

**- 24th Annual Federation Meeting -
Sisters Of St Joseph Gather At Perthville & Bathurst**



*Newly elected Federation Executive: (centre) President,
Sr Catherine Shelton, Whanganui NZ, (left) Vice President,
Sr Therese McGarry, Perthville NSW, (right) Treasurer,
Sr Jo Brady, Tasmania*

Leaders of the Australian-Aotearoa/New Zealand Federation of the Sisters of St Joseph gathered recently at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst for their 24th Annual Meeting. Sisters from Goulburn, Lochinvar, Whanganui (New Zealand) and Tasmania met with Sisters from the Bathurst Diocese.

On the first evening, the visiting Sisters gathered with local Sisters at Perthville to spend social time together. Perthville, the link site of all Josephites in Australia, is the place from which all foundations of the Federation were made during the 1880's.

One of the main purposes of the formal meeting was to strengthen the existing close bonds which link all the groups to St Mary MacKillop and Fr Julian Tenison Woods. The discussions of the meetings focused on issues of mutual concern, especially in relation to their mission of responding to the needs around them - for example people in rural areas, people who are refugees and the care of the environment. A specific area of concern raised by the Justice Group related to the trafficking of women. Of interest is the recent move to make connections with all Josephite Sisters who were founded from Le Puy in France. Fr Woods was influenced by this community when he founded the Sisters of St Joseph at Penola.

The Sisters elected to office are Sr Catherine Shelton of Whanganui (President), Sr Therese McGarry of Perthville (Vice President), and Sr Jo Brady of Tasmania (Treasurer).

A Conference dinner was held at Charles Sturt University where the Sisters were addressed by Ruth Townley, an ex-student of MacKillop College, Bathurst and a former volunteer with Josephite Community Aid. Ruth spoke of her time in Southern Sudan where she worked for the rehabilitation of Child Soldiers.

A relaxed day was spent together visiting significant historic sites at Perthville, Newbridge, Blayney, Millthorpe, Forest Reefs, Orange, German Hill (now Lidster) and Borenore. Perthville Archivist/Historian, Dr Marie Crowley gave interesting input along the way. The Sisters in early foundations in these places had close contact with both Mother Mary MacKillop and Father Julian Tenison Woods.

The Sisters will meet again next year in May in Tasmania to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the first foundation made in Westbury in 1887.

