

# Mary's World

**Inside:**  
Reconnecting  
with Papua  
New Guinea



# Dear friends and supporters of MMI

Earlier this year Pope Francis encouraged us to be hope for the future. He said to be that hope we needed two things.

Firstly, we needed a memory: of our people, our family and where we come from, the memory of our journey and what we received from those closest to you.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph are, for us, a pivotal part of that memory. This year the Sisters celebrate 150 years since they were founded by Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods. They celebrate 150 years of service to the community. Part of the Sisters' service has been the creation of ministries like Mary MacKillop International who today, in the most of concrete and human ways, bear witness to the love of Australia's first saint, Mary MacKillop in some of the poorest parts of the world.

This year we have heard so many stories of those that went before us. Stories like that of Sr Kathy Jennings, (page 4 of this newsletter), which tells of the missioning work of the Sisters in PNG. It is her journey there, and the journey of other Sisters that has led MMI to reconnect with Papua New Guinea again this year.

Another key part of that memory is our supporters here in Australia. In a recent visit to Timor-Leste I was looking at our new mobile learning bus (page 6 of this newsletter) and was reminded of

the profound legacy left by so many in Australia whose gifts extend the hands and feet of Mary MacKillop.

Secondly, to be hope for the future Pope Francis said we need to have courage — to be courageous, not fearful. Mary MacKillop International has been courageous on so many occasions this year- our expansion into Papua New Guinea, our decision to close some of our long standing projects in Timor-Leste, our ambitious new Strategic Plan. This courage is fuelled by our desire to be true to Mary MacKillop's legacy to serve the poorest of the poor with integrity.

Every gift you give helps Mary MacKillop International deepen our memory and strengthen our courage. The photos and stories in the pages that follow capture the legacy that your gifts leave. Because of you, our brothers and sisters in Timor-Leste, Peru and Papua New Guinea can have education, good health and opportunity. That gives us all a great deal of hope for the future.

With warm regards

*K. Robertson*

Kirsty Robertson  
CEO



*Inspired by Australia's first saint, MMI empowers communities overseas to realise their dignity through education, health and livelihoods. MMI's approach to development is shaped by the principles of our organisation. These principles are Human Dignity, Common Good, Participation and Subsidiarity and Option for the Poor.*

## Staying Connected

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 [@MMISOSJ](https://twitter.com/MMISOSJ)

 [MMISOSJ](https://www.instagram.com/MMISOSJ)

 [Mary MacKillop International](https://www.youtube.com/MaryMacKillopInternational)

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ACFID  
MEMBER

Mary MacKillop International is a signatory of the Australian Council for International Development Code of Conduct reflecting MMI's Compliance with industry Standards of good practice transparency and accountability.

Mary MacKillop International acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land, past and present, on which all our offices are located.

## Making an Impact ... Educating Timor-Leste

Some 20 years since the Sisters of St Joseph were invited to help the people of Timor-Leste in Tetun literacy, MMI's dedicated local staff work at the grass-roots to empower whole communities by training teachers in the most remote and underserved regions of the country. Through your support, 15% of teachers in Timor-Leste have been trained by MMI, providing the gift of life-long skills.

Dedicated teachers like Graziela Fernandes, a recently trained year one teacher from the remote municipality of Same, calmly explains to her students that it is time to prepare their bodies for reading. The children quiet down, cross their arms, and put their hands in their laps. Silence falls upon the room as Graziela

begins to read, though  
the silence does not  
last for long!

Before, during and after the story, Graziela continuously asks children questions about the story's illustrations and narrative. She offers students the opportunity to share their personal opinions and whisks the book around the room so the students can have a closer look at the catchy illustrations.

By establishing classroom routines through songs and games taught by MMI, Graziela has been able to engage her students in classroom activities in productive, child-friendly ways. She expresses that the training has also helped her to implement parts of the new curriculum, such as establishing a classroom literacy corner, in order to build a culture of loving literacy and reading in her students.

We must teach  
more by example  
than by word.

Mary MacKillop

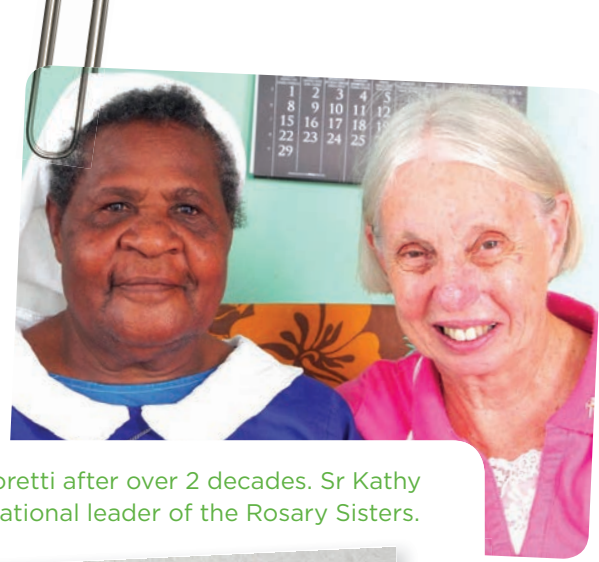
"I really like MMI's resources, especially the pictures in the resources... the books have pictures of animals, plants, etc. The children in Year One learn through pictures. Before we introduce the alphabet we introduce the pictures... these books help us to do that and help us to create our own classroom library to use with the students."

Graziela Fernandes, Teacher





# Reconnecting with Papua New Guinea



Sister Kathy is reunited with Sister Maria Goretti after over 2 decades. Sr Kathy trained Maria and today she is the Congregational leader of the Rosary Sisters.

Dear Friends

I was delighted when I was asked to accompany Kirsty and Sophie from MMI to Papua New Guinea last February. I had left the country after working with the people from 1970 to 1997.

Initially up in PNG I was part of a community of three Josephite sisters who opened and taught in Suain in a parish primary school. It was quite a remote area on the northern coast. When school finished each afternoon we would work with the youth, the women and we would attend to any medical work that was needed.

There were also two other communities of Josephite sisters in PNG. Up in Vanimo, four Josephite sisters set up a primary school, a vocational school for girls and later established a Diocesan Pastoral Centre for the training of lay leaders.

The third community of Josephites was in Wasangela, in an isolated and remote bush area. The local people were extremely poor and yet they welcomed refugees from Irian Jaya.

As I look back on my life as a Josephite sister I always come back to the years I spent in PNG. Not only did I feel that the missionary work of enabling and forming others was a privilege to be part of but I am a different person today because of the influence the people of that country had on me. When I first arrived in 1970, I am ashamed to say that I felt I had all the answers and was coming to "give to them." In truth I learnt much more than I ever taught.

Returning to PNG after all those years I knew that things would have changed, perhaps not even exist. The return, for me, was like catching up with old friends and just so affirming of the work that so many Josephite women had done over 25 years. True many of the buildings and structures we set up were not there but the training and enabling of the women and men to be their own leaders and messengers of the Good News was still alive and strong.

It is with great joy that I welcome the congregation, through the work of Mary MacKillop International, reconnecting with this young nation and I am especially delighted that the area in which the Josephite sisters began working in 1966 is again going to see a Josephite presence. May the charism of Mary and Julian continue to grow in this isolated and poor area of the world.

Sr Kathy Jennings RST



## Creating new Possibilities in Papua New Guinea

Some 52 years ago the Josephites boldly commenced their mission with the people of PNG, working with some of the most remote communities in the world, and remained there for nearly 40 years. This year MMI is humbled to continue this legacy, and once again spread the Josephite charm to this struggling nation through the gift of education.

### **Inclusive communities – seeking first the most neglected...**

MMI with our local partner, Callan Services reconnects with the remote township of Vanimo taking action to increase critical access to health and education to over 250 children and adults with a disability. Volunteers will gain necessary training in using media, art, drama and public speaking to advocate, identify, assess and refer people with disabilities to essential services, changing the lives of those living with disabilities.



### **Ready for School!**

Early literacy skills are vital for school readiness – particularly in remote communities in Papua New Guinea. Your support of this new, vital partnership will allow children to be school ready and develop early literacy skills that will improve their chances of being engaged and finishing school. Volunteers also attend workshops, engaging parents actively in their child's schooling, increasing their awareness and understanding of the importance of early education and creating a positive learning environment in the home.





# Bringing Hope

## Education

Thanks to dedicated Australian supporters like you, MMI has purchased a bus which is being converted into a Mobile Learning Centre in Timor-Leste. It will be fitted out with Tetum literacy books, music equipment and other educational



resources. The bus will visit schools, orphanages and disability centres in marginalised communities with MMI's trainers using craft, music, puppet shows and fun interactive games to help the children develop a love of learning.



Julmeria is a dedicated primary school teacher in Viqueque and mother of four.

## Thank you

"I am so happy to attend this training. Before I attended the training I didn't have any basic information about health or how to teach children about it. I hope MMI can give this program to hundreds of teachers and students, to continue to help us. Thank you."

## Livelihoods

Up to 60 women in Peru have been able to develop essential and productive skills in business, design, production, marketing, financial management, computing, conflict resolution and leadership. The women are able to use these skills to produce handmade Fair Trade products which are available for sale in Australia through MMI's Fair Trade organisation, Ethica Accessories. The women are paid a fair price for their products providing the ability to support their families not only with sustenance but building confidence and creating hope for their future.

Visit: [www.ethica.org.au](http://www.ethica.org.au)

*All that we do, depends on the generosity and kindness of friends like you, a small gift can have a huge impact, ensuring that MMI's vital education, health and livelihoods programs can continue to provide a brighter future for all.*

## Health

MMI's 5-day introductory workshop in the remote districts of Timor-Leste provides teachers with the essential skills to provide health information in an interactive way using music, drama and enjoyable games to excite, engage and educate children in basic sanitation, disease prevention and hygiene, increasing their chances of living full and healthy lives.



## Taking Action

### School Peace Program

In Peru, students are learning skills in conflict resolution, peer mediation and advocacy, to help reduce bullying in their schools. In the last year, 88 teachers have also been trained in the program, allowing them to introduce violence prevention and conflict resolution strategies into their schools, helping them to be safer and encouraging a positive learning environment.

“For a long time, we as teachers could see that there was a problem. Now we can be part of the solution.”

Norma, Teacher-Mentor.



Lisbeth, Participant of MMI's School Peace Program in Peru.

### Changing Lives through friendship and faith

Education remains a key challenge for Timor-Leste's future development. In a country where nearly 50% of the population cannot read or write, the need to provide quality education is urgent.

The Knights of the Southern Cross in Victoria were inspired by the work of Mary MacKillop in Timor-Leste and made the 'leap of faith' to support the urgent need to develop and translate the Grade 5/6 Teachers Manuals. After an enormous year-long effort and much dedication, groups and individuals across Victoria, Tasmania, WA and the ACT came together and raised almost \$30,000 for these vital resources.

Bonifacio Da Costa Barreto (Bonnie), MMI's Health Literacy Co-ordinator visited from Timor-Leste. On 8th August The Knights of the Southern Cross invited Bonnie to attend Mass at St Claire's church at Box Hill to celebrate St Mary's Feast Day. Bonnie presented the Knights with a traditional

Timorese tias, wooden carvings and certificate as a small gesture of thanks for the wonderful support and ongoing friendship.



Bonifacio Barreto, MMI's Health Literacy Co-ordinator from Timor-Leste.





Abilio's Story features in MMI's Appeal DVD – to receive your copy to share with family, friends and your community please contact MMI on 02 8912 2777 or [info@mmi.org.au](mailto:info@mmi.org.au)



Thank you for your ongoing generous support of MMI. If you'd like to join us by becoming a Parish Ambassador, speaking for MMI, organising a prayer group or running an Ethica stall please contact MMI.

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