

SIONIANS

Our Lady of Sion College Past Students' Association

From the Principal

Dear Sionians

Welcome to the 2015 November edition.

This is a very special year for the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion College because they celebrate the 125-year Anniversary of the Sister's first arrival to Australia. In addition to this, another important milestone for the Sisters is the 50th Anniversary of the Vatican document, *Nostre Aetate*, the declaration of the Church to non-Christian religious. This is a document that is very close to their heart and the Sion Charism. In the spirit of these two special Anniversaries, the College chose the theme of 'Growing through dialogue' for the 2015 school year.

It has been a wonderful year exploring the many aspects of this theme – growing through dialogue with God, self and others. Our major focus during Lent was to dialogue with the marginalized by showing our support for the wonderful work of Caritas Australia through Project Compassion. This focus of dialogue with the marginalized continued during our Sion Day celebrations on 15th August, where we raised over \$22,000 to support the projects led by the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, specifically in Brazil, Jerusalem and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In dialogue, we seek to set aside fears, preconceptions and the need to win. In dialogue, we take time to hear other voices and to consider possibilities. *It is through dialogue that we can discover layers of meaning and that if we undertake this sincerely, and openly, and patiently, we can sometimes find our way to something entirely new.* Ultimately, real dialogue presupposes an openness to modify deeply held convictions. With only a few weeks of the school year to go, I am truly delighted that the journey of this College theme, 'Growing through dialogue' has been rich and meaningful for the Our Lady of Sion College community.

This year ends my eleventh year as Principal of Our Lady of Sion College and it has been a real privilege and honour to lead this wonderful College community. I have loved every day at this school and to make a decision to leave has not been easy. As you know, this is a great school, with a rich Charism, strong faith and wonderful traditions. Why would I want to leave all this?

I have always known that as a Principal, it is important to be at a school long enough to make a genuine difference to the school community, but not stay too long. It is important to allow a school to be led by someone

with fresh eyes and different ideas. This is a school I would be happy to remain at for the rest of my career, but I don't think this is a healthy approach personally and for the school.

When the opportunity to be Principal at another school that has some different challenges became available, I decided to apply. Genazzano FCJ College is a different challenge because it has an Early Learning Centre for 3 & 4 year olds, it has a primary school, it has a boarding house, a separate Year 9 campus and a secondary school. If I am going to be an authentic leader and role model that encourages our students to take on new challenges and extend oneself, then I needed to do this myself.

My message to our students is that opportunities will come your way in life, and so it is important to recognise them and embrace them with open arms. Sometimes these opportunities can be overwhelming, but if we don't embrace them, then how can we extend ourselves to become better leaders, better people, and embrace the chance to make a significant impact on other communities. My decision to take on a new challenge is purely to do with a belief that God wants us to be more than we can imagine; to extend ourselves, to be challenged and to live our faith in authentic ways.

I am grateful for the wonderful support I have received from the Past Students' Association and I wish the committee and all past students well for the future.

With every blessing **Karen Jebb, Principal**



President's Report

2015 has been a busy year for the Past Students' Association. A 20 year reunion saw the class of 1995 return to the vastly changed halls of Sion, where they popped in for a tour and headed out to dinner.

The Committee would like to thank the women who organised this event, and of course Robyn McCann Past Students' Administrator and Leanne Whiteroad College Daily Coordinator for their continued support and assistance. The reunion was a lively event with past students catching up on decades of news and reminiscing about the good old days.

As usual, the Daughter of Sion fundraising event in October was a hit! We would like to thank all that came along to watch "The Intern" at Balwyn Cinema, demonstrating their support and dedication to the Past Students' Association.

This year marked a very special milestone for the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, with the 125th anniversary of their arrival in Australia. It was humbling to see past students, both young and old, come together to cele-

brate such a special occasion.

As our President, I have met with the 2014 Daughter of Sion award winner, Charlotte Adams; chaired our meetings and other gatherings during the year, as well as encouraging past students to join the Association Committee. We are always excited to welcome new members, so come along and share your Sionian experiences with us!

Finally, a big thank you to all the past students who have assisted at College events, including Music performances, College plays, GSV coaching, Science week and the like. Keep your passion and enthusiasm coming; we would love to see you all next year! In the Sion spirit of hospitality, we welcome all past students to take part in the activities of the Past Students' Association.

It will be our pleasure to continue meeting with the Daughters of Sion who have taken the influence of Sion with them in their life's journey.



125 Year Reunion

The Celebration of 125 years of the presence of Sisters of Our Lady of Sion in Australia

In 1899, the newly appointed Bishop of Sale, Bishop James Corbett travelled to England, Ireland and United States in search of Sisters for the Catholic education of girls in his far-flung diocese of Gippsland, stretching from Dandenong to the border of New South Wales. With no success, the Bishop went to France to knock on the door of the Mother House of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, situated in the heart of Paris, in walking distance from Notre Dame Cathedral. The Sister in charge was not very positive about sending Sisters so far away, 'to the Antipodes', as she explained to the bewildered Bishop. Undeterred, Bishop Corbett told Mother Marie Paul that he would pray and return to renew his plea in a week's time. This he did, and to his joy, was informed that Sion would send Sisters for the new foundation the following year.

In the company of the Bishop, the seven Sisters, with Mother Raphaela as leader, set sale from Tilbury Docks, London in January 1890. After six adventurous weeks at sea, the group finally arrived in Melbourne. They stayed with the Presentation Sisters, Windsor over night before taking the train to Sale. The people of Gippsland had been informed that the Bishop was returning with seven Sisters from Europe to begin schools in their diocese. At each railway station, people flocked around to catch a glimpse of the Sisters and to receive the Bishop's blessing. When the Sisters finally reached Sale, horse-drawn carriages were at the station, ready to take the Bishop and Sisters to the Cathedral and to meet the large crowd of people, assembled there for the auspicious and historic occasion.

Within a few weeks, the Sisters had opened a primary school and plans were drawn up for the construction of the beautiful Convent to house the boarding school for girls. A magnificent Chapel was soon added and opened in 1903. As part of the 125 years' celebration of Sion's presence in Sale, over the last few years, the Chapel has been refurbished to its original beauty; it now stands as a fitting tribute to the admirable craftsmanship of that era.

From Sale, the Sisters soon opened boarding schools for girls in Bairnsdale and Warragul. In 1927, a foundation was made in Ascot Vale, Melbourne and the following year, 1928, on White-

horse Road, Box Hill. Over these 125 years, Sisters of Our Lady of Sion also taught in many Parish primary Schools, both in Gippsland and in various suburbs of Melbourne.

On the weekend of 7th and 8th November, a number of past students of the different Schools of Sion, as well as friends of the Sisters gathered in Sale to celebrate the occasion. Conducted tours of the building, on Saturday, allowed approximately 500 people to view the Convent. The celebrations on Sunday began with Mass, celebrated by the new Bishop of Sale, Patrick O'Regan, in the Cathedral, followed by a sit-down meal for about 150 guests at the Sion campus. There were wonderful moments of happy reunions among the many present. The day ended with prayer in the Chapel. 'Memory', Bishop Patrick said, 'is gratitude of the heart. By remembering today the 105 Sisters of Our Lady of Sion who have taught in Australia since 1890, we express our heart-felt gratitude for all that these courageous women have given to the many students educated by them over these years.'

Sr. Patricia Watson,nds



Sister Maria Odor Malau

Sister Maria Odor Malau has spent time in Melbourne this year with our Our Lady of Sion sisters, staying with them in Box Hill.

Sr Maria is from Indonesia and has been in the congregation in the Philippines for the past few years. She has been in religious life as a sister since 2004 but joined the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion in 2013. "I like the way the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion have a view of religious life, it's not too conservative," Sr Maria said.

"The sisters are really working for the poor, for the farmers, and they have a passion to be with the poor and a commitment to justice." Sr Maria, 39, said she has enjoyed her time in Melbourne, spending her time in study and outreach work. "Melbourne is very multicultural, you can see very different faces," she said. One thing she found hard to adjust to was the weather. "I love Melbourne but it is very cold."

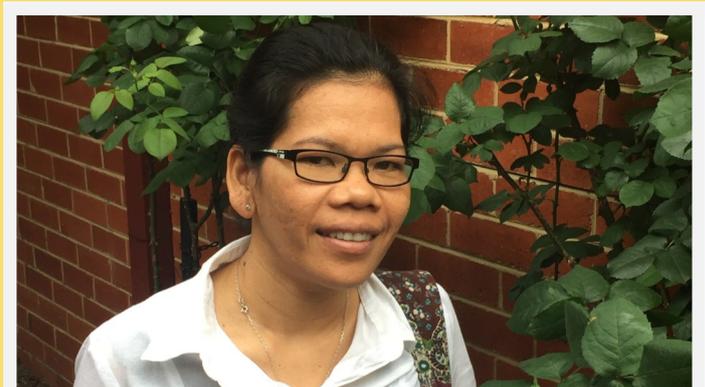
Each week Sr Maria has worked at St Mary House of Welcome in Brunswick, a support centre for disadvantaged people experiencing homelessness, poverty and mental health issues.

Sr Maria is an international novitiate for the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion and in early 2016 will travel to Jerusalem.

"As I am from Indonesia where it is majority Muslim, I am very drawn to interfaith dialogue," Sr Maria said. "But when you enter religious life you need to be ready for wherever you are sent and whatever you are asked to do."

Sister Maria leaves Melbourne in November with fond memories.

Emily Webb (nee Wood) Class of 1994



From the Archives

Until the mid 1950s Sion's houses were called by Latin names – Mater Purissima (Mother Most Pure), Mater Boni Consilli (Mother of Good Counsel), Mater Divinae Gratiae (Mother of Divine Grace) and Mater Christi (Mother of Christ). In one of the steps taken to bring the school into the modern era and in line with current Church thinking, it was decided to rename the houses, in English, after famous shrines to Our Lady. Thus they were renamed Carmel, Loreto, Lourdes and Fatima. This change coincided with the renaming of the College from Notre Dame de Sion to Our Lady of Sion.

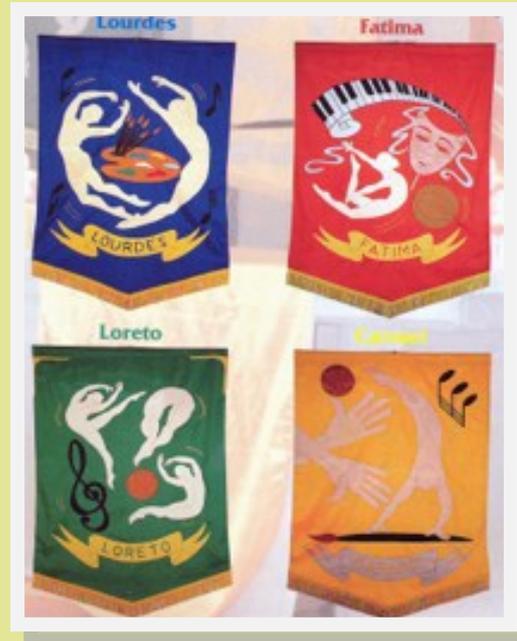
The first photo in the Archives featuring a House Banner is 1960 Fatima



We encourage past students to search out items (especially photos) they have tucked away to help preserve the College's history. Photos can be mailed or delivered to the College Office, attention Ms Nicholson. They will be scanned and returned as soon as possible. The College Archives continue to grow thanks to the kind generosity of Past Students.

Sandy Nicholson, **College Archivist**

1997 New House Banners



2012 Sion Day launch of new House Banners



1995 20 Year Reunion

On Saturday 24th November, a group of students from the class of 1995 returned to Our Lady of Sion College for a nostalgic visit before heading off into the evening to celebrate old times and catch up. The women were all delighted to return and to see the wonderful display of photos in the Archives room, spanning from when they were in Year 7 all the way up to their Year 12 photos.

A tour of the College created lots of laughter and stories as the former students reminisced about various events and all the good times they had in the different rooms. They loved seeing the old classrooms up on the balcony but equally enjoyed seeing all the new buildings and rooms. Everyone was very impressed with Dot's Café and exclaimed how lucky the current students are with such wonderful facilities, especially the beautiful new Miriam Theatre.

One of the highlights was visiting the Food Technology room and lots of laughter as they realized the room still had the same smell as when they were students and how the food odours stir their memories back to life.

It was delightful to hear what everyone is up to these days and how past students have moved far and wide, to different states and even different countries, but were able to return for their special 20 year reunion.



Fundraising Movie Day

Past Students' Association Fundraiser Event – The Intern

On Saturday 10th October the Past Students' Association group went to see The Intern at Palace Balwyn cinemas. The film was delightful, a mixture of comedy and some romance, it was a good old-fashioned feel-good movie.

A lovely group consisting of staff, Sisters, families, friends and past students, some from many, many years ago attended. It was a pleasure to hear all about what they are doing these days.

So with our drinks, choc-tops and popcorn, a lovely afternoon was enjoyed by all. The Association is delighted to have raised over \$400 which will contribute to the annual Daughter of Sion Award recipient, and then passed on to a social justice charity of her choice. Thank you to everyone who attended.



Privacy Notice

Alumni Association Collection Notice

1. From time to time, the Our Lady of Sion College Past Students' Association may collect personal information about you. The primary purpose of collecting this information is to enable us to inform you about our activities and the activities of Our Lady of Sion College, and to keep alumni members informed about other members.
2. We must have the information referred to above to enable us to continue your membership of the Past Students' Association.
3. As you know, from time to time we engage in fundraising activities. The information received from you may be used to make an appeal to you. It may also be used by Our Lady of Sion College to assist in its fundraising activities. If you do not agree to this, please advise us now.
4. The Our Lady of Sion College Past Students' Association may publish details about you in The Sionian, the College newsletter, College Social Media and on the College website. If you do not agree to this you must advise us now.
5. The School's Privacy Policy contains details of how you may seek access to personal information collected about you or how you may complain about a breach of the APPs.
6. If you provide personal information to us about other people, we encourage you to inform them of the above matters.

Reunions

SAVE THE DATE!

Are you celebrating a 10,20,30 or 40 Year Reunion in 2016?

We are celebrating the anniversaries of these alumni years with a 'Back to School' afternoon tea on Saturday 21st May 2016

The afternoon will commence at 2.30pm with guided tours running at various intervals. Please keep a lookout for an official invitation to this event and please keep a note in your diary!

For more information on this event please contact Robyn McCann at paststudents@sion.catholic.edu.au

Communications

Meetings

The next meeting for the Past Students Association will be our Annual General Meeting which will be held on **Thursday March 3rd, 2016**

All meetings will be held in the Ratisbonne Board Room and will be held at 7.30pm

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Or follow us on twitter @SionTweets



In order to care for our environment, would you consider receiving the Newsletter electronically?

Please email paststudents@sion.catholic.edu.au