



MU Australia
Part of the World Wide Mothers' Union

DEPARTMENT OF MU CARITAS AND PROMOTION & DEVELOPMENT

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NEWSLETTER NO.4 DECEMBER 2009

Dear MU Friends

I returned to Australia in October and have been endeavouring to write this letter since then. However there was so much work waiting for me when I returned I have only now found time to get to it. Of course not having heard from me (except for some individual emails and 'phone calls) during the 5 months I was overseas, you have probably given up on me.

Having read Deane's No.4 Circular, advising us that the theme for the October 2010 AGM will be "Journeying Together", my thoughts went back to the 5 month journey which Royce and I have just completed. At times we travelled alone, depending entirely on one another to reach our destination and take advantage of the sights. This meant we were independent, but at times it was stressful.

There were times when we had the loving support of family and friends to look after us and show us around. During these times we felt safe and supported but to a certain extent lost our independence.

On two occasions we joined with groups of people from varying backgrounds who were unknown to us at the beginning of the journeys. These were the times when we formed new relationships and shared experiences with one another. Some of these relationships will continue. We were able to relax on these journeys as we knew we had experienced people to lead us but at the same time we had choices.

I mention the above because I feel life is a journey where we experience all of the above and more. I must say the journey with strangers was the most challenging and rewarding. The challenge was to accept people as they were and travel in harmony. The rewards were the forming of relationships, sharing knowledge and experiences and having an experienced person to guide us while allowing us choices.

This can apply to our life as MU members. We should welcome the opportunity to join with other people and organisations to share the story of Mary Sumner and what the Mothers' Union stands for. In Branches, Groups and Dioceses, if the Leader is experienced and confident she or he will encourage members to reach out and become involved and make choices and decisions, knowing that there are certain guidelines. I mentioned in my March 2009 Newsletter the fact that I was involved in other organisations in order to gain knowledge of what is happening in the community and Australia wide and to spread knowledge regarding the Mothers' Union and MU Australia.

While travelling we experienced many forms of worship from the Cowboy Church in Colorado, small English village churches, Cathedrals in Truro, Winchester, Liverpool and London to the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Some services were different and in some cases we could not understand the language but we did understand the strong faith and devotion of the people involved. It didn't matter that the Cowboy Church was held in a horse barn or that the worshippers in Notre Dame Cathedral were from many countries, we all felt joined in our relationship and journey with God.

I thank the P&D co-ordinators and Caritas leaders who have sent me their Reports for 2009. I look forward to receiving all Reports as I need to know what is happening around Australia. Also thank you to the Dioceses who have sent to me their Annual Reports and their News Sheets. I enjoy reading all the news from the Dioceses.

While in the UK we had a base in Winchester, so I had the opportunity to visit the Church and Rectory at Old Alresford where Mary Sumner started the Mothers' Union. I must say it was a thrill and rather strange to be standing in the church where Mary Sumner worshipped for 34 years while her husband was Rector. I also attended a Mothers' Union meeting while in Winchester and will continue to correspond with the members who made me feel so welcome.

I also had the opportunity visit Mary Sumner House while in London and spent some pleasant hours with Joanna and Vania, talking about Promotion and Development (or marketing) and Caritas. Brenda kindly spent time showing Royce and me around Mary Sumner House. Unfortunately we were not able to stay there, but accepted the Mothers' Union choice of accommodation in Belgrave Street (very satisfactory). I was given quite a pile of Promotion material which I will be adapting for use in Australia (I have spoken to Elaine about this). While on the subject of promotion material, I am in the process of putting together a Handbook for Caritas Leaders and also a bi-fold brochure for Caritas.

Since arriving back in Australia in October I have travelled to Wangaratta to speak at their AGM/Coffee Morning. I also had the opportunity to spend a couple of hours talking with the P&D Co-ordinator Fr.David Holloway and then the next day I met with Beth Scaysbrook the Diocesan Caritas Leader. Both are doing a great job in Wangaratta. A big "thank you" to Shirley Steel the Diocesan President for the invitation to visit her Diocese and for her hospitality and organising the time for me to speak with Fr.David and Beth.

I have been invited to both Melbourne and Adelaide in August 2010. I would be happy to visit other Dioceses and share information with them and have the opportunity to meet with P&D co-ordinators and Caritas Leaders and groups.

I have recently had enquiries regarding the formation of Anna Groups and Caritas Groups. One Caritas Group in the pipeline is an email group. I will keep you informed. Please remember, before you close a Branch consider the members becoming an Anna Group, as they can still meet as a group without the hassle of office bearers. However please make sure they have a member from the Branch to keep them up to date and involved. There is information on the Web site and also in the Spring 2009 edition of MiaMia. Please contact me if you require any further information.

Just a couple of thoughts on the five Objects.....

(1) The Mothers' Union exists to uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and promote its wider understanding.

How can we do this unless we question and explore what we mean by Christ's teaching on marriage? Are you ready to get a copy of the new "Marriage Kit" when it comes from the printer? Keep asking about it.

(2) The Mothers' Union exists to encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church.

How can we do this unless we live out our faith in our relationships?

Are you earnestly promoting the PEP courses, or are you saying it is too hard. Are you contacting schools, kindergarten groups, play groups or even your local councils and State MP's.?

(3) The Mothers' Union exists to maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer and worship and service.

Think Global as well as locally in our praying and knowledge. Get your copy of Families Worldwide now being produced by our Publication Department. Don't forget "SERVICE". There are so many areas in which we can give service.

Sometimes we only have to look at our neighbourhood. If you can't think of anything to do, ask your local Anglicare. Remember we can't promote MU unless we have something to promote.

(4) (5) To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children and To help those whose family life has met with adversity.

THINK SOCIAL...Being people of faith in action involves living in solidarity with others. We need to act as part of a large body, and motivate people to join us in our action. Being a Christian does not require us to act alone.

BE REAL.....Being people of faith in action involves becoming aware of reality. We need to recognise and name injustice, suffering and inequality.

ACT JUSTLY....We should make an effort to understand the causes of injustice, poverty, child abuse, etc. We need to challenge these problems at their roots as well as take practical steps.

WHEN WE WERE ADMITTED AS MEMBERS OF THE MOTHERS' UNION WE MADE CERTAIN PROMISES...TIMES HAVE CHANGED BUT THE PROBLEMS IN SOCIETY ARE STILL THERE AS IN MARY SUMNER'S DAY. IT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO LET MEMBERS IN OUR BRANCHES SIT PASSIVELY AND SAY "LET SOMEONE ELSE DEAL WITH IT, WE ARE TOO OLD AND HAVE DONE OUR BIT". LEADERS NEED TO SET THE EXAMPLE AND ALSO LISTEN TO MEMBERS IF THEY HAVE NEW AND MAYBE CONTOVERSIAL IDEAS....(sometimes these can be toned down and so work)!!! STEP OUT IN FAITH.

In closing I wish you all a blessed and restful Christmas and may 2010 find you full of enthusiasm and ready to journey with strangers as well as friends as you do His work as members of MU Australia.

I look forward to meeting with you in 2010. Love and prayers,

Marjorie.