



MU Australia
Part of the World Wide Mothers' Union

**DEPARTMENT OF CARITAS AND
PROMOTION & DEVELOPMENT**
M.Voss

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Dear MU friends

As we head towards the end of another year and for many the end of their involvement with MU Australian Executive and Australian Council I pray that you have "Journeyed" well and will have happy memories and also enthusiasm for those things yet to be accomplished.

This year I have enjoyed journeying and speaking and meeting with members in MU Branches and Caritas Groups in Rockhampton Diocese, at the South Australian state "Joining Together Day" and the Victorian State Conference. I also spent a couple of days in Melbourne with Anne Kennedy sharing time with Melbourne Caritas and MU Branch members. I was happy but not surprised to learn of the work being carried out by members within their communities and further afield.

Relationships.....In our journeys have our relationships with others been loving, respectful and flourishing? This can be easy when dealing with those close to you or those who fall into your category of nice people to know....who have the same values as you.... even those who don't disagree with your opinions, etc. However in the real world there is nastiness and ugliness, varying opinions and values, situations you may not want to acknowledge or even think about. It is our duty as members of Mothers' Union-MU Australia to open our minds and hearts and give consideration to the plight of the homeless, the persecuted, people seeking refuge, those with different values to us, those we see as "different", and much more. Within our own Dioceses and at Australian level do we share a vision to "bring about a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships."

*I pose this question as during my journey with MU Australia and other organisations I have experienced first hand from time to time the lack of loving and respectful relationships which certainly does not lead to flourishing relationships. If we are to flourish as MU Australia we must have at least **respectful** relationships among members, our parishes and the outside community.*

As I have travelled to various Dioceses and also within my own Diocese I have brought to the notice of members the "New way of expressing the Aim, Purpose and Objects of Mothers' Union-2008" and the Mothers' Union Discussion Booklet from the UK "We are created by God" exploring our identity and relationships. After

having discussed the first topic I have introduced the booklet for further consideration. The Booklet helps us to discuss four different aspects of our identity and relationships. These are **marriage and cohabitation, divorce and further marriage, being single or widowed, and gay and lesbian sexuality**. I will not give any further information on the Booklet at this time, except to say in most cases it has led to interesting discussions. At times some members stated they have their own views and values and did not see the need to consider other views. To me this is like putting ones head in the sand. These issues are out there and as committed MU members it should be our aim to look at the bigger picture and if necessary walk beside people who may be marginalised or who may not come up to certain standards held by us. I would recommend (as our Primate did at the MU Brisbane Diocesan Lady Day service this year) that MU members look at and consider studying this Booklet. This might encourage a broader understanding of **Relationships**. Only God knows where our life will take us and our families.

Elaine (Australian Publication Manager) is carrying stocks of this Booklet.

Promotion.....Websites- As I have browsed the Australian and Diocesan websites I have become aware of the lack of information which would encourage the general community to become involved in MU Australia. We need to give information that reflects that we are a vibrant, active and caring organisation working at grassroots level in the community to help those in need. If you haven't a MU member with the skills to update your website, ask someone outside the organisation to look after it. This is another way to involve the community.

Media- This can take the form of Newspapers, Radio, TV. We should aim to accurately inform the public of all ongoing events, fundraising and news. Presidents and Promotion & Development co-ordinators should be aware of all activities being undertaken in their Diocese and make a point of promoting these in the wider community. I gave some hints in my May Newsletter about Media presentation.

Newsletters- Make your Diocesan Newsletters attractive and interesting. Remember these should be available to hand out in the community so are they

- * Attractive enough for you and other people to pick up and read?
- Does the content reflect the objectives of MU Australia? Does the content and appearance reflect a forward thinking and relevant organisation?
- Does it portray the world wide aspects of Mothers' Union?

This can also apply to Annual Reports which are usually given to outside organisations and the clergy as well as to our Branches/Groups. Are they all about facts and figures and closing branches and the number of badges presented **OR** do they reflect the activities of MU in the Diocese and worldwide in a positive way?

Speaking- Whether you are speaking to other organisations in an endeavour to promote MU and the work carried out by members or having a speaker come in to speak to your members, there are a few points to remember...

- Have the correct information regarding MU in Australia and worldwide.
- Be prepared to answer questions
- Be enthusiastic and be prepared to acknowledge other points of view

- *If speakers are coming to speak at your gatherings make sure they know some background of MU Australia and how we are involved locally and overseas.*

I am in the final stages of producing the new brochures, etc. for MU Australia. I have changed direction in certain areas but at last I think I am happy about what I aim to present.

Development.....*Members should always be aware of areas of need in the parish and community. If you are looking for projects to undertake you can always contact Anglicare or other support services. There are also great ideas and information to be gained on the UK websites such as MSH > www.themothersunion.org or Manchester> www.mothersunionmanchester.org Manchester provide Virtual Babies for use in schools, give bags of goodies to first year University students and are involved in other interesting projects. Have you thought about having a Wedding Expo?.....Inviting members of another Diocese to visit and you arrange billets and fellowship?.....Organise a sponsored activity to promote MU and assist a worthwhile project? Sometimes it helps to join with another organisation in order to undertake a certain project keeping in mind the rules under which we operate.*

Caritas....*I am pleased that I have had the opportunity to meet members of Caritas Groups as I have travelled around. I would have liked the opportunity to meet with all Groups in my term as Australian Leader, but this was not possible. As you know I will be resigning as Australian Caritas Leader and P&D Co-ordinator at the end of this year. I'm sure the new Australian Leader will be there for you and represent you well at Australian level. Before I leave I will be sending to you my findings from the survey I conducted. I thank those groups who responded. I aim to have a more unified Caritas membership with hopefully a Caritas link on the Australian website.*

In the new promotion material being produced there will be a Caritas postcard to distribute and also a Poster in A4 size to go on Notice Boards. I am also in the process of writing an information booklet for Caritas.

I know I am late requesting this, but if you have anything you want me to discuss at the Australian Executive and Australian Council Meeting in 2 weeks time, please contact me. I will be there as your representative.

In the coming weeks there will be changes in positions for many members at Branch, Diocesan and Australian level. Let us Pray for and Act with justice and patience, dignity and acceptance, forgiveness, mercy and compassion as we continue to work on behalf of this great organisation to bring hope and a sense of belonging to many.

Marjorie

Australian Caritas Leader and Promotion & Development co-ordinator