



MU Australia
Part of the World Wide Mothers' Union

**DEPARTMENT OF MU CARITAS AND
PROMOTION & DEVELOPMENT**

promotion@mu.org.au

caritas@mu.org.au

**NEWSLETTER NO.1 FEBRUARY 2010
TO DIOCESAN P&D CO-ORDINATORS AND CARITAS LEADERS,
STATE DELEGATES, DIOCESAN PRESIDENTS AND AUSTRALIAN
EXECUTIVE.**

Dear MU friends

Where have the first two months of this year gone? Maybe it's because I am getting older or busier or both of these. Maybe it's because there are so many people needing help and so much to do to try to make a difference in this World in which we live. We as MU members and Christians cannot sit back and let others do the work and only give "lip service" to what we have promised to do. *Is this why the months fly by so quickly for us?*

As you all know we are keeping in mind for this year the theme "**Journeying Together**". Since my last letter to you I have had time to reflect on life's journeys. Sadly one of my sisters died just 5 days before Christmas and before she died I had the opportunity to reflect with Irene on our journey as sisters and then with family and friends after the funeral. I have sad moments but then realize that Irene's last **journey** was into God's loving arms and I can only be happy.

Earlier this month I was asked to speak to a Historical Group on the history of St. Lucia Kindergarten where I had worked for 23 years before retiring. This was a time of recalling the happy memories of **Journeying Together** with the children and parents during their time at Kindy and with many into their later lives. I still keep in touch with many of the "children" and have at times acted as a "Dorothy Dix". As well as receiving invitations to weddings and graduations, two weeks ago I attended the Ordination of Julia.

Finally, this week I had to our home on Bribie Island eight of the staff who had taught with me at St. Lucia Kindergarten and the Preschool from 1974 to 2004. What memories we shared. We eight had **Journeyed Together** for 30 years sharing a close bond and many happy and at times sad times. We belong to varying churches, we lead quite separate lives but the one strong bond is our love and wellbeing of children and their parents and our respect and love for each other.

You may wonder why on earth I have rambled on so much, but I am trying to make a point that no matter where or with whom we journey we should never behave in such a way that we lose respect for ourselves or that others lose respect for us and what we endeavour to accomplish.

With Elections for Groups, Branches, Diocesan and Australian positions looming, we should make nominees aware that they should not accept the positions for the “glory” of it but with a clear and determined “vision” to make a difference. They should be made aware of the responsibilities before being “pushed” into a role they know nothing about. A few things to keep in mind.....

- (a) What time is the person willing to devote to the position
- (b) Does the person have a clear understanding of Mothers’ Union Worldwide and what is done in Australia and Worldwide. Does the person fully understand the role she/he is asked to accept.
- (c) When choosing people for positions it should be for their vision, qualities and enthusiasm (not because they are friends to be “got on side”)
- (d) Does the person understand all the Departments of MU Australia and how they operate.
- (e) If the person needs some assistance to understand the role, are you willing to give time to nurture them and are they willing to be nurtured?

These are only a few things to keep in mind.

I suppose you will think it is not my role to state the above. However I feel it is necessary to promote and consider the well-being of the office-bearers at all levels of MU Australia (or any organisation) if it is to prosper. Continual criticism and undercurrents lead to uncertainty, friction and division. As members of a Christian organisation we should be able to “be up front” with any concerns we have and all parties should be open to discuss these concerns. From what I have observed and experienced this would save a great deal of “heart-ache” and sense of failure.

Maybe in this Lenten Season as we walk in the steps of Jesus and try to understand how he suffered from betrayal of “friends” and the ridicule of many people, we can look at our own lives. Jesus did what he was called to do but it displeased many people who lied in order to achieve their goal and to discredit Jesus and other people.

Jesus won in the end..He did not fail. Sadly we are only human and we can feel we have failed through no fault of our own, if we lack support and understanding.

Reading through the latest Families First I read the following in the article “**Joy like a Fountain**”...”Nehemiah actually says to a people, grieving over their failures,

‘Don’t flay yourselves, go home and have a party instead. Invite the neighbours, and then the joy of the Lord will strengthen you’.” This was an article on joy in church, but it could well apply to **JOY** in our Branches and Groups. People will not want to join a group if there are long faces and no fun and laughter. We need to be prayerful, caring and helpful but not joyless. The article went on to say that as a child is instinctively joyful they laugh 300 times a day.....adults laugh 40 times a day or less.

At your next gathering or committee meeting organise someone to count how many times the members laugh. (do this without telling the members what is happening)

I’d like to hear the result. In my next Newsletter I’ll tell you what happens in my Bribie Branch.

Once again referring to Families First (I trust you all receive one) look on Page 7 “**A childcare charter for grandparents**” The questions here could be used for a discussion topic at one of your gatherings, either Caritas or MU. If there is a MU Branch and Caritas Group in the same Parish I would suggest both do it and then compare the answers. This could be interesting.

I found the last Families First so interesting I am also asking you to read P.10/11 **“Divorce”** and also take note of Rosemary’s article. This is the position we should make clear to people in the community and especially intending members. There are still people in the community who will have nothing to do with” Mothers’ Union “ as they or a relative have been hurt by the past attitude of the Mothers’ Union regarding divorce and many do not know the position has changed.

Do you want to raise some money for your special MU project locally or Australian? Look at the **“Count your Blessings”** on Pages 26/27 “Families First” and put it to your members. I know Lent has commenced, but I’m sure you can have a two week “catch up”. I think this is a great idea and it would be interesting to see how much the members’ “Blessings” are worth. I’d like to hear the results.

I appear to have done a lot of “poaching” from Families First” but I think it is great to share ideas. I realize you may have already taken these things on board. However, quite often what is read by the Presidents or Leaders is not passed on to members.

For instance how many Diocesan Presidents, Diocesan Caritas Leaders and other Department Heads pass on to Executive members and branches/groups the Newsletters (or information/ideas from them) received from the Australian Department Heads. I know in some Dioceses the letters are listed in Correspondence received and are tabled for perusal but in other Dioceses they are read only by the Diocesan President and/or Department Head concerned and go no further.

There needs to be more communication and information going out to all Executive members and members in general from the letters from Australian Department Heads. In this way the Australian Executive is not seen as “those up there” but ordinary MU members who are happy to share ideas and information to assist in promoting our great organisation.

I have been concerned about the apparent lack of understanding in some Caritas Groups of where they stand with relation to being part of MU Australia. With this in mind I will be sending out within the next week a special letter with some questions which I would ask be put to Caritas Groups. I’m sure most of them are as confused as I am with certain aspects and if we are to grow we need to be of one mind. I thank Caritas Groups and Leaders for all they do in their communities and my wish is that we can all move forward.

In closing I wish you a rewarding Lenten Season as we move towards Easter and I repeat what Carolyn (Education Department) says in part ***“We need other people to share our hearts, our laughter and our tears with”..... “Our MU Groups”*** (includes Caritas) ***“are a great place to build relationships, to share our lives and experience genuine fellowship”.***

I am sad to say that I will not be nominating for a second 3 year term as your Australian Caritas Leader and P&D Co-ordinator. I really enjoy the role which I undertook over two years ago, but I feel it is time for a younger person with new ideas to go forward into 2011. I will be contacting a couple of people to see if they might be interested and I’m sure you will also have some ideas. Please remember what I said earlier in my letter regarding asking people to nominate. I will always be available to speak to anyone who wants information.

Love and Prayers

Marjorie