vision and mission. For the Big Meeting a Big Thank You - to the ILT, the Grail in Brazil and all those who made possible such a happy experience.

### **International Leadership Team election**

The process has begun for the electing of a new ILT as the present team approaches the end of its term. We are very grateful to Maria Carlos Ramos (Portugal), Dilma Rodrigues (Brazil) and Mary Heidkamp (USA) who have worked together hard and well in particularly difficult times. Maria Carlos is not eligible for re-election as she has already served two terms. Mary's personal commitments prevent her from standing for election again. Dilma has agreed to accept nomination for a second time. So we will see at least two new Grail women stepping into international leadership roles at the end of this election process. We wish both the outgoing and incoming members of the ILT a blessed and happy future.



‘Another world is not only possible, she is on her way.  
On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.’

Arundhati Roy