Young Nano Nagle left her native Ireland to study in Paris. Returning to Cork, she carried a lantern through the streets and lanes of Cork and became a symbol of God’s love to the poor. That lantern has become the symbol of the mission for Presentation Sisters around the world.

In 1775, at the age of 57, Nano established a religious community that was ultimately to become the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Sisters opened their first branch convent in Ballina in 1892. Sr Maureen Flatley was the last Presentation Principal, completing the congregation’s long school apostolate in Ballina twenty years ago.

Sisters Marie Jean Akers and Veronica Mary Gahan are the brave souls who are here in 2007 to ‘turn out the lights’ – but only the electric ones, as the spirit of the... sisters will live on in... the rich Catholic history of Ballina...

We will keep the lamp burning in the spirit of Nano Nagle and her sisters, along with those sisters who remain in the district and the Presentation Associates... of our dear friends and sisters in the Lord – the ‘Presy’s’.

Father Michael Nilon

NET stands for National Evangelisation Team. NET commenced in 1988 and extended its outreach throughout Australia.

NET teams also work overseas in their mission to witness Christ to young people. St. Augustine’s Parish, Coffs Harbour is excited that the NET team will be working in this parish. NET teams encounter more than thirty thousand young people each year as they bring the message of Christ to them. NET ministries since 1988 have fielded twenty-eight National Teams travelling in excess of fifty thousand kilometres per year. Over five hundred young people have taken on the challenge to take the message of Jesus to those they encounter in their mission of evangelisation.

The NET team arrived in Coffs Harbour on the 16th February and will be here until the 7th November. They will be sharing their faith with the young people within our schools to help deepen their faith and be involved in the life of the parish. Inviting young people to live like Christ and be an example towards others is a challenge they present to the youth within our schools. The NET team form these young people with skills in evangelising others.

The NET team is made up of five young people: Jeff Kowenhoven 18 from Fort Saint John Canada, Kaylene Langford 19 from the Sunshine Coast Queensland, Heather Grimes 23 from Massachusetts USA, Lisa Curtis 18 from Ipswich Queensland and Adrian Pizzey 21 from Redcliffe Queensland. Adrian has enjoyed his experience so far. He is relieved to unpack his suitcase for the last time after being on training for five weeks in Brisbane and is amazed to see the support shown for young people. They all see Coffs as a beautiful City with everything including beaches, mountains, shops, to name a few and they feel blessed with the opportunity to live here this year.
Sisters who travelled from 22 countries included three delegates from the Lismore Congregation: Jill Kennedy (Congregational Leader), Mary Bruggy (Congregational representative) and Anne Shay (IPA Justice Contact).

It was inspiring and energising for us to meet with Sisters from around the globe especially the young Presentation Sisters from Zambia, Zimbabwe, India, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea who with delegates from Ireland, UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Latin America and the six Australian Congregations made up the full complement of 78 Sisters.

The Assembly was held during the Indian Festival of Light, significant for us as followers of Nano Nagle, who took her lantern into the back streets of Cork, Ireland, as she ministered to the poor in the slums. The Presentation Day Eucharist in an Indian cultural setting was a moving celebration. The homily consisted of us sharing our amazing foundation stories.

The theme of the Assembly was Listen... the cry of the earth, the cry of the poor. So we listened to speakers such as Medha Paktar, who works for justice for the millions of Indian people dispossessed of their land by mining companies and other giant corporations. She moved us by her account of the people of Nandigram, who in 2006 were raped and murdered for their refusal to leave their land to make way for a storage dump for Indonesia’s chemical waste. Millions of others lost their land for the building of the Namarda Dam. Medha challenged us to action: “Listen then what? It is not enough just to listen”.

Another speaker, Redemptorist Fr. Thomas Kocherry, impressed upon us that we are all part of a continuum of exploitation of the Earth and of those made poor. The least we can do, he said, is to ask the questions and he challenged us: “If we are not protesting, then by our silence we are collaborating”.

For several days we struggled to frame our response to what we had heard and seen. The challenge was to make the best use of the power we have as a global community to influence and bring about change at local, national and international levels. We have to enable the voice of those made poor to be heard. As members of IPA, our mission is to channel our resources so that we can speak and act for global justice.

Finally the Assembly accepted as our IPA Statement of Direction for the next 5 years:

We listen deeply to the cry of Earth heard most loudly in the cry of those made poor and we are moved to attend with urgency to the woundedness of our global community ...Therefore we will address the root causes of poverty, especially by confronting personal and corporate greed which exploit Earth, her peoples and the whole community of life.

As reported by Anne Shay pbvm – Lismore Congregation Justice Contact
Cuban worshippers approach the newly unveiled statue of the late Pope John Paul II, brought from Rome by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone as a gift to the people of Santa Clara on February 23, 2008 in Santa Clara, Cuba. Pope Benedict XVI called on Cuba’s Catholic Church to work for “reconciliation” in the Caribbean country, in a message delivered by his visiting representative Cardinal Bertone. Cuban dissidents called on Cardinal Bertone to urge Fidel Castro’s successor to release the regime’s political prisoners.

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St. Carthage's Parish School, Lismore

Celebrating Lent

The children, staff and parents of St. Carthage's School gathered to mark the beginning of the Church's great season of Lent. The day began with a liturgy for Years 1-3. Father Peter Padungay reminded the children that Lent is a time to take action. It is God's invitation to us to become better people. The ashes remind us to turn away from our selfish ways and to live as Jesus showed us. The children enjoyed making class Lenten banners and singing together. The children in Years 4-6 joined Father Paul McDonald and the Parish community to celebrate Mass at the Cathedral.

Photos taken by Terry Deefholts of Photography Unlimited.

Altar Servers Assist at School Masses

St. Mary's, Bellingen

Dr Anne Wenham's Visit to Bellingen

Leadership Candidates for 2008 were fortunate to have a visit from Dr Anne Wenham, Director of Catholic Schools late last year. Anne spent time with the group discussing leadership qualities. This discussion assisted the students with the preparation of School Captains’ Speeches.

Dr Anne Wenham pictured with prospective School Captains

St. Joseph's Primary School, South Grafton

New Year – New Leaders

Year 6 students at St Joseph's Primary School, South Grafton were inducted into their leadership positions by the Parish Priest Father Garry Hayes and the Principal Mr Andrew Madden on Wednesday, February 13 following the Celebration of the Beginning of the Year Mass at St Patrick's Church.

Newly inducted Year 6 Mission Representatives from St Joseph's Primary School, South Grafton begin preparing a strategy to assist the Project Compassion Appeal during this Lenten season.

Let the Spirit Direct our Lives

St Joseph's College, Banora

St Joseph's College commenced the year with the resounding words, “Let the Spirit Direct our Lives”. In the year when the youth of our country will be blessed by the visit of his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in July in Sydney for World Youth Day.

Year 7 students were inducted and Year 12 students were blessed with their journey candles for the commencement of their academic and spiritual journey in their first and last years respectively, as students at St Joseph's College. We also welcomed new staff, students in years other than 7 and 12 and parents to the College. Father Michael spoke highly of the contribution that the staff, students and families of the College make to the Parish and in particular have made since his arrival three years ago.

This school year commenced with the celebration of the Ash Wednesday Mass, in the second week of the term and quickly brought selflessness once again to the forefront of the College community, the importance of the Lenten period and the immediate community spirit of “giving something of our daily lives” to support the needs of others. Project compassion was launched and the generosity of students and staff is once again being acknowledged.

Staff and students in the CAPA department embarked on a successful excursion to Sydney in the second week of the term to experience the best of HSC art works and drama performances. The excursion provides an opportunity for students to experience the high standards the students achieved in the previous years cohort in HSC Visual Arts and Drama.

We look forward as a Catholic community to the year ahead and the wonderful opportunity to experience and be part of World Youth Day.
St Brigid’s Primary, Kyogle

St. Brigid’s, Kyogle “Gives Back”

St Brigid’s Primary has recently taken a more community minded approach to helping others. The emphasis at Christmas last December was not about shopping or consumerism, but rather about giving to good causes to help make Advent a time of reflection.

One of these is St Vincent De Paul. The school recently donated five hampers to the Christmas appeal, where goods were handed over to those less fortunate at this time of the year. Each St Brigid’s student was asked to donate one non perishable food item. The hampers were well received by Mr Tom Fitzgerald, on behalf of the St Vincent De Paul society.

The school also conducted a mufti day to raise money for the Westpac helicopter. Mr. Rod Harvey from Westpac Helicopter Rescue visited St Brigid’s assembly to accept a cheque of $380. Mr. Harvey stated that the money would contribute to the very expensive job of conducting an air borne unit to save lives.

St Patrick’s Primary School, Macksville

Kidsmatter National Initiative

Some of the students from St. Brigids SRC

The fundraising day was run by the St Brigid’s Student representative Council, a group made up of 13 students from Years 2 to Year 6.

St Patrick’s Primary School, along with 100 other Primary Schools around Australia are about to begin the first phase of the KidsMatter evaluation. Kidsmatter is the Australian national primary school mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative that has been developed in collaboration with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, Beyond Blue: the national depression initiative, the Australian Psychological Society, The Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council and supported by the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund.

The KidsMatter Initiative has three major aims:

• Improve the mental health and well-being of primary school students
• Reduce mental health problems among students
• Achieve greater support for those students at risk of or experiencing mental health problems

With Kidsmatter, schools develop and implement comprehensive plans for each of the four areas that protect students from developing mental health problems, which are:

• A positive school community
• Social and emotional skills for students
• Parenting education and support
• Early intervention for students at risk or experiencing mental health difficulties

Schools and teachers recognise the importance of good mental health for their students. Students who are mentally healthy learn better and have better relationships with their teachers, family members and peers. Good mental health makes it easier for students to negotiate the transition into adolescence and then adulthood, improving their chances of achieving long-term education and career goals as well as a better quality of life.

During 2008, all staff at St Patrick’s will receive training to improve their knowledge and understanding of this complex and sensitive area. It is hoped that by being involved in this pilot project, our school and Diocese will benefit from the many advantages that will come from being a participant. The project will be rolled out to every other school in Australian over the coming years.

Mt St Patrick College, Murwillumbah

Mt St Pat’s tops the North Coast

Mt St Patrick College, Murwillumbah topped the North Coast in the 2007 Higher School Certificate. The College gained first place out of twenty seven schools on the North Coast and obtained the highest rank of any school between Tweed Heads and Newcastle.

For the second successive year, Mt St Patrick College gained a place on the ‘top 200 schools list.’ The College gained a rank of 66 out of 685 schools in the State and was included in the top 10% of best performing schools in the 2007 Higher School Certificate.

Thirty one of the seventy one students who sat for the 2007 Higher School Certificate received at least one Band 6, (a mark of ninety or above). The College received a total of 64 Band 6s. College Captain, Daniel Maynes, made the Board of Studies Top Achievers List by obtaining a Band 6 in every one of his subjects.

Jayme Cooper received outstanding results in Drama. She was selected in OnSTAGE, a production showcasing the best HSC Drama Performances in the State.

The Murwillumbah Australia Day Committee acknowledged the outstanding 2007 HSC results by presenting the College with an ‘Excellence in Education’ Award on Australia Day 2008.
February 13th, 2008 was a very significant day in Australia's history. It was a day when we, as an Australian people, acknowledged and apologised for the hurt and anguish caused by the removal of our indigenous brothers and sisters from their families and a day to begin the healing process between our two communities. To acknowledge and celebrate this significant event in Australia's history, St Joseph's Primary, Kempsey held an emotional gathering of students, teachers, parents and distinguished guests to pray for the beginning of a new era of mutual respect between Aborigines and non-indigenous. Our distinguished guests included Aunty Sharon Kelly, a respected Aboriginal member of our Kempsey community and school staff. Mr Gerald Hoskins, an indigenous parent involved in the school was also present, as well as Jermaine Bradshaw, an indigenous student from St Paul’s College, Kempsey. Both the men explained to the students the importance of Kevin Rudd’s apology and what it meant to them as Indigenous Australians. We, as a school, can now recognise the hurt and pain that has been inflicted on our brothers and sisters and begin to grow in love and forgiveness, as we are all members of Christ’s community.

By Christy Ismay

St. Brigid’s, Port Macquarie
OnStage Drama Excursion

Twelve of the regions most dedicated drama students, along with Mrs Harris and staff and students from St Paul’s and MacKillop, Port Macquarie gathered at a brisk 3.30am to catch a bus destined for Sydney’s Seymour Centre with tickets to see NSW’s most brilliant Drama projects from last year.

The ONStage exhibition is an arrangement of the best HSC drama works in the State. Our Drama students had the privilege to view moved reads of scriptwriting projects, three superb short films and an inspirational and moving speech by the extremely talented playwright, Katharine Thompson (most famous for her play Diving for Pearls).

During the intermission, all students got the chance to walk around the exhibits of set and costume designs, promotional and scriptwriting projects from the graduating 2007 cohort. The afternoon session was a fabulous display of monologues and group performances – each funnier, more suspenseful or thrilling than the last.

The entire day was tremendous and all the students and teachers who attended left inspired, enthused and especially, entertained. Regional students want to thank the ONStage coordinators, the performers and especially Mrs Harris, Mrs Campbell and Mr Plunkett for such a special day out and hopefully some of our students will be “ONStage” in a few years.

St Joseph’s Regional High School, Port Macquarie

Ash Wednesday

This was also an opportunity to launch the Project Compassion PROJECT COMPASSION “Just want justice – a call to action” is this year’s theme for Caritas Australia.

There are many distressing things that happen in our world today that prompt us to ask serious questions.

• Why do so many people still go without clean drinking water?
• Why are there still over 1 billion people living on less than $1 a day?
• Why are men, women and children still being used as weapons of war?
• Why do so many women still die in childbirth?

Caritas Australia with our support is working hard to support communities so they can be empowered to find solutions to some of these difficult questions.

In marking World Youth Day, this year’s Project Compassion campaign also explores the role of young people around the globe empowering their communities and being advocates for change. In 1 John 3:18 we are called to make our love ‘not just words, but something real and active.’ Throughout this Lenten season there will be activities in our school communities to heighten awareness and to share what we have with those who have less.
Architects throughout the world were invited in 1960 to design a Cathedral for Liverpool which would relate to the existing Crypt, be capable of construction within five years, cost at the current prices no more than one million pounds for its shell, and most important of all, express the new spirit of the liturgy then being radically reformulated by the Second Vatican Council.

Of 300 entries from all over the world, Sir Frederick Gibberd’s (1908-1984) design was chosen, and building began in October 1962. Less than five years later, on the Feast of Pentecost, 14 May 1967, the completed Cathedral was consecrated. The Papal Legate at the consecration, most appropriately, was His Eminence John Carmel Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, who had been succeeded as Archbishop of Liverpool three years earlier by George Andrew Beck.
As It Was

The laying of the foundation stone of the Bellingen Church in 1919
(from left) Father Fitzpatrick, Parish Priest, Bishop Carroll, Austen McKay (Architect)

Catholic Men’s Guild, Children of Mary, Bishop, Clergy and Architect on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of Bellingen church in 1919. Back row third from left is the architect Austen McKay. Second row: At far right is Father John Durkin from Bowraville. Third from right is Father Fitzpatrick Parish Priest. Fourth from right is Bishop Carroll.