

CLC VICTORIAN NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2008



WELCOME TO EXCO NEWS

Victorian CLC Assembly 31 August 2008

The CLC Victorian Assembly is about gathering, reflecting and discerning our future direction and is the forum for the wider CLC community to elect their new State Executive Council. Over the coming months you will be receiving correspondence from Victoria's current ExCo in the lead up to the Assembly. We ask that you take the time to discern the process of nominating and electing a new executive council and to discern personally and/or as a CLC group on a possible commitment to a role of shared responsibility. Being a part of a community that is CLC provides these opportunities to answer a call to service in a leadership capacity. We pray that you might be inspired by the opportunities ahead for CLC in Victoria, Australia and the world.

What are we asking of CLC Leaders?

In CLC we lead each other as we listen to how each member is hearing God's call in life...we are all leaders. As we engage the Spiritual Exercises we allow God to teach us about ourselves. We learn to observe ourselves and notice the movement in our hearts. Those in leadership roles must listen well to our members. Information should flow freely so all members are clear about the situation of the community and can participate in developing vision and direction. The role of ExCo is to guide this process. **Each CLC member** shares in the responsibility to develop the resources the community needs. We do this with our

financial support and by giving our time and talent. To lead in CLC is to participate in leading CLC as an Apostolic Body.

(Lois Campbell)

Current ExCo members share their experience...

President

As President over the last 4 years I have been inspired by the community support and the willingness of members to share leadership responsibility. CLC Victoria has a depth of spiritual energy which makes service to the community a shared experience...we are all learning from each other. We have learnt (in our voluntary capacity on ExCo) to discover through discernment which of the many things is the most important, as we balance our CLC service within the context of profession, family and community. Working with a team of committed members on ExCo with wise Ecclesiastical Assistants has been a most rewarding experience.

~ Noreen Nicholson ~

Treasurer

My journey as Treasurer on ExCo has been one of richness and growth. Sitting on ExCo I have grown as a person and as a Christian. As a member of such group that has been our elected council, has allowed me to deepen relationships on many levels with many people. Sharing the responsibility of many tasks set out I have engaged with both the wider Victorian community and earlier this year at our National Gathering and Assembly, with the National community. CLC is a gift of the Holy Spirit

and to be called on behalf of the community to share in the leadership has been a great discerning experience. I am grateful for my fellow ExCo members and those who have spent their time with us over the last two years, it has been a privilege.

~ Lisa M Beer ~

Secretary

I was never elected. I was co-opted. For mouthing-off about CLC being a "secret society" with a "pronounced gender imbalance", I was made Secretary. Punishment or reward? Well, I can say it's turned out to be a terrific reward - the reward of working with an enthusiastic group overseeing the revitalisation and renewal of CLC in Victoria. Everywhere I look, energy is evident, in the groups, in the members multitude of good works, and in the executive, a thermal of grace that ascends to national level. To me, it's all living proof of CLC's charism to be a discerning apostolic community. And, just between you and me, I have learned a few things too, like improved computer skills, and, shhh... working co-operatively. Lord, I'm having a grand time!"

~ Tony French~

Ordinary Member

I was invited to be nominated for the Victorian ExCo. I felt privileged to be asked, so I prayed about the matter with Jesus. Saying yes would mean having to attend meetings in Melbourne once a month and being available to attend extra days on our CLC calendar. I must say I have enjoyed working with the other members on ExCo over the last two years. It has been a very rewarding time and I have grown as a person spiritually. It has been great to meet people from the wider CLC.

~ Angela Widdison ~

FAITH

In the Gospel reading for Wednesday, in the 6th week of Easter, Jesus tells His disciples- "I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for your now." This is another way of Jesus telling us that Faith is an ongoing relationship with Him that grows and grows; Faith is a process, rather than a product. It is not helpful to think of Faith simply as a list of Dogmas - propositions to be believed. As one of our senior Jesuits used to say of something he disapproved of - "It's not that it's wrong; it's just that it's not right."

Faith is a relationship - a commitment to Jesus; and so the dogmas of our Faith simply describe the different ways in which we can experience the Mystery of Jesus in our life. The dogmas are "relational" statements, which means that the relationship comes first. And that is why prayer is so important - giving time to the relationship.

Patrick O'Sullivan SJ

INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL FORMATION GROUP

In November 2007, the Victorian Formation Team (better known as the F-Team) was invited by NexCo to form the next National Formation Group (NFG), taking over from the previous National Formation Working Party (NFWP) who were ending their two year term at the end of 2007. The formation of a NFG was also in response to a call by World ExCo for preparation teams to assist local communities prepare for the World Assembly in Fatima 2008 and later implement the directions that will spring from the Assembly. We are also taking on the directions of our Nat CLC Gathering and Assembly in January 2008.

So, who are we and what do we do? We are a joyous and enthusiastic group of people consisting of Mary Nolan, Anna Munari, Liz Pichner, Veronica Hendriks, Fr Bill Uren SJ and Nick Galante (Nat ExCo link). We see our main role as

providing inspiration and leadership in Nat CLC formation for mission. Our first task was to assist Australia CLC prepare for the World CLC Assembly at Fatima in August. In this respect, you would all have received a letter and Stage 1 Preparation from Mary Nolan (on behalf of NFG), outlining the stages of our preparation. Stage 2 coming soon...

And here we are...



Nick Galante, Liz Pichner, Anna Munari, Mary Nolan, Veronica Hendriks, Bill Uren SJ

Father Bill Uren is a Jesuit priest and is Rector of Newman College at the University of Melbourne. He was Provincial of the Jesuits in Australia and New Zealand from 1990 to 1996, and was National Ecclesiastical Assistant and a member of NEXCO from 1997 to 2000. He has been a member of CLC since the middle eighties in Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria. He has lectured in moral philosophy and bioethics in universities in Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane and has been Rector of Jesuit university colleges in each of those cities. He has served on over a dozen clinical and human research ethics committees in universities, hospitals and research centres, and from 2000 to 2006 was a member of the Australian Health Ethics Committee. He still barracks for Carlton!

Mary Nolan, in CLC since 1983, is well known (and much loved) to all of us. Mary has had many roles, including 12 years on World CLC ExCo and three World CLC Assemblies, 12 years as National President and Victorian CLC ExCo. Home for Mary, is her farm at Meredith (she loves the land), but after Chris (her son's) illness and subsequent brain injury in 1996, Mary moved to live mainly in Melbourne. She is the founding member of Young People in Nursing Homes (YPINH) Consortium & Inability

Possability Inc. Mary is most grateful for the way in which CLC has the potential to change the criteria by which judgments are made on our society. Her CLC mission... Having fallen in love with God and received so much in CLC and the Spiritual Exercises, her desire is to share what she has received with others in and out of CLC, and introduce people to CLC.

Veronica Hendriks is a relatively new member of CLC, having joined the Hawthorn group in March 2004. Veronica came to Melbourne in 2003, after living for two years in Canberra, six years in Perth, and a few years each in Malaysia, Ghana and Japan. Currently attached to the University of Melbourne, she works in the area of Monitoring and Evaluation. After years of being 'On the Move', she is most grateful for being in the "right" place where God's extraordinary presence is encountered in the ordinary everyday events of life. She is also grateful for the communal experience of the Spiritual Exercises.

Anna Munari. I was introduced to CLC in 1983 by an old friend, a nun, who taught me at school. She told me about a course/retreat exploring spirituality based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. I was hooked, and 25 years later, I am still involved!

I am married with two teenage children, aged 15 and 18. I work as a kindergarten teacher to 3-4 year old children at St. Peter's Early Learning Centre, Toorak. My family and my work are the main focus of my life and the centre of my mission, that is, to be the hands and feet of Christ and to see God in all things.

My involvements in CLC over the past 25 years has included being a member of two groups; initially a young people's group in the late 80's which folded, and my current group, "The Travellers", which I am guiding. I was on state ExCo in the late 90's, and now I am a member of the Victorian Formation Team as well as the National Formation Group. CLC was invited to help with the Magis program, developing Ignatian spirituality in young adults, which I was so excited to hear about as it is so much of what we do in CLC. I am helping with this program in the lead-up to World Youth Day later this year. I also visit the Exodus Community in West Heidelberg and help with a story-telling group for toddlers and their mothers, who are often so isolated. I thank the Lord for calling me out to fully engage in this wonderful world.

Nick Galante's first taste of CLC was in 1986 at Burke Hall. He later joined and guided a group in 1990. Nick is a former member of the Victorian ExCo, National ExCo, and was part of the guiding team that produced our 1999 Australian Common Mission. Nick has enjoyed many collaborative experiences with Jesuits religious and laity in various enterprises at Campion Retreat Centre over almost 19 years (the seeds for mission arising out of CLC). He is the current vice president of National CLC and a delegate to the World Aassembly at Fatima. He is Chairman of the Companions in the Ministry of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, Tarrawarra Advisory Group (Cistercian Monks), and Little Sisters of the Poor National Advisory Group. Nick is a retiring lawyer, married with 3 children and 2 grandchildren, and with an Ignatian discerning appetite for imbibing things of the spirit - the longer in the bottle the better (sometimes)!

Liz Pichner. I have been part of CLC for about 10 years...exact date and year escapes me! In my early years of CLC I was part of the State ExCo. This gave me a great opportunity to meet many lovely people from different groups around Australia and within Victoria.

My work as a primary school teacher at St Brendan's, Flemington takes up much of my day time. The work is challenging and rewarding and I continue to be inspired by the resilience and fragility of children and their families. I often find myself in a privileged position, listening to stories from children and adults from all walks of experiences and depths of living. So amongst the teaching and learning, we all contribute to the wellbeing of each other. This is not unlike my experiences within CLC. I have a sense of familiarity with CLC processes and continue to be challenged and inspired by the people I gather with each fortnight. I look forward to the coming year and welcome the many opportunities to gather and pray with the wider CLC and continue to build a sense of connectedness and belonging.

THE GRANDEUR OF GOD AT ANGLECREST

The weekend was a much anticipated break from the busyness of daily concerns, when living on a farm means that you are always on the worksite. It was like walking into another world at Anglecrest and from

every window was a beautiful view, especially of the wide expanse of the sea. It brings to mind that poem by Gerard Manly Hopkins, "the world is charged with the grandeur of God..." The view and colours change over the time we were there, which sometimes make for a powerful symbol of our contemplation.

The weekend was a follow up to the previous year meditating on the Spiritual Exercises. There were a number of things which stood out for me and made a lasting impression.

The day started with a Paul Vaz-inspired relaxation session. To me these sessions were important for the prayer times, reinforcing that body awareness is as essential as the mind of the total person, and is an important preparation for contemplation.

Over the weekend a number of phrases caught my attention as we shared our prayer times.

In surrender there is freedom.

Give your life over to God. Do not try to control it. God is intimate, but uncontrollable.

God is present in the messiness of life as well as in the good.

"...sharing rather than total giving. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me."

Life is a gift. Live in the now with an awareness.

This awareness of others was reinforced in everything we did, in our sharing at mealtimes, in the washing up, in the fun times led by Anna on Saturday night, and in the quiet moments following our contemplation and prayer times. It reinforced my commitment to my CLC group, not only as a group but also to each individual members, with their own unique experiences. But "like a choir, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

The participation of Sacha and Michael speaking about Magis 08 was a powerful and inspiring part of the weekend. It reinforced an awareness of the potential for spiritual growth in this age group and some of us were inspired to offer to participate in an Experiment.

Thank you to everyone who organised the weekend. I look forward to next year!

June Cameron (Mary Ward Group, Ballarat)

MY RETREAT EXPERIENCE AT ANGLECREST

Over the weekend Nov 9th-11th, we had our annual retreat at Anglesea. Despite following fresh upon the heels of two Paul Vaz's retreats, the turnout this year was as good as ever, with about 25 people coming along for the two days. As many of you will know, Anglecrest is idyllically perched over the Great Ocean Rd at Anglesea, with expansive ocean vistas. And this year we were treated to two blissful days of sunshine, the ocean sunrises a harmonious backdrop for meditation and contemplation.

Trish and Mary Nolan led two wonderful sessions reflecting on the third and fourth weeks of the exercises, from the passion and suffering of Christ, to the joy of the resurrection and our giftedness. It's fair to say that everybody got a lot out of these reflections, and the small group meetings that ensued. Indeed, a number of people commented upon the fact that it was refreshing to have reflections on the spiritual exercises led by CLCers rather than Jesuit priests, as they felt CLCers offered a different perspective on the exercises that was not always offered by priests.

Perhaps the highlight of the weekend, however, was the visit of Sacha and Matt to talk to us about the upcoming MAGIS 08 programme, and the MAGIS mission in general. For those of you who've been away from the grapevine for a while, the MAGIS programme is an Ignation spirituality for young adults (18-30) that has been started recently in Australia. MAGIS bears much resemblance to CLC's model of lay spirituality, and some would go so far as to say that it is, in effect, CLC for young people. MAGIS 08, on the other hand, is an initiative to bring young people from all over the world to Australia for World Youth Day and to participate in "experiments" for a week beforehand, where they will be meeting

people from multiple nations and share their spiritual journeys together and be introduced to Ignation spirituality.

Sacha and Matt's visit ignited a spark in the hearts of many on the retreat and many felt a call to participate in some way, in both the MAGIS and MAGIS 08 programmes. Indeed, a group got together over the retreat to work on getting a two or three CLC sponsored experiments off the ground.

For the younger members of CLC, such as myself, MAGIS is an opportunity both to bring CLC to a younger generation and to fill the spiritual void that many young people feel, especially those in their 20s. I'm pretty sure you'll be hearing a lot more about MAGIS and MAGIS 08 in the coming months.

Although, for me at least, learning about MAGIS was the highlight of the retreat, a *very* close second was the barbecue and socialising on the Saturday night, particularly Anna Munari's various games and quizzes. Anna had us all up dancing like the Wiggles, she had me impersonating a monkey, and Tony perplexed as he never was before trying to guess the name of the CLCer written on his crown! I even managed to win an angel decoration for the Christmas tree during the quiz, though Anna-Marie trumped me, winning a fluffy purple pencil that she gave to one of her more highly self-opinionated students, much to his horror and embarrassment.

All in all, the retreat was a fantastic weekend away at a beautiful spot, with wonderful people. There was a great sense of community and sociability; nobody needed to be asked to do anything, and everybody pitched in at meal times, and with the cleaning. I think everybody got a lot out of the weekend and many of us came away with lots of enthusiasm, energy, and vision for the future life of CLC and our role in the wider community.

Michael McGann
(Parkville Group)

GREATER HAPPINESS IS HARD TO FIND!

Some Victorian CLC members have dual spirituality: Ignatian and Mighty Catatian. The group of four in this picture prayerfully spent their morning at World CLC Day 2008 at JTC before racing off to Telstra Dome to see their beloved "Mighty Cats" irreverently conquer Essendon by 99 points. Greater happiness is hard to find!



Noreen Nicholson, Jack Nolan, Janine Hellard and Bill Nicholson.

AN ACT OF KINDNESS

Approximately two weeks ago I filled my car up with petrol. I went to the sales person and proceeded to pay for my petrol. "I'm at number four", the sales person replied, "A lady has already paid for your petrol." I replied, "No that can't be right, I'm at number four, there must be some confusion".

I went over to the window to check if I had the right number. The sales person repeated again, "Your petrol has been paid for, really it has! This is not a joke." I said, "Now are you sure?" "Yes," she said. Well what could I say, that made my day.

I have told this to many people ...maybe I can pay for another person's petrol in the future and my friends might do this as well, this could have a domino effect and a few others might get a surprise.

Marilyn Smith
(CLC Geelong group)

A COMFORTABLE PLACE

Psalm 131

*Yahweh, my heart is not haughty,
I do not set my sights too high,
I have taken no part in great affairs,
In wonders beyond my scope.
No, I hold myself in quiet and silence,
Like a little child in its mother's arms,
Like a little child, so I keep myself.*

No longer do I feel the need to achieve,
To climb the ladder,
Not even holy aspirations,
To do great acts of love,
No desires to reach enlightenment,
To reach that centre where I have heard God is,
When I will be detached from all worldly things.

Instead, I am contented to be where I am at,
Living day by day,
Doing what needs to be done,
Enjoying all that I have,
Trusting that all will be well,
I am at peace.

How it happened I do not know,
I fear it will go if I write about it,
But share the light I must,
just as I share the darkness,
And cling to it, I must not,
It is Psalm 131 come true,
It is as gentle as a breeze,
As gentle as silence.

Susie Hii (The Vineyard group)

PROPOSED INTERNET DISCUSSION GROUPS

I am proposing to set up a number of discussion groups in Google Groups to enable the sharing of ideas, issues, questions and answers across CLC in Victoria. These groups are accessible to CLCers only. Like most “members-only” discussion groups, joining in a group will be by email invitation only. Interested people would email me, and if there are enough people interested, I would set up and “manage” the discussion group. You can then invite other people by email to join in.

Google Groups is free and there are many hundreds of discussion groups around the world already using it - some having a hundred new articles posted each day. The way we would organise it is that members need to be invited by me, the “manager”, or by the members themselves. Whenever a person emails a question to the group (or goes into Google Groups and replies to comments or questions there), an email would be sent to each of the members of the group. The email could include either the whole text, an internet link to the text or a daily summary of all the new discussions of that day - depending what you want.

There is also a section that allows anyone to upload files (Word, Excel or PDF files, up to 500K) that others can then download to their computers.

Some people may find it hard to get started so I am happy to ring you back after hours (after you email me) and talk you through getting in. Once you are in the rest is easy. You would log in with your own email address and a password that you select. If you were to forget your password, Google Groups would get you to chose a new one.

For now, I’m asking interested people to email their details to me peterschclc@gmail.com and mention what Discussion Groups you propose

or would be interested in. This will only go ahead if enough people respond. All interested people would be in the CLC Vic group that covers all Vic CLC ideas, hand-outs, discussions...

These discussion groups only work if everyone sends in comments, replies, articles... for everyone else in the group to respond to. Although I am the one to organise the members access - don’t expect that I will upload and comment... in each of the groups - they are your groups.

Suggested Discussion Groups include: CLC Leaders, CLC Vic, CLC and Justice, CLC and Ignatian Spirituality, CLC and Nature, CLC Gatherings & Assembly, CLC and Fun, CLC and What’s On In Christian Vic, CLC and New Members. People can join one or more group according to their interests.

Ideally what could be good for everyone interested is articles and notes from the National Gathering, maybe even the Powerpoint presentations of the speakers - especially for anyone who couldn’t make it. Later in the year, any articles from the World Assembly would be really welcome and could be the seeds that germinate into lots of discussions around and across Australia.

Don’t forget that the official CLC website is still the main source of documents and information about CLC in Australia but these discussion groups would help us to better respond to these and to each other.

I believe that the Internet can be used to bring us together across Victoria, later across Australia and maybe even CLC across the world. It is up to us to make the most Christian use of this vast resource for us as CLC and in spreading the Good News.

Peter Schmidt peterschclc@gmail.com
(The Travelers Group)
(Also, IT Manager at work)

GROUP PROFILE - The Vineyard Group

Our group started in July, 1995. Mary and Des Skehan, Amanda Sorenson and I are foundation members. Susie joined us the following year and Estelle and Elizabeth are testing the waters with us. We also have a satellite member, Irlande Alfred, in far distant Cranbourne when she is not on mission in Mauritius.

Des and Mary Skehan are both retired. Mary has a background in nursing and family counselling. After retirement, both volunteered their services for a time for the then Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. They were members of the start-up team for Marriage Encounter and have a long association with CLC, going back to Jose Gsell's retreat in the early 1980's. They are parents and grandparents. Mary understands the finer points of cricket, is a keen Demons supporter, enjoys films and has a long-standing friendship group. For Des, football, reading, the daily crossword and music are his main interests. Family is their main area of service.

Susie Hii - I work as a geriatrician, which sounds a bit like electrician, but they are not related. It is mind, body and soul/spirit. In my work, I deal mainly with the body though the body cannot be treated in isolation from the mind and spirit. My areas of interests and passion are mental health and spirituality. I hold the view that depression is not merely a chemical imbalance in the brain but can possibly be a wake-up call for the soul.

In February last year, during a monthly geriatric meeting of doctors, a psychiatrist gave a talk on religion and spirituality. I was deeply impressed by the talk. Since then, I have brought religion to work. I ask patients one of the questions he suggested 'Has faith ever been important in your life?' I like listening to people's life stories; I have heard some horrific ones and marvel at people's inner strength. I try to bring 'quality of presence' - Christ's presence - to

work. Some mornings, when I wake up, instead of saying 'Good morning, God', I feel like 'Good God, morning, Monday morning, not Saturday morning', and have no quality of presence at all. However, I often find that as the day progresses, I become absorbed in work. Listening to other people's problems take me out of myself. I am glad to have an occupation, or I will be wallowing in preoccupations.

Last year, I had a burst of energy and thought of taking CLC to the parishes. I contacted four parishes but only managed to do it at one. I am grateful for the two who have shown interest. I have known both Elizabeth and Estelle for a number of years now though it was not until last year that I spoke to Elizabeth personally about it. Estelle heard me speak in church. I could have spoken to her personally too, and that would have spared me from having to speak from the pulpit though I must admit I did enjoy getting the adrenaline going.

My main area of mission is family. Holy Week this year is very special as 6 year old Tessa and 9 year old Gerard showed a lot of interest when I told them the story of the Passion. I found it hard to tell them about Judas betraying Jesus and Peter denying Jesus as Tessa does not like bad guys and sad endings, so I quickly skipped to how after he rose, Jesus asked Peter 'Do you love me?' Tessa loves this. In the past few years, we have made up several love songs. One of them goes like this - one of us sings 'Do you love me?' and the other responds 'Of course, I do'. I also told them about the good thief and sang the Taize song to them 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom'. This was sung during Holy Thursday Mass.

I like watching my children, relaxing in our backyard looking at the silver lining in clouds. It has been very healing in the months and years after my 'thyroid storm'. I like reading and writing, and maybe even talking.

I dream of guiding a CLC group, leading a meditation group, being involved in retreats and spiritual direction. That may eventuate in the future or in another lifetime. For now I am at a comfortable place. I am resting in Psalm 131, resting in the peace of Christ. We should not have to wait till we are dead before we can rest in peace.

I am grateful for my group who have been there with me through the ups and downs of life in the past 12 years.

Elizabeth Etty-leal is a trained teacher and mother of two adult children. Elizabeth enjoys swimming and walking, and loves time spent at the seaside. Other interests are reading, art and gardening i.e. before the drought. Elizabeth has been a member of St. Vincent de Paul for some years and has a deep concern for those in need. Recently, she has volunteered to take religion education classes at St. Bridget's Parish and is also helping out Kevin Sheedy by hosting pilgrims for World Youth Day.

Estelle Kelly also has two adult children and is the grandmother of two little girls, one born earlier this year. She is a primary welfare officer, has trained as a counsellor and is an accredited life coach. Family is her first priority, and she also likes to catch up with friends, travel when possible and follows a regular fitness routine. Estelle regards her work as main area of service.

Irlande Alfred has not attended many meetings because her call to mission involves travel. She is a literacy consultant and in recent years has been involved in professional development for teachers in Mauritius, first under the auspices of the Catholic Education Office there and later implementing a UN project to improve literacy in areas outside the main towns. Although she thought that she had returned to Australia permanently, in April she will go back to Mauritius at the request of a Bishop who is in need of a Director of Education. At this stage, she expects to be away until July.

If you want to find out how to play Scrabble, watch Irlande play. Triples scores are magnets for her! Irlande says that because she likes to talk, she joined Toastmasters. Immediate family and a large extended family provide many opportunities for celebrations, and outdoors, Irlande enjoys bird watching.

Social justice is Irlande's passion and she represents her parish and the St. Vincent de Paul society on a regional basis. She has been involved in activities to welcome refugees, and meetings to arrange re-settlement for them, especially Congolese settling into St. Kilda and people from the Sudan in Frankston. Irlande is also active on an interfaith committee, which has provided opportunities for meals and worship with the Muslim community. She is looking forward to the Parliament of Religions which will be held in Melbourne next year. Her dream is that CLC moves round the bay to Frankston which is a reasonable distance from Cranbourne.

Margaret Biviano - I'm a happy retiree! I like outdoor activities especially any connected with the bush or sea. Even weeding has its appeal. Children's books and films take me to a very satisfying place, Yoga ensures that I can continue to bend and Strength Training gives me muscle power. I am interested in deepening my own spirituality and accompanying others. After 13 years, I'm still growing in my understanding of what it means to guide a group. CLC is a strong commitment for me, along with family and friends. I enjoy a monthly contact with those attending a Communion Service at St. Joseph's Hostel and am looking forward to Magis08 when I will assist Janine Hellard as spiritual accompanier in the Experiment that she is organising.

As a group and as individuals, we have had a history of various involvements with the wider community. The range in our ages has enriched us through the combination of experience, wisdom, energy and enthusiasm.

Margaret Biviano for The Vineyard Group

LIFE OF CARING MOULDED BY JESUIT TEACHING

William Joseph Quilty, physician
12/1/1930 - 16/1/2008

The Bill Quilty Memorial prize was recently instituted by Melbourne University's School of Rural Health in Shepparton to commemorate a man who devoted 32 years of his professional life, and a large part of his private life, to helping others.

Dr Bill Quilty, who has died from stomach cancer at Shepparton Private Hospital, aged 78, dedicated his considerable skills as a doctor to helping his patients, and beyond them, the wider Shepparton and Goulburn Valley communities.

He helped establish the first coronary care unit at Mooropna Base Hospital and a diabetes education program at Goulburn Valley Base Hospital, and was local chairman of the Victorian medical post-graduate committee. He was also the regional representative of the AMA until he resigned, and was the regional physician for the Austin Hospital spinal unit, and on the boards of Bendigo and Echuca hospitals.

First as a GP, then a consultant physician, Bill was skilled and committed to his patients; in return, "Dr Quilty" was loved and respected by his patients who were impressed by his strong sense of egalitarianism and spirituality.

Bill, the long awaited boy after four sisters born to William Quilty, a GP, and his wife, Kitty, of Hurlstone Park, Sydney, set his sights on a country medical career early in his life.

Educated at St Ignatius College, Riverview, his commitment to Jesuit values of compassion and caring for those in need was formed, together with his love of literature and learning.

He aimed to become a doctor like his father, but following the death of a close friend in a car accident and four years of mixed success at university, he decided to become a Jesuit priest. However, after two years he decided the priesthood was not for him - but he always said his time in the seminary was crucial in helping him to grow up, to focus and to be more disciplined.

Reunited with his friends he was somewhat out of touch, to the extent of having to be told who Marilyn Monroe was. After 12 months jackerooing he returned to medicine, where he met Selina. They were both resident medical officers at the Mater Hospital, North Sydney, and were married 12 months later. To equip himself for country practice, Bill worked at the Royal Womens' Hospital, and the Princess Alexandra Children's Hospital followed by a post-graduate degree in internal medicine at Concord Repatriation Hospital.

In 1965, he joined the Wyndham Street Clinic, Shepparton that was run by English surgeon William Ferguson and his wife Helen.

The ethical commitment of his Christian faith expressed itself principally in his determination to relate to each patient as an equal. With issues such as abortion and euthanasia he expressed his perceptions when appropriate.

His genuine interest in his patients made him popular with Shepparton's migrant families. He often received home-made wine, home grown vegetables and invitations to marvellous Italian weddings.

He retired in 1997 and embraced volunteer work. He believed Christianity was not just about praying but about doing. He was a radio presenter for Vision Australia, a home tutor and then a teacher's aide at TAFE teaching English to Congolese, Afghani, Iraqi, and Sudanese students. He worked for St Vincent de Paul and Rumbalara Aboriginal Football Club, and wrote letters for Amnesty International.

Diagnosed with cancer early last year, he continued this community involvement, started learning Spanish, as well as gardening, golfing and pursuing social causes.

More than 500 hundred people gathered in St Brendan's Church, Shepparton, to celebrate his life, and he was buried on January 21, his 48th wedding anniversary.

Bill is survived by his wife Selina, children William, Joanna, Mary, Simon, Jonathan and Matthew, and 11 grand children.

Bill was a faithful CLC Guide and his life of service was an inspiration to us all.