



FROM OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Hello again,

As I write I am mindful that soon here in Brisbane we will be observing **Orange Day** by bringing household items for women who have been living in our hostel and are now ready to begin the move to supported accommodation. We will be packing all the items in orange laundry baskets. Our weather has begun to warm and as I have been picking citrus fruit from our trees it made me begin to wonder about the connection with oranges themselves.



We as GFS members were challenged by our fellow members at World Council to mark the 25th of each month to likewise promote an end to violence against women and girls. Please read further in this issue about the UN program.

I have shared before that at my workplace, a large acute inner-city hospital, we certainly mark this day. In fact, unfortunately, I am constantly reminded of the ongoing violence against women, as I meet them on my daily visits. They find themselves in hospital with some of the most horrific damage: brain injuries, broken bones, mental health issues and attempted suicide.

I remember, after having grown up in a very sheltered home, one of my first encounters with someone who had personally encountered Domestic Violence was through GFS. One of our new leaders, whom I experienced as confident, professional and in control, but divorced - another thing I had had little to do with. As I got to know her better and ministered with her, she shared with me her personal story.

It turns out I, like so many others, had seriously underestimated her. She shared with me her story of a husband who abused her over many years, firstly, more from an emotional level then it grew to financial and finally physical. Finally ending up with him leaving her lying very badly broken from injuries for days, refusing to get her medical help. When she eventually ended up in hospital her physical injuries took months of medical and then rehabilitative work to bring about recovery.

She spoke mostly of the time she spent lying, reflecting in hospital about what would happen when she was due to go home again. Eventually she came to realise she couldn't go home, back to the same violence, at least in hospital she was safe. Something often echoed by my patients today, when I visit. What my GFS friend told me was that because she had been married in a church before God she felt she couldn't leave the marriage, you know, "in sickness and in health, for richer for poorer; for better or worse!" But finally it came to her when they had said "until death do you part" they didn't mean at the hand of your husband!

By the time I met her she had a new life, one free from violence and abuse and she was bright and cheerful and often wore bright colours and shared her gifts with others. Orange seems a great colour to celebrate that freedom from violence and a brighter future. Please read further in this issue to find more facts about oranges and some symbolism to ponder.



There is much more happening throughout Australia, so please read on.

Love and prayers, *Cheryl*



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LYN VAAK 1948–2/6/2019



We have many memories of Lyn's faithful service and her quiet strength. We offer our condolences to Lyn's family and friends, particularly in GFS Sydney who miss her. Many from GFS were able to attend a Thanksgiving for her life at St. Paul's Emu Plains on 12th June 2019.

Ev Beckenham, in her book 'A Faithful Journey-The story of G.F.S. in the Sydney Diocese', says "During my time (as Diocesan Chairman) I learnt firsthand that Lyn was a faithful and dedicated young woman who lives the G.F.S. motto "Bear one another's Burdens and So fulfil the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2) in her daily life. GFS became like a family to Lyn and she remained dedicated and most faithful to GFS and her Lord all her life. GFS was very special and a big part of Lyn's life in that she put God first, Friends second and self-last.

ORANGE DAY

The 25th of every month has been designated as Orange Day by the UN Women campaign Say No, UNiTE launched in 2009 to mobilize civil society, activists, governments and the UN system in order amplify the impact of the UN Secretary-General's campaign, UNiTE to End Violence against Women. Participants the world over are encouraged to wear a touch of orange in solidarity with the cause - the colour symbolizes a brighter future and a world free from violence against women and girls.

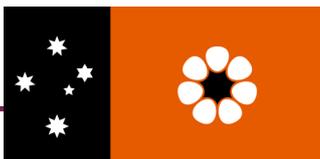
Here's a few fun facts that may help if you are thinking about sharing oranges on the day.

The orange was never a wild tree, it was produced by the Chinese by cultivating together the pomelo and the mandarin. From China it spread to India. *(We could consider our efforts as cultivating a better world for all)*

Contrary to what most of us think, this fruit was not named for its colour. Instead, the word orange comes from a transliteration of the sanskrit naranga. Which comes from the Tamil naru. Which means "fragrant." *(We could consider we are spreading the fragrance of compassion and understanding)*

It's thought that the reason oranges have long been associated with fertility (and therefore, weddings) is because this lush evergreen tree can simultaneously produce flowers, fruit and foliage. *(We could consider we are promoting the opportunity for every women and girl to reach their full potential)*

Oranges and orange blossoms are a symbol of love, used traditionally in wedding bouquets. *(We could consider we are spreading God's love for all creation when we allow all to be loved as God intended)*



Northern Territory Scoping Visit for GFS

We are working towards a new and exciting project—a scoping visit to take place in 2020 for possibly establishing GFS groups within the Northern Territory.

This has come about through Helen Petering's discussions with Reverend Kate in NT about the potential for GFS to help establish some groups.

Please pray for this visit to work its way through the processes to make it happen and we give thanks for Helen's willingness to be involved.



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AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL OUR GFS MEMBERS FOR A VICE PRESIDENT

Greetings in the name of our Lord. I trust that you are all well and enjoying your call to GFS Ministry.

You will be aware that earlier this year we celebrated the life of Lyn Vaak, a long-time devoted GFS member and leader. In losing Lyn to this life we lost so much in GFS including our Vice President. It is for this reason that I now call upon you all to consider your calling to GFS and its ministry in Australia. Some time has now passed since our National Council in January 2018 when Lyn so very graciously put herself forward for this position, which was to take her through to become the President of GFS Australia at the National Council in January 2021. Now we must continue to carry each other's burdens and go forward in faith. The National Executive invites applications for the position of Vice President GFS Australia. Please be aware also, in line with our moving to consider the outcomes from Open Space Consultation at our last National meeting, directly related to Governance, we intend to consider the term of various executive positions including that of the Vice President/ President, at the AGM in 2020. So please begin to consider this also. We intend to be able to announce and commission the new person called to serve in this role at our National AGM in Brisbane in January 2020. **To achieve this, we need to call for applications to be with the National Executive by September 27th and circulate to members in early October for voting in January 2020 at the AGM to be held in Brisbane.** We now ask everyone who is eligible to reflect and pray on God's calling for you in GFS. Maybe it was not your time of calling back in 2018 but maybe you have a different feeling now. Maybe you know someone whom you think is now ready for that task. Please don't hesitate to talk with them. We are holding you all in prayer and look forward to hearing from those who now feel called to this position.

Love and prayers, *Cheryl.*



*Please email national Secretary (Julie on julie679233@gmail.com) for an application form and information. **Applications need to be submitted via email to National Secretary by September 27th, 2019 to be circulated to members in October.** A vote will be held at our Annual General Meeting in January 2020, Brisbane for the position of Vice President.*

NORTH QUEENSLAND NEWS

Pictured below are the GFS on Mer Island, in Torres Strait when Ann Watkins combined a MU visit with GFS. The group are very interested in the Diocesan activities and the little red prayer book (later re-printed by NQ).



Jennifer Buckby used the Vision and Purpose cards to share with her NQ Synod in Mid June to inform them about what GFS was doing, plans for the future as part of a 5 minute PowerPoint informing Synod about their Ministry. **“What are we presently planning** - Encouraging members to highlight **Orange Day** in their MU on the 25th September.

Future plans We are presently negotiating with Andrew McDonough who lives in Adelaide to travel to Nth. Qld., hopefully to several places, to present a workshop on the **Lost Sheep Series**. He is very keen to come here but will not be able to until 2020. We are hopeful that it will be around May next year.



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CHAPLAIN'S MESSAGE

Dear friends,

I recently attended the Anglican Schools Conference in Hobart. I attended as the chair of one of our School Councils. It was nice, while in Hobart, to catch up with Julie Smith and also Janet Story, who was attending the conference in her capacity as a school chaplain.

THE KEY: **God is an AWE-SOME God (fear and wonder);**
God invites us into his presence

One of the speakers at the conference was English theologian, Dr Paula Gooder, who spoke on the theme of *Awe and Wonder (Amazement)*. I thought I would share with you a precis of her talk in this letter.

Dr Gooder introduced her theme by describing Awe, in the Bible, as embracing both fear and amazement. People were amazed by the things they saw Jesus do (awe and wonder). They are also filled with awe/fear when they encounter nearness with God. For example, the disciples were afraid on the boat with Jesus after the stilling of the storm and said (in awe), "Who can this be?" Or again, the Psalmist writes that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". In Scripture we often hear people also being told not to be afraid – think of Mary and Joseph at the annunciation, or the shepherds: "Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy".

You might remember reading in the Narnia chronicles that "Aslan is not a tame lion"! Our God is a tame God. He is all-loving, all present and very near. At the same time He is totally beyond us, totally other. What a remarkable thing that God calls us into His family as beloved children. We rightly feel awe as we contemplate this and sense God's presence with us. The good news is that God, who is greater than us, loves us.

The shape of the cross can remind us of the way our relationship with God and our relationships with each other belong together. The upright represents God and us, while the horizontal bar denotes us and others. When these intersect, a cross is formed. The intersection of these relationships describes our lives as Christians and disciples. 'Me and God' & 'me and others' belong together. When we consider this, we might understand why some people say that we live cross-shaped lives!



So, what do we do with all if this?



How do we promote awe and wonder in our own lives?

Paula Gooder suggests in three ways:

Model it – take time to feel awe ourselves

Leave space for it ... don't rush.

Recognise that young people are good at awe and wonder.

The poet William Blake began his poem, *Auguries of Innocence* with these words:

*To see the world in a grain of sand
 And heaven in a wildflower
 Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
 And eternity in an hour.*

Blessings, + Sonia





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BALLARAT NEWS

This photo was taken at our Townsend day on 29th July. Our guest speaker for the day was our Chaplain Fr. Chris Keast. Pictured with Fr. Chris from left - Mrs. Mavis Foy who was celebrating her 90th Birthday, Chairman Wendy Veal and new Member Mrs. Judith Rogers. (Mavis's daughter who had attended GFS in her growing up years.)

A delicious afternoon tea and much fellowship was enjoyed by the many members present.

Last month six members went to Hailey House and had afternoon tea with the residents there and handed out the rugs, capes and warm beanies made by our members.

Kindest regards, Nathalie— Secretary, Ballarat Diocese.



SYDNEY HISTORY DAY

Have you ever held a History Day?

On the 18th July 2019 a GFS History Day was held at Dawn Ferguson's home. Between all the attendees there was over 100 years of GFS institutional memory. The GFS motto song was the first topic of discussion. As near as we could discover, the words of the song have been sung since 1945. The tune has changed over time. Traditional hymns such as Glorious Things of Ye Are Spoken, Praise My Soul and Through the Night of Dark and Sorrow have been used. The current tune has been used since the 1960's. During this discussion, the contributions of Gaye McDonald were noted. Several of those present told anecdotes of her musical talent and dedication to GFS.

Some attendees brought memorabilia with them. One such item was a copy of the 1974 album "We Gather Together". Music has been an important component of GFS over the years.

Among other items of memorabilia was a 1970's GFS Australia poster, with photographs taken at Sydney Town Hall. The consensus was that the girls pictured were from the Castle Hill branch. Several attendees brought badges. We discussed the different levels of membership and leadership represented by the badges. As a general rule, the Leader and Associate badges were shield shaped and the Junior girl's badges were round. There were some examples of star badges which represented different numbers of years of membership. We discussed that this system was introduced to GFS Sydney by Ev Beckenham. The filigree brooch was first awarded to Mrs Gough in 1960.

TASMANIAN NEWS



On Saturday, 17th August GFS Southern Townsend met together for lunch to remember 35 years since a small group of women (4 of them in fact) who started a group for those who had previously belonged to GFS and were interested in making an adult group. With Betty Dean as the leader this group has flourished under her care and love and kept up a circle of friendship. Thank you Betty for a job well done!



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WORLD PROJECT NEWS



Pictured above—the 25 women who received their Certificates upon completion of the course. I can't speak highly enough of the course and how it is changing the lives of so many young women.

Pictured below— I visited the new office of GFS Sri Lanka in Dickoya in the Central Hill country and met many girls starting their English course and presented them with their GFS membership badges. It is exciting that two leaders of MU also elected to become members and are very supportive.

It has beautiful scenery and a special opening of a church built in 1878 for the English Tea Planters. So much history.

Once again I am so amazed at the continual growth of GFS in Sri Lanka, all that it is providing to young women and mostly because of the project. I encourage the donations to continue to the World Project!!



A Day in Colombo with Lunch at GFS Hall with executive and staff where we spent valuable time talking about the GFS world scene.



Jeanne and I made a trip together to Kurenegala, the home of the Bishop (there are only two Anglican dioceses in Sri Lanka, Colombo and Kurenegala).

Bishop Keerthisiri Fernando knew little about GFS but has similar hopes for the young women in his diocese and is very willing for the project to be involved and even introduced us to a person who is willing to coordinate the program.

So great news and we need to pray that GFS Sri Lanka can manage this huge growth and we in the world can finance it.

I leave Sri Lanka with a much greater knowledge and understanding of the challenges of both Sri Lanka and the GFS project. I leave with such a grateful heart for all the kindness to me and the arrangements made for me to see so much of the project at work.



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WORLD PROJECT

It is great to rejoice with Sri Lanka as the World Project grows. And a great reminder of our need to send in any monies raised toward the project to Noeleen gfsaus.treasurer@bigpond.com

We urge you to be generous at your World Day of Prayer days in support of the World Project.



(pictured—Star Sapphires—one of the new groups in GFS in Sri Lanka)

(pictured—Star Sapphires—one of the new groups in GFS in Sri Lanka)

National Redress Scheme

We are progressing towards joining the Redress Scheme as GFS Australia Inc. Please check with your diocese to find

GFS

National Council



January 2021

St John's College, Uni Queensland, in the heart of Brisbane

In the week beginning 10th January, 2021—but we want your input as to how we run it—length of council, options of format—all to be discussed at our AGM in 2020.

Governance was one of the issues you asked us to delve into after the Open Spaces workshop in 2018 and we now want your ideas!

WORLD COUNCIL

Forms: You can send your application form to Cheryl on (olytrans2@hotmail.com) as soon as possible—last possible date is 15th October.

Please don't leave it until the last minute for you and for Cheryl.

Travel: Noeleen Stewart has been gathering some information for a group travel booking, leaving via Perth on South African Airlines. If you are at all interested please email Noeleen for further information.

PERTH NEWS

We have begun a GFS Women's Group (still to think of a name to call ourselves). We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at the Greenwood Parish. We have had past members and current members come along and last week we had a Tapas



and Tampons night to collect items for the charity "Share the Dignity". We had 14 women come along and enjoy some yummy food and cost of entry was a donation to the charity.

Our holiday club in Wongan Hills (2 hours north east of Perth) was a great success with 27 children attending. We had a great time with the program Son Quest Rainforest learning how to GET It, GET Found, GET God's Love, GET Praying and GET Going – all based on some of the parables. Lots of fun was had hearing Bible stories, doing crafts, playing games and eating yummy food. The children performed the parable of The Good Samaritan in church on the Sunday morning. We made grass heads as one of our crafts and there are great results a few weeks on!





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You are warmly invited ..

to join your

National Executive and Brisbane GFS members

at the **Annual General Meeting Get Together**

January 11th and January 12th—2020

We will begin at 9 am on Saturday, January 11th, at St Francis College, Brisbane. We are planning to have some workshops to explore the topics relevant to us (for example Governance), our Annual General Meeting and look forward to voting on our next Vice President. We will be commissioning our Junior Delegate, Stephanie Stewart and our new Vice President. We will share in lunch and Dinner on Saturday. We invite you to join us in Holy Communion on Sunday morning and the weekend concludes after morning tea.

Some billets will be available.

Please register your interest (and if you would like a billet) by October 12th, 2019 by emailing Julie on julie679233@gmail.com indicating your interest and needs.



DATES TO REMEMBER

September 27 Applications for Vice President to Secretary

October 12th Indication of those coming to the AGM in Jan.

October 15th last day to get your application signed by Cheryl for World Council !!!

October 25th Orange Day (Tasmania)

October 31st Closing date for deposits and applications for world Council

November 25th Orange Day

2020 January—10th - 12th AGM Brisbane

February 25th Orange Day

March 15th Julie and Ian's wedding

March 25th Orange Day

March 31st Final payment for World Council fee

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