



# Missionary Sisters of Service

A MISSION OF LOVE AND SERVICE INTO THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

NEWSLETTER

## Geraldine Vytilingam's special bond with the MSS

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On March 8th, we celebrated International Women's Day. In the spirit of celebrating and encouraging women, we wanted to share with you the journey of Geraldine Vytilingam, an inspiring young woman who the MSS have known now for some years.

Geraldine was the inaugural recipient of the 2023-2024 Fr John Wallis Memorial Scholarship (awarded in 2022) which she used to pursue a Masters of Theological Studies through Catholic Theological College, in Melbourne. Since then, we've kept in touch with Geraldine, and have maintained an ongoing and flourishing relationship with her. She has now completed her studies and last year graduated with a Graduate Diploma of Theology. She also graduated last month with her Master of Theological Studies. Speaking of her relationship with the MSS, Geraldine says:

*'The MSS have believed in me even when I haven't believed in myself.  
They've invested in me emotionally and personally, not just financially.  
That's been one of the biggest blessings of my life.'*

In her current role at Xavier College in Kew, Victoria, as Reconciliation Leader and Youth Minister, Geraldine nurtures students in faith, social justice, and Indigenous education. Inspired by young people's drive for change, she sees hope as an active choice—one that sustains her belief in God's presence. Her message is simple yet powerful: lean into your gifts, embrace uncertainty, and trust that God's plan is filled with hope. 'Give things a go—you never know how it might shape you.'

Read Geraldine's inspiring story on our MSS website: [www.missionarysisters.org.au/news](http://www.missionarysisters.org.au/news)



Geraldine at the graduation of her Graduate Diploma of Theology. Photo courtesy Geraldine Vytilingam.

## **'Free2b Girls' building meaning and connection among girls and women**

**It was lovely to receive this update recently from Lorraine Groves MSS (pictured right) who is based in Hobart, Tasmania. Lorraine wrote to our community of women, and we'd like to share it with you:**

Greetings one and all, Liz Jordan (great-niece of Monica Carroll MSS) and I went to St Helens to celebrate International Women's Day with the 'Free2b Girls' who have had grants and support from Highways and Byways. Being a long weekend, St Helens was buzzing with people. We gathered and were welcomed by the girls and women at the Sun Rock Studio.

Tani Langoulant started 'Free2b girls' in 2017 and it has developed from then. We began sitting in a circle creating a safe place for the girls and women to share, and be supported without any judgment. This was enabled by a special activity and a ball of wool representing 'connections'. It was powerful by the end of the activity. The overwhelming expression was GRATITUDE for being able to be together and for one another. Their aim is to build up self-esteem and confidence in the girls and women in tough times.



## **Human slavery happens in our local areas**

Stancea Vichie MSS has long been involved with ACRATH, Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans. At a recent Speaker's Breakfast at Parliament House in Melbourne, Victoria, Stancea was among a cohort of ACRATH representatives, urging and alerting politicians to modern slavery that is happening in their electorates. Organised by Speaker Maree Edwards MP, the event highlighted ACRATH's anti-slavery work with representatives discussing their efforts to eliminate modern slavery, including forced marriage, migrant worker exploitation, and unethical supply chains.

ACRATH member Marg Leahy reinforced that modern slavery exists in every electorate 'no matter what electorate you belong to'. Following the event, ACRATH members engaged MPs in discussions on tackling these issues and supporting survivors.

Photo of Stancea Vichie MSS courtesy ACRATH.

**Visit our website to read these stories in more detail:**  
[www.missionarysisters.org.au/news](http://www.missionarysisters.org.au/news)





## Thank you to the MSS Stewardship Council Members

The Missionary Sisters of Service remain deeply grateful to the Stewardship Council members—Prof. Gabrielle McMullen AO, Mary O'Dea, David Alcock, Sauro Antonelli (all pictured above), Stancea Vichie MSS, and Bernadette Wallis MSS—along with our business manager and secretary to the Council, Glenn D'Souza (pictured far right), whose unwavering support plays an ever-important role in upholding the life and mission of the MSS. They have always been guided by a deep understanding of the MSS's history, purpose and charism and with generous hearts and voluntary service, have assisted in establishing a secure process for the MSS as we move toward fulfilment. Thank you to all of the members again for ensuring that our Sisters can continue living out our mission with strength, clarity and purpose.

## Monique Saywell, 'a shifting of the heart' with *Laudato Si*

The 2024 MSS Scholarship in honour of our 80th anniversary of foundation was awarded in early 2024 to Monique Saywell. This scholarship, which focuses on women and ecological studies, is enabling Monique to undertake a Masters of Pastoral and Spiritual Care through the University of Divinity (auspiced by Yarra Theological Union). Now in her second year of studies, Monique says the encyclical, *Laudato Si*, has become her 'companion'.



'Last year, I used it to form the shape of my course and this second year I have dived deeper still. A few weeks ago, as I re-read the encyclical, I was struck by the importance and relevance it continues to hold. It was not lost on me that, as I read, I was waiting for a water delivery, a much needed and longed for delivery (for those that may not know, the Adelaide Hills and rural South Australia is in a water crisis). Although *Laudato Si* provides practical and pragmatic ways forward, it also calls for something much deeper, a shifting of the heart—here, rural families have great tenacity as they advocate for access to water, and at the same time, they hold onto hope that rain will come again. As I explore subjects around ageing, dying and palliative care, and death as depicted throughout Christian art, I continue to be drawn into the deep need for all of humanity to be tended and cared for and for humanity to tend to each facet of ecology, as the Divine Gardener tends to us all.'



Image courtesy Fiona Basile

### **‘In The Beginning’, a reflection by Corrie van den Bosch MSS**

Embark on a thought-provoking journey with Corrie van den Bosch MSS’s latest reflection, *In the beginning*, which commences by contemplating the profound significance of the opening words of Genesis. Inspired by a retreat guided by Kate Rigby’s *Meditations on Creation in an Era of Extinction*, this reflection delves into the urgent ecological concerns of our present era, ultimately discovering a steadfast foundation in the boundless power of divine love.

Corrie’s reflection illuminates how the love of God, generously poured into our hearts, serves as an unshakeable basis for hope. This is not a passive hope, but rather a dynamic force that propels us into a mission of embracing all of creation with compassion, tenderness, and love. Corrie’s exploration encourages us to acknowledge the Divine essence within every being and to actively engage in the work of healing our world through love-infused actions.

*Hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been  
poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit  
who has been given to us (Rom. 5: 5).*

Discover more by reading the full reflection written by Corrie for the March edition of Contemplative Evolution Network ([www.contemplativeevolutionnetwork.com](http://www.contemplativeevolutionnetwork.com)) of which Corrie has been part, for many years. See: [www.missionarysisters.org.au/spirituality](http://www.missionarysisters.org.au/spirituality)

