

MONTHLY MEMO
May 2023

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MISSIONARY FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BRISBANE

Emerging Futures congratulates the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception who, at the second session of their Chapter in mid-May facilitated by Karon Donnellan rsm, let go of their leadership team model and adopted canonical governance provided by a Canonical Delegate appointed by their General Minister, Pauline Robinson mfc. Maria Lazzaro pbvm is the Canonical Delegate of the Sisters, assisted by Consultors Margaret Cleary rsj and Rita Flynn rsj. We began journeying towards this goal in March 2021 and the Sisters have worked tirelessly to reach the appointment of a Canonical Delegate and Consultors and the transfer of services to EFCL management. All the Sisters were involved, but I pay special tribute to the outgoing Leader and Leadership team: Catherine White mfc along with Elaine Morzone mfc and Patricia Treacy mfc. The well-being of the Sisters will be cared for by EFCL and by Catherine White mfc as Community Coordinator, Sonia Thorpe as Health & Wellbeing Coordinator and Bernadette Turton as Business Manager.



Standing: Catherine White mfc, Pauline Robinson mfc, Maria Lazzaro pbvm Seated: Margaret Cleary rsj, Rita Flynn rsj



Karon Donnellan rsm facilitator; Pauline Robinson mfc General Minister

EFCL MAY EVENTS

Another May highlight has been the two days Emerging Futures offered in Melbourne on May 8 and Sydney on May 15. Both days were very well attended, with 70+ participants in Melbourne and 100+ participants in Sydney.

Representatives of each of our 19 service partner congregations shared in the days with us: so we had Dominican Sisters from **New Zealand** and **Western Australia** as well as Sydney;

Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception from **Queensland** as well as Presentations from Queensland, Lismore, Wagga and **Tasmania**. From **Victoria** we welcomed the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny, Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Missionary Sisters of Service. In **NSW** we were joined by the Brothers of St John of God and the Patrician Brothers, by the Discalced Carmelite Sisters of Toronto and the Poor Clare Sisters of Bethlehem Monastery, and by the Sisters of Mercy, Parramatta. As well, sixteen religious institutes not currently engaged with EFCL attended in Melbourne or Sydney to learn more about the work of Emerging Futures.

Many of our service partner congregations now have EFCL managed staff working with them and we were delighted that staff from Victoria, NSW and Queensland participated in the days. In fact, many attendees would probably state that the staff working with congregations were the most inspiring presenters in our afternoon session -not to deny the value added by our EFCL managers, Board Directors and Member Representatives.

Our **Melbourne** day began with a presentation by Liz Dowling rsm, a biblical scholar who has decades of experience in education across secondary, tertiary and adult education areas. We have been grateful to have Liz as a resource for Emerging Futures since our earliest days and she has contributed greatly to our continuing understanding of the biblical, theological and spiritual underpinnings of Emerging Futures. In Melbourne, Liz spoke of the parables which “turn the world upside down by challenging presumptions, reversing expectations, and proposing a different view of life with God.” [B.E. Reid]

Our second session focussed on two of our service partners -Catherine White mfc and Margaret Barclay pbvm- who spoke of the journey of their congregation **to** Emerging Futures and their journey **in** Emerging Futures. The Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception is a Brisbane-based Governance Circle of an international congregation and so very different from the Wagga and Sydney based Presentation Sisters, a pontifical congregation. Each group has had a very different journey with Emerging Futures and Catherine and Margaret very ably brought participants to understand the uniqueness of their path.

We organised the afternoon session as a MarketPlace, where seven very short presentations led into two sessions of participants choosing a topic about which to seek more information resourced by EFCL staff and a Member Representative. Much appreciated were the two short presentations by **Andrea Smith** who is the Health & Well-Being Coordinator for the Cluny Sisters and the Sion Sisters and **Carrie Philpott** who is the Community Coordinator for the Cluny Sisters. We offered breakout tables about Shared Services, Formation & Induction, Health & Well-Being Coordination, Community Coordination, Member Representatives & Fundraising, Canonical Delegate & Consultors experience and Lay Colleagues contribution. It was a bit of a bun rush trying to get people moving round the room: so for next year we'll be employing break out rooms!

Our **Sydney** day began with a presentation by Dr Janine Luttick, a biblical studies lecturer from ACU, on the surprising and challenging nature of parables. Our second session featured presentations by three service partner leaders: Sandra Winton op, Prioress of the Dunedin NZ Dominicans; Timothy Graham oh, Provincial of the Brothers of St John of God and Margaret Barclay pbvm, Congregational Leader of the Wagga Presentation Sisters. These were well-appreciated stories of the different journeys of different groups to and in Emerging Futures. Sandra and Margaret lead pontifical congregations, while Timothy leads a province of an international congregation. While the three groups and their journeys have been very different to each other, they have each involved their total congregation in the process of Emerging Futures. Many evaluation respondents stated this session was the highlight of the day for them: *The three stories shared - open, honest and good questions raised; seeing & hearing so many people being engaged with the process; hearing those first hand experiences.*

We again organised the afternoon session as a MarketPlace, where seven very short presentations led into two sessions of participants choosing a topic about which to seek more information resourced by EFCL staff and a Member Representative. **Mary-Lynne Cochran** sgs Community Animator for the St John of God Brothers and **Carrie Philpott** Community Coordinator for the Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny captured the heart of their roles, as did the Health & Well-Being Coordinator for the Wagga Presentation Sisters, **Trish Ridgway**. The thought-provoking input about the contributions of lay colleagues in Emerging Futures from **Robert Fitzgerald AM** accentuated the importance of this role now and into the future.

Another bun rush to get to tables to discuss Formation & Induction, Health & Well-Being Coordination, Community Coordination, Member Representatives & Fundraising, Shared Services, Canonical Delegate & Consultants experience, Lay Colleagues and Emerging Futures and Transition Services. Break out rooms next year, we promise!

We are very grateful for all the evaluation responses gathered by Survey Monkey in the days after the two events. Comments like the following have given us food for thought:

- *the opportunity for shared learning and the spirit of openness that existed between those present. There was a great sense of hope in the vulnerability*
- *I appreciated the opportunity for so many congregational members and lay colleagues to gather together in a very inclusive way*
- *the opportunity to meet the other participants and EFCL staff and to learn more about the governance structure and services of EFCL*
- *I would like the opportunity to go more deeply into some of the important issues about the future role of EFCL as an emerging and different expression of being the church*
- *The range of stories in EFCL participation so honestly & openly shared. Also clear presentation of range of supports EFCL can offer.*

Both in person and in the evaluations there was a call for a longer experience in 2024: so we have booked **TWO** days in both Melbourne and Sydney for 2024. Monday-Tuesday **April 22-23** at Treacy Centre and Monday-Tuesday **May 13-14** at Mary MacKillop Place. Both venues with break out rooms for any sessions that might need them. Please put those days into your long range planning!

We believe that EFCL is enhanced by the sharing of wisdom between groups who are our Service Partners and that events like the May days help create a network, a community of religious institutes and members who are on a journey together. Every journey is different, but there are learnings to be shared and support to be provided.

My apologies for the fact that this *Monthly Memo* has exceeded the two pages, but there was much to share!

Dates to diarise:

Tuesday November 7, 2023: An EFCL Zoom event for all interested participants from 11am-1pm AEDT.

Monday-Tuesday April 22-23, 2024, two day conference at Treacy Centre **Melbourne**.

Monday-Tuesday May 13-14, 2024, two day conference at MMP, North **Sydney**.

Sharon Price rsm
Transition Manager
May 30, 2023