

# Perthville hosts Josephite Journeying Retreat

12-19th April 2011



**Back Row:** L-R: Di Phillips (Qld) Margaret Gillespie (Qld) Mary Fermio (Vic) Barbara Bochat (NSW) Michele Madigan (SA) Aileen Shanahan (Vic) Mary Ryan (NSW) Sally Camilleri (NSW) Katherine Tyrrell (NSW) **Middle row:** L-R: Patricia George (Vic) Clare Hopper (P) Josepha (W/NZ) Claire Dawson (NSW Standing) Carmel Drew (G) Colleen O'Sullivan (NSW) **Front Row:** L-R: Ann Morrison (P) Florence Snell (NSW) Jill McLoughlin (NZ) Meg Hills (NZ) Missing: Clare Noonan (NSW)

**Abbreviations:** Central Josephite Congregations: Qld, Vic, NSW, SA, NZ. Federation Josephite Congregations: G, Goulburn, P, Perthville, W/NZ, Whanganui

Seventeen Sisters from across Australia and New Zealand arrived at The Vale on the evening of 12th April 2011 to begin a retreat which opened for them the riches of their Josephite family tree. Using the metaphor of landscapes, Carmel, Colleen and Ann, (pictured below), invited participants to contemplate their story, the stories of their founders and the Hand of God in all that unfolded. Marie Crowley helped set the scene by introducing the Retreatants to the history of this Sacred Place.



One of the highlights of this time was a pilgrimage to Wattle Flat where retreatants were immersed in the stories of the "separation" and were able to wander the grounds walked by the early sisters and to hear their 'whisperings in the trees.' All were privileged to

have had the opportunity to hear Marie Crowley's depth of knowledge and understanding of the details of the story. As part of the prayer retreatants built a cairn to acknowledge that they stood in solidarity with those who had gone before, naming the pain and heartache, as well as the strength and courage of those early Sisters – both Constitution and Diocesan.



*Archivist/Historian Dr Marie Crowley sharing the Sacredness of this place with Retreatants*

The Closing ritual gathered the experiences of the week where all shared the gift this time had been for each of them, as they stood in prayer and planted a bottle brush to honour their journey. Under this bottle brush each placed her hopes and dreams for the Josephite family and planted the seed of her dreams for the future.

The retreatants agreed that being at Perthville (The Vale), such a significant place for all the congregations, had allowed them to enter more fully into their shared story. The comment of one Sister:

*"I have so appreciated journeying with all my Sisters together- WE ARE ONE,"* was echoed by many.



*Pictured above: Clare Hopper (P) placing her stone on the cairn;*



*Above: Michele Madigan (SA) deep in prayer and reflection*

*Below: Hopes and dreams for the Josephite family are planted under the bottle brush*

