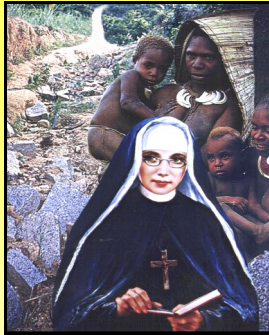




RNDM AUSTRALIAN PROVINCE MISSION OFFICE

March 2019



OUR FOUNDRESS
EUPHRASIE BARBIER
1829— 1893

**WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS
WE THANK YOU**

Dear Friends,

A year has gone by since we last sent you a newsletter to update you on where we are as an RNDM Province in Australia. We are a small group of 15 sisters here, but worldwide we are numbering 870 sisters with our growth areas being in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We still have significant numbers in New Zealand, England and Canada, but they are ageing. We are in 22 countries and our largest Province is Vietnam with 179 sisters.

You, our partners in Mission,.... friends, schools, parishes and donors have been extremely generous in the support of our Mission initiatives worldwide. In 2018 our Solidarity Fund sent \$313,805.00 to our missions in need. The break down is as follows:

Individual donors	\$ 191,690.00
Parishes, Groups, Schools	\$ 59,120.00
Christmas Catalogue	\$ 8,735.00
Funding Agencies	\$ 30,000.00
Child Sponsoring	\$ 10,941.00
Interest received	\$ 13,319.00
Total:	\$ 313,805.00

It would be extremely difficult for many of our missions to continue with their missionary outreach without your support and for this **they** and we are indebted to you all. All we can do in return is to offer you our heartfelt thanks and our prayers for you and your families. Blessings and peace to you all.

Sr. Maureen Dwan



**FOR RNDM's,
FRIENDS ,
SPONSORS &
PARTNERS IN
MISSION**

**RNDM SISTERS IN AUSTRALIA
PROMOTE MISSION THROUGH
VARIOUS APOSTOLATES,
OUTREACH, COMMUNICATION AND
FUNDING FOR THE MISSIONARY
WORKS OF 870 SISTERS OF
OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS
IN 22 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE.**

A PRAYER

**It's not you who should solve my
problems, God,
But I yours, God of the asylum-seekers.**

**It's not you who should feed the hungry,
But I who should protect your children
From the terror of the banks and armies,**

**It's not you who should make room for
the refugees,
But I who should receive you,
Hardly hidden God of the desolate.**

**You dreamed me, God,
Practicing walking upright
And learning to kneel down
More beautiful than I am now,
Happier than I dare to be
Freer than our country allows.**

**Don't stop dreaming me, God.
I don't want to stop remembering
That I am your tree,
Planted by the streams of living water.**



*Translated from the German "Traume Mich Gott"
As published in Dorothee Soelle: Mystic and
Rebel by Renate Wind (Minneapolis)*

The Congregation of the **Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM)** was founded in 1861 in France in Lyon by **Euphrasie Barbier**.

Today the Congregation is present in 22 countries. There are 870 **“RNDM sisters in the world”** and they share their love to the ends of the earth in the spirit of the Divine Missions. They are committed to the education of women and children, to health care in fragile communities, and microcredit projects to improve the skills and sustainability of people.

The sisters also develop programs in inter-religious dialogue and multiculturality.

Our priority as RNDMs is to be present to and work with those who are vulnerable and neglected, those marginalised in our world today, with particular regard to women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, migrants and victims of human trafficking.

(RNDM Congregation Chapter 2014)



Social Impact Worldwide

Education

Nursery—High School About 55,000 students

Orphanages and Hostels About 10,000 children

Dispensaries Health Care About 112,000 patients

Pastoral Care About 100,000 people

Women Empowerment About 50,000



Schools for poor children.

Below: Afternoon School for Street Children in Kolkata., India. Uniforms, books and food are provided.

This project is partly sponsored by an Australian donor



UNDER THE RISING SUN

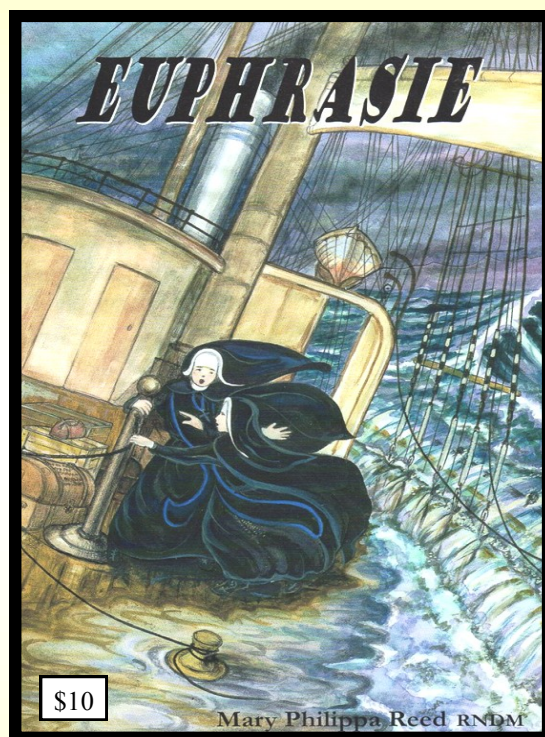
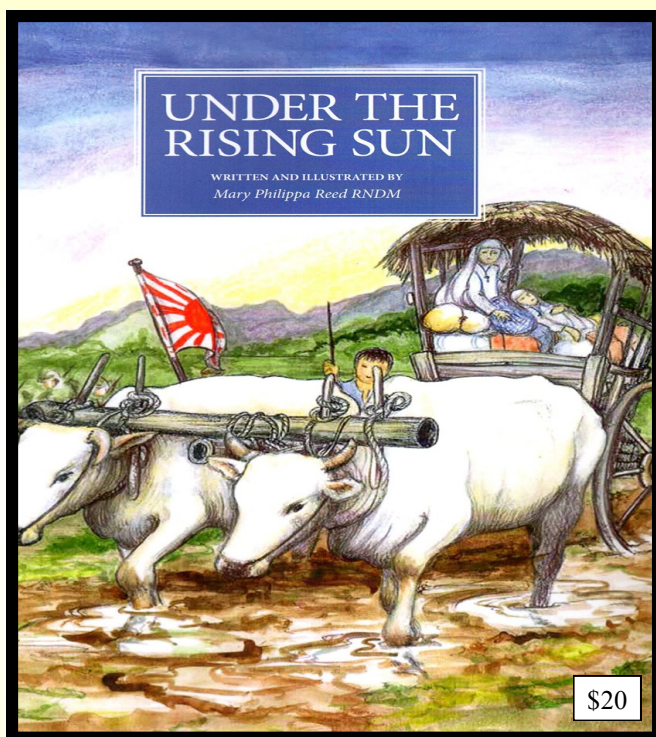


Sister Mary Philippa Reed was brought up in a farming family in the Waikato, New Zealand, where she developed a love of animals and of gardening. Educated by her mother, a former teacher, at a very small government school in Okaeria, and the New Zealand Correspondence school; at sixteen she went to Sacred Heart Girls' College, Hamilton, as a boarder to complete her education. In 1950 she was professed as a Sister of Our Lady of the Missions, and taught in Catholic primary and secondary schools for some twenty five years before becoming involved in social work in mental health care, which is still one of her great interests. People, cultures, history, geography, science, arts and classical music are also important to her. Sister continues to have a particular passion for and appreciation of language and the writing of books. She pursues her creative flair in arts and crafts. All the sketches in the book are the work of Mary Philippa.

CONGRATULATIONS

Sr. Philippa on celebrating 90 years of life.

An extraordinary gifted woman who had has the ability to bring her prose and sketches to life which engages and enthral the reader.



EUPHRASIE BARBIER FOUNDESS OF THE SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF THE MISSIONS 1928-1893

Under the Rising Sun by Mary Philippa Reed RNDM tells the story of those Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions who were interned by the Japanese in Burma after Japan invaded that country. Reed concentrates on the stories of the three Europeans, Mother Mary of Jesus Adolescent from New Zealand, Mother Mary Fanahan from Ireland, and Mother Mary Lucille from Australia. But she also tells the wonderful story of their relationship with the Burmese and Indian sisters with whom they lived prior to their arrest. The unfailing love and support of these sisters included insisting to Japanese authorities that they stay with their European companions. This ensured that virtually all survived their imprisonment.

EUPHRASIE

is a biography of a woman with a cherished mission in life. It is not a great scholarly work: others have done the research which I used to put the story together. In other words this book is a simplified version of what others have already published. It is intended to be an easily readable account of an interesting life, a presentation of Euphrasie Barbier as a warm and lively human being with courage, goodness and foibles we can understand even when we cannot imitate.

Sr. Philippa Reed

OFFICIAL OPENING OF ST ANNE'S HOSTEL FOR GIRLS, SITTWE, MYANMAR



Sister Mary Lucille Benny.
Her incredible missionary
experience is written in the
book *Under the Rising Sun*

The official opening of St Anne's Hostel for Girls in Sittwe, Myanmar took place on Sunday 13th January.

The late Mrs Jenny Wright, niece of Sister M Lucille RNDM, left a bequest for our missions. It was decided in consultation with the daughters of Jenny Wright that the funds would be used to build a new hostel for girls in Sittwe. Sittwe is in the north of Myanmar.

Most of these girls come from distant villages where they would not have the opportunity of a High school education. While some of them are from further north in Rakine state where there is much violence they are considered **Internally Displaced Persons** as their families have fled from their homes to avoid the violence. They are also afraid for their daughters as many young women have been raped and abused by either the military or the rebels.

These girls reside at the hostel, which is a safe environment, and attend the High school next to the convent.

Sister M Lucille RNDM spent many years as a missionary in Asia including Myanmar. It was in Sittwe in 1942 that she was arrested by the Japanese together with three other sisters and for the remainder of the war years was imprisoned in a concentration camp with other "enemies of Japan".

She was a courageous and resourceful woman who was instrumental in assisting other prisoners survive the rigours of the camp.

She returned to Australia and much to the surprise of us all lived to be 106 years of age and was lucid until the end! A truly valiant woman!

There is a plaque above the front door of the hostel:

*In Loving Memory of Sister M Lucille and her niece,
Mrs Jenny Wright*



St. Anne's Hostel, Sittwe. Myanmar



Sr. Catherine Brabender

A WORLDWIDE GLIMPSE OF RNDM'S WORKS WORLDWIDE



Boys at Bihar India.



Rimenze, South Sudan



Teachers' College South Sudan



Taiwan



Kulaman Hostel Philippines



Tamil Nadu South India



South Sudan



Unwed Mothers Vietnam



Senegal



Kawthaung Myanmar



Africa



Tei WaNgai Matuu Kenya



Kalyanpur India Central



Railway Children Kolkata



Afternoon School Kolkata

LUNAR NEW YEAR 2019

CHUC MUNG NAM MOI



Teresa Nguyet and Anna Thuy attended the year-end Mass at the Vietnamese Catholic Church in Western Australia

Tet holiday is considered to be the biggest and the most important in the year. Tet is a special occasion for family reunions and celebrating the arrival of spring. The atmosphere is really noisy, the streets are overcrowded and the surroundings are colourful. In addition, all the houses are cleaned and decorated with various plants such as kumquat trees, peach blossoms, apricot blossoms...

On the last day of the old year, people go to Church to attend the Year-end Mass to thank God and the people gather to participate in the reunion party and say goodbye to the old year together. Everyone hopes that he/she could get rid of unwanted things and strive more in the new year.

On the first day of the New Year, all Catholics come to the church to offer the New Year and receive the Word of God (small scrolls with a sentence from the Gospel). On the second day, people remember about ancestors and grandparents to show their filial piety to those who have passed away. The third day of the Lunar New Year is dedicated to sanctifying jobs. Every family member comes to grandparents, relatives and neighbors' houses to wish them health, happiness and a happy new year. Children often receive lucky money kept in a red envelope from their parents and relatives.

Tet has become a spiritual feast for all Vietnamese.

Anna Thanh Thuy

Partners in Mission Day Melbourne

As RNDM contemplative missionaries we are drawn into an incredible mystery of Divine relationship where we recognize ourselves called not "servants but friends," partners, co-creators with God! Our priority as RNDMs is to be present to and work with those who are vulnerable and neglected, those marginalized in our world today, with particular regard to women, children, youth, indigenous peoples, migrants and victims of human trafficking.



Sr. Josephine Kane
Congregation Leader

From the beginning education in its broadest sense was the first priority of our ministry as RNDM missionary women. The primary work of the sisters was the empowerment of women. Consequently children and young people are still at the centre of our RNDM educational institutions. In countries where access to basic education is limited, centres have also been developed to promote literacy and provide health education and the social welfare for women. Our Dispensaries and Health Centres are located in under developed areas where patients are unable to get health care from anywhere else, mobile clinics provide this service. Health talks on preventive medicine is part of the programme. We reach out to people where there is real distress, abandoned or maltreated children, young people left to themselves in the suburbs of the huge cities, victims of drug addiction, prostitution, AIDS, women who are exploited, those on the fringes of society and foreigners without documentation.



Mary Grech, Sr. Patricia Keogh,
Frs. Kevin and Peter O'Neill
(Columbans) and Sr. Jo Kane



Helen Gartlan with Student
Sisters Lan, Lucia and Angela

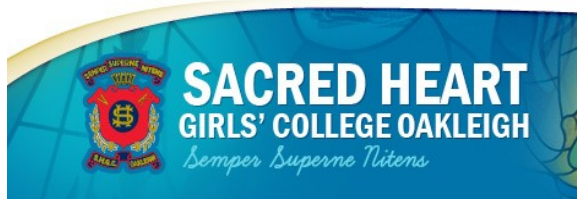
With forty Partners and Sisters present Sister Josephine Kane gave a comprehensive overview of 870 RNDM Sisters' missionary outreach in 22 countries throughout the world. working with thousands of women and children.

Weaving Project Dantdalton Village, Oatshispin, Myanmar

Inspired by some women who were facing jobless problems, Sr. Catherine with the consent and support of PLT initiated a weaving project in Dantdalton village, St. Theresa's parish, Oat Ship Pin. To begin this project, two women were trained, then two sets of loom were bought and finally three further women are now weaving under the supervision of a lady called Daw Nyo Nyo Win.

The finished materials are sent to Sr. Jucie in Kawthaung for making of bags which are sold to the local women and people. Many bags have made their way here to the shores of Australia.

Many other women are attracted to this weaving project and request to be allowed to join the program. We thank God for his blessing on our humble work and we pray that His name may be widely known in this area.



Sacred Heart Girls' College, Oakleigh was established by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions in 1957. While the sisters no longer administer the College, their spirit and influence remain in both the spiritual and academic life of the school.

AN IMMERSION INTO POVERTY IN MANILA

After their school exams 10 girls from Sacred Heart Girls College, Oakleigh spent almost two weeks with RNDM Sisters on mission in Manila. I was amazed at the resilience and compassion of the girls as they not only faced dire poverty, but they engaged with children and families who they met on the streets, living in the squalor.

One incident stands out clearly in my mind. The girls were led through a housing area that had been devastated by floods. Families were living among the refuse that was dumped on them by filthy rivers. I could see that the girls were upset by what they could see as they went further into the barrio. When they arrived at the area for a street class they first gathered around their teacher. She said to them "I can see that you have been deeply moved by what you have just seen. But I am asking you now to put away your tears and look at the children. They are waiting for you and they are excited to see you".

Immediately the students found their inner courage – they began to play with 30 – 40 kids giving them a day of happiness that they will remember for some time. They forgot their sadness and reached out to the children. They discovered a new joy and inner strength that they didn't know that they had!

Sr. Madeleine Barlow





Sr. Veronica Martin

PERSONAL ADVOCACY

PERSONAL ADVOCACY IN PERTH

Personal Advocacy is a spiritual programme for people with intellectual disabilities.

Sister Veronica Martin writes: Working with young adults with special needs these past 20 years has been, for the most part, a very rewarding experience....until the last session for 2018 that is! As we sat together in our sacred space, six young people with disabilities and eight volunteers, there was a feeling of togetherness and joyful expectancy. I posed the question, "What are we going to celebrate on the 25th of this month?"

Douglas, always willing to oblige said, "Jesus was born".

"No he wasn't", came back Mathew in a flash,

"It has been scientifically proven....."

The atmosphere was shattered and I was struggling to contain my anger. As I write this I know I have a lot to learn about accepting the unexpected. All in God's good time!

Missionaries, when they return from the field of their labours are sincere when they say they have received more in love than they have given. This has been my experience in the 20 years I have been blessed to accompany my friends with special needs.



Bishop Don Sproxton.
Aux Bishop of Perth
presents Sr. Veronica Martin with a
certificate congratulating her on 20
years of service in the Personal
Advocacy Programme.

RNDM Child Sponsorship Programme

Thanks to the help and compassion of many generous donors we are able to relieve the suffering and provide education to a number of children. Through our Sponsor a Child initiative which has been running for six years we are able to divert funds and support children in the Philippines, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Kenya and India.

Presently 43 children are being sponsored from donors in Australia, New Zealand, the British Isles and Ireland, Canada and Rome. Of the 43 children being sponsored Australian donors are sponsoring 31 of these children. Each child has his/her own story to tell and a brief synopsis along with a photo is sent to the donor. Often it is the parent or grandparent, or the Sister in Charge who writes of the progress of the child and speaks of their gratitude to the giver. Some children are able to write their own letter of thanks. Most of those sponsored are in our two orphanages, St. Benedict's and St. Peter's in Bangladesh. The sisters care for almost 100 children from infants to teenagers. These children are happy and loved. We are often heartened by 'good news' stories, one recently of a girl left on the orphanage doorstep as an infant who now is in her second year of nursing training.

Maureen Dwan rndm

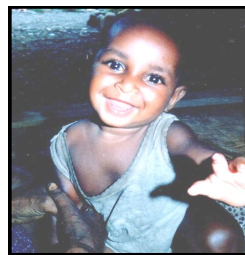




ARCHIVES

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1969 - 2010



First four Sisters 1969
Sr. Bernatdette, Sr. Majella,
Sr. Veronica and Sr. James.



Sister Marie Lawlor



Sr Maureen Dwan rmdm &
Sr. Lukas from Switzerland

Sr. Marie Therese (visiting)
Sr. Maureen Dwan, Sr. Maureen
Belleville, Sr. Marie Lawlor,
Sr. Rose Mary Harbinson,
Sr. Lidwina Van Beers
Kneeling: Sr. Monica Kortegast.

After the 1966 General Chapter the Australian Province investigated the possibility of opening a house in Papua New Guinea. The final choice was to go to the Southern Highlands. In a letter to the Provincial of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions the Bishop of Mendi Firmin Schmitt described in detail the aims of missionary work in that area. He concluded by saying:

If it is your aim to take a mission in some area where Christianity is not yet well established ...there is no better place that the Southern Highlands to carry out your desire. It would be wonderful if you could help us in this foundation.

In 1969 (50 years ago) four Sisters were missioned to Ialibu in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea and as more sisters arrived Pangia, Wiliame Madang, Kagua, Tari, Port Moresby and Mendi became other places of ministry for the Sisters. During the intervening years the Sisters adapted their life style and apostolate to the changing needs of the local people. In showing such flexibility they reflected the vision of Euphrasie Barbier who never developed a neo-colonial mentality and always insisted on respect for the local cultures and languages.

The Sisters worked closely with the Capuchin priests and brothers from Pittsburgh and Kansas and the many lay missionaries who came as teachers, nurses, pilots, mechanics, engineers and carpenters.

Initially the Sisters taught in schools but by 1972 some had moved into catechetical work and the training of local catechists. Welfare work, the effective training of local people for Church and community leadership, as well as the teaching of seminarians, the spiritual formation of National Sisters and the evolvement of a Diocesan Pastoral Center have kept the Papuan New Guinea Mission alive and active.

At Wiliame the sisters ran a very successful Clinic with a mobile outreach. The last RNDM Sister left the mission in 2010. The diocese is now serviced by National Sisters of the country and some from other overseas countries.

Maureen Dwan rmdm





AN INVITATION TO OUR PARTNERS IN MISSION

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Throughout this year Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions in every Province throughout the world will be meeting in Chapter. A Chapter is an ancient monastic practice. It happens every six years and its purpose is to help all the members of the Congregation to consider our missionary efforts and to make decisions about the future. It is also a time for preparation for a General Chapter – a meeting that involves representation from every province of the Congregation. The General Chapter considers the overall mission of the International Congregation. The next General Chapter is to take place in Thailand 18 January to the 15 February 2020.

As you know our Australian Province is now growing smaller – only six Sisters in Perth and nine of us in Melbourne. New times are upon us! Our future is fragile. During our reflections on the preparation of the Chapter our thoughts turned towards you – our partners in mission. A few years back we coined that term – *Partners In Mission* – because that is how we wish to experience your friendship with us. We see you as our friends who encourage us.

The General Leadership in Rome have set the theme for the 2020 General Chapter as
Seeing Anew – One Body One Mission

As we talk together about this title, we are prompted to think about the relationship we have with you – our partners. We are grateful to you for the support and encouragement you give us and especially your interest in the wider mission of the Congregation. We honour and treasure the developing relationships we share with you under the banner of RNDM. We do see RNDM Sisters and RNDM Partners in Mission having one vocation—forming one body with one mission.

Consequently we would like to invite you into reflection with us—how can we each enrich the partnership in mission that we are sharing. We would love to hear your opinions and walk with us in preparation for our Chapters.

The following are some prompts to begin a conversation with you and we hope you might respond to us by considering any one or all of these following suggested pointers.

- We wonder how you consider yourself as RNDM Partners in Mission?
- What is your sense of your own mission?
- How would you describe your mission in the world?
- How can we - as a community of Religious women - support you in your mission?
- How do you see yourself as supporting us - partnering us in RNDM mission?
- Do you have any thoughts, suggestions, questions etc about RNDM Mission that you would offer us for consideration at our Province Chapter in August?
- How can we, (Partners and Religious Sisters) together build the Body of Christ and share together One Mission?

If anyone wishes to join in this conversation, by replying to any or all of these prompts, or with any suggestions that you may feel could be helpful for us, then please send your ideas etc to Sr Marie Therese Ryder in Perth thereseryder@hotmail.com) or to Sr Catherine Brabender in Melbourne cbrabender@bigpond.com

Madeleine Barlow rndm



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THANK YOU AND BLESSINGS



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