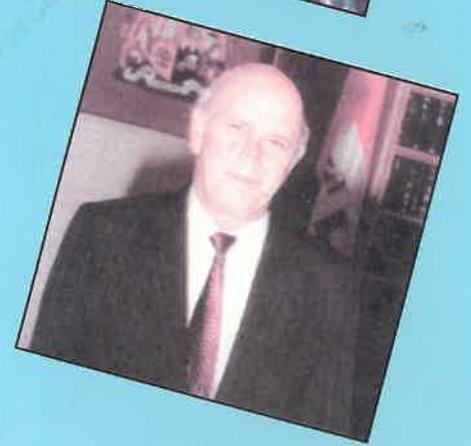


Loreto in South Africa

25 Momentous Years

1978 - 2003

Presidents



Provincials



Loreto in South Africa

1978 – 2003

25 Momentous Years

Editors: Belinda Milne and Sr Shirley Kay

This publication is fondly dedicated to the entire Loreto family of South Africa who have collaborated in keeping the Loreto flag flying during the last 25 momentous years.

CONTENTS

Preface	3
Foreword	4
Political background	5
Chapter 1: Skinner Street 1978 – 2003	7
Chapter 2: Queenswood	13
Chapter 3: Strand	16
Chapter 4: The Mary Ward Pilgrimage, 1985	19
Chapter 5: Closing and Opening	21
Chapter 6: What are the Loreto sisters doing now?	26
Chapter 7: The Loreto Conference, 21-23 February 2003	40

PREFACE

The aim of producing this brochure is to record the history of Loreto in South Africa during the last 25 years. The idea is to present a sequel to the Centenary brochure published in 1978.

As will be seen, the years from 1978 to 2003 have been momentous years indeed, as well as years of radical change within the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (alias the Loreto sisters) and also in the political arena in South Africa. The account is necessarily brief to guard against what could have been cumbersome. I have tried to show the transition of our schools from management by the sisters to lay management, as well as the transition from an almost totally white enrolment to an almost totally black enrolment. That this transformation came about in an evolutionary manner without the problems that beset many other schools must surely redound to the credit of those in charge.

I wish to pay special tribute to the lay principals and the Boards of Management of our three schools for bringing about change so efficiently. To Mrs H elene Addis and Mrs Ren e d'Oliveira at the helm of Skinner Street since 1989, I say well done for your excellent work. To Miss Marlene Jardine, Mrs Louise Wilson, Mrs Elaine Twyford and Mr Marcello Pollazzi who have steered Queenswood along the path of excellence I say thank you. And to Ms Athena Athanasiades and Mrs Anne Krause I pay tribute for keeping on in spite of difficulties and for doing a good job. Also to the many members of staff who have contributed to keeping the educational values of Mary Ward alive and upholding the traditions of Loreto, I salute you all.

In undertaking this task of recording the history of the last 25 years, I did not foresee the difficulties that were to beset the enterprise. As can be appreciated, the handicap of my weak eyesight was a huge problem. The second problem was that Miss Belinda Milne, Senior History teacher at Loreto Skinner Street, who undertook to work with me resigned from the staff at the end of the first term. She did so as she intended relocating to the UK. Fortunately for me, her relocation plans were delayed and she continued to make her services available to me in spite of a heavy schedule at another school. I have the highest praise for Belinda to whom I am very deeply indebted. She managed to find time to attend

sessions with me for planning and composing the script. This she recorded on computer adding her expertise as an historian as well as a writer. But best of all, I found her a delightful person to work with, always gentle, kind, ladylike and courteous. Thank you Belinda.



Sr. Shirley Kay

Another thank you goes to Sr. Bernadette who helped with proofreading and contributed in many ways to the whole. Bernadette dreaded hearing that I needed to have a job done! I am grateful to her for giving time that became an ever scarcer commodity as her workload increased.

Lastly, I thank the sisters of the Province who contributed to Chapter Five, an account of "what the sisters are doing now".

I trust that all who read this account will realise that whilst the schools are in the safe hands of our loyal laity, the sisters are giving their time and energy to other necessary apostolates and that everything is done for AMDG: *AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM* (all for the greater honour and glory of God).

Sr Shirley M. Kay IBVM, 31 July 2003

We apologise should the efforts of any member of the Province have been unintentionally omitted.

FOREWORD

In 1978, during the centenary of Loreto Skinner Street, the sisters wrote of “handing on the torch” to the next generation in the Loreto tradition. This included the handing on of Mary Ward’s values of freedom, justice, sincerity and joy. Mary Ward was a “pioneer of liberal education for women” and realised the vital role women had to play in the future. Not only that, but Mary Ward realised the need to open schools to all who could benefit from them and Loreto in South Africa has done just that.

The last twenty-five years (1978 – 2003) have been momentous years for the IBVM sisters. They have worked hard to achieve integration and implement liberal education in all Loreto schools in South Africa. The path to integration has not been an easy one with dwindling numbers of sisters and restrictive legislation passed by the Apartheid Government. Firstly, the South African Government opposed the importation of Catholic nuns and priests into the country and numbers dropped from 86 to 24 (1978 – 1992). Secondly, they implemented the quota system that limited the number of African learners Loreto schools were legally allowed to register. And, thirdly, the use of the Separate Amenities Act, restricted the movement and freedom of Loreto learners until its abolition in 1989. As apartheid crumbled in South Africa, some Loreto schools went from strength to strength and others weakened.

In 1974, Canon T. Verryn of the Ecumenical Research Unit, foresaw the collapse of the apartheid government and the inevitability of change in South Africa.

He made predictions and recommendations regarding the future of Loreto schools in South Africa. These included Skinner Street; The Strand; Sea Point and Glen Cowie. These were his recommendations:

- Owing to the shortage of staff the boarding houses of various schools would have to close their doors (Skinner Street 1983)
- Owing to the shortage of staff lay people may have to be used in the running of the various schools
- Skinner Street and Glen Cowie were found to be indispensable. In fact “justice demand[ed] that Glen Cowie be given maximum support” as “it fill[ed] the

most obvious social and religious need.” Glen Cowie provided a school, clinic and hospital – all essential services in the area.



Belinda Milne

- On the other hand, the Strand “(could) best be spared” and after that Sea Point. Both areas had few young children as their parents preferred to be closer to the city for work purposes and elderly people were settling in these areas.

Indeed, Sea Point was closed in 1982 due to the change in demographics. Yet, it is ironic to note that while “indispensable” Glen Cowie was handed over to the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1991, the Strand remained open.

Loreto went forward into democratic South Africa with three schools – Skinner Street, the Strand and Queenswood.

With the new dispensation came new challenges. In 1987, the IBVM sisters realised that logistically they could not provide the services they had done over the past hundred years and the decision was taken that the sisters would hand on the running of their schools to the laity. The sisters stayed on as educators and still participated in school life as much as possible. Another challenge came in the form of a new curriculum, Outcomes-based Education (1995). This policy’s foundation is close to Mary Ward’s idea of “inclusive” education and the development of “the whole person”. She believed in “education as a formation for life” instilling skills and morals in children that would lead them to responsible adulthood. Empowered with the Mary Ward and Loreto tradition, the educators have attended numerous training sessions and workshops to rise to the challenge and have implemented OBE in their classrooms.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The last 25 years have been momentous and tumultuous ones in South Africa and have led to many changes politically, economically and socially.

In 1978, P.W. Botha was appointed Prime Minister of South Africa. He began to address the “problem of apartheid” and wanted to start reforming some of the discriminatory apartheid laws, but not all. He was fiercely opposed to any course of action that would remove power from the hands of the whites. He had a number of reasons for reforming. These included:

1. The growing international antagonism towards the apartheid policy
2. The impossibility of achieving H.F. Verwoerd’s aims of a purely white state with no influx of Africans.
3. The fear that the continuation of apartheid would lead to African radicalism and violence.

Botha’s first major reform was the adoption of the 1983 Constitution which made provision for the “division of power”. A new three-chamber parliament was set up: a House of Assembly for whites; a House of Representatives for coloureds; and a House of Delegates for Indians. Each chamber would deal with legislation relating to their population group and any disagreements would be put to the President’s Council for settlement. A major shortcoming of this reform was the fact that 70% of South Africa’s population, the Africans, were still excluded from political representation.

Despite this shortcoming, over one hundred apartheid laws were abolished in the period 1984 – 1991. Africans were permitted to attend “white” universities according to a quota system. The Separate Amenities Act began to crumble as restaurants and beaches opened to all races but not all city councils rushed to reform. They were forced to do so in 1989 when F.W. de Klerk ordered the complete removal of the law. African citizens were allowed greater freedom of movement as the despised “pass laws” were abolished.

However, things were not moving quickly enough for people still suffering the effects of apartheid. A revolt in the townships of the Vaal Triangle began in 1984 and continued to rage for two years. The reasons for the unrest included an economic recession which hit the poor people hardest, the unpopularity of the black town councils, the dissatisfaction with the 1983 constitution,

and the attempt of the African National Congress (ANC) to make the country ungovernable and thereby force reform. This unrest led to the deaths of thousands of people and the destruction of thousands of houses and schools. School boycotts were another form of resistance against the inferior standard of education provided for African children and the whole social, economic and political system. The ANC encouraged children to return to school under the slogan “people’s education for people’s power” in order to prepare them to participate actively in the struggle. The government introduced two states of emergency to cope with these problems, the second of which was only lifted in June 1990. Clearly, white control and domination were slipping.

The government of South Africa announced in August 1985 that there was to be widespread reform. The eyes of the world fell on South Africa as P.W. Botha made his “Rubicon speech”. Contrary to expectations, he declared himself adamantly against “one man one vote” and would not be responsible for giving up white power. This speech had massive financial repercussions for South Africa. Investors withdrew large sums of money and many foreign banks began to call in their loans. Botha had failed in his objectives to maintain an orderly government, to improve relations between the various population groups, to further economic development, and to maintain law and order. He had stopped short of full reform which led to frustration and dissatisfaction.

F.W. de Klerk replaced Botha as State President in August 1989 and pushed for reform. International sanctions and pressure had been widely applied to South Africa in order to force her to revise her racial policy and this crippled the economy. De Klerk realised that peace would never materialise as long as Africans did not have the same political rights as whites; that it was better for him to reform while the white government was still in a position of strength; and that South Africa could not continue with heavy international pressure. He began by releasing eight political prisoners including Walter Sisulu and by lifting the ban on the ANC, Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Communist Party. On 2 February 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison after serving 27 years.

The threat to reform now lay in the violence between ANC supporters and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporters. This violence claimed thousands of lives and led to a deep resentment between the two groups which polarised the African community. An attempt at peace

was made with the National Peace Accord (September 1991) which set out codes of behaviour for the police force and political groups. This attempt failed as violence continued.

Reform was boosted by the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) in December 1991 which aimed to set up a new, democratic constitution for the country. The delegates undertook:

To bring about an undivided South Africa with one nation sharing a common citizenship, patriotism and loyalty, pursuing amid our diversity, freedom, equality and security for all irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed: a country free from apartheid or any other form of discrimination or domination.

This commitment was approved by the white population in March 1992 when, through a referendum, they voted in favour of de Klerk continuing his reform programme. Another meeting of Codesa broke down due to disagreements and ongoing violence. Only in April 1993 were things back on track with a multi-party negotiating forum working on an interim constitution which was approved in November 1993.

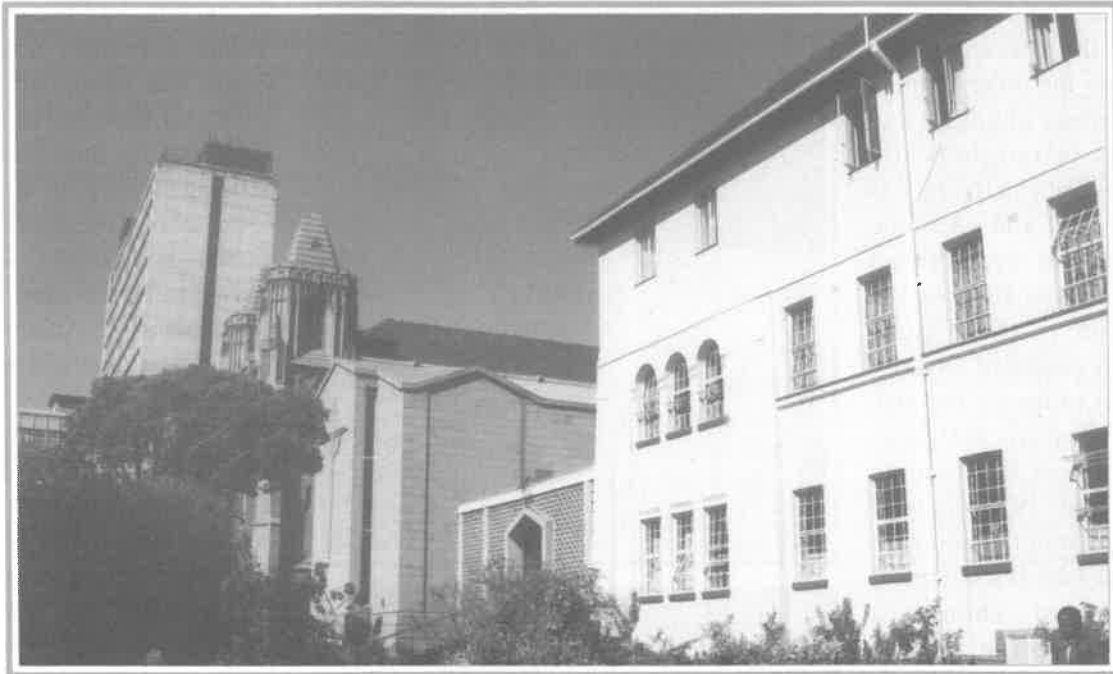
Finally, on 27 April 1994, South Africa's first democratic election was held. The ANC won a large majority and on 10 May, Nelson Mandela was sworn in as the new President of South Africa. A Government of National Unity was established and reconciliation and nation-building were emphasised. In order to deal with the injustices and cruelties of the past, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was appointed in 1995 where victims could tell of their sufferings and amnesty, if appropriate, could be granted. The new constitution was completed in 1996 and embodied a Bill of Rights designed to protect the basic human rights of all South Africans.

It has been nearly 10 years since apartheid and inequality officially disappeared in South Africa but its legacy is still visible in the poverty of many South Africans and the emergence of new problems like crime and general lawlessness.

It is against this turbulent backdrop that Loreto schools have attempted to teach their children respect, tolerance, honesty and responsibility which would equip them to deal with the challenges facing them. This remains the aim of Loreto schools today.

CHAPTER 1: SKINNER STREET 1978 – 2003

“Leading and learning in love and justice”



The year 1978 marked the celebration of the Centenary of Loreto in South Africa. Special events to mark this special milestone in our history included a week-long seminar in January which was attended by the then Mother General, Sister Agnes Walsh and as many sisters from the Province who could travel. The photograph taken at the event shows 94 present. Various papers were presented and guest speakers from outside made the occasion both enriching and memorable.

In May, a pageant of the history of Loreto in South Africa was staged on the hockey field. This was a spectacular event combining all the Loreto schools in South Africa in a colourful display. Skinner Street was honoured by guests from Ireland, Sr Evangeline McDonald (Rathfarnham), Sr Kieran (Navan), and Sr Christopher from Zimbabwe. These festivities were followed by an outdoor Mass on the hockey field at which Cardinal McCann of Cape Town was the main celebrant, assisted by members of the hierarchy and many priests. Among the congregation were hundreds of past pupils, parents and other friends of Loreto. Sr Clement Kelly was principal of Loreto Skinner at the time. Due to the fact that the staff was dwindling, they found it increasingly more difficult to maintain the boarding department, with

the result that it had to be closed in 1983. Another reason for closing the boarding department was the fact that the majority of the boarders lived in Pretoria and could travel to school every day. Soon the boarding quarters were used to improve the school: the dining room became a media centre and dormitories on the top floor were converted into classrooms (the Accounting and Business Economics classrooms, 8G and 8K at present).



Sr Joan McLoughlin

In the same year, the decision was taken to write the Transvaal Education Department Senior Certificate Examinations like the Government schools. The 1980s also saw Skinner Street opening its doors to learners of all races but at the same time trying not to antagonise the Apartheid government. There were occasions of conflict as the municipal authorities would not allow any black girl to use the Pretoria City Hall

(Loreto did not yet have its own hall) and would not allow them to participate in inter-school sports. As a result, Skinner Street's sport became largely non-competitive. While this remains true for swimming, the learners now compete at soccer, hockey and tennis.

Big changes were set for 1986. Catholic Schools began to receive a departmental subsidy which was a huge

boost for all concerned. Sadly, ten years later, serious cutbacks were experienced. Also in this year a General Congregation was called for the entire Loreto family. It was an elective congregation as Sr Agnes Walsh had passed away on 7 January 1986 and a new Mother-General was needed. Sr Agnes was an outstanding leader of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, leading the order through the momentous changes and innovations in religious life introduced by Vatican II. She was both a powerful and energetic woman. Perhaps her greatest achievement was to give the congregation the new Constitutions modelled on those of the Society of Jesus – the wish of Mary Ward nearly 400 years before. The most far-reaching outcome of the 1986 General Congregation was the adoption of Pope John Paul II's statement in Mexico, to choose a "Preferential option for the poor".

to work pressures and was replaced by Mr Wilson, an experienced attorney.

The first task of the Board of Management (the current Governing Body) was to appoint the first Lay Principal of Skinner Street. Mrs Hélene Addis, who had been teaching at St Paulus Primary School for 10 years, was appointed in August 1988 and took office in January 1989. Despite the formidable task of being in charge of three sections of the school (Pre-School, Primary and High School), Mrs Addis proved to be the ideal person for the transition from management by the sisters to management by the laity. She replaced Sr Joan who was the last Sister Principal and who had done sterling work in the school for eight years, especially in the area of discipline. With diplomacy, delicacy and openness she met all challenges with cheerfulness and removed any doubt as to the wisdom of the decision to involve the laity. One



Mrs Hélene Addis
Principal of Loreto Convent School
1989 - 1995

of her first concerns was the school's finances. The school fees were far too low to make the school financially viable and Mrs Addis had to introduce the idea of a school being a business to the sisters which went against what they thought Catholic Education stood for. Finances were improved as well as other aspects of Skinner Street - paving of certain areas, improvements to the swimming pool and a new coat of paint, inside and out. A new Biology laboratory and Computer room were also established and Loreto's yearbook was reintroduced at this time.

Thus when the members of the South African Province met in May 1987 two very important resolutions were passed:

- The management of the Loreto schools would be handed on to the laity
- The sisters would be available to work in other areas apart from teaching, especially in response to the request to choose the "preferential option for the poor".



Mrs Renée d'Oliveira
Principal Loreto Skinner Street

The first step to implementation was taken in January 1988 when members of the laity, with various valuable skills (expertise in education, law and finance), were asked to serve on the Board of Management for Skinner Street. The Constitutions of schools which already had Boards in operation were examined and a draft constitution to meet Skinner Street's specific needs was drawn up by Sr Bernadette and Sr Shirley. Mr J. McMenemy was chosen as the Chairman of the Board. He, however, had to resign in the middle of the year due

President F.W. de Klerk realised the futility of their efforts to stem the tide that had started in 1976 and he took the decision to release Nelson Mandela from prison and to start a government of national unity and democracy. The reforms gradually being applied in the 1990s to free the

South African people from oppression were upheld by Catholic education institutions. In 1990, Loreto Skinner Street appointed their first black Head Girl, Martha Mokone. During the National Catholic Schools' Congress held in Durban in 1991, attended by Mrs Addis, it was affirmed that "the Catholic school creates an environment of healing and reconciliation in the present situation of turmoil. In this atmosphere, the Catholic school maintains a vision that upholds Catholic teaching by teachers committed to their ministry and who are prepared to serve...the Catholic school should be seen to be a community serving humanity". It was clear that Loreto had an important role to play in the "New South Africa". When asked what being at Loreto Skinner Street had meant to them at this time and why they had chosen the school these were some of the learners' responses:

"I find this a unique school because we have to learn to respect each other...I got to know about other religions and different cultures while I was here."

Maria Perregil Grade 12

"First of all, I was sent here because it was an English-medium school...my parents wanted me to be able to communicate with people from other cultures and, in fact, anyone I might encounter...I might add that the most important thing I have been taught here is that I am responsible for every action I take, for everything I say and do."

Laëtitia Mduli Grade 11

"(My parents) have noticed that, unlike the children who go to whites-only schools, I can understand the politics and make-up of South Africa much better. I also realise that the African people of our country have many justifiable complaints and that the only way to make this country a better place to live in is to have better interracial relationships."

Helen Takos Grade 11

Some girls found a safe haven at Loreto Skinner Street amidst political turmoil:

"Children in Std 7 (Grade 9) arrived carrying knives and guns and began giving orders to the teacher. There was a feeling that war was going to break out - not between teachers and students but between pupils and students from another school. That is when my parents decided to find another school for me."

Paula Mzimela Grade 11

Mrs Addis remembers her years at Skinner Street with fondness:

"...with a lot of love, support and grace from above, the years at Loreto were very rewarding, and will never be forgotten. Special mention must be made of Sr Shirley who does not seem to know the meaning of the phrase "give up", and was always such a help as well as a firm friend, and Mrs Kathy Wisselo the secretary for whom nothing was too much trouble. Also my colleagues on the staff were very supportive, and especially Mrs Büttner who became the vice principal, Mrs Wright and Mrs Clarke who were the other Heads of Department.

Last but not least, I remember the pupils with great fondness, especially the little ones who carried my bags in the mornings, and watered the plants in my office. As Loreto School is celebrating its 125 years in Pretoria, may I be one of the people to congratulate them on their tremendous achievement and service to education over the years. Mary Ward would indeed have been proud that her vision of education has been lived out to such an extent."

In 1996, Mrs Addis was succeeded by Mrs Renée d'Oliveira who was no stranger to Loreto. She taught French on a part-time basis from 1978 – 1986 and returned in 1992 to teach English part-time. Her duties also included being head of English, editing the school yearbook and co-ordinating the Religious Education in the school. When Mrs Addis retired, Mrs d'Oliveira was encouraged to apply for the position and after much soul searching did so and was appointed. A vision statement drawn up by the staff during the time of Mrs Addis remains the vision statement of Loreto Skinner today: *Leading and Learning in Love and Justice.*

Many changes have taken place including the building of a school hall. Thanks to the drive of Sr Shirley, the fundraising of the PTA, and the support of the Governing Body, plans were drawn up and building started in 1997. The hall was officially opened on 1 June 1998 with a blessing of the hall and unveiling of the plaque by His Grace Archbishop George Daniel. On 5 June, a celebratory mass was held in the morning, followed by two concerts in the afternoon and evening in which the whole school took part! At last there was space for the whole school at assemblies, concerts, prizegivings and parents' evenings. Over time, curtains, a sound system, lighting and a large screen have been added.

Also in 1997, a new Bridging classroom was built for the Pre-school, but eventually, due to lack of numbers, was converted into a Day Care Centre in 2001. Other "touch-

ups" to the school include: re-roofing of the southern buildings, re-surfacing the sports field and the swimming pool, erecting a borehole, re-wiring the tennis courts, refurbishing the staff kitchenette, staff toilets and offices of the administrative staff, and moving the main entrance back to Skinner Street. The whole security system has been upgraded with an alarm system, closed circuit television and automatic gates.

In 2001, the Loreto sisters relinquished part of the Convent so that four new classrooms could be built. More areas were taken over in 2002 which helped to enlarge the Media Centre and create a conference room, video room, kitchen, laundry and storerooms. Another exciting addition was a modern, air-conditioned Computer Centre with thirty new computers, new programmes and a network system which enables classes from Grade 1 to Grade 11 to attend computer skills lessons every week. Furthermore, Computyping is now also offered as a high school subject.

Thanks to the generosity of a donor, the whole exterior of the school was given a face-lift in 2002 when it was repainted. Attention has also been paid to the facilities of the cleaning staff with extra storage space and lockers for their personal belongings.

Owing to difficulties with uniform stockists, there is now a well-stocked clothing shop with the newly designed school uniform and sports clothes.

Having such a beautiful school hall urged the school to share it with the wider community and a Saturday Morning club was started in August 1998 for destitute and unemployed women in the care of Potters House, as well as street girls who sought shelter at Lerato House. Space was set aside in the gallery of the hall for lessons in basic English, hand crafts and computer literacy. Soon the outreach programme was extended when the children of these women and the girls from Lerato house came to homework sessions in the afternoons. Initially, there was an enthusiastic response from teachers in the school, members of the American Embassy and some Loreto sisters. However, a lack of volunteers to run the programme and a lack of continuity among the participants, led to its finally closing.

Far more successful has been Skinner Street's association with Sizinani Mission near Bronkhorstspuit. "Poor money" is collected from the children on a daily basis and set to the mission for the upkeep of a disabled child named Tshepiso. She was introduced to the whole school after a visit and a group of high school learners give Tshepiso and her friends a birthday party every year in August. Other efforts to help the poor include gifts of

food for refugees in the Cathedral parish hall, clothing and food for Aids babies at Klipgat and the Mohau Centre in Atteridgeville, the yearly collection of money for the Lenten Appeal, gifts before Christmas for the needy, visits to the women and children at Pretoria Central Prison, to the sick at Hospice and the elderly at Nazareth House. These initiatives help to instil in the Loreto learners an appreciation for what they have and an awareness of those less fortunate.

Having four sections of the school ranging from Grade 0 to Grade 12 creates difficulties as all facilities have to be shared. To cope with this situation, all primary school classes have activity lessons like educational games, needlework, entrepreneurship, music ensemble and various sports incorporated into the morning timetable. This leaves the facilities open for the high school extracurricular programme in the afternoons. A variety of clubs and sports are offered: self-defence; First Aid; computer; choir; journalism; debating; drama; yoga and modern dancing. These are offered at no extra cost to the learners. Taking part in a club or sport is compulsory for all learners Grade 8 to Grade 11. Valuable skills are developed and these have helped to give direction to tertiary studies, such as girls who have gone on to study Drama and Journalism at university. Other activities offered by private tutors at an additional fee include: hip-hop dancing; French; violin; brass wind instruments and pottery.

To motivate the learners and create some school spirit, the House system was reintroduced. There are three Houses: St. Gabriel, St. Michael and St. Raphael. Beautifully embroidered banners of the archangels have been hung on a wall of the school hall, together with trophies awarded to the winning House at the end of the year. House points are earned by academic, sporting and cultural club activities.

There is still a prefect body in the primary and high school to help with discipline. In addition, the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), was formed in 1996 to serve as a link between learners and teachers. Each class is represented on this council.

Another attempt to broaden the horizons of the children has been the regular performances of professional theatre groups such as ON CUE, N.E.T.S (National Education Theatre for Schools), AREPP and Edutainment 'R' Us in the school hall. The children learn about the dangers of drugs, physical abuse, HIV/AIDS and they enjoy literary and musical shows. Guest speakers are also invited to share their expertise with the learners. Topics range from the dangers of smoking to the charitable work done by St. Vincent de Paul. To cover the cost of these

productions and speakers, as well as the Yearbook, material for Design and Technology, Art and OBE material, an "Extras Fee" is charged ranging from R250 to R350 per child, per year.

Since the school day was extended to 2pm to accommodate all the learners, it meant that teachers were on duty longer and still had an extra three hours per week for afternoon duties. As a result, salaries were increased from the previous 90% of the GDE salary scale to a full GDE salary. Salaries are now deposited straight into the staffs' bank accounts as the account's office has implemented electronic banking with an up-to date VIP payroll computer programme.

In 1996, there was both a fulltime speech and occupational therapist to help children with learning and behavioural difficulties. It soon became apparent that a fulltime remedial teacher was needed in the Junior Primary. A fully qualified teacher was appointed in 1997. Since then the position has changed from helping the children in only one class, to working with children with learning disabilities in all the primary school classes. The present remedial teacher, or academic support teacher, heads the School-based Support Team. The team meets every week to support and monitor children in every class of the primary school. Parents are kept informed and are encouraged to work in partnership with the teachers.

Very often children who are having academic and behavioural difficulties are having to deal with traumas such as death in the family, divorce, violence, absent parents, frequent school changes or social problems with friends. In an effort to further support the learners, a part-time school psychologist and peer counsellor group have also been appointed. The support groups have been trained by Lifeline. They have started an "anti-bullying" campaign which it is hoped will help develop Loreto as a hurt-free school.

Another attempt at improving the behaviour of our learners is the development of a Behavioural Guidance Programme. This runs on a merit and demerit system which may lead to detention and then a disciplinary hearing, resulting in an in-house suspension, full suspension or even expulsion. This procedure is rigorously followed by the whole staff and has helped to teach the children to be more self-disciplined and responsible. In addition, all staff, learners, and parents have to agree to sign the Code of Conduct which was accepted as school policy in 2001.

Parent involvement is greatly encouraged by inviting our parents to parents' evenings, PTA meetings and Governing

Body meetings. This ensures they are involved in their child's work and in the running of the school.

Our enrolment has increased over the last seven years with 564 learners in the school in 1996 to 598 in 2003. The racial composition of the learners has changed from about 82% African, mainly Setswana learners in 1996, to 94% in 2003. The number of boys in the senior primary has always been low, and as there is a lack of sporting facilities for boys, the Governing Body, with the agreement of the parents and staff, decided in 2002 to close admissions to the senior primary boys. This change will take place over the next few years, after which boys will only be admitted up to Grade 3 from 2006.

Despite the declining number of Catholic learners (only 25%) and staff, the school maintains its Christian ethos based on Catholic tradition. The school day starts with a morning prayer and notices for the day. There are regular Religious Education lessons and Mass once a month. Weekly assemblies are held with each class taking turns to lead with a religious or moral message. Each class from Grade 5 to Grade 12 has a day set aside for a retreat and the staff go on retreat on Ascension Day.

In 1996, there were still two Loreto sisters teaching Religious Education but now the role of the sisters is limited to representation on the Governing Body, assistance with liturgy and pastoral care. Their continued presence, interest and attendance at all significant functions in the school are much valued and appreciated.

Every year a theme is chosen to focus on certain values. For example, in 2000, the theme was Christ, the centre of our lives, as we celebrated the Jubilee year. In 2001, the theme was "Respect for all cultures" and last year "Honesty and Integrity" in line with the call to strengthen the moral fibre of our nation. This year, our 125th as a school, we are focussing on the qualities that have kept us going all these years: "Loyalty, Commitment and Community".

When Hélene Addis was appointed co-ordinator of Catholic schools in the Pretoria Diocese in 1996, she started a Principals' Forum for the principals of Pretoria Catholic schools. There are meetings once a month to discuss matters of common interest. A number of inter-Catholic schools events are organised: Grade 7 Day, Prefects' Day, Public Speaking competitions, Bible celebration, and music festivals. This idea is now being applied on a wider level among the three Loreto schools in South Africa: Skinner Street, Queenswood and Strand. One of these principals' meetings led to the realisation

of the importance of staff development. We have now made provision in our budget for staff members to attend courses, workshops or seminars according to our Skills Development Programme. These include: computer skills, self-enrichment (run by Lifeline), self-defence, fire-fighting, labour law, whole school development, learning difficulties and others. In addition, time is set aside for Colloquia which are usually led by a team of our own teachers. The Colloquium is a process by which the school staff meets in order to discuss the meaning of their calling as Christian educators in the light of their own spiritual development. At the Colloquium there is a deeper spiritual dimension in the sharing that would not normally take place at the Staff meeting. It was at these meetings that Skinner Street vision statement came into being – Leading and Learning in Love and Justice.

In 1997, the Gauteng Department of Education introduced a National Outcomes-based Education system, with a new National learning framework, Curriculum 2005. Our teachers have attended many workshops and training sessions and have gradually implemented some of the changes to improve teaching and learning at the school. The greatest challenge has been the new continuous assessment and methods of reporting which are still being developed. Further changes lie ahead when the New Revised Curriculum comes into effect in 2006.

At the same time of these changes in Educational policy,

Loreto Skinner Street has had to set goals for the future. In July 2001, the whole community of Loreto sisters, learners, parents, staff and Governing Body were involved in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to set goals in terms of the school's vision of Leading and Learning in Love and Justice, for the next three to five years. The key aspects that needed attention were: classroom space, computer technology, curriculum change in line with National Education, a new uniform policy, admission policy, code of conduct and implementation of the Employment Equity Act. All these goals have been met. It is now time to have a new needs analysis in order to set other goals for the future. This can only be done together, as the whole school community needs to give expression to its dreams and vision.

Renée d'Oliveira, who has guided the school through all these exciting developments, has this to say:

Having looked back at the past seven and a half years, I can only thank God for the great privilege and honour of being able to serve Him and His people as principal of this wonderful school. My main desire has always been to help build a vibrant, innovative and caring community where all may learn and grow into the full human beings God has meant them to be. What we have achieved over the years has been made possible by the dedication, loyal support and commitment of the whole Loreto community. Glory be to God!

CHAPTER 2: QUEENSWOOD

“Working in God’s presence and to His greater glory”



In 1976, Loreto Hillcrest was closed as the property was sold to the University of Pretoria as they needed the property for their own expansion. The school was transferred to Queenswood with all the Catholic tradition built up over the past fifty years. In 1981, the Provincial, Sr Therese Wightman and the Superior, Sr Emer invited John McKay, Terry Mc Donogh and George Deeb to form the finance committee along with the two principals, Sr Marian and Sr Elizabeth. This committee functioned effectively until 1986 when it was enlarged, in 1988, to form the Board of Governors including the Provincial, Sr Deirdre, Sr Therese, George Deeb, John McKay (Chairman), Terry McDonogh, Reg Edwards, Ian Melass and later additions, Pat van der Valk, Irene Ntuli, Joan Frielick and Jeremy Nurse.

In 1985 Loreto Queenswood was chosen by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to take part in the Computer Literacy Research Project, along with 24 other schools. IBM sponsored the project by donating computers to the schools for the duration of the project. Queenswood received six computers and a printer. In December 1985, the training of teachers started under the guidance of Mr Rodda from the HSRC. By the following year there were six computer classes in the school and Sr Marian even arranged evening classes for the parents.

In 1986 the school principal, Sr Marian, aided by Sr Elizabeth in the Primary School and Mrs Blackadder in the Pre-School, addressed the issue of a government subsidy for the school in order to continue to provide a quality service. Not only that, but Sr Marian also began negotiating with the Department of Education regarding the integration of schooling. All the time, she emphasised the values of Mary Ward that needed to be fostered among the children:

Now if we wish to guarantee our authenticity and freedom to educate young people in a way that encourages them to think for themselves and to question sincerely, we will have to examine carefully the implications of accepting a subsidy. We promote academic excellence, we realise the importance of academic achievement in our world today but we must never lose sight of the need to help pupils accept responsibility for their own destiny. We must promote development in all aspects, human and spiritual. We see occasions like annual retreat days, Leadership days, First Friday school Masses, Youth Encounter Spirit (YES) weekends and other youth camps as a vital part of the pupils’ human and spiritual formation.

Again the education and formation of the whole human

being was the focus of Loreto education. In 1988, these ideals would have to be continued by members of the laity as the number of sisters declined. The Board of Governors appointed Queenswood's first lay principal, Miss Marlene Jardine, who took up office in January 1989 and resigned a few months later. Mrs Louise Wilson was then appointed in the third term of 1989. Mrs Wilson acknowledged the vital role the sisters played in the school and the need to move with the times:

We hope that the reader of this magazine will be able to discern the qualities that we try to educe – a realisation of truth, a spirit of love and a thirst for knowledge... (the words) will, we hope, disclose a faith. The soul of this faith is epitomised by the Loreto sisters whose vision and progressive thought have made this school what it is today. Above all I hope the reader will find a glimpse of the new South Africa perhaps revealing hope, hope supported by patriotism and unity, for our school is building the new South Africa. Loreto Queenswood Yearbook, 1989.

Other qualities Mrs Wilson wished to be taught to the learners were the ability to live in harmony with their fellow humans, self-control and respect for others. These qualities were put into practice when the learners provided help to Winterveld with food and stationery.

Throughout her time as Principal of Queenswood, Mrs Wilson valued not only the input of the sisters but of the parents or "primary educators of all children" whose co-operation and interest helped to make the school run smoothly.

The year 1993 was one of many radical changes for Queenswood. In June 1993, the Board decided that for financial and moral reasons, the High School with its small classes (pupil-teacher ratio of 6:1) would have to be closed. Mrs Elaine Twyford took over leadership of the school in July and had to break the news to the staff which was received "with shock and tears followed by anger and in some cases real anxiety about the future". For years Loreto Queenswood and Christian Brothers College (CBC) had held discussions over possible amalgamation of the two schools but due to a variety of reasons nothing came of this. Meetings were again held with CBC and they agreed to become co-educational in

1994 and would welcome the Loreto girls to their High School. With the encouragement of the Head of Department for the High School, Mrs Dawn Haynes, who herself transferred to CBC, the response was positive as about 90% of the girls moved to CBC. Five of the teachers were transferred to CBC, some reluctantly sacrificing their long leave. A number of other teachers found posts at other schools.



Mrs Louise Wilson
Principal
Loreto Queenswood
1989 - 1993

It was not an easy time for Mrs Twyford who, while sorting out the closure of the High School, was dealing with employment practices for the first time. She described it as "baptism by fire" but appreciated the help of Reg Edwards and Provincial Sr Deirdre Harman. Two events marked the end of a momentous year for Queenswood. The final prizegiving and Valedictory service which marked the close of the year, not only for the Matrics but the whole High School. The impressive and moving ceremony was attended by His Grace, Archbishop Daniel and Dr Ken Paine, Executive Director of the Transvaal Department of Education. The second event was a formal dinner give to say goodbye to 16 staff members. It was attended by all Board members and Loreto sisters headed by Sr Deirdre. It was a sad but gracious occasion.



Mrs Elaine Twyford
Principal
Loreto Queenswood
1994-2001

With the closure of the high school all focus fell on the Primary School and new pupils had to be sought for the primary and pre-primary areas. Fortunately for Queenswood, parents from the townships were seeking a more stable environment for their childrens' education and more classes were established in the available classrooms. Another change was made as boys were permitted to stay on at the school after Grade 3 and the school became co-educational. So great was the demand, that by 1997, new classrooms were needed!

In 1994, the sisters moved out of the convent building to Skinner Street and it was let to Louis Botha Children's Home for a time. The rest of the building was used for meetings, after-care facilities and storage space. In 1998, Sheila Nation, an "educational architect" came to advise Queenswood how and where to build classrooms and some radical ideas emerged after a meeting with the Board, Loreto sisters, parents and members of staff. It was decided that the convent would become the administrative centre and library and the existing

administration and library would become classrooms. To make this happen the existing main staircase in the school building had to be removed and a new driveway and parking area constructed to provide access to the administrative block. The plans were approved and funds made available from the Special Education Fund. In December 1998, the builders moved in. This was far from pleasant for the teachers and pupils as

(they) cowered behind closed doors while jackhammers demolished the main staircase three storeys high, and took cover as dynamite removed part of the mountainside. Noise and dust became part of the daily routine and more and more of our precious garden disappeared under the onslaught of earthmoving equipment.

What was supposed to take five months became twelve and finally, on 18 November 1999 peace was restored. The children, dressed immaculately and behaving like angels, were impressed with their “new” school. The gardens were replanted and the new administrative block named the “Mary Ward Centre”. The event was celebrated by a service for the children in the school hall and an Evening Mass in the school Chapel led by Archbishop George Daniel. On the day of dedication this promise was made:

We promise that we will use these wonderful new facilities for His Glory and that we will continue to add bricks of value throughout the coming years to make this school always a place where God lives among us.

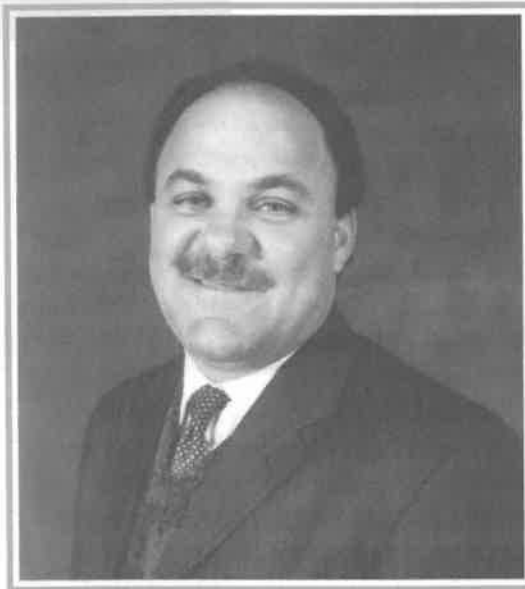
After this exciting phase a novelty came to Loreto Queenswood. In 2001, the first male principal of the school was appointed. Mr Marcello Pollazzi’s knowledge of the Loreto Order and the school itself when he started was non-existent. His first contact with Loreto was through the Provincial Superior, Sr Marian Moriarty. From their first conversation, Mr Pollazzi was made to feel part of the family. Sr Marian’s inner peace and quiet diplomacy made him realise that Loreto and all their schools, were very special places. This was confirmed

when he met the staff, learners and parents of Loreto School Queenswood.

Being the first male Loreto principal in South Africa, in no way altered his management of the school and he felt honoured:

When I look back I am indeed honoured to have made history by being the first male Loreto principal in South Africa. I am privileged to work with the Loreto sisters, to head such a professional and dedicated staff and to be able to work in God’s presence and to His greater glory.

Slowly, as 2002 unfolded, Mary Ward’s charism began to reveal itself to him within the school. Although pictures of Mary Ward are found throughout the school, it was the Mary Ward charism that shone through every staff member and learner that made the school so special. The opening prayers, masses, outreach programmes, attitudes, the school’s vision and the love and care of all, are part of the Loreto way of life. Mr Pollazzi was lucky enough to be asked to go to Kolkata in November 2002 to meet with other Loreto schools around the world. He tells of his experiences:



Mr Marcello Pollazzi
Principal Loreto Queenswood - 2001

My trip to India in November 2002 consolidated the specialness of Loreto Schools worldwide. I was in Kolkata with 23 strangers and yet was at home and discovered that Mary Ward’s charism existed beyond Loreto Queenswood.

Perhaps what I have brought to the Loreto family is an outside perspective as to how special Loreto and Mary Ward’s charism is. Quite often in life we take things for granted and lose sight of its value.

In conclusion, when I left my previous school (where I was principal for 9 years), a colleague said to me that ‘a school is a school no matter where you are.’ This statement has over the past year proved incorrect. Loreto is much more than a school, it is a family, a home away from home.

CHAPTER 3: STRAND

“Nurturing Christian and family values”



Loreto School Strand in the Cape has been, in its almost eighty years of existence, a struggling school. But despite the struggles and hardships it has managed to remain positive and forward-looking.

Sr Marie Brady spent six years at Strand from January 1976 to 1982. Her overall memory of those years was that they were an exciting time... a time of transition, a time of change and a time of struggle. A lot of this had to do with the fact that Loreto Strand was becoming an integrated school. In the midst of the struggle and difficulties of this process there were many rays of hope that kept breaking through the darkness. Sr Marie Brady explains her feeling of joy:

One day I was carrying on a conversation with a mother and her ten year old son. The mother was expressing concern about the number of coloured children that had been admitted to the school and she told me that if a coloured person came to work in her office she would resign. Her son's immediate response was, 'But why, Mom, they are exactly the same as we are.' Here was a boy of the next generation educating his mother. This gave me hope for the future.

The second incident occurred during break time as I watched two young girls – one white and the

other coloured – sharing an ice-cream cone. One took a lick and handed it to the other who licked it and returned it to her friend. This continued until the cone was finished. This gave me a glimpse of a future South Africa where all would be free and equal and ready to share with one another.

During these years Sr Marie learned to fully appreciate the apostolate of conversation:

This lesson was taught to me by Sr Helena Guerin R.I.P. As many of you remember, Sr Helena had a thyroid operation which left her with a very soft voice, if there was any noise in the background it was difficult to hear her. She had the task of collecting the fees from parents. When a parent came, she always invited them into her office where, as well as taking in the fees she offered them a sympathetic ear and listened with love and concern to the stories of each one. When going downtown she often said to me, 'I am going out to carry on my apostolate of conversation' and as she walked down the street she stopped to greet people who were working in their garden or anyone she met on the way. When she died suddenly of a stroke I shall never forget the multitude of cards, letters and messages that poured into the convent from people expressing their appreciation for all that she had done for them.

Unfortunately, Strand has been one of the Loreto schools beset with financial problems. In 1972, the school had to close its boarding department and, in 1974, Canon T. Verryn predicted that Strand “(was) the institution which could best be spared” and a few years later, in 1976, the high school was also closed.

1976 was an important year for Strand as the sisters recognised that South Africa was moving on the road of evolutionary change and they decided to transform their establishment into an “open school”. This decision was followed by some exciting times.

Sr Immacula Bolger reports: Educational tours and camps were organised for the pupils on a regular basis. In 1986, the Standard Fives flew to Johannesburg, stayed a few nights at Loreto Skinner Street, visited the Kruger National Park, Gold Reef City, the Mint, the Zoo and other places of interest. Two years later, a similar trip was organised for the Standard Fours and Fives. If there was one snake in the veld the boys found it! Very few mishaps arose and even the measles that one child got only appeared the day after their return. These trips proved to be very valuable experiences, in many ways, especially for those who managed to draw from the knowledge the children had gleaned in each subject for the rest of the year! Arts and crafts were undertaken with great enthusiasm between 1984 and 1988. In 1985, the school won the cup in the Junior section of the Goodwood Show and obtained 47 prizes of the 51 entries submitted. So, even though those were difficult years due to fewness of numbers and Departmental restrictions with regard to admission of other racial groups, a very good spirit prevailed among the pupils and teachers.

Sadly, in 1987, Strand had to review its position once again due to financial constraints and the lack of staff to teach and administer the school. A decision was reached at a Province Meeting of the Sisters that the school should

be closed. However, the sisters had not reckoned with the determination and strong sentiments of the parents and staff who begged and bargained for the school’s retention. A Continuation Committee consisting of parents and teachers was put in place and after a year of “storming heaven” and hard work the sisters entrusted the continuation of Loreto Primary School to a Board of Governors in 1989. The first lay principal of Strand was appointed in January 1989, in the form of Miss Athena Athanasiades. We are grateful to Miss Athanasiades for her dedication and hard work in the short time she was principal. She was succeeded, in 1991, by acting principal Mrs Anne Krause, a past learner and teacher at Loreto Strand who became Principal in April 1993.



Sr Immacula Bolger

True to the tradition of the Loreto sisters, the school is conducted in a Catholic Christian atmosphere where religion is a way of life. Religious education is compulsory for all learners. Learners are encouraged to share themselves, to grow in the ability to love others and in the desire to build a better world. They are equipped to deal with many potentially misleading pressures like materialism, violence and pressures that lead to promiscuity and drug addiction.



*Miss Athanasiadis
Headmistress*

In 1996, Strand aligned themselves with new developments in education by introducing the Integrated Thematic Approach (ITA). Like Outcomes-based Education (OBE) it focuses on skills, concepts and attitudes rather than content in the teaching-learning situation. Skills like investigation, research, recording, reasoning and questioning were fostered. Moving onto OBE was thus an effortless task when it was introduced by the Western Cape Education Department though educators still attended workshops

and training sessions offered by the Department.

Strand is able to give its learners individual attention and this helps to create a positive attitude to their school work

and helps the children to improve their self-respect and respect for others irrespective of ability and performance. Sport is also encouraged to build up self-discipline, sportsmanship and camaraderie. Learners are encouraged to be aware of those less fortunate and take part in a soup kitchen for the needy and arrange a jersey collection for the winter months.

Close contact is maintained with the parents of the school in order to advise or discuss the progress of their children. As Mrs Krause puts it, "We believe very sincerely that parent and educator complement one another as the home-based and school-based members of the same training team". All members of the school, learners, staff and parents are committed to helping those less fortunate.

Over the last 12 years, the number of learners at Strand have doubled. The school now has 247 learners and there is a steady growth rate. In January 1994 their Reception class was reopened and in January 1999, due to the needs of the local community, a Pre-School was opened for 4 – 5 year olds.

Once again in 2000, Strand's financial position caused concern. In May 2001, Sr Marian Moriarty, Provincial of the Loreto sisters, began negotiations with the Western Cape Education Department in order to change the status

of the school – a Public School on Private Property. Under the guidance of their new Bursar in 2001 Strand's financial situation showed vast improvement. A good relationship with the Western Cape Education Department has also been an advantage. Under the guidance of Mrs Brian O'Connell, past parent and retired

Director General of Education in the Western Cape, combined with never accepting "No" as an answer, the school will become a Public School on Private Property in the near future, only one signature is outstanding. This will put Strand alongside many other similarly struggling Catholic schools in the country.

To the present principal, Mrs Anne Krause, great credit and gratitude are due for her patience and perseverance in this last process of negotiations. Mrs Krause has been at the school for over 50 years, first as pupil, then teacher and finally principal. Her loyalty and passion for all things Loreto are outstanding. As the



*Mrs Anne Krause
Principal of Strand*

lady herself puts it:

Over the last 77 years, the Loreto Strand family has had to fight many battles, we weathered numerous storms, but in true Mary Ward spirit we have emerged victorious and we look forward to a bright future as we continue with dedication and devotion to offer quality education for all.

CHAPTER 4: THE MARY WARD PILGRIMAGE 1985:

The Fourth Centenary of Mary Ward's birth

In 1985, to celebrate the Fourth Centenary of the birth of Mary Ward, celebrations involving the whole Institute were held in Rome where the Loreto Generalate had been established. Groups of Loreto learners throughout the Institute converged on Rome. The group from South Africa consisted of learners past and present from Skinner Street, Queenswood, Strand, Atteridgeville and the St Louis Primary School in Langa. They were accompanied by Sr Margaret Mary O'Brien and Sr Joan McLoughlin. The South African party flew straight to Madrid, Spain. There they were met by the Spanish Provincial Superior and Sr Irene Reynolds (on holiday from Peru) who had spent several years in South Africa. The party boarded the waiting bus and Sr Irene acted as tour guide. At supper that night in the hotel they were entertained by Spanish dancers.

Next morning they flew to Rome. The Hotel Manager gave them a meeting room and the pupils were divided into four groups with the sisters in charge of the junior pupils and the past pupils in charge of the seniors. These groups were maintained for the whole tour and made sightseeing safe and easy to manage.

The highlight of the tour, of course, was the holy Mass in the Basilica of St Peter followed by an audience with the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, in the Audience Hall. A senior pupil from Holy Trinity was asked to present the gift to the Holy Father on behalf of all the schools present. He mounted the steps to the platform and presented the gift. He was in turn presented with a Rosary by the Pope. Among the places visited were the famous Basilica of St John Lateran and St Paul outside

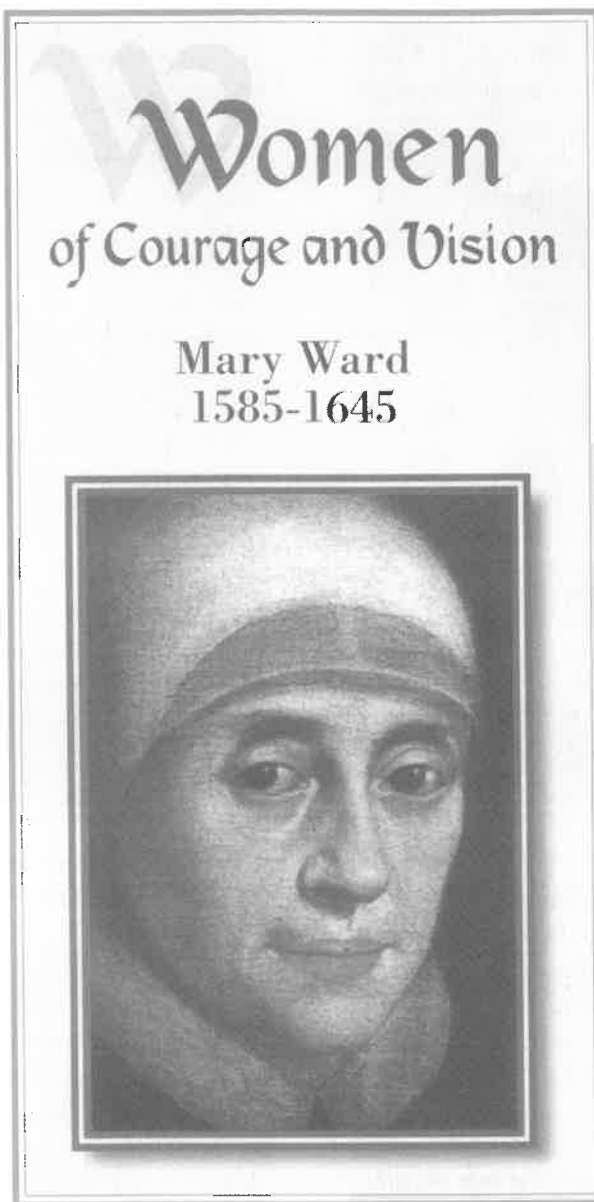
the wall, the Coliseum and the Loreto Generalate. There were many other stops along the way which included Florence, Nice, Paris and Calais. London was the next port of call and lots of sightseeing was achieved. In York, they visited the Bar Convent, York Minster and the room where Margaret Clitherow, the famous martyr, had lived.

A ferry then carried them to Ireland where they were met by Loreto Sisters. The sisters took the pupils to visit Rathfarmham Abbey where they were entertained by novices.

One of the "past pupils" on the tour was Anne Krause now principal of Strand. She remembers the tour with fondness:

Loreto has played a vital role in my life for the past 54 years. There have been numerous highlights but one of the greatest was when I was afforded the opportunity to be part of the delegation of 25 to represent Loreto SA at one of the greatest milestones in the history of our foundress Mary Ward – the celebration in Rome to mark the 400th anniversary of her birth.

We took on the responsibility of looking after the senior pupils. The highlight of our evening excursions was a trip down the River Rhine under the watchful eye of our caring, very protective coach driver. Every evening we set out to explore our surroundings and from all reports the girls were very relieved that they did not have to go to bed at the same time as the "babies" in our delegation. There were numerous hilarious incidents and many giggling sessions over coffee at the end of these long, but exciting days.



We visited York and I will never forget the painting of Sister Francis Beddingfield's great, great aunt – the family resemblance was quite striking! York Minster, inside the ancient walls of the city is probably one of the most awe-inspiring of all English cathedrals and, like the rest of the city, positively oozes history.

My schoolgirl dream of visiting Rathfarmham Abbey was also realised. That first walk through those magnificent wrought iron gates down the imposing driveway up to the massive front door will remain in my memories always.

The learners' experiences are best told by them. Adrienne Langley, a pupil at Loreto Queenswood at the time, recalls her experiences:



Adrienne Langley

28 September 1985 saw 25 learners, teachers and past pupils of Loreto/IBVM schools around the country taking to the skies for Spain en-route to the Mary Ward 400th Centenary celebrations in Rome and the trip of a lifetime!

Seventeen girls, two boys (ranging from Grades 7-11) and six adults, including Sr Joan McLoughlin and Sr Margaret Mary O'Brien, made up the South African contingent. Five thousand learners from Mary Ward schools around the world converged on the Vatican for a five day seminar on our foun-dress.

For most of the group, this was our first trip outside South Africa. We immersed ourselves in the different cultural delights. Italy, with its magnificent works of art and architecture enthralled us. We also enjoyed the cuisine, the strong coffee and especially the gelati!

The atmosphere at the seminar was one of

excitement and awe. It was a truly amazing thing to see so many culturally diverse young people who shared the Mary Ward charism. Although everyone spoke different languages, making communication difficult, there was an overwhelming sense of unity and community. Much of the seminar was in German and Italian and often the content went over our heads, but we were unified in the singing of hymns and the mass celebrations.

The crowning event was a Mass at St Peter's Basilica celebrated by Pope John Paul II. We were also granted a private audience with his Holiness, during which I was fortunate enough to be able to shake hands and have a brief conversation with him.

After the seminar, we toured France, England and Ireland, visiting famous landmarks, Mary Ward schools as well as her birthplace. We were welcomed everywhere we went with open arms and warm hearts. We met so many wonderful people and experienced so many new things. We also came to realise how dedicated Mary Ward had been because, while we travelled by luxury coach, Mary Ward had walked these roads on foot to spread the values of Truth, Justice, Serenity, Joy and Freedom.

I grew so much as a person on this tour. I formed lifelong friendships, broadened my horizons and learned so much about life in different places. I still draw on those experiences today, but what I value most about the trip is the sense of belonging I felt and the appreciation I gained for 400 years of tradition that I was part of as a Loreto pupil.

Another pupil from Skinner Street, Lindy Reynolds (née Loretan) remembers:

To celebrate Mass with 7 000 other children, all from different countries and speaking different languages but with one common identity, belonging to Loreto, was a very moving experience. One woman, Mary Ward, with God's help was able to unite people and leave a lasting impression on our lives.

The tour was truly a remarkable journey and gave a glimpse of the diversity, strength and loyalty the Loreto family shares across the world. Loreto has a tradition to be proud of and, although times change, tradition as firmly grounded as Loreto's will be undying.

CHAPTER 5: CLOSING AND OPENING

"In Search of New Pastures"

In reviewing the years 1978 – 2003 one needs to bear in mind what was happening to the sisters of the South African Province. During this time, besides the age advancement, there were also gaps left by death and withdrawals from Religious Life. After the General Congregation of 1998 the possibility of sisters returning to Ireland reduced the number in the Province to only 25.

Loreto Sisters in South Africa in January 1978



Front row (Left to Right): Thomasina Donegan, Marie Eustelle Conroy, Imelda O'Brien, Patrick Rossiter, Eucharia O'Dempsey, Agnes Walsh (Mother General), Lurach Walsh (Mother Provincial), John Baptist Mee, Padua Norris, Fergus McWalter, John Ryan.

2nd row: Ita Kavanagh, de Lourdes Collings, Sixtus McNulty, Joseph Frawley, Marie Thérèse Funge, Bernadette Wilczkiewicz, Eugene Collings, Martin Byrne, Shirley Kay (Superior, Glen Cowie), Marie Brady (Superior, Strand), Ursula Traynor, Josephine Traynor, Rosina Coghlan.

3rd row: Patricia O'Keeffe, Angela Hehir, Consiglio Ryan, Rosaleen Compbell, Cecilia Mullan, Scholastica Mongey, Barbara Doyle, Agnes Campbell, Oliver O'Mahony, Margaret Heffernan, Teresita Tully, Maria Gallagher, Monica Shanley, John McLoughlin.

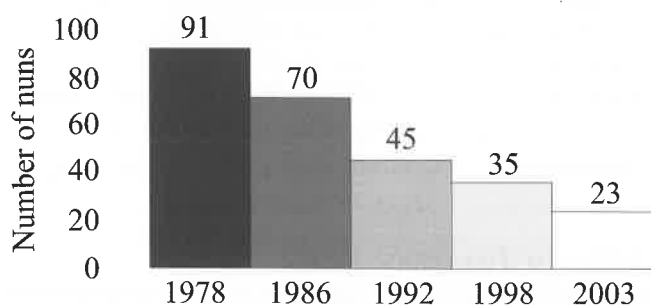
4th row: Jacinta Bannon (Superior, Skinner Street), Celestine Ryan (Mistress of Novices), Immacula Bolger, Deirdre Mellett, Declan Walsh, Lelia Geoghan, Mary Hayes, Dorothy Butler, Margaret Mulvey, Lucy Ryan, Joseph Veronica O'Nolan, Joseph Anne Hart, Assumpta Spencer.

5th row: Kathleen Burns, Anne Farrell, Cletus Toolan, Clement Kelly, Fergus O'Farrell, Clare Funge, Gerard McGee, Anne Hulme (Superior, Sea Point), Francis Bedingveld (Superior, Queenswood), Xavier Smith, Irene Reynolds, Marguerite Cantwell.

Back row: Columbanus Kerrigan, Deirdre Harman, Peter Prest, Ultan Gillespie, Margaret Mary O'Brien, Kevin Coghlan, Peter Claver Shanahan, Celine McNally, Elizabeth Redmond.

A simple graph illustrates this decline:

Decrease in number of nuns from 1978 to 2003



The dramatic decline was due to the following factors during the past twenty-five years:

- 49 sisters died
- 9 sisters left Religious Life to pursue other careers
- 15 sisters returned to their respective provinces, 3 of whom subsequently died.

During this time only one novice entered and stayed. This presents a rather bleak picture to say the least. But Loreto has been determined not to close down and disappear.

The dwindling number of personnel simply forced the sisters to adjust the running of the Province especially as regards the school apostolate. A new trend developed in the Institute as a whole to establish small communities and withdraw from the large ones. In 1978, there were five communities namely: Skinner Street, Queenswood, Glen Cowie, Strand and Sea Point. The smallest of these was Glen Cowie with 10 members and the largest Skinner Street with 30 members. These communities included personnel to run all aspects of the schools like administration, teaching and domestic services needed in the boarding departments. However, these sisters were not left to work alone as dedicated and faithful members of the laity helped at every level. They worked for salaries that were below those offered by the Government. Sister Shirley indicates her appreciation, "We salute them for helping to keep Loreto's flag flying. May the Lord reward them."

Despite this help, Loreto had to face a number of closures accompanied by struggles, heartache and pain. At the end of 1982, Sea Point was closed. The main reason for this was the decreasing number of learners due to a demographic shift of the population in the area. More elderly people were settling in the area to retire and people with young families were moving elsewhere.

In 1983, Skinner Street closed its boarding department which had functioned for 105 years. The reason was again a drop in numbers of both boarders and sisters and the fact that the building no longer had adequate facilities to function properly. However, things were looking up when, in the same year, two small communities opened in the Province:

- 159 Luttig Street in Pretoria West was bought by Sr Therese Wightman (the Provincial) and became the Provincial House of the Province
- Kromboom Road in Rondebosch was rented from the Catholic Welfare Department in Cape Town. A community of four was formed. Two of the four members of the community worked in Langa at the adult education centre and one as principal of St Louis Primary School in Langa. The fourth member worked in the Archdiocesan Catechetical Department in Cape Town. This was the first move into small communities.

In 1987, a house was bought in Plumstead, Cape Town from the Notre Dame sisters. The sisters running the St Francis Adult Centre in Langa lived there. This year also saw the resolution to appoint lay principals in all the Loreto schools and a programme set in motion to retrain the Loreto sisters. This will be covered in the next chapter.

Glen Cowie became the next focus of attention. Sadly, because of dwindling numbers of sisters and their getting on in years, it was decided to withdraw the sisters from Glen Cowie in July 1991. The school was able to continue under lay management while St Rita's Hospital had already been handed over to the government.

As Sr Marian and others (Sr Eileen and Sr Linda) moved away from Glen Cowie and involvement in formal school ministry, they moved on to a black township near Witbank called Kwa-guqa in 1992. As Sr Marian relates, there were some critical moments in those years:

The time around Chris Hani's tragic death and burial stand out in our memory because the three of us in Kwa-guqa had some frightening experiences at that time. However, we knew we had the support of the local people among whom we lived and worked. It was a privilege to be there in the historic year, 1994, when we were involved in the preparation for the actual elections. The sense of being "free at last" was tangible in those days and people were full of hope.

Among Sr Marian's "frightening experiences" was an attack by youths of the Vosman's squatter camp.

Sr Marian was on her way to visit a family in the area when a petrol bomb was thrown into her car. Sr Marian was dragged from the vehicle and the youths demanded money from her. Petrol was poured onto her, but she was rescued by a Vosman resident, Josephine Mahlangu, who pulled her into her home. Sr Marian's vehicle was found later, totally burnt out.

Chris Hani's untimely death unleashed anger and a desire for revenge which had its impact on the sisters in Kwa-guqa on 10 April 1993. Sr Marian tells the story:

The Easter Vigil was celebrated at 8 am at the Parish Centre. The three of us got home before 1 pm. Linda and I watched the news on TV, and Eileen decided to go to bed. Nelson Mandela was interviewed about the tragic death of Chris Hani. Linda and I retired around midnight. Linda was sitting on her bed reading when suddenly a man with a gun was at her window asking for money and threatening to shoot. I remember waking to a scream and realised that something was happening on Linda's side of the house. I heard voices and asked Linda what was wrong. Linda told me not to come in as the intruders had a gun and were looking for money. I woke Eileen and took the common purse from a cupboard in the passage. A shot rang out. I went to Linda's door and threw the purse towards the window. This distracted the two robbers and Linda ran out, obviously very shocked, and all three of us huddled in confusion in the corridor. We locked all bedroom doors, Eileen put on a deep voice and banged on doors. We had no telephone but shouted for our neighbours, Bongsi and Richard. There were no other houses near us at the time. We got no response. Then we found a corner of the living room and Eileen began the Rosary, invoking also Mary Ward and all those who had gone before us. We were about half way through the Rosary when Linda said, "They're in the house. I can hear them." We knew we needed to get out as they would quickly break down the doors. We quietly went out the front door, locking it behind us. They had left nobody on watch outside so we went onto the road and ran towards the Church Centre. We heard voices and realised that a house nearby had a tent Church-Gathering for a Vigil that night. We went in and asked for help. Solly, who lived near the Church Centre, agreed to take out his bakkie, and took Eileen and me to Lynville Police Station. Linda stayed with the Church group.

At 1 am Eileen and I joined a small queue of "complainants" at the police station. When the police heard our story, they took out two police vans and

set off at speed with Eileen in one and me in the other, each wedged between two policemen. By the time they reached the house the robbers were gone. Other policemen arrived from town. Linda came back and began telling the tale, giving statements etc. Cups of tea were passed round. Eileen had earlier baked lovely goodies for Easter, and many were consumed by the policemen that night! A police officer stayed with us for the night. We managed a fitful rest.

Despite the hardships, the opening of Kwa-guqa gave the sisters a feeling of community. Community was vital for them as they shared the "agony and ecstasy" of their daily rounds in the context of their evening prayer and meal together. Sr Marian remembers her years in Kwa-guqa:

My years in Kwa-guqa were special ones and I began to realise the power of being rather than doing. While we seemed to do a lot too, I believe that our presence there was more important than our deeds. It is not always easy to believe and live this.

The year 1994 marked the bicentenary of the birth of Teresa Ball and each Province was asked to venture into something "new". In response to this, a house was bought by the Institute in the Blue Downs area of Cape Town. This was made possible by a generous legacy left to the sisters by the late Mr James Bateman. From Blue Downs a new Adult Education Centre was developed in Khayelitsha. In the meantime, the Loreto presence in Langa had been withdrawn and handed on to the laity.

In 2001, Plumstead was sold to help finance a new convent for the sisters in Strand. In the same year they moved out of the Strand Convent into the new building which stands in the school grounds.

In the meantime, the community of Skinner Street had been shrinking and the decision was taken to hand over some areas of the convent for use by the school. These included the first floor of the west wing, the administration offices facing Skinner Street and the former Dining Room, kitchen and laundry. These areas have been converted into new classrooms, a meeting room and have helped to enlarge the Media Centre. The Skinner Street community has been reduced to five members (2003).

A number of reasons for the decline in Loreto sisters have been investigated by Sr Eileen Gallagher, but despite the decline, she remains optimistic about vocation ministry in South Africa:



Sr Eileen Gallagher

Over the past 25 years, the number of Loreto sisters in the South African Province have gone down while their average age has gone up! This is a concern for all of us, although we believe that the call comes from God, and we continue to pray earnestly that those He invites will listen and respond generously.

In spite of our diminishment, the ministries of the sisters have expanded considerably, as they try to respond to the needs of the times. Nowadays, you will find Loreto sisters doing their bit in trying to cope with the AIDS pandemic in South Africa, in counselling, giving retreats for care-givers, home-based care, education, and involvement on committees at Deanery and Diocesan level. They are also involved in Prison Ministry, retreat-giving, Spiritual Direction, Prayer Groups, Social work, education and Pastoral Care, Clinical Pastoral Education, Healing and reconciliation workshops, as well as various projects for the homeless and refugees, especially women and children. Those no longer able to take part in an active apostolate give very essential prayer support.

How has the life of the Loreto sister changed over the years? In the past, those preparing for the Religious Life (Novices and Postulants) lived in one place, under the guidance of a Mistress of Novices. Their days were filled with Spiritual duties, household chores, recreation and handwork. The person entering now would have a programme suited to herself and her needs, and could be based in any community with someone to act as "companion". A variety of ministries and duties would be assigned to her as well as some studies from the Loreto charism, theology, spirituality etc. There is great freedom with regard to dress. Retreats in the past were mainly preached by priests, but now there is a choice of different types of retreats, many directed by women.

We often wonder why there are so few vocations at the moment in South Africa. Could the reason be rooted in our past? The values of materialism, instant gratification and the stereotype external image projected in the media, affect the youth and inspire unrealistic expectations. Greater possibilities of travel and careers have opened up as the world becomes a global village. The pressures on people, including migrant labour have had their effect on families which are the building blocks of the nation and for the development of sound moral values.

People often ask, "What is required for me to become a Loreto sister?" We would be looking out for normal, well-balanced and generous young women, mostly between 18 and 35 years of age, although some join when they are older. As the life is demanding, the person needs to be healthy in body and mind and would also need a certain level of maturity. Mary Ward said that this life is not for half women! We would also be looking for a great desire to follow Jesus, a spirit of prayer, generosity and the ability of service, especially to the poor. The person would also need to be able to live in community and to relate to others easily.

In some of our other provinces, especially Eastern Africa, India and Mauritius, many young women have joined Loreto. We hope that, before too long, a number of local women will come forward and join Mary Ward's family to continue her spirit in South Africa and to prove in this country that "Women in time will come to do much". Does our country not need great things at present? There are some very positive signs as a number of young women have shown a definite interest and stay in constant contact. Pray the Lord of the Harvest to send labourers – the fields are ripe for harvest.

Sr Marian also has hope for the future of IBVM in South Africa:

In recent years, visitors to our province have often noted a sense of life in us that we did not always recognise ourselves. For me that aliveness was evident even in the 1980s. I believe that we were and still are alive to needs, alive to the necessity for change and adaptation, and alive to new calls...Pat Hanvey's profession in 1999 was a joy and sign of hope for us. We also welcomed two groups of Tertiaries among us and several young IBVMs who came from Mauritius and Kenya to spend time in the province as part of their formation or to do the CPE Programme. Our links with IBMV

Zimbabwe and DIHM were strengthened through Hildegardis and Monica's presence in the Skinner Street Community. Delegates visited us en-route to the General Congregation 1998 in Mauritius and a Provincial's meeting in Nairobi in 2001. South Africa is certainly on the map in a new way.

It was these visitors who commented on our life and openness. Few though we are, we are very alive and open – open to new calls and challenges as shown in the development of a variety of

ministries in recent years, in the movement of some of our retired sisters (Sr Assumpta, Sr Clement and Sr Oliver) into shared facilities with other religious, adapting our living arrangements to suit current needs, in our readiness to welcome new members, and in the energy with which we respond to the ongoing "paper challenge" from the Central Directory Commission, Casa Loreto or wherever! We have our questions about the future – but if we had no questions how alive would we be?

Sisters at the Province Meeting in December 2002



Front row (Left to Right): Linda Prest, Monica Shanley, (Provincial) Bernadette Wilczkiewicz, Pat Hanvey, Elizabeth Donnan, Marie Brady, Maire Sinnott

2nd row: Ursula Traynor, Columbanus Kerrigan, Assumpta Spencer, Shirley Kay, Rosaleen Campbell, Clement Kelly, Deirdre Harman

3rd row: Eileen Gallagher, Joan Blunden, Jacinta Bannon, Thérèse Wightman, Anne Hulme, Marie-Thérèse Funge, Deirdre Mellett, Immacula Bolger, Oliver O'Mahony, Eileen Cullen. (Overseas: Emer McNally, Marian Moriarty, Margo Mulvey)

(Since this photograph was taken the following have re-located to other provinces: Anne Hulme, Deirdre Mellett & Eileen Cullen)

CHAPTER 6: WHAT ARE THE LORETO SISTERS DOING NOW?

"The old order changeth yielding place to the new and God fulfils himself in many ways" – Tennyson

There have been far-reaching changes in the way of life and dress of the Loreto sisters over the past twenty-five years. As a result of the guidelines given to religious congregations by Vatican II that there be "a continuous return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration behind a given community and an adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times", the Loreto sisters were asked to go back to their roots and therefore also to the wishes of their foundress, Mary Ward. In so doing, it was clear to them that Mary Ward's conflict with the Church arose out of the fact that she wanted her sisters to be able to work among the people without religious enclosure. To fit in with their communities, Mary Ward wanted the dress of the day to be worn rather than a habit, "The style of dress should, for the most part, be conformed to that generally worn by virtuous ladies in those countries or provinces where ours happen to live or reside." [Rario Instituti (Chambers)]. Mary Ward also wanted her religious to govern themselves, rather than a bishop – women should be governed by women. As she was asking for something not acceptable at the time, her plans were rejected but her later successes brought them to fruition in time. As a result, the sisters adopted a modified habit initially which, in time, became the dress of the day. However, with regard to the veil, those who wanted it were given the option to keep it.

Dress was not the only major change for the Loreto sisters. Following the resolution made at the Province Assembly, in May 1987, to hand on the schools to lay management, the sisters embarked on a programme of retraining.

Sister Deirdre Harman had already spent three years in the United States studying Ignatian spirituality when Sisters Emer McNally, Marie Brady, Linda Prest and Jacinta Bannon went to study in Canada and the United States. The main focus of their studies was also Ignatian spirituality as Mary Ward had founded her religious order on this aspect of spirituality and also because the Ignatian model was very much part of the Loreto charism. The sisters are now qualified to give retreats to various categories of people. Not only that but they are also able to give spiritual direction on an individual level and to facilitate meetings of religious congregations.

It is only fitting that the sisters themselves relate their experiences outside the school environment.

Marian Moriarty: Provincial 1996-2002

During my six years in a leadership role, the province experienced many comings and goings. We were blessed to welcome several sisters from other provinces for long or short term mission commitments. These were Sr Elizabeth Donnan (Australia), Sr Kathleen Fitzpatrick (Ireland) and Sr Eileen Cullen (Ireland) without whom it would have been almost impossible to manage Kwa-guqa.



Sr Marian Moriarty

In my years in Kwa-guqa, Witbank, I was involved in a Matrics-only education project in the townships and a small Adult Literacy project initiated by the local librarian. Huge concern for me was the large number of school leavers who seemed to have no way forward. Through career guidance and other meetings, I tried to encourage them and supported their efforts to get bursaries and to choose realistic courses! I also spent time each week with an adult unemployed group – an ongoing struggle to encourage a desire to become more self-reliant and creative in generating income. The unstructured nature of this ministry was a great challenge for me after years of the much clearer school structures.

Deirdre Harman

In 1975 I ended my work as matron in St Rita's Hospital in Glen Cowie. I had worked towards enabling the staff to take total responsibility for the hospital. I then became aware of the great spiritual needs in South Africa and thought of training in Catechetics.

At the same time, I was invited by Father Gillick to train

in spiritual direction – an area unheard of for women in South Africa and in a lot of other places in the 1970s. Something inside me responded with a deep resonance. I was fearful but yet strongly drawn to it. My first renewal course (1971) and the gift of Mary Ward to us after Vatican II affirmed this invitation. The training gave me deep understanding of Ignatian Spirituality and the “tool” of discernment as a means to live it and “share it with others”, in the words of Mary Ward. Without this personal experience of the thirty days’ retreat and the ongoing training in directing retreats, I would not have been able to assist in the work of developing the African Sisterhood in Glen Cowie and helping them move on to self-governance. I saw the clear link between their Constitutions and the Spiritual Exercises and tried to share, however inadequately, the way of discernment. I asked and received permission to study theology and do more training in Spiritual Direction. I was realising that through retreat direction, people were being helped but many were also staying in the same place in their spiritual life.



Sr Deirdre Harman

I did a diploma in Spiritual Theology in Milltown Park (Ireland), and then went on to the USA where I did a three months programme of Clinical Pastoral Education as a prerequisite for an internship in Spiritual Direction at the Centre for Religious Development run by Barry and Connolly S.J. My experience of discernment to do both sets of study taught me a great deal about how God deals with individuals and a great deal about discernment in my own life.

The course in Spiritual Direction focussed on the Spiritual Exercises in great depth and we had ongoing experience of direction in daily life with a variety of persons from all walks of life and faith background. I found the key to direction in the place Ignatius gave to *Desire* in the directee – desire articulated by the person in his/her relationship with God and explored in an ongoing way. I saw how desire is the driving force in the life of each one and the importance of enabling the other to continue

to uncover and discover the depth of that desire within him/herself.

I returned to South Africa surer of my ministry and I can honestly say that ever since, I have felt “able” to help others in their pathway to God. Yet, I have continued to learn about Spiritual Direction and was greatly helped by a course in counselling which helped me help others to explore their own experience. From that time onwards I have been invited again and again to use my “skills” in so many ways and in each response I have learnt more and more.

While continuing to work in ongoing direction in the Seminary with Religious, Laity, C.L.C (Christian Life Communities) etc., I have moved to work with groups in a way that reaches more people and have discovered the place of communal discernment and know that I share this gift of our charism in so many ways and places. I also know that it is because of this gift in our charism, recognised by others, that I am asked specifically for help in the discernment processes. I understand very clearly why St. Ignatius placed such emphasis on choice(s), how discernment is the means, and how, in discernment, the gifts of freedom, integrity and right relations are both essential to discernment and its fruits, and how the fruit of these three is joy.

My present work is mainly with women religious and lay people. I find being part of a team of facilitators is another way of using the gift of charism at all times through enabling groups to reflectively discern the choices every step of the way. I know that it is this gift that is valued by the team to which I belong.

I live with a song in my heart for the gift of our spirituality lived out by Mary Ward and her companions and I try to “teach it to others” because of the gift it is in my life.

Margaret Mary

I retired as principal from Holy Trinity College, Atteridgeville (Pretoria), in December 1989 and the following year began a Spiritual Renewal Course at Hawkstone Hall in the United Kingdom. Several courses included:

- Enneagram
- I worked with a team conducting a week of Directed Prayer in Balbriggan Parish
- I attended a course on giving Spiritual Exercises in daily life.
- I attended a Hospice course for Bereavement and Visiting
- I trained as a guide for giving Prayer and Life Workshops.

In January 1991, I became a member of the Strand community and was involved in a number of new areas:

- coordinating the Parish Catechetics for pupils attending Provincial schools, in English and Afrikaans for nine years.
- instructing converts individually for nine years
- doing Bereavement Visiting for Hospice and the Catholic Caring Network until I could no longer drive



Sr Margaret Mary

- giving a Faith Enrichment Course to past pupils weekly at the request of the Past Pupils' Committee and giving occasional talks to the Legion of Mary Group at the request of the Parish Priest for a few years.
- I was Minister of the Eucharist on Sundays to the Coloured township of Rusthof until I could no longer drive

At present I am involved as a Guide for Prayer and Life Workshops and am very happy in this ministry.

Jacinta Bannon: Clinical Pastoral Education and the Healing of Memories

I first encountered the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Programme during 1993 when I had the privilege of having a period of sabbatical following six years on the General Council (1986-1992). The programme in which I was a participant was offered at the Mater Hospital, Dublin and the supervisor was Fr. Dermot Brennen OP.

When I began the CPE programme I had no idea what was involved and my intention was to continue to relax and enjoy the sabbatical time. Very soon I realised the depths to which it was possible to explore using the CPE process. With great joy, wonder and amazement I discovered the link between the CPE process, the Mary Ward Charism and Ignatian Spirituality. From that moment, I was "captured" and "intoxicated" by CPE and the tremendous possibilities it opened up. Following

my first CPE I went to the Holy Family Medical Centre in Methuen, Massachusetts, where the supervisor was Rev. Gerry Wywas, a clinical psychologist and Presbyterian Minister. With the two basic units completed I was offered the opportunity, by Dermot, to participate in two advanced units being offered at the Mater Hospital. I was invited and encouraged by Gerry to train as supervisor under him at the Holy Family Medical Centre. During that time, I also studied for a Masters Degree at Emmanuel College in Boston.



Sr Jacinta Bannon

On returning to South Africa towards the end of 1995, I was well-equipped to get involved in CPE and other allied ministries. Since early 1996, I have been involved in CPE programmes at Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town; Pretoria Academic Hospital in connection with St. John Vianney's seminary; and Grey's Hospital, Pietermaritzburg in connection with the seminary at Cedara and the Theological Department of the University of Natal.

After all this explanation I must explain what CPE is. It is professional education for ministry. It trains clergy, religious and laity of all faiths or work in pastoral care – in other words, it brings them into supervised encounter with persons in crisis. Out of an intense involvement with persons in need and feedback from peers and supervisors, students develop a new awareness of themselves as persons and of the needs of those to whom they minister. From theological reflection on specific human situations, they gain new understanding of the human situation. Within the interdisciplinary team process of helping people, they develop skills in interpersonal and interprofessional relationships.

CPE is a method and standard of training that is well established in all five continents. The focus is not on textbooks and lectures, but on disciplined and supervised reflection on real life experiences with people who are hurting – that we call the living human document.

The essential elements of CPE include:

- A specific time period
- The actual practice of ministry to persons
- Detailed reporting and evaluation of that practice
- An individual contract for learning
- A process conception of learning
- A small group of peers in a common learning experience.

Clinical Pastoral Education has not been my only interest. I have also been involved in the “Healing of Memories”.

The workshops for the Healing of Memories originated as a chaplaincy project at the Trauma Centre, Cape Town, for the victims of violence and torture at the hands of the Apartheid government. These workshops began being offered from the beginning of 1996. The first workshop I attended was given in early 1996 and held in Franschoek and fully funded by Quaker Peace.

The Institute for the Healing of Memories was set up on 1 August 1998. It grew out of the chaplaincy project mentioned above. This Institute is a Trust which seeks to contribute to the healing journey of individuals, communities and nations. The Institute offers healing of memories activities such as workshops, seminars, talks and sermons. We are also developing models for dealing with emotions such as anger, hatred, guilt and processes for reconciliation and forgiveness and an experiential way of learning about and from the past.

At the time the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up, it was obvious that only a minority of South Africans would have the opportunity to tell their story before the Commission. It was argued that platforms needed to be provided for all South Africans to tell their stories. It was in this context that the Healing of Memories workshops were developed as a parallel process to the then forthcoming Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These workshops have become the principal focus of the Institute for the Healing of Memories. The workshops have been run over the past seven years in the Western Cape and a national programme has run in cooperation with the South African Council of Churches. The model has also been adapted to suit other situations. In 1998, the first Healing of Memories workshop outside South Africa took place at Riverside Church in New York and again in 1999, in Rwanda. Other areas of involvement include East Timor, Sri Lanka, Ireland and Australia.

In the Western Cape we aim to offer at least one Healing of Memories workshop each month. In order that participants can speak and understand in their own language, there are translators available. We are also involved in developing what we call a “second phase workshop” – “Dealing with anger, overcoming hatred

and struggling with forgiveness.” Twice a year we have weekends to train future facilitators as well as two weekends where the present facilitators do “in-service training”. One weekend each year is set aside for our strategic planning for the following year. Pamphlets are available in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa and we also produce our regular newsletter called *Footprint*.

We believe all people:

- are spiritual beings of infinite worth
- share responsibility for the past and are therefore responsible for dealing with it
- are capable of being both victim and victimizer
- should face history and themselves

Sr Monica Shanley: Adult Education and Loreto

A picture of Sr Veronica O’Nolan IBVM co-founder with Fr Matthew Gormley OFM Cap of St Francis Adult Education Centre, Langa, Western Cape, hangs in a prominent place at the entrance of the Centre. When Sr Veronica began the Centre in 1972, with a handful of adults “yearning for learning”, she could never have dreamt that the phenomenal growth of the Centre could take place to such an extent that, by the end of the decade, the attendance of night classes exceeded two thousand. Fondly referred to by the local people as “Our University”, the Centre presently serves over three thousand adult learners with a multiplicity of programmes on offer – the main courses being as always the academic courses from Literacy level up to Matric.



Sr Monica Shanley

Why Adult Education? Why the extraordinary growth and success of Sr Veronica’s venture into this new field for a Loreto sister? In order to understand, we need to dip into the history of our country and to remember how the Apartheid laws impacted on African people and their education – or lack of it. Not only were Africans in South Africa subjected to an inferior education – Bantu

Education – but also during the struggle for liberation in the 1980s, schools became venues for opposition to the Apartheid system and they seethed with political activity and debate, leading to protests, strikes and stay-aways. Consequently, schools became increasingly ineffective and end-of-year examinations became a series of disastrous results. Hundreds of thousands of students emerged from the schools devoid of even the limited ‘skills’ of Bantu education. And yet, students view education as empowerment, as a liberating and humanising experience necessary for increasing social, economic and political participation. Educational deprivation was viewed by many as having potentially extremely negative consequences, in terms of the limited contribution which students could make to the future development of the country. It became evident that there was little chance of normalising schools while the struggle for liberation continued. As a result, night schools became increasingly necessary and popular.

Into this “teachable moment” came Sr Veronica providentially. Until then Loreto’s main ministry had been almost exclusively in school-based education. Inspired with the Mary Ward and Loreto charism of Justice, Freedom, Sincerity, Truth, it became clear to Sr Veronica and her first helpers that here was an opportunity to reach out to the disadvantaged multitudes of the country. She had the wisdom and courage to respond to and adapt to the challenge of this new venture, realising that the dignity and equality of all God’s people required that we put our education experience and skills at the service of those who come asking for such help. The Glory of God is shown in each person who is fully alive, developed to their full human potential through education.

Sr Veronica soon learned the deeper personal reason which motivated students to return to the classroom, to night classes despite the hardships involved. Illiterate people are very unsure of themselves and they feel less than whole people. When they learn to read and write they become immensely more self-confident and their self-esteem grows. An extract from a long letter written by one of the first students of the St Francis Centre, by Phyllis Madikwa, is evidence of such motivation:

I left school in 1959 without any qualification...I was employed at an old-age nursing home where I took lessons in home nursing...My salary was nine pounds per month. What worried me was...that I earned far less than my white colleagues...some of whom had no education at all...I began to take stock of my life...Fortunately I had a wonderful cousin who kept on nagging me to go back to school. I attended only to please her and that was my long search for knowledge. (We heard that there

was a nun in Sea Point who was willing to help us...at St Francis Centre). I completed my Matric which at that time I only wanted in order to regard myself as an educated person. But then I realised I still had to educate myself. I have now obtained a BA Degree, H Dip in Education and B Ed. Education is a never-ending song...

Great gratitude must be extended to Fr Matthew Gormley OFM Cap, parish priest of Langa at the time, for opening the doors of his church premises and for joining in fully in the vision and development of the Centre. From the humble beginnings of crowded classes, housed in all the existing space available at the parish church, the Centre began to grow from initial prefabs to the large complex that today is known far and wide as St Francis Cultural Centre, Langa.

Sr Veronica’s untimely death in March 1981 might have been a devastating blow to the Centre, but she had set a firm foundation and had dedicated staff, both full-time and part-time who continued the work she had begun. The Education Department gave their full support to this extremely successful Centre (in the midst of a chaotic and malfunctioning school system in all African areas) and donors contributed generously.

Sr Monica Shanley joined the Centre in 1981. Sr Kathleen O’Farrell and Sr Emer McNally both had short terms of service there. Sr Shirley Kay came in 1983 and, with her immense experience in education and great organising ability, contributed greatly in setting up the Day School which started in 1985.

The Day School was to cater for adult students who had failed their Matric examinations. That venture also flourished and though the initial intention was to limit the numbers, there was no stemming the flood of applicants who now number the maximum capacity of 1 500. If there were any questions about where we should put our energies and education skills to the service of the “MOST” there is the answer!

Sr Shirley tells of her experiences in Langa:

The ten Matric classes of thirty per class having been set up at the request of the Education Department that year were entered to write Matric at the end of the year, but the political unrest was such that classes were boycotted by the learners from the beginning of August. Activists made frequent visits to make sure that no classes were in progress. As the year drew to a close, a group came to me to demand that we hand over the exam papers. We told them that the key to the safe was

not available. They threatened to "necklace" anyone who attempted to write Matric at the end of the year. ("Necklacing" meant that a tyre filled with petrol would be put around a person's neck and set alight). In spite of this threat, about eight of the three hundred Matrics wrote their exams at the Inspector's office in secret and passed! St Francis Adult Education also ran a course for Pre-Primary Teachers' Training. They were in their final year so the possibility of getting a certificate meant a lot to them. Arrangements were made for them to write their exams in secret too.

By the end of the 1980s it was becoming clear to the Loreto sisters that, due to the lack of personnel and lack of vocations to the Institute in South Africa, they needed to involve the laity more in leadership roles in the schools and other institutions. The sisters embarked on retraining in order to become trainers themselves and facilitators in enabling and supporting new leadership who would carry on the tradition of Catholic Education in schools (as well as ministries in other areas of pressing need). In line with this policy, the principalship of the St Francis Centre was handed on to Mr Kevin Wright, a dedicated Catholic lay man, who very successfully continued its development in order to meet the ever demanding educational needs. He introduced technology and design programmes and developed further computer education and literacy. It has been a very successful and blessed story by any standards.

We will let Phyllis Madikwa, previously quoted, and who is presently the principal of the Day School, have the last word on the founding and growth of St Francis Centre:

Education has brought back my human respect and dignity and has built my self-concept. I can now discuss and argue objectively without feeling inferior to any other person...I have been freed from ignorance and I am a better person and I am proud to be me. Thanks to those wonderful people who have made this possible for me and thanks to God for giving me the chance.

Marie Thérèse

In 1982, we closed the school in Sea Point and a year later I went to teach at the Christian Brothers School in Green Point. I taught there for two years during which I became involved in Crossroads in the afternoons. At the same time, I was training catechists for the Archdiocese of Cape Town and co-ordinating catechism classes in Sea Point and Green Point.

From 1985, I moved over to Crossroads full time. In the afternoons, I was joined by some university students to teach mainly English and Maths to Primary School children. A year later, I opened a little school for children who had previously had no opportunity to go to school. There were soon over 100 children from the age of six all the way to twenty one. This was all done under the direction of the Schoenstatt Fathers. Unfortunately, the Schoenstatt Fathers moved out of Crossroads in 1988 and without their support the school could not remain in existence. I then began full time work in Catechetics, working mainly in Khayelitsha and Lwandle. Apart from Catechetics, I also started adult instruction and made visits to the people's homes and shacks, encouraging the children to come to Catechism classes. I was responsible for organising the celebration of Mass in Lwandle where none had previously been held. Archbishop Naidoo R.I.P. came out twice and celebrated with us. This year they will build their own church.



Sr Marie Thérèse

In 1990, I went to Strandfontein as Parish Sister. Here I visited the sick and the elderly and brought Communion to the sick. I had an Adult Instruction class and for the six years I was there an average of 12 people per year were received into the Church. The Catechists required ongoing formation and we held a Catechists meeting every month. I also assisted in organising the children's classes and prepared the children's Masses once a month. In addition to all this, I started a sewing group and some of these women are now making a living out of their sewing. We began a Care Group in the parish which in turn gave birth to a friendship group for the elderly. Once a week they would meet in the hall, play games and have lunch. Sometimes outings were also organised. In 1997, I went on Sabbatical.

Two years later, I went to work at Catholic Welfare and Development looking after the Care Groups in parishes. I then began to work in Prison Ministry, visiting prisoners on a one-to-one basis, facilitating a team for Goodwood Prison and providing training for them. I went to Pollsmoor for a year counselling mainly gangster leaders.

Now, in 2003, I am still involved in Prison Work. I have moved to Strand and am helping in the parish to start up a Care Group. I visit people who need to talk and teach the First Communion children in the school. A few of us visit sick people in Rusthof. I plan to start a Womens' Group in Lwandle shortly and to begin Catechism classes for the children.

**Marie Brady:
Prison care and Support Network**

When I returned to South Africa in 1994 after the Guelph Course and further study at Regis College, Toronto, I did not want to go into full time Retreat Work and Spiritual Direction because I also felt called to work with the poor and marginalized. I looked around but nothing seemed to attract me until one day I received a phone call inviting me to become part of a team that would visit prisons. Without taking time to reflect or discern, I just knew that this was what I was waiting for. I immediately said YES to this call and to this day I have never regretted it for one moment.

The response to the call for volunteers was most encouraging and today the number stands at forty seven. The training of volunteers is an important aspect of our work and on-going formation is given at monthly meetings where we support one another, share our joys and difficulties, our insights and experiences and receive supervision and input on a topic relevant to Prison Ministry. The volunteers are mainly from the African and Coloured communities and it is wonderful to see how eager they are to learn so that they can help their own people. They have shown great commitment, generosity and dedicated service in their ministry over the years and have responded wholeheartedly to the spiritual and emotional needs of inmates with loving care and sensitivity, keeping focussed on our mission statement of fostering hope in the individual and restoring a sense of humanity in the community. They have taken their own personal formation seriously and have recognised the need to attend workshops and further training so that they can be more effective in their ministry to the inmates.

Right from the start we were convinced of the HEALING POWER OF LISTENING. We took to heart what Gerard Hughes said about listening, "The gift of being a good listener is perhaps the most healing gift anyone can possess, for it allows the other to be, enfolds them in a safe place, does not judge or advise them and communicates support at a level deeper than words." Listening became the heart of our ministry and has continued to be so to this day.

As supporting inmates with AIDS was our focus some of the volunteers did the AIDS AWARENESS COURSE and the AIDS COUNSELLING COURSE given by ATTIC, to equip us to help in this area. We also approached the leader of the CWD AIDS PROJECT to assist with Aids education in the prison. Gradually our focus changed to support and help all inmates.

The Bible has helpful principles for those involved in Prison Ministry. In Mark 4 we find Jesus teaching his disciples about sowing and planting seeds. And that is how we see ourselves – as Seed Planters. We are fully aware that the ground is often rocky and infertile and that the thorns and weeds which flourish in the prison environment often kill and choke the seed. Yet we know from our experience that some seed has fallen on fertile ground and has produced a crop – some thirty, sixty or a hundred fold. We rejoice at the signs of new life as we gather together the fruits of our ministry...as expressed by some of the inmates.



Sr Marie Brady

I visited Jerome regularly for more than two years. He was sentenced to fifteen years and was transferred to another prison. In March 2002 I received a letter from him in which he wrote:

On 19 April 2000 you gave me a small card with the words from Phil 4:13 printed on it...I can do all things in Him who strengthens me. Since then I was taught and am continually being taught to draw from His strength. I am practising to have an attentive ear and daily I am being changed from glory to glory into the image of Christ. It is my longing that Christ be portrayed in my words, actions and worship.

Another man, Mark, who is out on parole at present, wrote the following:

Without you labouring in my life I most definitely would have become desperate to the point of giving up. At the time I am referring to I was having suicidal thoughts. Although I never acted on these thoughts, things were becoming more and more difficult for me. I felt I could no longer cope. To put a finer point on this subject, I was at the end of my rope. Your visits taught me that I am worthy of being loved. That there is somebody who cares about my well-being as well as my spiritual growth. You have nurtured both and by the grace of God pulled me through and for this I am eternally grateful.

As I look back on my years of Prison Ministry, I feel I have much for which I am most grateful. Constitution 331 states:

With love and humility, we should listen to the poor and humble of the Lord, and learn from them, having where possible some concrete experiences of their lives. We thus come closer to Christ, vulnerable and powerless, grow in respect for the dignity of every person and discover a richness that does not depend on possessions.

I feel Prison Ministry has helped me to do just that. It has given me some concrete experience of the lives of the poorer people in our society and I have learned much from them. In particular I have discovered a richness that does not depend on possessions and for this I am most grateful.

Margo Mulvey

Sr Margo Mulvey started a completely new project in Cape Town. When she saw the plight of the homeless people living under bridges in cardboard boxes, she felt a call to do something for them. For five years Margo worked with various NGOs in Cape Town including the Salesian Institute's Learn-to-Live Programme, Don Bosco Outreach Programme and Edmund House Residential Programme. Coupled with this, she spent several months as a guest of the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in Bombay where Third World methodology has been introduced to deal with Third World problems.

In 1995, several young women living on the street approached Margo with an urgent problem concerning the removal of their children into foster care. She appealed widely for help and Sr Maria Lanthier from the Canadian Province joined her in this new initiative.

Thus, in November 1996, the project called WIN – Women

in Need – began. The aims of the project were as follows:

- to empower women living on the street to develop and run an organisation of Women in Need (WIN) whose purpose is to improve and uplift the quality of life of its members in Cape Town.
- to improve opportunities for better health care, protection and education for their children
- to develop leadership and caring skills among the members so that they can benefit the wider community of street people
- to become more aware of their dignity as women and to enjoy a new sense of identity and unity as members of WIN.

As the years passed by it was very obvious that those objectives were realised. By 1998, the programme also included a clinic, workshops, prison visits, youth sport, street walks, choir events and events such as "Miss WIN". There was also a WIN Playhouse (crèche) for children aged 2 to 6 with four full time trainee teachers, a volunteer from the street community, two part time volunteers and a supervisor.

A further development was the Child in Need Initiative (CINI). Margo purchased a house for temporary residential care for children with a full time house mother, an assistant and a supervisor. Many people supported Margo in her efforts and soon there was a need for the "Poor Relief Drop-in Programme". This included the distribution of food and clothes, counselling and the services of a social worker.

Margo was deeply appreciated by the Cape Town Community and the Church. When she finally decided that it was time to hand on her project into other capable hands, she was shown on the SABC news as "The best-loved nun in Cape Town". On 23 May 1999, she was honoured for her work by the International Rotary Club. The award is given to a female for being involved with the development and upliftment of women. In 2000, the Pope donated a large sum of money to people working with the poor in society and the Archbishop of Cape Town assigned this sum to WIN.

As I write this, Margo is recuperating in Ireland after a gallstone operation. We hope to see her back soon, possibly dreaming further dreams to help those on the "edges of society".

Deirdre Mellett

This year we celebrate the 125th anniversary of Loreto in South Africa. I am happy to have played my part as a Loreto sister in the field of education in this country. Having trained as a primary teacher at Mowbray Training College in Cape Town, specializing in the junior primary department, I taught at Skinner Street, Hillcrest, Sea Point and Strand. I enjoyed teaching very much, however, after twenty-five years in school I felt the children would benefit from having a younger teacher and so I opted for Adult Religious Education. Having received a diploma at Mount Oliver Institute in Adult Religious Education, I moved into Catechesis for all age groups. I taught again in our schools as well as State schools. These included Hamilton School, Lyttleton Parish and Marabastad in Pretoria, Strand, Macassar and Lydenburg.

I then did a course in the skill of giving spiritual direction and retreats. After this, I found myself in Lydenburg at the Pastoral Centre where I gave retreats, was on the team for training deacons, organised catechetical courses for the catechists and taught children in the neighbouring schools.



Sr Deirdre Mellett

After spending some time there, I found myself back in Cape Town where I spent five years as a Parish Sister in Bonteheuvel on the Cape Flats. Again my catechetical skills were used to the fullest. I also visited parishioners and was on the marriage preparation team.

I returned to Ireland for two years to work at a retreat centre. On my return to South Africa in 1996, I was employed as a formator at St Peter's Seminary. I taught English and Human Development to the students and was their spiritual Mother in the whole area of Prayer and Spiritual Direction.

I am now returning to Ireland but hope to continue to share my skills with others. I have been very happy in the education sphere in South Africa. Admittedly, the years of transition to open schools were challenging but

I am glad that Loreto played such a big part in breaking down the wall of apartheid in education. Loreto has influenced the lives of many young people through education and I know and believe that this influence is being continued and will continue thanks to our dedicated and enthusiastic teachers.

Viva Loreto in South Africa. Amandla!

Emer McNally

I joined Sea Point Community in 1978. I enjoyed teaching Mathematics and Religious Education in school and Mathematics at St Francis Adult Education Centre in Langa on a volunteer basis in the evenings. Sadly, Sea Point Secondary School closed at the end of 1982. On our last day, Sr Margaret Heffernan addressed the staff and pupils, we sang *Ave Maria Loreto* accompanied by Sr Anne Hulme, and in an atmosphere of gratitude and sadness the pupils said their tearful goodbyes.

I then joined the Queenswood community as local superior and member of the school staff. We were eighteen in the community. Here I began to learn to be a listener! I see myself at that time as a supporter and encourager of initiatives in the school community towards greater collaboration with the parents. During those years, we experienced the growth of multicultural integration in Catholic schools in the midst of opposition and growing political tensions. There was also growth in reflection, prayer, and sharing in community, school and parish.

For six months in 1986, as Assistant-Director to Sr Monica in the St Francis Adult Education Centre, I again shared in the desire of so many adults who were trying to make up for their lack of educational opportunities in earlier years. I remember seeing the smoke rise from Crossroads – a sign of the increasing unrest and tension that preceded the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990. At a province meeting in 1987, we made a decision to engage our lay collaborators more in the administration of our schools. As Principal at Queenswood in 1987, and 1988, and member of staff in 1989, I was part of this transition process.

In 1992, after a sabbatical of retraining, I returned to a new South Africa facing elections in 1994. As a member of the provincial council, I was able to use some new skills in facilitating community development. We were also able to offer retreat in daily life to the staffs and pupils of Skinner Street and Queenswood. Mrs d'Oliveira, Mrs Twyford, Srs Therese, Marian and myself met once a month as a support group.

Sr Therese and I directed the Tertianship Program in South Africa from 1997 to 1998. After the General Congregation in 1998, I joined the General Council. It has been and continues to be a great joy to me to meet so many Mary Ward women throughout the world and to be able to encourage and support them in whatever way I can.

I miss South Africa. In quiet moments I remember with gratitude the many people who were a part of my life over the years. When I read reports of our ministries and meetings I want to say: "Yes, continue to choose life!"

Bernadette Wilczkiewicz

The year that we celebrated our centenary I had the good luck to be chosen to attend a month's course in Spain on Ignatian Spirituality. That was a great event in my life because up till then I hated Ignatius with a passion. It was all about that *agree contra* (go against yourself) phrase. I finally tried to go against myself for one day and decided it was for the birds. But there, studying the original writings of Ignatius, I understood what part of the *self* I needed to go against – so he was forgiven and a new love of all things Ignatian began. It was there too that I found out that I really did belong to Mary Ward's charism. Sr Agnes Walsh asked us to draw a symbol of how we saw our own "charism". I drew a ballerina standing on her toes ready to move in any direction. To my delight, we were told that Mary Ward used a similar symbol. After that course my foundations in the IBVM were indeed strengthened.



Sr Bernadette Wilczkiewicz

In 1979, SACLA (South African Christian Leadership Assembly) was held in Pretoria. It was a massive effort of all Christians in South Africa to confront the evil of apartheid. I firmly believe that it was that gathering of more than 10 000 people of one mind and one heart that contributed to the fall of apartheid. We were convinced that there was an alternative to violence and that prayer could not only move mountains but governments too. I

was also politically educated at the conference. Safely tucked away in the "bush" in Glen Cowie, absorbed totally in the school, safe behind convent walls, all the information I ever got about politics was from the South African Press. At SACLA I interacted with all population groups and I began to see a little of what others suffered under apartheid.

After the 1976 Soweto riots life was never the same at the mission. I suddenly found myself to be an alien. The relationships with the children changed. Because we were white, there was suspicion where before there had been trust and co-operation. It was really very painful. Added to this, the government propaganda which painted the ANC efforts of liberation as communist-inspired and anti-God was so clever that I was partly ready to believe it, having lost my homeland (Poland) to the Communists years before.

During the riots of 1985, some extraordinary things happened to us in the school. Like many other Catholic schools we were torn between being IN the struggle and at the same time trying to keep the school going. On 3 May 1986 we were attacked by about ten busloads of young people wanting us to join them and to close the school. We told the children that if they wished to go they were free to do so. But an extraordinary thing happened. When the mob finally arrived in the quadrangle all of the 250 boarders clung together like a swarm of bees. Nobody could move them. They tried from the back and side but the huge clump of red uniforms was glued together by some invisible force. In the end, the "comrades" left leaving only the garden trampled and a window broken. In the evening the staff asked if we could have a thanksgiving service. It was very moving and the children, the staff and ourselves felt so united and strong. That day we knew, that in one little section of South Africa, there was no apartheid.

In 1987, after 18 years of work in the Secondary and boarding school at Glen Cowie, I was absolutely exhausted, especially after the tension of the years of the struggle for freedom. I was then sent to Queenswood. It was a strange experience to see a class of 15 instead of 50 before me and they were all white! After looking at black faces for so many years, white faces looked sick and ailing. But I soon got used to that. It was also very interesting to listen to the girls' conversation at break. So different to Glen Cowie. Here they talked about new furniture in the bedroom for their birthdays, the others about funerals on Saturdays. Some weeks later I had to go to the doctor as I felt ill without knowing what was the matter with me. There was nothing wrong with me physically, simply withdrawal symptoms. I realised I missed Glen Cowie a lot.

In the same year, I was asked to train for formation work and was given a year to study at St John Vianney Seminary in Pretoria. What bliss! No preparation for class, no marking, no reports, just sitting there listening to interesting topics. Here I need to pay tribute to Fr. Bonaventure Hinwood who adjusted the timetable in such a way that I could do all the subjects I wanted to. At the end of that year, I was sent to St. Anselm's in England. This was another great adventure in self-discovery and the complexity, beauty and value of human life. The course included lectures in personal growth, counselling and spiritual direction. All participants had to tell their story "from the inside", not just facts but what the process of living "life" meant for them. I cried my eyes out listening to every story. There is so much invisible pain in everyone and at the same time so much courage, beauty and heroism. The world is not a bad place, it may just look bad at times.

In 1990, I thought my time on earth had come to an end when a huge growth was discovered in my abdomen. It was removed and for some months I had to go for further tests, but thank God, I am still alive. The following year, I was offered a job at St Peter's Seminary. I was the first woman to be employed full time on the staff and live at the Seminary. That was not a small thing, I discovered later, as Canon Law states that no female may stay in the Seminary. But the South African Bishops – God Bless them – knew that Canon Law is for us not against us and made the decision to let me come full time. I arrived in January 1991 and worked happily for nine years teaching Spirituality, Human Sexuality, English, typing, Methodology of study, and I even managed to squeeze in "trench gardening" which is my passion.

What a new life that was! I stayed at Hammanskraal (about half-an-hour's drive from Pretoria) from Monday to Friday. A friend used to give me a lift to Queenswood which was my community. I was appointed as the academic co-coordinator. Group work and spiritual direction were also part of the programme. Soon, Methodology of Study was added to the syllabus and I found myself very busy also attending to the health needs of the students. Two dogs, one a Great Dane, who used to gallop chasing buck in the veld as I took them for a walk, provided light relief. After two years we moved the Seminary to Cape Town which was a bonus for me as my sister and family live there. My last year was 1999 when the Seminary moved to three other centres. These were very happy years for me. We worked as a team. In the second year we formulated a vision statement that we all believed in and were passionate about. During our weekly meeting, we would check if our goals and objectives were being met. I also found that the young men trusted me and I had a very good

relationship with them. I now have the joy of being invited to the ordinations!

In 2000, I was transferred to the Pretoria community, but was also permitted to visit India for three months. I fell in love with India. The moment I stepped on that soil I felt at home. Once, during a retreat in Patna, somebody asked me how many years I had been in India! It even showed outwardly. I am also interested in the religious aspects of that culture. The retreat of 12 days that I did there was a big milestone in my spiritual life. I was also so proud of our Sisters there. They are working in most trying conditions and are making an invaluable contribution to education and human development. They could not have done more for me at that time, it was only three months but the impact on me was far greater.

I spent the next two years at Cedara near St Joseph's Theological Institute. I was one of the two coordinators of a sisters' community. It was a new venture of the Women Religious of Southern Africa. Many sisters, particularly from diocesan congregations, did not have the chance to study overseas so a centre was opened up near the Seminary where they could get qualifications which would help them in their pastoral work. One of my functions there was to help the sisters with their studies and to attend the more difficult lectures with them so I could help them absorb it better. We also hoped to be able to form an inter-congregational community of sisters from the different congregations. This was very hard work as studies and community duties often clashed – as happens in most home communities, but here the mixture of charisms added to the problem. I found this very taxing and realised that I could not do justice to the job or myself. I asked to leave.

Now I am in the Skinner Street community of five and have been "roped in" to teach English at St Peter's National Seminary and at the OMI pre-novitiate. I give spiritual direction at St John Vianney as well as the two other centres. Twice a week I do secretarial jobs for Sr. Monica, our Provincial. Now and again I am asked to give a day of recollection. Hurrah for retirement, there is always space for one more job!

Linda Prest

In response to the call of 1986 Chapter of the “cry of the poor”, I responded to the request of Bishop Mogale of Witbank to be of service to the hundreds of Mozambiquan refugees pouring into the country. As there was a team in place for supplying food, I joined the catechists who were trying to integrate the refugees with the local church. In the following year I was also involved in a literacy programme and travelled daily to various refugee camps for classes. I was also involved in catechesis and youth work in the local rural communities up until 1988.



Sr Linda Prest

In 1992, I still found myself reaching out to the poor and less advantaged. I was involved in establishing our new outreach in Kwa-guqa, a township near Witbank. As a pastoral worker, I did anything that presented itself: being a liaison between donors and receivers; delivering food, clothes, materials for “crèches”, visiting the sick, taking people to hospital, attending funerals, organising catechetics, training catechists and other leaders, supporting these leaders and going to the Basic Christian communities for prayer and discussion. I also organised retreat days for all parish and other groups, supported youth groups and helped with their camps, bringing in outside groups to enrich them. I helped to organise bursaries for young people, listened to their problems and tried to negotiate conflict situations.

Sr Ursula Traynor

I have been involved in Tape Aids for the Blind for some time now. Tape Aids is a national library service for the blind and print-handicapped. In 1992, I began proofreading at the Hatfield Studio and received a certificate of appreciation in 2002.

Two years ago, the books were recorded onto cassette tapes which made it easier for me to fetch the tapes and check them at home. With each set, I am given a Listener’s Guide Evaluation Form which I fill in and return with the cassettes. I find the readers very good and am pleased to be able to help in this way.



Sr Ursula Traynor

This is not the only area I have been involved in. In 1991, I heard about the Citizen’s Advice Bureau and called at the office behind St Alban’s Cathedral where I met the secretary. I was interviewed, taken on and given a list of instructions. I was also advised to come and sit in on sessions in progress by experienced voluntary workers. After a short time, I was put on the roster and began seeing clients. There were usually two or three voluntary workers busy at a time in adjacent offices which made it easy to consult one another in a difficulty. The problems were many and diverse. Six lawyers gave their advice for free and we could consult them on legal matters. Often problems of “unfair dismissal” were put forward. In these cases, it was necessary to get in touch with the employer to ascertain the other side of the story and then try to negotiate a peaceful solution. After the session, the voluntary worker writes up a detailed report of her session with the client who is issued with a number at their first visit. Each client has a card with their details on it for easy reference.

At the end of 2001, I gave up my work there as I no longer felt able to do it. I do, however, still attend the volunteer meetings once a month and represent Archbishop George Daniel, at his request, at the Executive meetings every second month. It has been a good experience to be associated with these volunteers and to help even in a small way.

Kwa-Guqa projects on the go!

Parish/Education: numerous projects are undertaken within the local schools and parish.

Catechetical Programme within the Parish: Organisation, Facilitation. Enrichment Courses for Religious Formation Teachers. Retreat Giving, Spiritual Direction, Prayer groups.

HIV/AIDS – visiting families where there is someone suffering from the virus, showing care and concern, talking and praying with them, bringing holy Communion to some of them, counselling and guiding them. In cases of need, bringing food to them. Special maize-meal is bought and distributed. This meal has ingredients which build up the immune system and provide much needed extra nourishment. Also driving them to clinics or hospital, and visiting them there.

Collection and Distribution of Second Hand Clothes – Pupils from Loreto Schools in Pretoria and elsewhere, and people from Witbank, give the Sisters second-hand clothes. These are sorted and brought to poor areas or to people known to be very much in need. The Sodality, whose members take care of the food vouchers, helps out here.

Teaching within the local Government Secondary School.

School fees and uniforms – a significant number of family groups in the area don't have sufficient money to pay for school fees or buy school clothes and shoes.

Bursaries for Tertiary Students – these are mainly supplied to students attending apprentice type courses. Students are given assistance with fees, books and their bus fares in and out of Witbank. The type of student supported in this programme has no money to pay for such things. This project really provides students with the opportunity to eventually gain some form of employment to support themselves and their families.

Toy Library – provides educational toys to creches and pre-schools. The Toy Library staff work in collaboration with Occupational Therapy students who present workshops to teachers helping them to understand the educational benefits of the toys being supplied. Loreto

funds provide a stipend for two staff members. At the end of 2002 the Library went mobile.

Collection and distribution of food – The owner of a large confectionery shop in Witbank frequently empties her freezer of cakes and bread gone beyond the sell-by date. These are collected and brought to very poor areas, where, when the car stops and the boot is opened, crowds gather to receive some goodies. Many of these people might not have eaten anything for days, and sometimes the children, especially, bite into the food immediately without even waiting for it to defrost; a telling reminder of their hunger and need. Other caring people, friends of the sisters in Kwa-guqa, often have left-overs after a party, funeral or the like, and they contact the Sisters who have the immensely satisfying task of distributing this food to needy families.

Within the township the Loreto Sisters with members from the local community assist in a number of projects. Funding for such programmes comes from many generous overseas donors. The projects include the following:

Food vouchers – are funded through the Loreto funds and managed by a local Sodality. Each family receives 12.5kg of maize meal and 1kg of dry beans. The food vouchers are available once a month to a family.

Home Affairs – a Government department that exists so people can obtain ID's and birth certificates. Many people in this township do not have the money to pay for these, let alone the taxi fare into town. If the child is seven years or under the family is entitled to a child's grant of 100 Rand per month (25 Australian dollars). For many families this is the only income that they have, no other cash flow comes into these families. There are no unemployment grants, only the child benefits or old age benefits.

Text books – In the Apartheid Era (Bantu Education), the students did receive text books. Now such books are not available. The curriculum is changing, there are no text books being supplied and families do not have the money for text books. As a result, class sets are



Sr Eileen Cullen



Sr Elizabeth Donnan

provided in numerous schools in the area.

Food/Seed Project – in the Informal Settlements seeds are distributed to encourage maintenance of gardens as well as the more important role of providing food for the families. This project is run as a competition and the gardens are judged twice a year.

Maintenance of Paralegal Office – this office advises people on their legal and human rights, Many people in the township are not aware of their rights.

Emergency Relief – provides assistance to people in need e.g. flood victims.

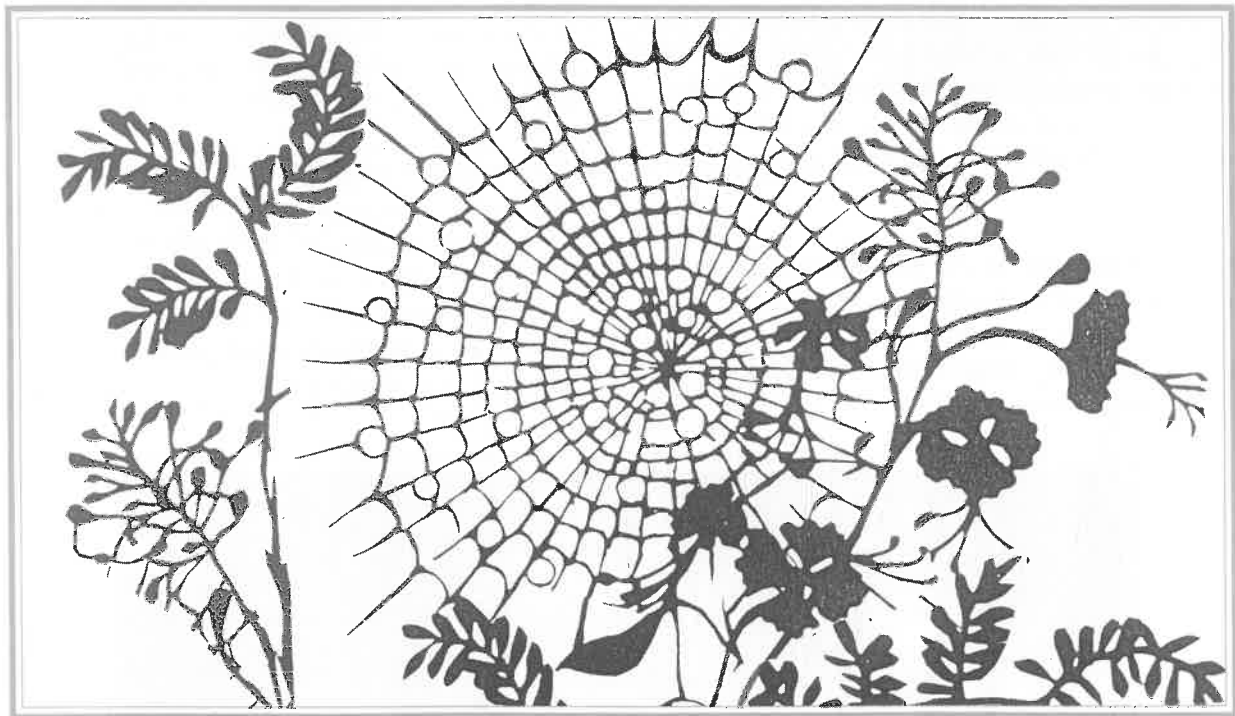
Interact club – associated with the local Rotary of which Sr Elizabeth is an honorary member. Sr Elizabeth and another teacher run Interact in Empucukweni Secondary School where Sr Elizabeth teaches. Projects undertaken include painting of classrooms and mending of school desks.

Support of Creches – Loreto funds help support the local creches with material needs as well as the necessary training for teachers.

Co-ordination of Sewing group where local women use and improve their dressmaking skills and earn money by making school uniforms, track-suits, and other items of clothing.

A symbol of the South African Province, 2003: Hope for the future

In March 2003, there was an international meeting of IBVMs in Rome and each province was asked to bring a symbol of how they see themselves. The South African Province brought the following symbol:



It is a web suspended firmly on branches. It was done on dark blue material and the web was painted with silver glitter glue. The dark background symbolizes the life of faith. The dew drops are the sisters in the Province. The web is now a very fragile thing and the sisters are elderly. However, the life and beauty of the web is in the fact that it is held in the branches, representing Christ. The flowers and buds represent love and hope. Also joy. Joy is one of the characteristics of the Mary Ward sisters and, in spite of the diminishment of health and numbers, there is plenty of joy.

The main mission of the sisters is making connections, as the web indicates – in all directions and in many ways. We make connections between people and God through prayer, counselling, spiritual direction and information. Many people phone in for information of all kinds. We feel ourselves to be very much concerned with the rest of our international, multicultural institute in many countries.

And so we continue to shine in the light of God's love and "hang in there" until we are called to be placed with God in another place or world.

CHAPTER 7: THE LORETO EDUCATION CONFERENCE, 21-23 FEBRUARY 2003

In February of this year, sisters and teachers from all three Loreto schools in South Africa gathered at Loreto Queenswood under the able facilitation of Sr Pat Murray, a member of the Loreto General Council in Rome, to discuss the possibility of the three schools working more closely together. This comes as part of a similar drive, the Loreto International Network, to establish links between Loreto schools all over the world.

Throughout the conference, the values and charism of Mary Ward were highlighted. Each school made a presentation to indicate how they uphold these values on a day to day basis and Loreto Skinner Street was recognised as the heart of Loreto in South Africa, being the founder school in 1878. After this, all delegates were divided into groups to "Network SA" by exploring ways in which all three schools could co-operate. Many exciting ideas were put forward: a Loreto newsletter, a Loreto song, a Loreto mascot (Jollie Skanswood), a learner/teacher exchange, and the possibility of a Mary Ward Tour in 2005. The conference was ended by Mass in the school chapel.

What stood out at the conference was the sense of family and unity among the Loreto schools in South Africa. Mrs Anne Krause, who was surprised and pleased to meet up again with girls with whom she had travelled to Rome in 1985, had the following to say:

The Loreto Educational Conference held in Pretoria will remain a cherished memory for many, many years. The sense of belonging and of being loved and accepted by so many Mary Ward followers really meant a great deal to me.

Hopefully, the strong new bonds that have been added to those established so many years ago, in 1985, will grow from strength to strength. Long live Loreto SA and may we all continue to carry on Mary Ward's mission in our schools.

As Loreto Skinner Street turned 125 years on 7 June this year, the occasion was marked by a Gala evening and the performance of the *Oterol Virus*, a wicked computer virus which stole the last 25 years of the history of the school. Thank goodness this information was retrieved by a determined trio and handed over for this publication to be completed!

The last 25 years of Loreto have truly been momentous ones as the schools have striven to uphold the values of Mary Ward in the face of apartheid opposition. Loreto has lived to see some of these values take hold in South Africa and will continue to uphold freedom, justice, sincerity and joy way into the future.



A group representing members of the Staffs of Loreto Schools: Skinner Street, Strand, and Queenswood, taken at the end of the Education Conference, in February 2003.



EDUCATION CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 2003:

Front Row (left to right):

Sr. Monica Shanley (Provincial), Sr. Eileen Gallagher, Mrs. Renée d'Oliveira (Principal of Skinner Street), Mr. Marcello Pallozzi (Principal of Queenswood), Sr. Pat Murray (General Councillor), Mrs. Anne Krause (Principal of Strand), Sr. Ursula Traynor and Sr. Shirley Kay.

Back Row:

Sr. Bernadette Wilczkiewicz, Sr. Immacula Bolger, Sr. Linda Prest.



LORETO WORLDWIDE