

**ELIZABETH HAYES
AND HER MISSIONARY FRANCISCAN SISTERS:
Ministry to Brisbane and further afield, including PNG**

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Introduction

In 2005 the Missionary Franciscan Sisters, often called ‘the Kedron Sisters’, celebrated 75 years of the sisters’ ministry in Australia, especially in Brisbane. This response to an invitation to briefly record the history will begin with an introduction to the foundress, Elizabeth Hayes, followed by the arrival of pioneer sisters, and the service of the Franciscans that followed. ¹

Elizabeth Hayes, known in religious life as Mother M. Ignatius, founded a Third Order Regular Franciscan group with simple vows in late 1872 in Belle Prairie, Minnesota, USA. While she has always been acknowledged as foundress, until recently inadequate attention was given to what her early companions recalled, namely, ‘and foundress of the Confraternity for the Diffusion of Good Literature’. While Elizabeth began the community on North American soil, it was with great foresight that she later established her mother-house in Rome. Her community became known as the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Present research presents her as Franciscan, educator, missionary, foundress and journalist.

Elizabeth, born in 1823, was a Guernsey woman of English Anglican parents and her father, the Rev. Philip Hayes, conducted the successful St Peter Port School that prepared boys for matriculation. The Hayes' forebears were very musical and their names were associated especially with compositions, publications and performances of George F. Handel. Elizabeth was the youngest surviving child of the Hayes' ten children and her parents ensured that she received a sound education, was fluent in French and English, and that her early love of literature was encouraged.

Living in London and Oxford in the 1840s, Elizabeth - working as a teacher - was influenced by the leaders of the Oxford Movement and in 1850 she became a pioneer in the Anglican Sisterhood at Wantage (outside Oxford). A qualified school principal and a religious leader for some years, Elizabeth next converted to Catholicism and joined a group of women converts who lived in a religious community. These women, under the leadership of Elizabeth Lockhart – sister of the famous Fr William Lockhart - followed the Rosminian Rule and lived in Greenwich and later in Bayswater, London. Through the influence of Fr Henry Manning, later Cardinal, this group became associated with the newly French-founded community of Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Glasgow. Elizabeth made her vows with them on 26 November 1859. Historians of religious life are interested to learn that, through the Glasgow Franciscans, the sisters trace their story through the Third Order Grey Sisters community at Comines in France, back to Franciscan tertiary Angela of Foligno, and finally to St Francis.

Elizabeth Hayes wanted to be a missionary - even made a fourth vow to the missions - and she was sent immediately to the Franciscan Sisters' mission in Jamaica (West Indies). During this period she wrote much of what is known as her Diary.² Later she worked with Franciscans in Europe, and then opened a convent in Sèvres – well outside Paris in those days but not so today. War, travel and many trials strengthened Elizabeth's missionary dream. God directed her to North America's 'Wild West' where she opened St Anthony's school at the beginning of 1873, began the community and introduced her sisters to the Apostolate of the Press. By now Elizabeth was approaching her 50th birthday yet her courage and zeal had not diminished.

For 21 years until her death in 1894, Elizabeth showed herself an intelligent, caring and adventurous woman who with determination and intense love for God was able to inspire many other women in the Franciscan way of life. Like some other European community leaders in North America, she suffered because of an anti-foreigners attitude in the United States. Bishops at times encouraged sisters to shake off the authority of a Mother General in Rome, leading sisters to separate and establish their own diocesan autonomy. For Elizabeth the experience of separation meant watching many of her pioneer sisters form a diocesan group in Little Falls, another town of Minnesota not far from Belle Prairie. On the other hand, years later in 1964, 26 Franciscan sisters from Mother Elizabeth Lockhart's English community amalgamated with Elizabeth Hayes' institute.

Elizabeth's breadth of reading, editing and publishing was amazing for she had a great enthusiasm for evangelisation through the diffusion of good books. A particular element in her life was her desire to train sisters in religious life and to send them out in service to God's people at a time when nineteenth-century missions flourished. The Australian mission began in 1930 with the arrival of our pioneer sisters. Australian-based sisters initially experienced being directly governed by the Superior General and her Council in Rome, to becoming a province in 1958 with Mother M. Macartan Kenny as the first provincial. Later through many adaptations after Vatican II and increased awareness of the leadership style practised by St Clare, early follower of St Francis and founder of the Poor Clares, the sisters restructured into circles of communion through which greater local and individual responsibility is lived. Sisters do not live in large communities under one roof but are linked and supported by one another in their particular regional circle and have an Australian leadership team.

Elizabeth Hayes indicated that she was aware in 1888 of the presence of Franciscan friars in 'the diocese of Sydney'.³The Order of Friars Minor initially arrived in the 'Land of the Southern Cross' not as a community but came to work individually for bishops, or as bishops.⁴ William Ullathorne (1806-89), as Vicar General for Bishop Bede Polding, recorded that he asked Irish Franciscans in Dublin to come to Australia. He gained two volunteers, Patrick B. Geoghegan ofm,⁵ who returned with him in 1837 and Frank Coffee ofm who came later. A community of Franciscan friars made a foundation in Kedron, Brisbane, in 1929 with Fidelis Griffin ofm as Parish Priest.

Pioneers

Fr Fidelis searched in Australia for sisters to teach in the new parish school but found it impossible to find any. Previously in Ireland, he was introduced to Mother M. Scholastica Mullin who was assistant leader of the international Missionary Franciscan Sisters' institute. So he made a request to the institute's Superior General in Rome, Rev. Mother M. Benignus Holland; his plea was heard and Sisters M. Dympna Ahern and Agnella O'Callaghan, teachers in the United States, set out accompanied by Mother M. Scholastica. They arrived in Brisbane in January 1930 to begin their educational work in Kedron.

The friars gave up their Turner Road presbytery in order to provide a convent for the sisters. The pioneer sisters, like Dympna and Agnella, were to be mainly Irish-born and had previously left their homeland to minister in other countries. From the USA, Egypt or Rome they came to Australia; Dympna from Savannah, GA, and Agnella from North End, Boston, were joined the same year by Jarlath McIntyre from Brooklyn, NY, soon named their superior, and Isidore Brennan from Cambridge, MA. In 1931, Bernadette O'Callaghan⁶ arrived from Rome with Purification Hannon. In 1935 also from Rome came Majella Mullin and Rosina Casey while the next year, Padua Nolan arrived from Egypt. In 1937, Macartan Kenny arrived from Philadelphia and Alicia O'Donnell from Chicago while the following year, Leo Dwyer and Jose Gallagher arrived from Rome. Jose was our returning 'Aussie' who had been serving in Egypt.⁷

In 1938, Sr Patricia McIntyre⁸ came from Brooklyn, NY and from Rome came Olive Calnan in 1940. Next in 1946, Martinian McSweeney, Leocadia (Elizabeth) Prendergast and Quentin Kirwan arrived in Brisbane. They had come from our novitiate in Bloomfield, Mullingar, in Ireland via Dublin and Liverpool, and finally Sydney where they disembarked from the Nestor. (The ship's other passengers were mainly war-brides coming to Australia.) More missionaries arrived from Ireland in 1947; they were Helen Jefferies, Cassian (Catherine) Dower, Pacifica (Philomena) Conroy and Kiernan McAuliffe. The total number of Irish-born sisters to reach our shores was now twenty-one.

The sisters' presence and life-style inspired young Australian women to want to follow in the footsteps of Saints Francis and Clare, and Elizabeth Hayes. Five women set out in 1937 to begin their formation as Australian novices in Rome and they included, Ita Moore later Sr M. Francis; Nellie Curtin (Damien); Denise Donovan (Christina); Bonnie O'Brien (Raymond) and Kath O'Brien (Ursula). A joyful return to Brisbane for the second year novices was celebrated in 1939. First Profession of Vows for Raymond, Francis, Christina and Damien was in early 1940.

Sr Monica completed part of her training in Rome and made her Final Profession in 1946. Sr Clare Walker, a gifted musician, the first sister to complete all her formation in Kedron, entered the Kedron convent in 1940 and made her First Profession of vows in 1943. More young women were inspired by the early sisters and asked to join the MFIC Kedron community. They learnt to imbibe Franciscan spirituality along with the special charism of Elizabeth Hayes.

Ministry in Education

Catholic Schools in the Brisbane Archdiocese were struggling to provide religious staff in the 1930s. It was to the ministry of education that our newly-arrived sisters first turned their attention. Committed to this ministry from the outset, sisters found that education of the period was religious, academic, cultural, and also very pastoral.

When the Mercy Sisters opened their Brisbane-based McAuley Teachers Training College, our Franciscan Sisters were welcomed and from the 1960s a stream of young sisters benefited from learning how to become qualified and committed primary teachers. Among many other words of wisdom, the college principal, Sr M. Julius, told sister-students that they would need a university degree in ten years time, so Franciscan leaders provided further educational opportunities and opened university doors for the young sisters.

As the years passed, Catholic education changed and the sisters committed themselves not only to teaching in classrooms and principalship of schools but to a wide variety of new ministries. These included, religious education co-ordination, religious education in government schools, training of catechists, education of members for school pastoral boards and parish pastoral councils, school librarians, college counsellors, consultants in Catholic education offices, facilitator in liturgy or mission offices.

Franciscan sisters ministered in each of the following places, first by themselves and later assisted by lay teachers from the 1960s: Kedron, Bardon, and Coorparoo (Cavendish

Road) in the Brisbane archdiocese, Silkwood in the Cairns' diocese, Coolangatta and Burleigh Heads on the Gold Coast, around Queensland with the educational mobile ministry in Pastoral Boards; Kingston in Brisbane, Rockonia in North Rockhampton, Marsden in Brisbane, Woree in Cairns, Toowoomba and Kingaroy.

St Anthony's School, Kedron

This opened in January 1930 and annual First Holy Communion days were highlights on the school calendar. A new building for St Anthony's was opened and blessed by Archbishop Duhig in 1951. A red letter day was celebrated in 1959 when Cardinal Gilroy KBE, Archbishop of Sydney (1940-71) visited the school. Besides academic excellence, success in interschool sport and marching was a feature of St Anthony's School for many years and sisters like Cassian, Raymond and Leocadia were excellent coaches and the sisters' long Franciscan habit and veil proved no hinderance. Sr M. Teresita Felsman was the last Franciscan Principal of the school in 1988.

Fond memories are held of an old wooden free-standing building on the primary school grounds, nicknamed the 'Doll's House', which was used as a music room and a remedial centre. Grand old trees around it, shading many a pupil at playtime, were given much care when Delamore retirement units were built around them. In 2002, the Agnella Centre was opened and Sr M. Agnella in her 93rd year, the one remaining pioneer sister, was able to attend.

Mt Alvernia College, Kedron

Just over fifty years ago, history was made for our Franciscan community in Australia with the opening of our secondary college, Mt Alvernia, in 1956. Although opened in response to a stated need, only ten students enrolled on the first day and their classroom was a large front room in the convent, the historical house called Delamore. Archbishop Duhig arrived unannounced that first day of February to greet the students and returned the following Friday to give the girls a ‘party’. During the year, the first college building was completed and in 1957 the year began with an enrolment of 29 students.

The curriculum in the early days included Religion, English, French, Latin, Maths A & B, and Commercial subjects; also within a few years Science and Home Economics were offered. Music, singing, sport and art were important in school learning from these early years and through the decades excellent results were recorded. Of significance in the late 70s was the venture into school musicals with Padua Boys’ College and this remains a yearly much-anticipated event.

Within ten years of foundation, the college enrolment reached 300 students. Between 1956 and 1992 eight sisters served as principals and over the years another twenty-two sisters worked in the college as teachers or support staff.

Mt Alvernia is committed to the total development of the students in the light of the Gospel and the tradition of St Francis and St Clare, aiming to develop the virtues of love, compassion, simplicity and joy. Introduction to the life of

Elizabeth Hayes is included in the students' studies and part of the college complex is known as the Elizabeth Hayes Resource Centre.

Mt Alvernia is now a thriving college of more than 700 students, a few sisters are members of the governing board and Sr Pauline Robinson is Project/Research Officer. Times have changed but the Franciscan Spirit and the fruit of the sisters' labour lives on;

see <http://www.mta.qld.edu.au>.

St Joseph's School, The Drive, Bardon.

The historical centre-piece of this school site has always been Bardon House. Built in 1853 by Joshua Jeays, this unique stone house was named Bardon because it rekindled memories of Bardon Hill in England. It had a series of owners. When uninhabited for a period it was called by local children, my mother included who gathered firewood nearby, the 'haunted house', until purchased by the church with first Mass celebrated in it in 1925. With its slate roof and sturdy chimneys, it was a presbytery for the local priests, Dr O'Donoghue and Fr R. Lyons, yet they moved out so it could become a Franciscan convent (1937) and provide the first classroom on the side veranda (1938).

The earliest Franciscan teachers in St Joseph's School were Sisters Jarlath, Macartan, Leo and Jose. With financial assistance from Dr M. Eakin, St Joseph's convent school opened the doors of its new timber building in 1940. The first scholarship class of 1940 consisted of Carmel Beirne,⁹ Betty Curry and Pat Cassidy. In the same year, so an old photograph shows, they enjoyed a fancy dress ball with

other pupils and their parents. When the sisters arrived in Bardon, it was the time of the Great Depression and many school children could not afford even the sixpence-a-week contribution for the sisters' support. Visiting the parents of students and helping needy families were part of the sisters' ministry. In the 1960s, St Joseph's A Grade Basketball team was a force rarely to be matched in premiership competition; there was great encouragement from Sr M. Lucy Wooden and other supporters.

Up to the 1970s, home visitation was continued to ensure close partnership between home and school. The Parents & Friends Association became an important part of school life and a provider of up-to-date classroom resources and playground improvements. When Sr M. Francine Shaw was principal (1972-76) the school staff included Sisters Pauline Robinson, Pacifica, Maureen (Andrews) and vibrant lay teachers including well-known ones like Mrs Pam Clay, Mrs Barbara De Vere, Mrs Thurlene Edwards and Ms Lorraine Scott.

The school was divided into 4 sports' teams; ribbons at interschool competitions were plentiful, swimming carnivals were great events at local and regional levels, and winning ball-game events in regional competition was normal. All this physical activity helped to stimulate the school's academic and religious life that drew increased numbers of parents to enrol their children. Imagine a primary school successfully presenting the Sound of Music. It's true, it was a smash!

When Sr M Leo, an early pioneer, left Bardon for eternity, past pupils flocked to farewell the sister who knew each one by name on the playground. For many years Sr Christina (Zammit) shared her gifts with the school and the parish community. In 2007 the Franciscans withdrew from Bardon House with 70 years of cherished memories.¹⁰

Our Lady of Mt Carmel School, Cavendish Road, Coorparoo

Franciscan Sisters lived in Mt Carmel Parish, Coorparoo, from 1943 to 1973. At first they travelled daily to school by tram from Kedron, next they lived at Marriot Street, and soon they moved to a house in Norfolk Road. The convent was in 'the gully' and the yard flooded often. In 1959 a convent was built and opened in Kerra Street thanks to the generosity of the Josephson family who donated the land behind their house to the church for this purpose. Today the former convent is converted to classrooms and is one structure among a cluster of buildings in the large school complex.

By 1956 the teachers were Sisters Macartan, Monica, Bonaventure, Helen, Veronica (Margaret Rubenach), Clara, Leocadia (Elizabeth), Therese (Mcgee), Joseph (Dawn), Paschal, so seven Australians and three Irish-born. In this period, the Graham Burrows School of Physical Education provided teachers for Mt Carmel students as it did for many convent schools in Brisbane. A yearly display for parents and parishioners was the common practice. An old photograph taken in the early 1950s records the land later covered by a brick extension that served as extended church on the ground floor and more classrooms upstairs.¹¹

In 1966 Franciscan Sisters at Mt Carmel were Sr M. Cassian, convent superior and school principal as was the practice in those days, Sisters Paulette (Golding), Fidelis, Macartan, Elizabeth R., Francine, Pauline D., Francesca (Cecilia) and Gerard.

The school marching squad regularly brought home the coveted cup from inter-school Catholic school sport competitions, a highlight in the school calendar from the 1960s. In the 1970s school excursions were the flavour of the day and it was nothing unusual to see some 54 grade-three pupils, accompanied by Sr Francine and six mums (ex-teachers/nurses), off together on a day's project. Musical activities, including guitar classes led by Sr Cecilia, were much appreciated by Mt Carmel students in the 1960s and early 70s.

The Franciscans withdrew in 1973 to enable some sisters to be missioned to the Australian outback, especially to Aboriginal communities; this invited the presence of Loreto Sisters while the work of committed lay-teachers continued.

St. John's Primary School, Silkwood

The sisters went to the Cairns diocese to minister in Silkwood Catholic School and the priest vacated the presbytery for the first six months until a convent was ready. The sisters arrived late 1947 and many hardships were endured. Every January from then on the convent and school walls would be covered with tropical mildew and sisters with elbow grease were needed. The Good Samaritan Sisters in Tully and Innisfail always provided hospitality and friendship.

Franciscan teachers in the far north in 1949 were Sisters Jarlath, Lucy, Padua, Clare and Fidelis and they were supported in their work by their Augustinian PP, Fr A. Natali. The history of St John's School records that its humble beginning was in a former sausage factory. A new building came in the 1960s, situated behind the church and surrounded by cane farms and frogs. Sisters loved the Italian customs of so many Silkwood residents, not to mention the feast of Three Saints, and Sisters Raymond, Leo, Vianney and Elizabeth R. never stopped praising the people for years afterwards.

Raised in North Queensland, Sr Jeanne La Spina brought a unique contribution to the Franciscans. In a published article, "From Sevres to Silkwood and Beyond. The Migrant Apostolate", she recalled her youthful amazement as to why 'five sisters would travel a thousand miles from Brisbane to bury themselves in Silkwood'.¹² The last sisters to work in the school were Celine and Crea and it was with heavy hearts that they said goodbye 40 years after the initial sisters had arrived.

Gold Coast Schools at Coolangatta and Burleigh Heads

The early history of St Augustine's Convent and School at Coolangatta was developed by the Sacred Heart Sisters. Franciscans arrived in late 1949, encouraged by Archbishop Duhig to have a large house that could provide a home for teaching sisters and also be a place for others to holiday and to make their annual retreat.

The Coolangatta Community of 1961 was Sisters Rita (Johnson), Vianney, Magdalen (Jo Scanlan), Olive, Angela (Frances Crowe), Clare, Jarlath, Martinian, Raymond and Hyacinth. Only a tall pine grove in the convent side yard separated house and school grounds. For many years from the little ‘music house’ at the end of the fernery, one would hear the voice of music teacher, Sr Clare, accompanied by the brave piano struggles of a would-be musician. A sister lucky enough to be in the end upstairs-classroom in St Augustine’s School in the 1960s, could stand on the classroom rostrum, look over the heads of her pupils and out through the windows to enjoy the sight of Cook Island and the sea. At the same time a beautiful Pacific Ocean breeze would come in from the shaded wide veranda. Delightful – pupils as well as breeze.

The parish purchased the convent and land so the sisters moved to a nearby house in 1975 and again in 1990. Sr Pauline Robinson, principal from 1976-83, was ably assisted in these years by sisters and an increasing number of lay staff including the long serving Mrs Joan Withers. The school moved to a new site at Currumbin Waters in 1987 and Sr Lucy continued as librarian until 1992. Sisters Raymond and Dawn were the last sisters to live in Coolangatta parish until they moved to Kingscliff in 2002.

In 1953 Sisters Raymond and Hyacinth travelled daily by bus from Coolangatta Convent to Burleigh to teach at the newly opened Infant Saviour Primary School. It flourished and in 1956 a small car was donated for the transportation of the three sister-teachers. What a blessing! In 1968 a convent was established at Marymount and Infant Saviour School

eventually became Marymount Primary School, relocated at Burleigh Waters. In 1981 Sr Paulette joined Sr Martinian on a staff that was composed then mainly of lay teachers.

Sr Agnella with lay helpers organized the Parish Religion Centre and teachers went forth to provide religious education to a growing number of local State School children. For many years, after much time dedicated to education, Sr Elizabeth P. assisted in the parish with the RCIA Program, ensured that altar linens in all parish churches were spotless and visited countless families, hospitals and nursing homes. Sr Vianney is remembered for her years of assisting Marymount's young pupils in the primary library and for training the parish altar servers.

The Franciscan Coat of Arms over Marymount Secondary College is a reminder that the Missionary Franciscan Sisters commenced here with a handful of students and a small staff in 1968. Teachers who gave years of service to build up this college include, the first principal - Sr Patricia (Crea), Marguerite (O'Brien), Carmel (2nd principal), Karen (Bourke), Rita, Helen, Jo and Francine. Sr Clara lived in the Burleigh Franciscan Community and worked (1991-96) with the Marriage Tribunal staff.

Other Educational Scenes

During 1980-2, Sr Francine worked as the first school board liaison officer for Queensland Catholic Education Office as it aimed to implement the vision of the Vatican II Council, the 'governed will be involved in the governing'. Sr Pauline joined the team in order to establish a mobile mission that was made possible by a large caravan that served as

accommodation and office. In 1983-85 they worked together to service Catholic schools/colleges, parishes and education offices throughout the State as Catholic education moved toward shared decision-making through policy-making based on Gospel values. A Catholic Leader article at the time read:

Getting ready for the long road. Sisters Pauline and Francine planning their long trips to meet with hundreds of teachers, principals, parents & friends, pastoral board members, pastors, CEO personal, bishops and diocesan educational councils in each diocese of Queensland.

Sisters taught and ministered for less years but with equal energy at Maryfields Catholic Primary School Kingston (1981-86), St Anthony's Primary School Rocktonia (1986-87) and St Mary's Primary School (1990s) in Rockhampton, St Gerard Majella School/College Woree in Cairns (1988-91), as staff member at Banyo Seminary (1980-89), as consultants at Brisbane Catholic Education Centre (1990-96), as counsellor in Kingaroy Catholic College (1998-2000) and in the Toowoomba diocese as director in liturgy (1993-2002) and co-ordinator in mission (1998-2003).

Papua New Guinea

In 1949 in response to a request from the Franciscan Friars, recently established in the Diocese of Aitape, PNG, our sisters set out from Brisbane on board the Malaita for Sissano. There was a pressing need for sisters to work in education and caring for the sick. Beginning in Sissano the sisters taught in schools, nursed the sick, especially caring for women in childbirth, and visited the surrounding villages.

They had a special concern for the education of young girls who were often denied the opportunity of schooling.

By 1953 a school and a hospital were in operation in Sissano and in the mountains at Fatima. Education took a giant step forward in 1967 when Aitape became a central educational facility with a high school for girls and boys. From Aitape also mobile clinic work was carried out in the surrounding outposts. While several sisters were involved pastorally in schools, in the 1970s pastoral ministry in parishes became a separate entity and was a much valued ministry in the mountain and coastal villages. Many sisters worked generously at this grass roots level and other sisters were called to work at diocesan and national levels. This Australian missionary venture came of age with the first profession of national novices in 1982, the establishment of a separate New Guinea province in 1984, and finally with the election of the first national provincial in 1998.

In 2007, Sr Quentin who was missioned to PNG in 1958, and stationed for 34 years in the Aitape Diocese in the West Sepik Province, has succumbed to increasing pressure to record some of the interesting stories of her life. Her book, *The Ride of My Life*, has been published and well received by those who appreciate the author's humour, simplicity, and understanding of tribal and village life. The anecdotes recounted are a tribute to all the MFIC missionaries who worked in PNG.

Aboriginal Missions

During the 1970s there was an increased surge of interest in working with the Aboriginal people and since we are a missionary institute, we wanted to participate in the initiatives. Sisters became involved in the Aboriginal apostolate in Dajarra in Western Queensland, Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory and Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberly district of Western Australia. While the emphasis in the first couple of years was to be a welcoming presence and to meet local people, the sisters were soon able to identify specific needs and invited especially the women and children to their literacy and home making classes and to religious events.

The 1980s marked a new development around Fitzroy Crossing, namely an outreach to distant Aboriginal communities. On a fortnightly trek Sisters Frances and Miriam travelled in their 4-wheel drive up to a 1000 kilometres, giving instruction and teaching practical skills as they made the rounds of the various camps. One Aboriginal man declared: 'Everybody likes you mob. You're always helping people.'

A mammoth bi-weekly task was providing clothes for the needy with the help of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Perth. Over the years, Sisters Rita, Teresita, Lucy, Cassian (Catherine), Quentin and Francine all participated in the Kimberly experience. Sadly the key in the door of the demountable-convent was turned for the last time in late 2000. On Bathurst Island in the Northern Territory, Patricia Cordwell made another significant contribution to the aboriginal missions.

As a highly trained nurse, she worked there with the Tiwi people and today Cecilia Prestashewsky ministers at Woorabinda in the Rockhampton diocese.

Other Pastoral Ministries

From 1985 our sisters responded to specific pastoral needs outside the field of education. This included parish pastoral ministry, working with the homeless, reaching out and being a presence to people in housing commission estates, being a presence to senior citizens by attending their gatherings and visiting the elderly in retirement homes. Places include, Marsden, Loganlea, Carinya, Evans Head, Kingscliff and Pottsville. Other sisters worked with the disabled, taught English to migrants or ministered as chaplains to the Italian communities. A few sisters undertook special training to equip them professionally as nurses and counsellors. Sue Sullivan has worked at the Mater Children's Hospital for many years while Maureen has counselled in places as far a field as Port Augusta, Emerald and Goondiwindi. It seems that the sisters could be found where ever people were in need and their Franciscan presence was requested. In the Sale diocese of Victoria today, Brisbane-born Elizabeth Roberts still provides pastoral care to the Italian community.

Delamore

In 1990 Delamore Retirement Community for aged-care became a new ministry in Kedron. The sisters purchased Delamore House for a convent back in 1935. Fifty years later the complex had become too large for the community's needs and too costly to maintain. A search began for possible ways of utilizing the property. Accommodation and care for retired people were identified as emerging needs in

the Brisbane Archdiocese. Finally, Delamore Retirement Community with its serviced apartments and numerous units became a reality due to much effort by Patricia Treacy and Margaret Rose; today it has around sixty-six contented residents. Sisters reside in a few units, in one building wing and in the 1960s two-story purpose-built convent within the complex

Overseas Ministries

At different times, sisters have been or are involved in our ministries in Italy, England, Ireland, Egypt, USA, PNG, Tchad and Bolivia. These ministries cover education, nursing, pastoral ministry, internal service and general administration. Elaine Morzone, an Australian sister, is the present leader of our international institute. The total number of sisters in the international institute continues to diminish and is approximately 270, with the largest number still in USA, and there are a handful of novices. Today in Australia, we are only 43 sisters with some in overseas ministries in PNG, Egypt, Sudan and Rome.

Conclusion

Most sisters are currently living in semi-retirement yet still serving in various ways. The more active are involved in a diversity of ministries in an effort to respond to current needs of the church and society, according to their personal gifts and talents and in the spirit of Francis, Clare and Elizabeth Hayes.

Our website is www.mficaust.org.au

Resources

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She has spent years in teaching, educational administration, pastoral school boards for QCEO and as consultant for BCEC. Research on Elizabeth Hayes has been Francine's focus for years, culminating in her 2006 thesis completed at ACU on Elizabeth Hayes and her Franciscan journal; a 2009 publication is underway.

ENDNOTES:

1. When first presented, the paper was accompanied by power point showing archival photographs selected from the 75th celebratory DVD.
2. The author edited the Diary for publication to commemorate the centenary 1894-1994 and in the next year produced a Companion to the Diary.
3. Elizabeth Hayes, 'The Seraphic Order', *Annals of Our Lady of the Angels XIII*, xi (1888): 338.
4. Jim Fitzgerald ofm, *Sowers of the Seed: Irish Franciscans in Victoria during the 19th Century* (Box Hill, Victoria: Franciscan private print, 1976), v, 5b.
5. A living relative of Patrick Geoghegan is Sr Teresa Geoghegan mfc.
6. Blood sister to Sr Agnella O'Callaghan.
7. Dawn Gallagher (Sr Jose), the first Australian-born Missionary Franciscan Sister, had departed for Rome in 1935 and was professed there in 1937.
8. Blood sister to Sr Jarlath McIntyre.
9. Carmel Beirne later became a Franciscan sister, known to many as Sr M. Ignatius mfc.
10. A list of the names of sisters who resided in Bardon House is found in Mrs M. Freer's celebration booklet.
11. An outstandingly fast and efficient brick layer, Mr Tom Moore of Haig Street, Coorparoo, was one of the workers employed for this project.
12. Sr M. Jeanne La Spina, 'From Sevres to Silkwood and Beyond... The Migrant Apostolate' in *Passageways*, Sr Helene Byrne mfc, ed., (Rome, MFIC, 1995), 151-54.