

Vision 5 years on

Archbishop Bathersby in his address given at the Opening and Blessing of Santa Teresa on October 4, 2009 prayed: 'May Santa Teresa, a saint for our time, inspire the Archdiocese by her faith and simplicity and make this Spirituality Centre a powerhouse of God's grace into the future.'

Since then over 13,000 visitors have spent time here encountering God in prayer, growing in their faith and sharing the riches of our spiritual tradition. The dream of Archbishop Bathersby has been realised as each year thousands of spiritual seekers from within and beyond the Archdiocese come and spend time at our beautiful Ormiston Centre to be refreshed and renewed in their faith journey.

'I have felt that I have been in a truly sacred place....thoroughly nurtured and cared for...' is a consistent theme echoed in visitor comments. I am grateful for the generosity and dedication of our staff whose efforts are widely recognised: 'the service and hospitality are superb.' May Santa Teresa bless the hearts and lives of all who come to this special place.



Archbishops Lazaratto and Bathersby at the Blessing and Opening of the Centre

Creating beautiful prayer gardens

Over the last five months, Toni Sokolov and his team from Figtree Landscapes, have further developed the grounds by creating a garden swale in the drain running across the front entrance of the Centre providing a friendly green welcome for visitors.



Garden swale provides a beautiful entrance to the Centre

Below the chapels, linked to the labyrinth and pathway among the gum trees, two new prayer spaces have been formed. One, known as Cana, has a magnificent sandstone sculpture of Mary pointing towards two large water jars set in a circular space with seating. This Mary setting focuses on the Wedding Feast of Cana, where Mary tells the waiters to 'do whatever he tells you.'



Cana prayer space set amongst the trees



Sandstone sculpture of Mary created by Toni Sokolov

The other, known as the Hermitage, provides a table and chair enclosed by a curved wall reflecting the waters and landforms of the Bay. Here guests can spend time reflecting and writing their thoughts and prayers beneath the inspiration of the Cross and the Holy Spirit. The cypress wall of 52 posts forms a prayer fence where it is hoped thoughts and prayers will be left for others to read.

Great creativity and planning have been taken to establish a series of garden settings that enhance the natural beauty of the Centre; complement the existing chapels and labyrinth and provide outdoor spaces for personal and group prayer and reflection.



Hermitage with prayer fence provides a haven for quiet reflection and writing

Cenacle dining room and Couderc Cottage affirms our Centre's origins and history

The Cenacle Retreat Centre was opened in 1984 and operated by the Cenacle Sisters until 2006, when the sisters left the Archdiocese. The Cenacle dining room and Couderc cottage have been given these names to honour the legacy of their work and remind us that we are called to 'the upper room to pray and encounter Christ'.

'As St. Therese Couderc lay on her deathbed, she "received a vision in which the word *Goodness* was stamped in gold letters on every creature."

My first response to this was a positive one in which I readily acknowledged the many that I know who appear to have *Goodness* emblazoned on their soul. But then I went beyond the borders of this affirming experience to the wider world and the daily news. I wondered how this spiritual vision could be true for those who behead another person. How could *Goodness* possibly be stamped on someone who does such a cruel and evil deed?

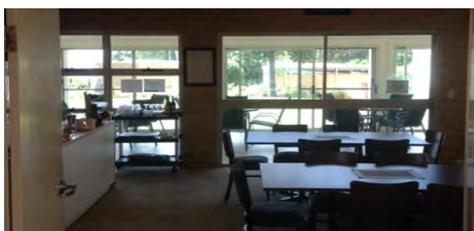
Gradually, I conceded that God sees as I do not see, that somewhere in every human, no matter the worst of crime or greatest loss of virtue, there remains the shining light of *Goodness*. This light gets smothered over with false beliefs and harsh life experiences that armor the mind and concretize the heart. Only the Holy One knows what leads a person who beheads another to become saturated with heartlessness and vengeance. Only the Eternally Loving One looks deep enough to see through the thick swath of evil deeds to the *Goodness* etched permanently on every soul.

I can easily appreciate *Goodness* in those whose views and way of life conform to my own. And I readily find it in people who do good for others. But even with those closest to me, I sometimes forget the beauty of that inner core of never-fading Light, particularly when something they say or do, (or do not say or do), rankles my mind and shakes peace out of my heart. When significant difference of opinion, unfair judgments or shattered expectations cloud my vision, I step away from that beautiful reality of golden radiance imprinted on another's deepest being. Only with prayer, love, and restored faith do I return to the *Goodness* that illuminates the soul. Only by returning to the teachings and ministry of Jesus do I find the courage to approach each one with belief in their abiding and enduring centre of Gold.' *Reflection by Joyce Rupp October 2014*

We are grateful for the pioneering work of the Cenacle Sisters (and their founder) whose charism and hard work established the Spirituality Centre and enriched the lives of many people during their time of ministry.



Painting of St Therese Couderc 1805-1885
Founder of the Cenacle Sisters



Cenacle Dining Room



Couderc Cottage

Evaluation forms—we listen and respond

Sometimes it can seem that filling out yet another evaluation form is a waste of time.

One could ask: What happens to the information collected? Does my opinion make a difference?

Firstly, know that each form is read by our Centre Supervisors, Centre Coordinator and Caterer and any issues that are raised about our facilities, our food or our service are discussed and where it is warranted, action taken. This could relate to items needing repair, suggestions for future improvements, ideas re menu offerings or comments about your experience of being welcomed and assisted with your enquiries.

Secondly, staff appreciate hearing first-hand your experience of Santa Teresa hospitality. We are very proud of our Centre and want it to be warm and inviting, so we seek to be attentive to your needs. Both positive and constructive remarks help us to achieve this. Over time as our finances allow, we have implemented a large number of the suggestions made through the feedback forms.

Easter heralds our freedom from slavery



Recently I attended the first of the *Living Biblically in a Secular World* formation evenings presented by Archbishop Coleridge. One of the rich biblical insights offered was that our God cares for us and acts to liberate us from the slavery of the Egypt imposed by the Pharaohs of this world and even by ourselves here and now.

As we approach Holy Week and the Easter season may it be a time when the risen Christ speaks into our hearts and releases us from the bondage of slavery to enjoy the beauty and joy of living as sons and daughters of a loving God. Happy Easter!

Mike Humphrys -Coordinator