

MISSIO

Newsletter of the Society of the Sacred Mission

Southern Province



November 08



Margaret Dewey: editor extraordinaire

This issue

Margaret Dewey

New chapter for a blue pen

Celebrating 30 years

St John's Youth Services

Tying the knot

Matrimony matters at St John's

Speaking up

'Father Kelly and Post-Modernism'

Back page

Prayers

Happenings

Contacts

Bequests

'An idea in the working.' This phrase is as robust for the Society of the Sacred Mission today as it was for its founder Father Herbert Kelly a century ago.

The Society first took shape as a loose-knit missionary brotherhood in England; more formal structures developed over time as it established theological colleges. And it has kept on evolving across generations.

In Australia today the Society is a group of men and women working together to realise Herbert Kelly's vision here and now. Theological reflection, parish works, services for homeless youth and outreach to victims of HIV/AIDS in Lesotho are among the activities in which members are involved.

Margaret Dewey, editor of the Society's newsletters for 28 years (20 in England and eight in Australia), stands out as a dedicated exponent of the work of the Society in thought and action.

Born and educated (Harvard) in the United States, Margaret moved to England in 1950

where she says she felt instantly 'at home'. It was while working with the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG), including editing its magazine, that she first encountered students at the Society's theological college at Kelham. In the late 1960s she got to know the Society more intimately and moved into residence at Willen in early 1978.

Residing in Australia for close to a decade, Margaret speaks passionately about time spent in Jerusalem and Papua New Guinea. She regards herself an observer, but has also been a reader, researcher and purveyor of information on many facets of the society's life.

Now 85 and living at Diggers Rest, Margaret continues to write using her old and cherished Olympia, but she no longer wields her blue pen. 'To know when to bring a good work to an end is proof positive of the way in which her own mind is fed', wrote former USPG secretary James Robertson of Margaret after she had relinquished her role at USPG.

She stands ready for a new chapter, and the society extends its deep gratitude to her for her endeavours over close to three decades.

Margaret kindly agreed to provide excerpts from her article 'Father Kelly and Post-Modernism' for the *Speaking up* column in this issue of *Missio*.



Lesotho cross

> see back page



Ironworker Christopher Smith has managed to keep pace with orders . . . just. To place your order for a Lesotho cross telephone 08 8223 2671 or email ssm.s.province@esc.net.au Cost \$25 (plus \$5 postage).

Prayers

Please give thanks for the recent Chapter meeting of the Southern Province in the Barossa Valley, South Australia.

Keep in mind society members as they map new directions for the future.

Happenings 2008

Southern Province website

Check out this exciting development scheduled before Christmas at

www.societyofthesacredmission.org.au

SPEAKING UP cont.

"We were studying God's view of human life—what God was doing on the Somme, and at Westminster, and at Tilbury Docks . . . I do not want to know what you can do with Christ in a church (building) half so much as I want to know what Christ is doing in the street . . .

"This Kelham Theology of the will of God in the world was a Kelham gospel to the world. I do not mean that only Kelham believes it. Every Orthodox Christian admits that it is in some sense orthodox doctrine—(but) we had shaped our whole ideals on it: We had made it the basis

of our education—in that, I think, we were alone."

'SSM is unique among religious communities in having the doing of theology as one of its principal aims', writes Margaret.

And later in the article: 'The quest for certainty is powerfully attractive, but the conversion of St Paul stands for all time as a warning that certainty can be mistaken. When asked how we know what the will of God is, Father Kelly would reply, "We never do—and that's the giddy joke!".'

'In 1992 Hilary Greenwood summarised our SSM theological tradition in terms of three characteristics of our founder: "a reverent agnosticism in all things, including human morals; a tendency to teach and meditate with paradoxes; and (the ultimate paradox) a slightly flippant attitude to human religion, eclipsed by a loving trust in the God of paradoxes".'

Margaret's article in full along with other articles and documents of the Society will be available at:

www.societyofthesacredmission.org.au

To the glory of God in the doing of God's will

The Society of the Sacred Mission, an Anglican religious community, is a means of uniting the devotion of ordinary people, using it in the service of the church. By making a donation or bequeathing to the society, you will be acknowledging the work of members who share a common life of prayer and fellowship in a variety of educational, pastoral and community activities in England, Australia, Japan and Southern Africa.

Addresses and contact numbers

The Provincial
PO Box 149
Flemington Vic 3031
Tel 03 9376 5517
Email ssmprov@tpg.com.au

St Michael's Priory
75 Watsons Road
Diggers Rest Vic 3427
Tel 03 9740 1618
Fax 03 9740 0007
Email ssm.melbourne@bigpond.com

SSM Provincial Office
14 St John's Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Tel/fax 08 8223 2671
Email ssm.s.province@esc.net.au

St John's Rectory
14 St John's Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Tel 08 8223 1014
Fax 08 8223 2764
Email stjohnsanglican@adelaide.on.net

Form of Bequest

I give and bequeath to the Society of the Sacred Mission—Southern Province the sum of for the general purposes of the work of the province, and I direct that such bequest shall be free of all duties, and I declare that the receipt of the society's provincial officer for the time being shall be sufficient discharge for the same.



From humble beginnings in the 1970s, St John's Youth Services provides the only emergency accommodation for young men and women in the city of Adelaide, helping around 700 each year, including young mothers with children. It's a powerful story of social import.



THREE DECADES HERALD NEW BEGINNINGS

St John's Youth Services

St John's Youth Services grew out of an initiative of the Society of the Sacred Mission and the Parish of St John the Evangelist to open the church hall to homeless young men overnight. As well as shelter, they offered other support, such as food and clothing.

This mission outreach developed steadily and, by 1981, St John's Youth Services was incorporated by the parish as an association. It employed support staff and others equipped to seek and administer grants to expand the services and put emergency services on a more professional footing.

By 1987 St John's Youth Services was operating a fully supported emergency night shelter for young men. By 1993 it was operating integrated emergency services for both homeless young men and women, using two separate accommodation facilities within the city precinct.

Father Christopher Myers has served on the board since his appointment in 1990 as priest-in-charge of the Parish of St John's Anglican Church in Adelaide.

'Christopher's vision, guidance and encouragement over more than 20

years added immeasurably to the strength of the board and, in particular, the achievement of recent outstanding breakthroughs', says St John's Youth Services chair Jon Gilbert.

Plans have been developed and external financial support secured for a 'Next Step' program. Under the program, accommodation and related support are provided for several months to some young people passing through emergency accommodation, giving them serious help to break the cycle of homelessness.

The South Australian Government has announced its intention to replace the ageing and outdated emergency services buildings with a new purpose-built facility. It will comprise 20 self-contained apartments and office accommodation at a cost of several million dollars.

The Board of St John's Youth Services has taken an important initiative in addressing homelessness in young people nationally, through creating the Foyer Foundation, of which St John's Youth Services is the founding member.

The Foyer Foundation will play a lead role in establishing more effective accommodation options for homeless

young people across Australia. It is based on the international Foyer model that has proven effective in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States.

In essence, Foyer offers accommodation for one to two years to young people. It is on the basis that they use this opportunity to address their health issues, set personal goals, and take serious steps toward getting the skills for a more independent and self-sufficient life.

'As an independent body, the Foyer Foundation will have greater capacity to attract the support and involvement of governments, corporate and private sponsors and the community generally', says Jon Gilbert.

In the 30th anniversary year of St John's Youth Services to help homeless young people, it is timely to recognise the pivotal role the society has played in its development over many years. It is a legacy that is leading to an even more powerful impact in the future with new and exciting initiatives in train.

For more information about St John's Youth Services go to www.stjohnsyouthservices.org.au

For more information about the Foyer Foundation go to www.foyer.org.au

St John's Youth Services

'How appropriate that we should celebrate 30 years of the society's ministry at St John's, Halifax Street, Adelaide, with eight members of the congregation getting married to each other. Two of them bishops to boot.' Father Christopher Myers.



John Lewis and Joyce Bleby 8 August 2008

TYING THE KNOT

Commenting about the weddings, St John's parishioner Ted Ward said Anglican bishops are not thick on the ground, except when they all meet in Lambeth.



Stuart Smith and Judith Nurton 8 June 2008

'To have two retired bishops in one's congregation is somewhat unusual. But for the pair to marry members of our community within months of one another is certainly momentous.

Both occasions were enthusiastically supported by the St John's congregation', says Ted.

'If anything can be opined about the Society it would be that it is solidly pro-living and pro-loving.' says Christopher Myers.

'Father Kelly sought to lay down lines for the Society's development early in its history.'

'We cannot be ascetic. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and

to appreciate, to enjoy, the reasonable pleasures which God gives are really part of our work and witness. Again, we cannot have a separate life. We are bound to find God's will where he operates . . . It is really part of our calling that we should enjoy food, sights, games; that we should be tremendously interested in politics, business; and that we should seek the commonest and simplest forms of church work.'

Other marriages before year's end were Michael Cant to Kathy Rutledge and Jon Gilbert to Pauline Underwood.

For more information about parish services go to www.stjohnsadelaide.org.au

SPEAKING UP

Speaking up is a regular column in *Missio*; in this issue it is Margaret Dewey.

'It seems Father Kelly's idea of theology is an idea whose time has come. And his willingness to live with uncertainty and paradox, in loving trust in the God of paradoxes, is a way of discipleship for the post-modern age.'

This is Margaret Dewey's conclusion in her article 'Father Kelly and Post-Modernism', in which she grapples with the concept of society's relevance in the post-modern world of today—the world of quantum physics.

'How, now, are we to make Father Kelly's idea of theology and the SSM tradition known?

'In his theological vision Kelly was, in his lifetime, swimming against the tide of scepticism rooted in what is still popularly called the 'modern' scientific world view. At Oxford (where he read history) Kelly had learnt to see "the whole of creation as God's province" and "the whole of history as the drama of the purpose of God".'

'This is theology as understood throughout European history until the Enlightenment, as the "Queen of Sciences", which unites and gives meaning to all others. But in the worldview of Newtonian physics, truth was to be found by reducing things to their component parts and studying the parts and the mechanisms by which they interacted.

With human knowledge thus fragmented, theology had become just one specialised academic subject among many others.

'It was when Kelly began presenting men for ordination in England (not just for the overseas "mission field") that he came up against the theological establishment, saw what had happened to their discipline—and rejected it.'

"To us, theology was not technical and professional knowledge", he wrote in 1920'.

continued over >