

# *RNDM Reader*

*Volume 1*

*Trinity Sunday 2014*



*We are Keepers of the Story*

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# *Why A Reader?*

*Carmel Linden, Partner in Mission*

## The RNDM Reader

At the RNDM Mission Discernment Day held during the 2013 Australian Province Chapter an Action Plan was formed with the focus: *The RNDM Story: We are keepers of the story.*

As a result, it was decided to develop a Reader which would include articles relating to RNDM Spirituality. This Reader would be for Staff, Partners in Mission and friends who are interested in keeping alive in their hearts the spirituality of the RNDM Sisters. The items in the Reader are for use by individuals or in groups. The Reader will be distributed mainly as an E-Reader, though hard-copies will be made available under arrangement with the Sisters.

Before going any further, it would be good to pause and reflect on what meaning is being attached to the word READER in this context. A Reader can be any collection of literary pieces, meditations, works of art, songs, hymns, prayers and so forth, usually within a given theme, as chosen by the compiler/s. Hence, the RNDM Reader will be a collection of works, all related to the Action Plan *The RNDM Story: We are keepers of the story.* A Reader is not intended to be read as “a book”; rather the items stand alone to be used for reflection and/or discussion as desired.

A Reader may also be described as an anthology. *Anthology* derives from a Greek word meaning “a collection of flowers”. I find this a very appealing and exceptionally appropriate term to describe the RNDM Reader. Please take pleasure in the beauty, colour and fragrance as we explore the garden of the Spirituality of the RNDM Sisters in the RNDM Reader.



# Introduction

Sister Madeleine Barlow RNDM



A fresh breeze of the Spirit enlivened participants at the Australian Province Chapter in August last year. Over 30 Partners in Mission (previously known as Associates) gathered with the Sisters in Chapter to discern the mission of the Australian RNDM Province in these times. With joy we heard stories from Sisters and Lay Partners of the many ways all are working together to partake in mission: united in prayer, united in the desire to fund the mission projects of the Sisters and especially united in the desire to giving new life to so many disadvantaged families with whom the Sisters are connected in difficult circumstances around the RNDM world.

Four groups formed at the Chapter. This READER is the work of *one particular group* which became concerned with *the story* that we have all inherited from Euphrasie Barbier and which gives meaning to our shared missionary life as RNDM Partners in Mission. This group wanted to understand Euphrasie's particular way of living the Gospel. What motivated her to open her heart to act with loving kindness to the poor of her world? Can that same motivation be relevant for us and for the young people of today?

The group (based mainly in Perth) decided that they would continue to meet and would name themselves "Keepers of the Story." Their goal would be to produce an RNDM READER exploring the spirituality inherited from Euphrasie.

Euphrasie called for missionaries – people willing to go to the ends of the earth to tell the good news. She wanted missionaries who by the quality of their lives would automatically proclaim a God of indiscriminate, tender love for all, just as Jesus did. At the same time she strongly cautioned her Sisters to safeguard and nurture the wellspring of their spirit. Only in this way, she stressed, could they sustain their commitment to take on the hard quest to love no matter the challenges confronting them.

In this first edition of the RNDM READER you will find reflections on two key aspects of Euphrasie's spirituality which she passed on to her Sisters: the meaning of TRINITY at the heart of mission and an understanding of the SACRED HEART. These are two key aspects of Euphrasie's spirituality that not only throw light on the nature of our generous loving God, but at the same time are vivid descriptions of ourselves – a glimpse of *who we are* and *who we can be!* It is Good News! She did not want these two images to become just 'nice ideas or doctrines to think about,' but rather they were offered as descriptions of a vibrant missionary life of her God, of herself and of her Sisters and Partners in Mission!

The written reflections in this first RNDM READER have arisen from the reflection of the lived experience of the authors, from their personal experience and from their practice in some RNDM schools. It is an offering to invite others to join in the conversation. Will there be another RNDM READER? Will the idea grow? Those are questions that can only be answered by the interest that is aroused by these brave contributors.

All of us are called to be missionary RNDM vowed Sisters and RNDM Partners. All of us are rightly disturbed by the inequalities we see in our world. May this RNDM READER not only inspire reflection about mission and the nature of the depths of God's love, but be a source of energy for all to be Living the Joy of the Gospel. Pope Francis says "*Let us go out joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth! What are you waiting for?*"

# *RNDM Trinitarian Spirituality for Mission*

*Sister Madeleine Barlow RNDM*

*“Regarding the expression Divine Missions we do not have in mind our own poor missions, we who are nothing, but solely the Mission of the Incarnate Word who was sent by God His Father to redeem the human race and the Divine Mission of the Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son to sanctify the Church. This is the reason for the existence of the institute and for its special character both interior and exterior”.* Euphrasie Barbier Letter from Lyon to Fr. Bruno in Rome 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1890.

Euphrasie wrote these words when she was trying to clarify her understanding of what it meant for RNDMs to have a missionary heart. She used the image of God as Trinity – three images of the nature and being of God – sent on continual mission - longing for the wellbeing of all that is created, in Spirit of Love, bringing wholeness to all.

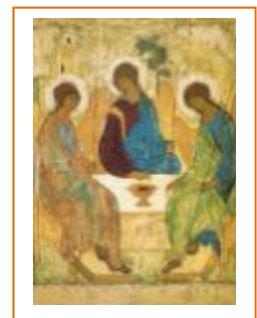
Humankind according to Genesis is made in the image and likeness of God. The seed of God is planted within us so that we have the capacity to grow into the very image and likeness of God. Euphrasie calls us to meditate on these words leading us from contemplation of the Trinitarian nature of God to an appreciation of our own human capacity and our call to mission.

“I must proclaim the Reign of God – that is why I have come!” As RNDMs Sisters and Partners we share this same urgency for mission as did Jesus. It carries with it a sense of daring to love no matter the cost. Some of us have the courage to go out to be with the most abandoned on earth - leaving the comfort of home to reach even to the ends of the earth if need be. Some of us dare to live in courageous love in our homes and neighbourhoods. Some chose to commit themselves to drawing others into the Trinitarian quest of universal, indiscriminate love in the great work of education, medicine etc. Each of us according to our gifts are called to support the great work of God’s mission of indiscriminate love and kindness and to pray that all of us will have generous hearts for the poor of the world wherever we find them.

In the Trinity there are no boundaries to love – (consider the image of Jesus as the Sacred Heart which Euphrasie also called us to contemplate). RNDM Sisters and Partners are called to let themselves be disturbed by the inequalities and cruelties in our world and to do our best to change it and assist those who are oppressed and downtrodden to find a good life. We are members of an international/intercultural community reaching out together to create a world of peace and justice. The image of Trinity leads us to be in right relationships with each other, supporting each one in our commitment to walk in compassionate solidarity with all who struggle so that they, too, may live with dignity in the face of their great disadvantage.

*“In an evolving and expanding universe we listen to the heartbeat of earth. Together we expand the boundaries of our hearts and minds to learn from earth. We open our beings to “harness for God the energies of Love, of Divine Presence, of Divine Missions. We long to make real in our time the cry echoed by Euphrasie that all is One, all is Love – and that we are One and we are Love.”*

(RNDM Chapter Document 2008)



Sister Shelley Barlow RNDM

## Wellsprings of a Trinitarian Spirituality Gift of God to Euphrasie Barbier

### Overview

All creation is caught up in the one great Trinitarian flow.<sup>1</sup> Euphrasie Barbier grasped this startling truth so deeply that it became the vital source of her missionary impetus. These reflections tap into the wellsprings that stirred Euphrasie to give particular expression to divine love flowing from God-Trinity. Swept into this experience it became for her *gift of God* (Jn 4.10), source of the Trinitarian spirituality that runs through RNDM life and mission.

### Caen, 1829 – 1848

Euphrasie grew up in Caen, near the coast of Normandy, western France. As a frail and tiny newborn, she was hurried to the font at St Gilles church soon after her birth January 4<sup>th</sup> 1829. Baptised “*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” the Sacred Persons made their warm and loving home in her (Jn 14.23).<sup>2</sup>



Saint Gilles Church  
bombed during WW2



Pilgrims at Saint Gilles renewing  
their Baptismal Vows 2012

Baptism affirms we are made in the image of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
a God of relational Trinitarian Love at home in us.

Recall the date and place of your Baptism ... your parents and God-parents  
Pause a moment and give thanks:

<sup>1</sup> Richard Rohr, *A Lever and a Place to Stand: The Contemplative Stance, The Active Prayer*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Hidden Spring 2011, 84.

<sup>2</sup> Baptism affirms and establishes this reality. This text refers to the awakening to the mystery of indwelling and its acceptance in love by the believer.

The mystery of Divine Love dwells within you.

In 1838, at age nine, Euphrasie made her First Communion in the magnificent gothic church of Saint-Pierre not far from the Barbier home. The day was significant since the celebration took place on the Feast of the Holy Trinity reflecting the traditional French Spirituality of the time<sup>3</sup>. A three day retreat preceding First Communion Day was led by Father Manchon, the Curate at St Pierre's, and Sister Saint-Arsene, Euphrasie's much loved teacher. Would they not have wakened the First Communicants to the mysterious beauty of the Feast day? May we not surmise that the murmuring overflow of Trinitarian love celebrated that day stirred Euphrasie's heart as she received Jesus for the first time in the Eucharist? By her own admission we later learn that on her First Communion Day, Euphrasie knew she would one day become a religious missionary.<sup>4</sup>



Church of Saint-Pierre, Caen  
Rebuilt after WW2

On our First Holy Communion Day  
Jesus comes to us as our best and most faithful friend.  
Pause a moment. Let Jesus say to you again  
his word of loving friendship.

<sup>3</sup> Marie Bénédicte Ollivier, *Missionary Beyond Boundaries*, 609. The choice of Trinity Sunday for First Communion reflected the current theological teaching of the *French School of Spirituality* whose teachers included St Vincent de Paul, and Cardinal Pierre Bérulle.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 47, endnote 34.

Caen is home to the famous Abbeys built by 11<sup>th</sup> Century William the Conqueror and his wife Queen Mathilda. L'Abbaye-aux-Dames, the monastery for women, and its Romanesque church were built by Mathilda and dedicated to the Holy Trinity. When Mathilda died in 1083 she was buried in Holy Trinity Abbey. One can imagine the youthful Euphrasie visiting the ancient Abbey church. Before the front facade, she'd have contemplated the central portal tympanum depicting the Trinity. Inside she'd have seen the mystery of Trinity honoured by the ornate cover adorning the ancient Baptismal font. Such symbolic portrayals likely drew the youthful Euphrasie to ponder Trinitarian love, storing within her a latent energy only to find release as she gradually realised her missionary vocation emerging out of a Trinitarian horizon.<sup>5</sup>



Holy Trinity Abbey Church



Central Portal



Baptismal Font

Are there places, events or symbols in your childhood or youth  
 which drew you to ponder God's love?  
 Take a moment to recall and savour those sacred impressions.  
 Share that memory with another.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 608. "Marie Bénédicte asks "Is it not possible to point to the symbolic impact attached to places peoples and events which led her gradually, to give shape to her personal vocation and vision of mission?"



## Cuves, 1848 – 1851

At nineteen Euphrasie set out to fulfil her life's dream joining the missionary *Sisters of Calvary*, recently founded in the small village of Cuves, Eastern France.



Village of Cuves

Euphrasie's immersion into a Trinitarian spirituality began in earnest at Cuves. The Sister's spiritual director and teacher, Fr Philpin de Rivières, focussed the formation program on the centrality of the mystery of Trinity.<sup>6</sup> A combined Trinitarian theology and spirituality was further complemented by a community life based on the Rule of St Augustine. Augustine called community *a group of friends in search of God*.<sup>7</sup> He urged them to "be lovers of spiritual beauty<sup>8</sup>, something emanating from the transformative power of love he'd experienced at his conversion:

*Late have I loved you O Beauty, ever ancient, ever new. Late have I loved you.*<sup>9</sup>

Saint Augustine wanted his Rule to be like a mirror.<sup>10</sup> Reflecting upon it the group of friends searching for God would grow in love's likeness. The Rule required them to be united, to be one, to be love. The sacred source of their unity was the mutual love of the Divine Persons. The dynamic relational life of the Trinity was to be the Community's motivational force, energising their presence to God, each other, and all they encountered.

*In the first place – and this is the very reason for your being gathered together –  
you should live in the house in unity of spirit  
and you should have one heart and one soul (Acts 4.32) entirely centred on God*<sup>11</sup>.

In Cuves, Euphrasie began to depth the wellsprings of Augustine's insights into Trinitarian love and its lived expression in community.

**Most likely Euphrasie Barbier drew water from this well not only for the washing in the laundry, but symbolically for her own spirit through very difficult times.**



Well in Village of Cuves

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 609.

<sup>7</sup> Rule of St Augustine

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. V111.1

<sup>9</sup> *Confessions* of St Augustine, Book 10. XXV11,

<sup>10</sup> Rule V111.1

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 1.2.

To further secure their missionary goals, it was decided the Sisters move to London.<sup>12</sup> Before leaving Cuves Euphrasie made her first vows placing herself at the heart of the Trinity. She surrendered to the will of the Father, in union with Jesus, and attentive to the Holy Spirit, in the hope of living out her missionary calling. The opening and concluding formula of Vows are like bookends enshrining her total Trinitarian commitment:

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

... ..

*Let everything be for your greater glory and for the purest love of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
through you, my divine Lord Jesus, my one and only love.”<sup>13</sup>*



*Cuves Roadway*

“Our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee” St Augustine.  
What are your dreams? How do you see your road ahead?  
Following Jesus with Euphrasie, we bring our dreams and desires  
to the Father, asking Holy Spirit to guide us along our way.

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<sup>12</sup> MMB, 84. A chief reason was to learn English, the most common language used in foreign missions. Euphrasie and Sister Marie Raphael were chosen to pioneer the move.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 85.

## London: 1851 - 1861

Euphrasie's years in London bore evidence of her whole-hearted zeal but were very harsh. The novelist Charles Dickens describes the kind of bleak conditions endured by the Sisters living among London's poorest.<sup>14</sup>



London, 1850's



Greater Titchfield Street today

Working long hours among the marginalised and destitute, suffering cold and hunger, Euphrasie contracted smallpox. But in every hardship her spirit was steadfast. In her eight years as Novice Mistress, 1853-61, she would have emphasized the Trinitarian spirituality in which she herself was formed. When an excessive work load was pressed upon the Sisters,<sup>15</sup> Euphrasie experienced disquiet. She realised zeal would wither without time for prayer, and urged its practice. She felt disconnected from her personal call and the Sisters' original goal of the foreign missions. These were being swallowed up in the London outreach. When a breakthrough came for missionary outreach in New Zealand, Euphrasie joyfully returned to France to make preparations.



Dunn's Passage  
today



Have you experienced times when your dreams seem to be thwarted?  
How have you managed to keep your hopes alive?  
In what way does prayer help us keep fixed on our goals?

<sup>14</sup> C/f "Fagan's Den" described in *A Christmas Carol*

<sup>15</sup> In the ragged schools of Dunn's Passage, among destitute girls caught in prostitution and orphans, the sick and dying.

## Lyon - World: 1861 – 1893

In Lyon Euphrasie eagerly prepared for sailing to New Zealand<sup>16</sup> but the venture suddenly fell through! While her hopes may have seemed dashed, the unexpected time and space offered something wonderfully new – the formation of a new congregation.



If she had been “dragged down into the whirlpool of works at the London Oratory”<sup>17</sup> now that experience became a gift, confirming her sense that missionary activity was an overflow of the divine indwelling. Something fresh, alive and dynamic it would endure to the extent it was invigorated by contemplation. The next months of quiet reflection saw all Euphrasie’s intuitions for missionary life beginning to crystallize.

Euphrasie’s insight is reflected in the title she chose for her new Congregation: *Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions*. By “Missions” she didn’t mean particular ‘missions’ the Sisters engaged in. She meant the ‘Divine Missions’ ... *The Mission of the Incarnate Word, sent by the Father to redeem the human race, and the Divine Mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, to bring about the sanctification of Christ’s Church. This is the reason for the existence of the institute and for its special character both interior and exterior.*<sup>18</sup> The source of Euphrasie’s thought is St Augustine’s theology of the Trinity. He describes ‘Divine Missions’ as the ecstatic overflow of the Father’s love into the Christ Event. *God loved the world so much that God sent his only Son* (Jn 3.16): the Word became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth who revealed God’s love for us. When his earthly life and mission were complete, Jesus promised to send the Spirit to be with us always. Augustine’s thought draws directly from the gospels: “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I’ve said to you.” (Jn 14.16; 26).

Trinitarian life is an overflow of God’s love into the world.  
The Divine Persons, Father Son and Holy Spirit are distinct yet one  
living in deep delight and communion with each other.  
How do you see the life of the Trinity mirrored in your own life?

<sup>16</sup> With her companion Elizabeth Norton, Sr Wilfred.

<sup>17</sup> MBB, 151.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Letter to Fr Bruno in Rome, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1890.

Euphrasie’s vision found its primal model in Mary who stands in the heart of the Trinity. Once again the wellsprings of her intuition are found in Father Philpin de Rivière’s teaching at Cuves.

Open to the Father’s call, overshadowed by the power of the Spirit, Mary gives birth to Jesus Word made flesh in her.



News of her cousin’s pregnancy sends her swiftly on an outgoing path of love as she visits Elizabeth – current of the divine missions flowing through her.



She keeps God’s word, contemplating everything in her heart (Lk 2.19). Mary stands by the Cross. She is present with the disciples on the cusp of their mission into the streets of the world (Acts 1.14).



Seeing the radiant energy of the Trinity flowing through Mary Euphrasie described her as “Woman of desires who hastens God’s Advent and gives him to the world.”<sup>19</sup>



Mary’s spirit is the clear guide for Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions as they cross all boundaries to share God’s love.

What pathway of love did you take recently to help someone in need?  
Is there an image of Mary that inspires you to fulfil your deepest desires?  
How does Mary help us cherish Earth in this time of its vulnerability?

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 201. First draft of the Constitutions

Over the next thirty-two years of her life, Euphrasie Barbier's work expanded as she travelled Earth from Europe to the Pacific to Asia establishing small communities of women<sup>20</sup> committed to live out the gospel through the Trinitarian way of love.



All the while Euphrasie drank deeply from her own wells. She wrote to her spiritual director about "the habitual presence of God in the depth of my soul ... as a centre of peace ... a hidden sanctuary, the dwelling place of the three Divine Persons."<sup>21</sup>

Saint Augustine's theology is again apparent. At the heart of his treatise on the Trinity<sup>22</sup> he names the three Divine Persons *Lover, Beloved* and *Love*. The Father is Lover. He loves the Son – the Beloved; the Spirit is their mutual Love. Their love is seamless, flowing one to the other of the Divine Persons in a fullness of joy. Eager to draw us into a clearer appreciation of God's divine life Augustine offers another image of the Trinitarian Nature: God-Trinity is *Giver, Receiver, Gift Given*.

The Father gives the Divine Self to the Son. The Son Receives the Father's love; their dynamic interchange is the Spirit, the Gift of their love.<sup>23</sup>

Take some time to think about Augustine's images of the Divine Persons  
Lover, Beloved, Love  
Giver, Receiver, Gift-Given.

How do these images resonate for you?  
Where do you see them reflected in life around you  
Perhaps there are other images that speak to you of Trinity?

As Euphrasie's journey unfolded, she found herself caught up in the dynamic flow of Trinitarian life. It was the charismatic gift of God bestowed on ~ her way of living the gospel. A basic imperative was the respect due to differences while quietly working towards communion as seen in the following letter. "God wants us to help one another with great charity, each in their own way to become transformed by his grace in such a way that it is not our ideas but truly God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit who lives in us ... speaks with our tongue, looks with our eyes, and acts through our members and it must also be he who thinks with our minds and loves with our hearts ... then the gentle peace of the children of God will remain with you."<sup>24</sup> In 1893 Euphrasie Barbier died at sixty-four years. If her body finally succumbed to ill health and exhaustive missionary travel, her spirit stayed alive to the Trinitarian impulse of unity in diversity – communion of hearts in God. Euphrasie's dying words still breathe through the air: "I am not leaving you. It is not even a separation since we remain united in God ... .. Be very united on earth so as to be united for all eternity".<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Sr Marie Therese Ryder, "Being A Pilgrim", 2012.

<sup>21</sup> To her spiritual director, Fr Bruno. Marie Bénédicte Ollivier RNDM *Straight is my Path*, 57.

<sup>22</sup> *De Trinitate*, Book 6, Ch.1.7, ch. 18-19

<sup>23</sup> Augustine quotes Acts 8.20; Romans 5.5, John 4.7

<sup>24</sup> Letter to the Superior at Chittagong, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1890. *Straight is my Path*, 116.

<sup>25</sup> MBB, 593.

## Review

These reflections have tapped the wellsprings of Trinitarian spirituality embraced by Euphrasie Barbier. Little by little she found herself in the one great flow of life and love emanating from God-Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The initial experience was in her native Caen. In Cuves the wellsprings were sounded and deepened. In London they flowed into her many works and formation of novices. In Lyons they began to consolidate. Across her years Euphrasie celebrated Trinitarian life as the living source of all mission. As *gift of God* (Jn 4.10) the charism given to Euphrasie Barbier continues its expansive missionary way around the world.

## “Wellsprings”

The little village of Cuves is crossed by a bubbling brook. It wends its way steadily, an ever-widening stream towards the mighty Rhône where it loses itself in the river’s swift currents. Like ‘Le Bréf’ Euphrasie Barbier’s encounter with God-Trinity in Cuves became a *“a living spring bubbling up to eternal life.”* (Jn 4.14). As the wellsprings surfaced, the call to let go into the great flow of Trinitarian life steadily overtook her, *becoming rivers of living water flowing out of her heart* (Jn 7.37). This dynamic flow is the striking feature running full length through her life and characterising her prolific writings. It swells into sacred gift for the *friends in search of God*, swirling out to all those in their pathway of life. As we tap the wellsprings of Euphrasie Barbier’s spirituality of Trinitarian love may their outward flow bring joy and refreshment to all we meet.

Le Bréf, Cuves,  
Eastern France



Mystery of Love, Holy Trinity dwelling within us.  
Out of our hearts, streams of living waters are flowing  
Keep our pathways alive and free.  
We give you glory, thanks and praise.  
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,  
Amen.

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### *Further Reading on The Holy Trinity*

*If you are finding our articles on Trinitarian Spirituality interesting, you may like to try some of the following:*

- Rohr, Richard OFM. *The Divine Dance: Exploring the Mystery of the Trinity*. (Series of 4 CDs) (Orders in Australia [res.mtm@bigpond.net.au](mailto:res.mtm@bigpond.net.au))
- "The Story of God as Trinity" in Kevin Treston's *A Modern Credo: Telling the Christ Story within the Context of Creation*. (Mulgrave, Victoria: johngarrettpublishing 2010, pp 68- 76).



*Sister Shelley Barlow RNDM*

## St Augustine and the Mystery of the Trinity

Have you heard the famous legend about St Augustine and the child on the seashore? It's said to have come from a 4<sup>th</sup> Century apocryphal letter by St Cyril of Alexandria.



The scene is the seashore, where there is a small pool, a little boy with a seashell, and a sandy beach on which St Augustine, clad in his Episcopal robes, is walking, pondering with difficulty the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

"Father, Son, Holy Spirit; three in one!" he muttered, shaking his head.

As he approached, the little boy,

who was running back and forth between the sea and the pool with a seashell of water, Augustine craned his neck and asked him "Son, what are you doing?"

"Can't you see?" said the boy. "I'm emptying the sea into this pool!"

"Son, you can't do that!" Augustine countered.

"I will sooner empty the sea into this pool

than you will manage to get the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity into your head!"

Upon saying that, the boy, who was an angel according to legend, quickly disappeared, leaving Augustine alone with the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.



Benozzo Gozzoli, 1420-97

Augustine and Child  
on the seashore



Sandro Botticelli, 1445 - 1510

The parable-story of Augustine's encounter with the child on the seashore reveals something of his struggle to find words to talk about the Trinity.

So great was Augustine's desire to depth his understanding of God's divine life of love that he wrote *De Trinitate*. He started to write in early manhood round 400 C.E. and finished it in his old age. Some scholars think he never completed his treatise. Perhaps Augustine saw there could never be a last word on God's radiant Trinitarian life of love.

The simple words where he writes of the Father Son and Holy Spirit as *Lover, Beloved, Love* capture the essence of his thought.

### **Father, Son and Holy Spirit ~ Lover, Beloved, Love**

For Augustine, the Father is a *Lover* pouring his heart out for his *Beloved*.

*"You are my Son the Beloved"*

Jesus heard as he was baptised.

Jesus loves the Father intimately

calling him by the child's name for Father "*Abba*"

speaking familiarly of *My Father* throughout the gospels.

*Love* is the name of the Spirit

~ the infinite mutual Love between Father and Son

### **Father, Son and Holy Spirit ~ Lover, Beloved, Love**



#### **Addendum:**

*Bit by bit by bit Saint Augustine and Euphrasie Barbier realised that LOVE was at the heart of God's Trinitarian life – a love so strong that it gave birth to the entire creation which radiates and reflects the divine life. The legendary story of St Augustine and the child on the seashore doesn't mean that the Trinity can never be understood.*

*It means that for true love, the mystery is infinitely knowable – you can never get to the end of it! (Richard Rohr ofm, *The Divine Dance: Exploring the Mystery of Trinity*).*

*It means you don't even try to! Just let go into the one great Trinitarian flow of love and life as Augustine and Euphrasie Barbier did.*

# Reflections on RNDM Trinitarian Spirituality

Leila Coffey, Partner in Mission

in conversation with Sister Shelley Barlow<sup>RNDM</sup>

I have been reading “*An Expanding Theology: Faith in a World of Connections*” by the Australian Redemptorist Tony Kelly. His reflections remind me of RNDM Trinitarian Spirituality. The following extracts (in blue) sparked connections for me:

Christian theology speaks of the divine indwelling, at once God dwelling in us, and ourselves dwelling in God ..... such an indwelling means that God is known with an “inside” knowledge, a knowledge of participation in the Love-Life that God is: “*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God ... For God is love ... No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us (1 Jn 4.7-12)*”. To experience God in such a way is to find oneself as a ‘connected self’, a self-to-be-realised in relationship to the other.

Euphrasie Barbier grew into a radiant realisation of God’s love dwelling within her. She experienced its felt-sense, but knew that this love didn’t stop there. In the language of her day Euphrasie wrote: *The Spirit from whom every good thought and every perfect gift proceed, this Spirit who is also the Spirit of the Father and the Son, the bond of eternal love of the Divine Persons in their pure, holy and ineffable unity, will also be the pure, gentle bond uniting our souls with the divine Spouse to whom we have vowed all our love (1865)*.

Euphrasie’s growing experience of the indwelling of the Trinity kept generating love towards others. She is always urging her Sisters to open their hearts to the gift of love within and to cultivate its outward flow: *Oh yes, let us love God always, always, always and let us love one another always in God (1865) ... Let the most gentle charity reign among you (1868) ... You can do a great deal for God and each other by kindness, mutual respect and love that is friendly; that revives, invigorates, and warms; such should be the effects of our love for each other (1870). Have among yourselves only one heart and soul (1876)... Be very united on earth so as to be united for all eternity (1893)*.

The ‘other’ today admits of a global, ecological and cosmic extension. Hence the adoration of such a God orients the believer into a world of relationships and communion. It implies an agenda for the transformation of ourselves, our communities, our global co-existence.

The 19<sup>th</sup> world of Euphrasie didn’t think in terms of “ecological and cosmic extension”. People weren’t faced with the compelling ecological issues confronting us today. They were not aware of an unimaginably vast universe still expanding after its birth 14 billion years ago. However, from the perspective of faith, Euphrasie’s missionary spirituality envelopes the whole since its source is God-Trinity. The entire Universe is caught up in the one dynamic flow of Trinitarian love - what Euphrasie Barbier called *Divine Missions* where the entire creation is being drawn into communion with the One Love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The cosmic principal of communion, originating within the love-life of the Divine Persons is seen as an enlivening force within the RNDM Trinitarian vision of things: *Our shared life in community finds its source in God-Trinity, who has inscribed the rhythm of Divine relationships into the fabric of creation. We are drawn into this dance of communion with each other, interwoven and interdependent with all that is. We celebrate the grace of difference, and the giftedness of each Sister.* (General Chapter 2008)

Tony Kelly advises an “agenda for transformation”. Euphrasie directed that education of the young be planned to address contemporary challenges in church, society and culture. Awakening the young to respect all creation and the environment is integral to the RNDM vocation to universal mission (*Missionary Beyond Boundaries*, pp. 643, 650). *Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions themselves are seizing the moment to reawaken wonder, beauty and the goodness of creation, to educate themselves and others about the destruction of the environment and the depletion of natural resources, and to commit themselves to forging respectful and vital relationships with earth and God's people* (General Chapter 2008)

If, in this brief reflection, we have moved Trinitarian faith from the background to the foreground of our thinking, it is not for the sake of needless complexity.

But in a world of needless complexity as well as astonishing connectedness, Christian faith can find a new wholeness in contemplating the universe in the light of its fundamental mystery The Holy Trinity (Section v1 The Sixth Circle of Connections: The Trinity, pp.166-7).

In the vision of Christian hope, the goal of creation is considered as being drawn into such ultimate Love-Life (the Being-in-Love of the Trinity). In the Incarnation of the Word, through the outpouring of the Spirit, the Mystery is present as gathering creation to itself.

In the Trinity, the Universe comes home; and ... celebration of God as absolute Being-in-Love at the heart of the Universe, is a sense of the divine community enfolding all conscious creation into its own Love-Life.

Euphrasie Barbier's Trinitarian spirituality encourages us towards in the 'homecoming' Tony Kelly describes. She helps us recognise and relax into the indwelling of Love deep within, to let it flow out to others and contribute to the radiant Trinitarian life sweeping all into its sacred mystery of communion, light and love.



Sister Marie Therese Ryder *RNDM*

## Rublev's Icon of the Trinity



### Introduction

As I was growing up the only icon I ever knew was that of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, popularized by the Redemptorists. Most of the religious art that was around was an expression of 19<sup>th</sup> century piety or of the great European painters of the Renaissance period.

It was in the early 1970s that Sr Marie Benedicte from France, our then RNDM Superior General, visited Australia. She had spent time reflecting on the spirituality that had animated Euphrasie Barbier, but which had been eliminated by the Church from our original Constitutions. Although aspects of this spirituality were included in an early booklet called a Directory, it did not seem to have had a pervasive influence on the spirituality of the members of the Congregation. The place where the spirituality that Euphrasie desired for her Sisters found its ever evolving and deepening expression was in her voluminous letters to them. However, her letters only became available in English in the late 1960s.

In her book “Straight is My Path” Marie Benedicte traces the roots of Euphrasie’s Trinitarian spirituality and its development throughout her life.

*“Having been formed from the beginning of her religious life in the school of St Augustine and by the masters of the French School of Spirituality, Euphrasie Barbier felt herself drawn irresistibly by the Spirit to the contemplation of the trinity and the Divine Missions flowing therefrom for the salvation of all mankind(sic) 1*

Certainly the name Euphrasie chose for the Congregation is the most obvious proof of the fundamental orientation of her life:

*“Regarding the expression ‘Divine Missions’, we have redrafted this article showing that we, who are nothing, do not have in mind our own poor missions, but solely the mission of the incarnate Word, sent by God the Father to redeem the human race, and the divine mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son to bring about the sanctification of Christ’s Church. This is the raison d’être of the Institute, and its special characteristic both interior and exterior”2*

As even this seminal passage had been eliminated from the original Constitutions, the consequences for RNDMs was a lack of awareness of the richness of the spirituality which had been bequeathed to us by Euphrasie Barbier.

In the 1970s all religious Congregations were challenged to go back to their origins and discover their charisms anew. It was particularly through the studies of Sr Roberta Morrissey from Canada and Sr Marie Benedicte that this happened for us.

### ***Rublev's Icon in the RNDM Story***

Concurrent with these studies, there was in the West in the 1970s, a growing appreciation of the spirituality expressed in icons, which, of course, had their origins in the Eastern Church. Marie Benedicte saw in Rublev's icon of the Trinity a dynamic aid to enabling the Sisters to reclaim and deepen their understanding of our Trinitarian spirituality, even if it wasn't an image with which Euphrasie herself was familiar. The significant place which this icon has taken in our spirituality since the 70s has made me recall a quote I read recently from Judy Cannato, an Associate of the Sisters of St Joseph, USA:

***“Perhaps one of the most significant roles of leadership today is to be the story tellers and the story keepers. It is necessary to hear the old narratives unpacked in way that are truly life-giving, and it is also necessary to engage new stories that contribute to our evolution”*** 3



Thanks to Marie Benedicte, if you were to visit any of our community houses around the world today you would find Rublev's Trinity in a prominent place for this icon has become a life-giving way for most of us of deepening our RNDM spirituality, a deepening that we hope will continue to evolve. This eReader is a contribution to that endeavour.

Initially not everyone took readily to the icon as a help to prayer but for many it has played a large part in drawing them into a more contemplative way of praying.

### ***Understanding an Icon***

Icons have a very long history. For us in the Western world appreciating them requires some education as they have not been an integral part of our culture and so may not immediately speak to our particular artistic sensibilities. There are many wonderful resources available that detail the development of iconology. 4 Historians date the appearance of the iconographic style to the first three centuries of Christianity. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century they formed a major part of Eastern devotions.

An authentic icon is the fruit of deep contemplation and can be months and years in the making. Whereas a Western religious painting is more realistic in anatomy, perspective and lighting and through these aspects moves our emotions and imagination, an icon engages us differently. There is a seriousness and gravity about an icon that invites us to stillness, to contemplation. In his book “Behold the Beauty of the Lord” Henri Nouwen illustrates this from his own experience of first engaging with an icon. He says:

***“By giving the icons long and prayerful attention, talking about them, reading about them, but mostly just gazing at them in silence, I have gradually come to know them by heart..... ‘gazing’ is probably the best word to touch the core of Eastern spirituality..... they offer access through the gate of the visible, to the mystery of the invisible.”*** 5

## ***The Icon of the Trinity by Rublev***

According to Gabriel Bunge the icon of the Holy Trinity by the saint and painter monk, Andrei Rublev is the most famous of all icons. There can scarcely, he says, be any other icon about which so much has been written. <sup>6</sup> Most iconologists would point out that the icon is not primarily a private devotional picture. Its proper place is the liturgy where it complements the proclamation of the word of God about a mystery central to our faith.

As with all icons, this icon of the Trinity is rich with symbolism. Its traditional name is “The Hospitality of Abraham” as it depicts the three strangers/angels who visited Abraham as told in Genesis 18:1-15. It would seem that Rublev in his reflections saw in this story an image of the life of God. There are different interpretations as to which figure represents which person of the Trinity or even that Rublev intended such identification. However, one of the foremost interpreters, Paul Endokimov suggests that the central figure represents Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God.



So in the icon we see three angelic-like, almost identical figures, gathered around a rectangular table, the four corners of which stand for the four corners of the universe to which God's mercy extends. On the table there is placed a cup with two fingers of Christ's hand stretched towards it. In the background we see the façade of Abraham and Sarah's home, and a symbolic representation of the oaks of Mamre.



There are many reflections available on the meanings conveyed by this icon, so I will share here something of what it has come to say to me

### **Contemplation- Communion**

As we look at each of the figures, their postures and their gazes, it appears as though they are held in a circle of communion with each other. It seems to me that, through his hours of contemplation, Rublev came to 'know' so much about the being, the life of God that he is trying to convey through this icon. The story is told of Rublev that he and another monk, Daniil, whenever they were free, would take their chairs and sit in front of an icon just gazing at it uninterruptedly, allowing the mystery that it portrayed to enter into their being and they would be filled with divine joy and radiance. <sup>7</sup>

Through this icon then, we too are being invited into that life. For right at the front of the picture there is an opening, or you might say, an empty place at the table through which we are being invited to enter, to be drawn into communion in God's life. Yet at the same time I ask myself "How can I enter into this life of relationship with God?" And then I see Christ there opposite the empty place, his two fingers indicating as it were, that not only is he divine, but that he has also '*emptied himself and become like us, taking human form...*' (Phil2:6), and that it is through becoming one with him in the power of his Spirit that I am drawn into the life of God. It is through baptism that I am incorporated into Christ, reflecting, as St Paul says, 'the image in which I was made... and this is the work of the Spirit' (2Cor3: 18)

As I am held in the centre of this sense of communion that is God I come to know a little more of the depths of the mystery of that life and can appreciate something of Paul's sense of wonderment and awe: "*How rich are the depths of God, how deep his wisdom and knowledge..... who could ever know the mind of God, or who could ever be his counsellor.....to him be glory forever.*" (Rom.11:33-38)

Yet often too the experience is just of being there, with no wonderment or emotion, perhaps a sense of being held... or perhaps a sense of nothing!

I think that Euphrasie was reflecting something of this sense of communion that she was experiencing within God-Trinity when she wrote to Sr M. St Pierre in 1876:

*"Let it be divine love alone which keeps you faithful because it is Love, the Spirit of Love, God's Holy Spirit, which should be the sacred bond of your intimate union with Our Lord Jesus Christ and with his heavenly Father who is also our Father."*<sup>8</sup>

Twelve years later, in a letter she wrote to her life-long friend, Fr Philpin, the deepening sense of this communion is evident along with an integration of her whole being:

*"Do you think I can safely follow a certain interior attraction which takes no specific form but is in the region of pure faith and is drawing my whole being into the heart of God, in a way which I cannot define, but which seems to be the realization of the text, "Hidden with Jesus Christ in God, in the love and unity of the Holy Spirit?"*

*Then, for a short time, all creation disappears, even the remembrance of myself, and my utter poverty..... God alone remains... Sometimes I seem to hear in the depths of my soul, an inner voice – imperceptible to my senses – recalling these words to me: "Come and rest for a while in the Lord' or 'Enter into the joy of your Lord."*<sup>9</sup>

### Contemplation – Mission

The life-energy of communion which passes between the three figures sitting around the table and shared with the one who enters in, is not meant to stay within the circle. The cup, holding the sacrificial lamb, at the centre of the table is a potent symbol of a life totally given. So



having been drawn into the circle, and enlivened and enriched by the life in which I have shared, I am sent out, impelled by the Spirit of Jesus, to share the love I have received, to carry forward in my everyday life the on-going mission of God, to be God's love made visible, to be a contemplative in action.

According to Euphrasie our lives are to integrate contemplation and action, and so it is in the measure in which we receive within ourselves the outpouring of love from the Trinity that we will be a channel of the divine Missions. Contemplation of this icon can develop within us the wisdom and the compassion to be the contemplatives in action that Euphrasie was and invites us to be.

In conclusion I would say that, while it is helpful to read various commentaries on the icon and to appreciate their diverse interpretations, it is important finally to then let them go and to simply 'gaze' at the icon and let God-Trinity draw you into the circle of communion, believing that this is God's deepest desire for each of us:

*“Father, may they be one in us,  
as you are in me and I am in you..... (Jn 17:21)*

*I want those you have given me  
to be with me where I am.....(V.24)*

*So that the love with which you loved me may be in them,  
and so that I May be in them. (V.26)*

*The Spirit will lead you to the  
complete truth” (15:13)*

*“To participate in the Divine Missions is to be held in the communion of love at  
the heart of the Trinity...”* RNDM Constitution Art.8

#### *Footnotes.*

1. p.27
2. Ibid, p.29
3. From an Interview in “Occasional Papers”
4. Cf. Paul Endokimov, “The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty”  
Many references can be sourced from Google
5. P.13 , Ave Maria Press, Indiana, 1987
6. Gabriel, Bunge “The Rublev Trinity”, p.11
7. Ibid: p.109
8. Letters of Euphrasie, 1876, Vol. 7
9. Written in January, 1888, quoted in SMP, p.59

#### *Further Resources*

Sr Marie Benedicte Ollivier, “Straight is My Path”, Ch II, “In the Radiance of the Trinity”, pp27-60  
Bunge, Gabriel, OSB, The Rublev Trinity, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, NY, 2007  
Evdokimov, Michael, Light from the East, Paulist Press, New Jersey, 2004  
Nouwen, Henri, “Behold the Beauty of the Lord”, Ave Maria Press, Indiana, 1987

## *Where Heart Speaks to Heart*

**The Russian mystics describe prayer as  
descending with the mind into the heart  
and standing there in the presence of God.**

**Prayer takes place where the heart speaks to heart, that is,  
where the heart of God is united with the heart that prays.**

**Through the spiritual life we gradually move from  
the house of fear to the house of love.  
Rublev's icon shows us the way to enter more deeply  
into the mystery of divine life.**

**The more we look at this holy image with the eyes of faith,  
the more we see a holy place to enter and stay within.**

**We are invited to experience a gentle invitation  
to participate in the intimate conversation  
that is taking place,  
and to find our own place at the table.**

**Rublev's icon gives us a glimpse of the perfect house of love.**



*"Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons" Henri J. Nouwen Ave Maria Press:  
Notre Dame, Indiana, 1987. An adaptation taken from the chapter entitled  
'Living in the House of Love', 'Where Heart Speaks to Heart, pp22-24.*

*An exhortation from  
Euphrasie Barbier: Mother Mary of the Heart of Jesus*

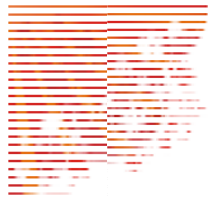
May the most gentle and holy heart of Jesus  
be always the bond of union between all the members of this  
Institute ...

May our place of meeting be in the blessed  
sanctuary of the Most Holy Trinity,  
until we meet again in the glory of  
God our Father,  
in the Holy Unity of the Spirit of pure love  
in that place of Eternal bliss.

Amen



*From a letter to the Sisters and Novices in New Zealand  
30<sup>th</sup> April 1886 (p 533 MBB)*



*God, we praise you...*

You are Life Giver; The Way; Spirit of Love;  
You reveal yourself in the depths of our being  
drawing us to share in your life and your love.

Be near to the people formed in your image  
Be close to the world your love alone can bring to life.

Amen

*Adapted from the Opening Prayer of the Liturgy for Trinity Sunday*

Compiled by Carmel Linden, Partner in Mission

# Sacred Heart Spirituality

## *The Heart of Christ*

In Western countries around the world, many of the Schools and Colleges owned and ran by RNDM Sisters were named “Sacred Heart”, because of Euphrasie Barbier’s religious name and her great devotion to the Sacred Heart.



Adele Euphrasie Barbier  
Mother Mary of the Heart of Jesus  
1829 - 1893

From the beginning of her consecration to God, Euphrasie Barbier, in choosing her religious name – Marie du Coeur de Jesus (Mary of the Heart of Jesus) – understood that knowledge of Christ’s love has its source in his Heart.

Mother Mary of the Heart of Jesus makes numerous references to the Heart of Christ in her writings, as in the following recommendation:

Let us renew ourselves again in a more perfect practice of the religious virtues which will make us so dear to his Heart: humility, gentleness, recollection, obedience ...

Writing from Rome to the novitiate sisters in Lyon she asks them to

kindly copy out the letter for the novices in New Zealand so that, from the very beginning of their religious life, they may grow accustomed to having but one heart, one soul in Jesus Christ ...

A few days later, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, she writes to the professed sisters in Lyon

‘Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls’. If with the help of grace, we try to penetrate into the secrets of the intimate life of our Lord Jesus Christ, what dispositions do we find there? What a filial attitude towards his heavenly Father! What docility regarding the inspirations of the Holy Spirit who reigns supreme there ... What effacement, what humility of heart in his holy humanity, vis-à-vis the Blessed Trinity ... What Peace!

Devotion to the Heart of Christ is, therefore, for her a path leading to the Trinity. There – in the Sanctuary of his Heart – He will hold us together united in living his life and in being entirely one with Him, with the Father, in the Spirit.

Taken and with minor adaptations, from Sr Marie Benedict Ollivier, 1978, *Straight is My Path*, “The Heart of Christ”, pp45-47

# *Sacred Heart Spirituality at Sacred Heart College Sorrento, WA*

*Carol Young, Archivist Sacred Heart Sorrento W.A.*

The theology and spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is an integral part of the College, although it is more something that acts as a foundation for the belief system of the College rather than being overt. When it is distilled to its essence, devotion to the Sacred Heart means Love – love of God and love of neighbour, and this is what we endeavour to convey to our students and staff.

## **Focus on the Sacred Heart**

As our previous Chaplain stated in his Newsletter article last year, *“This week we come to an important day in our College calendar: ‘Sacred Heart Day.’ It’s the day when we focus on the heart or rather the matters of the heart and for really good reasons. We have been named after the Sacred Heart of Jesus. What better name and a relationship than to be connected to the Divine Heart, who is the source and destiny of our life?”* This is a way of looking at the Sacred Heart of Jesus that is promoted throughout the College. This article will explore some of the many and varied ways that the Sacred Heart of Jesus permeates Sacred Heart Sorrento.

## **Core Values of the College**

In every classroom there is a plaque with the College crest and the core purpose and values of the College. The core purpose is articulated as: *“As a Catholic School faithful to the Gospel and the tradition of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions: We develop our students to respond to Jesus by striving for personal excellence, having the courage of their convictions and being active agents of change.”* Our core values are: *“To go beyond ourselves with Compassion, Courage and Respect.”*

While the Sacred Heart is not specifically mentioned, compassion is surely related to the Heart of Jesus, full of love for all.

*The College Crest for  
Sacred Heart College  
Sorrento, W.A.*



### **The College's "Spiritual Pillar"**

The College is built on four pillars, with the first being the spiritual pillar. (The others are academic, cultural and sporting). The spiritual pillar encompasses Love in Action, and is headed by the Faith and Liturgy Captain, two Social Justice Captains and the Environment (Stewardship) Captain. Love of neighbour comes through strongly here, as many activities that help the underprivileged and marginalised are undertaken. Love of God is shown in the raising of awareness of God's gift of the Liturgy and of Creation.

### **Christian Service**

The Christian Service Learning program runs throughout the whole College and is tailored to each year level. When it is introduced at the beginning of the year, we endeavour to instil the concept that the program is based on love and is connected to the love of the Sacred Heart and also to Euphrasie Barbier's Mission.

### **The Mission Pilgrimage**

The Mission Pilgrimage to Vietnam celebrated its tenth year in 2013 and is now an integral part of the fabric of the College. In this experience, students really see Love in Action, particularly through the work of the RNDM Sisters. But this love is not confined to Vietnam or to the College, as students are also involved in the wider community through their parishes in the preparation for the journey and when they return.

*Sacred Heart College Sorrento students  
On RNDM Mission Pilgrimage in Vietnam*



### **Year 7 Induction**

At induction of Year 7 and of new staff, the life and mission of Euphrasie Barbier is examined, with special emphasis on her love of the Sacred Heart and of the Trinity.

### **Feast of the Sacred Heart**

We celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart with a whole College Mass and then enjoy a fun day with stalls and games and fund-raising for the Sisters in Vietnam. Students are aware that as part of belonging to the College, we support those less well-off and less privileged than we are.



*Sacred Heart Day  
Mass, Fund Raising  
and lots of fun!*



### **College Symbols**

Two College symbols connected to the Sacred Heart are the name of our chapel: *Sacred Heart Chapel* and the name of our House Shield – the *Concordia Sancta* shield, suggesting the harmony of holiness found in the love of the Sacred Heart.

### **Prayer Tradition**

Prayer is an important aspect of the College. During Form in the morning, at the beginning of classes, at the beginning of all meetings and at assemblies, prayer is offered. It is our tradition that each prayer ends with: “Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in you” which helps us to focus on the love and care that Jesus has for us.



## Sacred Heart Day: Prayer Preparation

In the days leading up to Sacred Heart Day, the following prayers are used by all classes and are printed in the morning memo for all:

Sacred Heart of Jesus  
I ask your blessing on all that I do,  
my work, my study, my play.  
I want to do everything I can do to please you  
and to give you honour.  
Without your help I can do nothing.  
Be close to me and guide me.  
I also ask your blessing  
on the work of my father and mother.  
Reward them for being so good to me  
and for all they do to make me happy.

I offer all my thoughts, words and deeds  
to your Sacred Heart.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in you.



Sacred Heart of Jesus,  
I thank you for all the blessings  
you have given me.  
For my mother and father and our family  
I thank you.  
For making me a child of God in Baptism  
I thank you.  
For all the graces you have given me to help  
me love and serve you  
I thank you.  
For all the good things you have given me  
during my whole life  
I thank you.  
For the heaven you promised me after this life  
I thank you.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in you.

Sacred Heart of Jesus,  
for those who hurt you, you prayed:  
“Father, forgive them.”  
But more than forgiving them, you excused  
them:  
“They do not know what they are doing.”  
You showed your love for them.  
My human response “I forgive them”  
so often is no better than contempt,  
for in my heart I feel  
“They should have known better.”  
In this I show my selfishness.  
Teach me, Jesus, truly to forgive;  
not only to forgive but to excuse.  
It is only in this way that love is perfect;  
it is only in this way that I can know  
my concern is truly for them  
and not for myself.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in you.





Prayer to be more like the Sacred Heart.



Dear Jesus, grant us a heart like yours:  
A humble heart, that even when given wealth  
does not cling to material possessions;  
A gentle heart, that accepts everyone and seeks  
revenge on no one;  
A patient heart, that is calm in adversity and  
happy even in the most difficult circumstances;  
A peaceful heart, that is always at peace with  
others and with itself;  
A heart that is always content with what it has;  
A heart that loves prayer and prays often and  
cheerfully;  
A pure heart, that in all things seeks God alone  
and desires only to please him;  
A grateful heart that appreciates the benefits God  
gives;  
An open heart, generous to the poor and  
compassionate towards the suffering.  
  
Sacred Heart of Jesus I place my trust in you.

Sacred Heart of Jesus  
give me your grace,  
for without it I cannot be holy.  
Help me to be poor in spirit  
so that I may seek heavenly riches.  
Help me to be gentle  
so that I may overcome all anger.  
Help me to find comfort for my sorrows in  
your Sacred Heart.  
Help me to hunger and thirst for holiness  
by loving you with all my heart.  
Help me to be merciful to my neighbour  
so that I may receive your forgiveness.  
Help me to be pure in heart  
so that I may see you in heaven.  
Help me to be a peacemaker  
by keeping peace with myself and others.  
  
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in  
you.



**Prayer to the Divine Flame of Love**

Holy Mystery, God of boundless love  
You have taught us that the measure of love  
is to love without measure.  
May your Divine Flame of love  
ever increase in us and be the source of our missionary zeal.  
Lead us to a greater awareness that you, who love us so much  
ask only one thing in return – only one thing – Love!  
  
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in you.

*Prayers provided from Carol Young's private collection.*

## **Euphrasie's Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

The following prayer was written by the founder of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, Euphrasie Barbier, whose Religious name was Sister Mary of the Heart of Jesus.



*Let us love him in joy and thankfulness  
Let us love him in silence and song  
Let us love him in recollection and prayer,  
In studies and work, in rest and activity.  
Yes, let us love him always  
And let us love one another in him.*

*Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in you.*

*(EB 1<sup>st</sup> Constitutions)*

## **Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

As a preparation for Sacred Heart Day, the following information is placed on a poster for all classes and teachers are encouraged to read and discuss it with the students:

### ***THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS***

#### ***History***

*Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus goes back at least to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but remained a private devotion until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The first feast of the Sacred Heart was celebrated on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1670 in Rennes, France, through the efforts of Father Jean Eudes. From Rennes the devotion spread, but it was not until the visions of St Margaret Mary Alocoque (1647-1690) that the devotion became universal.*

*St Margaret Mary had visions of Jesus that lasted for eighteen months. In these visions, the Sacred Heart of Jesus played a central role. Jesus told St Margaret Mary that she was to be his instrument in spreading devotion to his Sacred Heart, and he asked her to request that the Feast of the Sacred Heart be celebrated on the Friday after the octave of the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. In one of St Margaret Mary's visions, Jesus revealed his heart to her and said "Here is the heart that has so loved human beings so much and in return I receive, from most of them, only ingratitude."*

*The devotion became quite popular after St Margaret Mary's death, but it wasn't until 1765 that the feast was celebrated officially in France. In 1856, Pope Pius IX extended the feast to the universal Church. It is celebrated on the day requested by our Lord, the Friday after the octave of the Body and Blood of Christ, or 19 days after Pentecost Sunday.*

### **Meaning**

*The Sacred Heart is often depicted as a flaming heart shining with divine light, pierced by the wound of the soldier's spear, surrounded by a crown of thorns. The wound and crown of thorns refer to the manner of Jesus' death, while the fire represents the transforming power of Jesus' love for us.*

### **Euphrasie Barbier**

*Euphrasie Barbier, the Foundress of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, taking the name Sister Mary of the Heart of Jesus when she entered the convent. The great love of Jesus for all people, represented by his heart, was a driving force in her vocation to bring Jesus' love to the poor and marginalised of the world.*

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This article has endeavoured to give a flavour of the way that the spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is influencing the life of the staff and students of Sacred Heart College Sorrento. We try always to link the Sisters' story to the Sacred Heart and to the everyday life of the College, hoping that we plant the seed of love of God and of neighbour that is the core of our Mission.

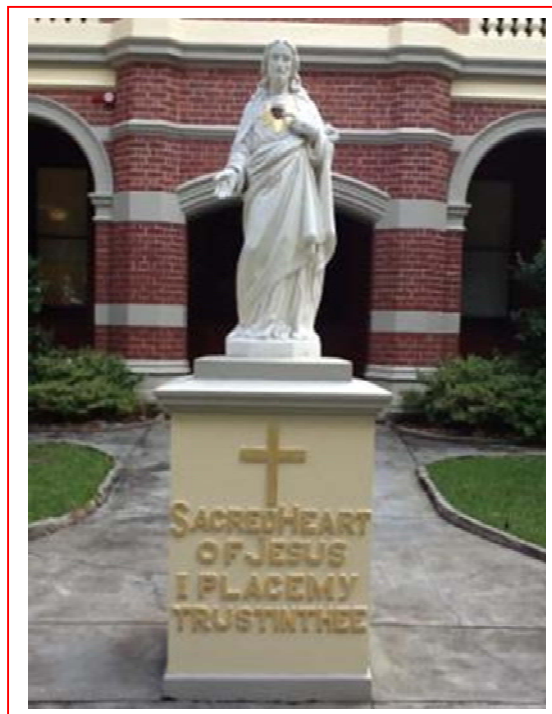


# *Visual Reflections on The Spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at Sacred Heart Primary School Highgate, WA*

*Contributor of photos, prayers & hymn: Frances Ammoscato, music teacher at Sacred Heart Primary School in Highgate WA.*

*Commentary: Carmel Linden, partner in mission.*

Frances has provided us with delightful “snapshot” views of how Sacred Heart spirituality permeates the life and heart of the school.



First, there is the imposing statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus dominating the entrance to the school, bearing the inscription:

***“Sacred Heart of Jesus I place my trust in thee”.***

This statue thus declares the character of the school to all comers.

## **Memories**

No doubt seeing that picture of the statue of the Sacred Heart will inspire nostalgia in many Western Australians reading this article, for in a time gone by this was also the entrance to Sacred Heart High School, now relocated to Sorrento as Sacred Heart College in 1967.

## History

This statue also holds the memory of a very special history, that of the RNDM Sisters who established their first convent and school in Western Australia at Highgate, at the invitation of Bishop Matthew Gibney in 1897. With the RNDM Sisters came their special devotion to the Sacred Heart, their hearts aflame with the missionary zeal that brought them to these far shores.

## RNDM Spirituality

This stained glass window formed part of the double doors leading from the entrance into the Convent.

Being a semi-enclosed Order, these doors served as a reminder to the world of the contemplative life of the Sisters. The heart of Jesus depicted in the stained glass indicates the strong connection of the spirituality of the RNDM Sisters to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



## A Parish School

The connection of Sacred Heart Primary School to Sacred Heart Parish Highgate is again visually apparent in the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus prominently displayed in the Church.



This vibrant imagery reinforces the common spiritual and theological ethos of both the School and Parish, which in turn strengthens their community links.

The Sacred Heart represents Christ's love for all people, and our devotion to it is an expression of our faith in His mercy.

### School Emblem

Sacred Heart Primary School Highgate's emblem features prominently the loving heart of Jesus as its central focus, along with its principles of Faith, Loyalty and Truth and the time-honoured logo A.M.D.G. dedicating all one's endeavours to the honour and glory of God.



### Reflections



The entrance to the school features a stained glass window of deep crimson emblazoned with the letters SHJ. Through it can be seen the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the grounds leading to the entrance.

### Sing to the Lord

Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Live in us each day.  
Guide and protect us  
Bless us with your grace  
Sacred Heart of Jesus  
Help us live as one  
Filled with the spirit of Faith, Hope and Love.

This is the chorus to our school song written by Anna Sheehy and Carla Klomp  
Sacred Heart Highgate Perth W.A.

## Lift up your voice in Prayer

### *Our School Prayer*

*Dear Jesus*

*Through the power of the Sacred Heart  
you have shown us how to live the Gospel values.*

*You have taught us how to treat others  
kindly and with respect.*

*Help us at Sacred Heart Highgate to use our talents  
and to continue your good work  
so that we will be peacemakers for the world.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ our model and teacher.  
Amen.*

*Sacred Heart Highgate Perth W.A.*

### **Aspirations to the Sacred Heart**

**Sweet Heart of Jesus, grant that I may love  
you more and more.**

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved in  
every place.**

These reflections on the theology and spirituality of the Sacred Heart as underpinning the life and heart of Sacred Heart Primary School, Highgate W.A. have demonstrated the importance of visual artefacts in generating and sustaining memories, history, connections and community. It is one of the many ways the story of the RNDM Sisters and their unique spirituality to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is kept alive in our schools and in our hearts.

# TAKE HEART

Dear Friends,

Catholics of a certain age can well remember from childhood rather saccharine 'holy' pictures hanging on the bedroom and living room walls of their parents' and grandparents' houses. They are almost part of the psyche of our memories of family life.

One image in particular was almost omnipresent: a picture of the **Sacred Heart of Jesus**.

Last Saturday (October 22), we celebrated the feast of the saint (St. Margaret Mary Alacoque) whose 'visions' reminded many in the Church of the importance of the 'Heart' of Jesus.

The imagery and style of such paintings from older days may, of course, leave some cold today. However, a spirituality of the loving wounded Heart of the Risen Jesus can never go out of fashion.

Indeed, perhaps we all need to 'recover' this spirituality for us to 'survive' in the contemporary church.

I don't know about you, but these days I occasionally certainly feel the need to 'take heart'! For we live in a world so dominated by cold hearted politics and a culture which worships at the even more frosty idols of 'scientific reason' and greed.

That is why I like Karl Rahner's description of the love of neighbour as a contemporary form of devotion to the Sacred Heart. He sees the unity of the love of neighbour and the love of God as the essence of a post-Vatican II theology of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Rahner reminds us that it all comes down to having a 'heart' to love the real people close by and also 'far away.' Act locally, think globally.

For God is not some object of our love next to other objects! The heart-felt love of neighbour is not in conflict or competition with the love of God: **they are the one love**.

A spirituality of the 'Sacred Heart' therefore challenges us to love in very concrete ways. If love has to do with self-emptying, then we need to stay in touch with how loving our heart is, especially in responding to people we may find it hard to love. As we empty ourselves of our expectations, disappointments and prejudices, we become open to receive others. Yes, that seems at times almost impossible. It can feel like we live in a culture and Church where some seem frozen and beyond the warmth of such redeeming Love.

Yet as disciples - as evangelisers - we can never forget that people will never be changed by sheer 'reason' and 'ideas'. Faith is personal. It 'walks the talk'. Our way forward must be a pastoral strategy where: 'Heart speaks to Heart' (John Henry Newman).

*(Author & Date Unknown)*





# *A Dancing Jesus*

## **AN IMAGE OF THE SACRED HEART IN A GIRLS' COLLEGE**

(edited by Sr Madeleine Barlow RNDM)

from an article in Superne (2001) a College quarterly magazine)

A Sculpture of the Sacred Heart stands in the courtyard of Sacred Heart Girls' College Oakleigh. This is the centre gathering point or 'heart' of the College. It is the perfect site for the spiritual focus of the College, reflecting the traditional symbolism of the Sacred Heart in a way that is relevant for today's young people.

The sculpture of the Sacred Heart was unveiled in the courtyard in March 2001 in the presence of all the school community. College dancers unveiled it to the rhythm of the didgeridoo and the community in acknowledging the Wurrundjeri peoples, who first walked this land, renewed its pledge to work for reconciliation.

Pauline Clayton, Art Educator and practising sculptor<sup>26</sup>, was a gifted woman who for many years was committed to exploring identity, self and spirituality for teenagers through creative arts. She was commissioned to bring to fruition a new interpretation of the traditional images of 'Sacred Heart' especially for the College community. To do this she spent many hours with the students and teachers discerning their particular understanding of "Sacred Heart" in their lives today.

Pauline was present at the ceremony of unveiling as the sculpture was danced in to life. In her keynote address she spoke of the role of the artist which was to look with new eyes, retaining a childlike curiosity while exploring ideas and images. She spoke with passion of working with earth and clay respecting the source of this material to depict the Sacred Heart.

The sculpture exudes an earthy spirituality of a man who was at one equally with earth as with people. The hair of the figure is gently blowing in the wind reminding us that God is frequently experienced as a gentle breeze in the wilderness. This is a prompt for all us to take time in nature to nurture the place of God in our lives. Jesus is shown with bare feet indicating his choice to be with the poor and he has planted them firmly on a rock – symbol of the rocklike, steadfast, indiscriminate love of our God. To whom else can we turn when the winds and storms of modern life threaten our sense of safety and wellbeing?

In her discussions with the students of 2001 Pauline discovered that the young people wanted cheerful images that spoke of the joy as well as the suffering in the life of Christ. Jesus was a charismatic person to whom people were attracted because it was good to be in his company. Women in particular found he treated them with acceptance – he liked them and actively

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<sup>26</sup> The community continues to mourn the loss of Pauline who died of cancer in 2001. May she rest in peace. As an artist and educator her special area of interest was in reclaiming the women of the texts and re-imaging religious images of the Christina tradition. This interest has also been explored in major works such as *Joseph, Son of Jacob* and *St Anthony* in St Francis' Church in Melbourne, *Mary of the Magnificat* at CLC in Eltham and *The Annunciation* at St Columba's College in Essendon.

sought their company and they openly defied the cultural restrictions of their time to follow a man who valued and loved them. The women in return never abandoned him.

Pauline's sculpture shows an image of Jesus in an invitational pose, dancing with joy. Its design is energetic, alive and focused on the divine presence. The work invites the onlooker to take up the joyful call of the Gospel that is filled with good news for human beings. The gaze of the figure causes us to look upwards for a totem in the sky. The arms are outstretched to welcome and embrace all who would stop long enough to feel its power and perhaps discover that to enter into any creative work is to arrive at a spiritual place. Strong images emerge from the seamless garment that covers the figure. We could imagine that it was woven by his mother and was placed around his shoulders at the Last Supper! Anything is possible if we let ourselves imagine outside the lines and as we imagine the sculpture, the man it represents may become more our own.

Finally, Pauline the artist, spoke of her hope that Sacred Heart girls will come to love this image of Jesus. She encouraged all to take time to look at it, regarding it slowly trying to discover why every deliberate mark has been made in a particular manner by the artist. Nothing is there by chance. It was her hope that we will pray through the sculpture and not pray to it and that all would make a commitment to care for and protect the image which was made especially for all the girls past, present and future of the College.



# *Prayer To The Holy Trinity*

*Adapted from 1<sup>st</sup> Manual of Prayers used by RNDMs Lyon 1872*



Glory to You, Loving Creator,  
who, through the Power of Your Love,  
Created the world and made us in Your own image.

Glory to You, our Redeemer,  
who, in Your wisdom, took on our human condition  
to lead us to the Kingdom.

Glory to You, Holy Spirit,  
who, in Your mercy sanctified us in Baptism,  
and by Your grace, work to Create us anew each day.

Glory to You, Holy Trinity,  
Who were, who are and who always will be  
eternally great to the end of the ages.

We adore You  
We praise You  
We thank You

Because you were pleased to reveal  
the depths of Your mystery  
to the humble, to the little ones.

Help us to walk in faith and joyful hope  
until the day when we shall be able  
to live in the plenitude of Your Love  
and to contemplate You forever  
whom we now believe to be God,  
Creator, Redeemer and Spirit.

Amen.

## Responses

We invite your feedback on this our first Volume of the RNDM Reader.

We would love to hear about any items you have found to be significant or helpful.

Please send suggestions and comments to the Province Office  
Email: [rndmsecaus@olm.org.au](mailto:rndmsecaus@olm.org.au)

*Or write to:*

Province Secretary, Mrs Leila Coffey  
Province Office  
P.O. Box 352  
Maylands, Western Australia 6931

*It would also be very much appreciated if you would notify the office of any changes to your contact details.*



*Volume 2 of the RNDM Reader is already being planned!*

*The focus will be on the Visitation of Our Lady, with the date of issue corresponding to that feast day on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015.*



If you **do not** wish to receive further copies of the RNDM Reader, please contact:

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