

MEDIA RELEASE

SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH of GOULBURN AND TASMANIA, MOVE TO UNITY

At their shared Assembly held in late January, **the Sisters of St Joseph of GOULBURN and TASMANIA** unanimously supported a proposal to become one Congregation. Critical to this decision is the intention that in becoming one group the Sisters will together search out and determine “new and different ways of being Josephite for today’s world”. This search has already begun.

Following the momentous decision for UNION, each Sister committed herself to ongoing involvement in the process towards unity. It is the Sisters’ hope that by the end of 2011 the new Congregation will be established.

This Assembly with its theme “Living Waters Flow” is the third such shared Assembly held over the past three years. The Leadership Teams of the two Congregations have met regularly between Assemblies.

Held at St Joseph’s Centre for Reflective Living at Baulkham Hills, the Assembly was facilitated by Sr Mary Cresp rsj (of the North Sydney Congregation) and Sr Patricia Egan rsj (a Lochinvar Josephite). The process adopted was open and consultative, and the assembled Sisters benefited greatly from the wisdom, skills, and vision of these two Sisters. Sr Maria Casey rsj (also of North Sydney Congregation and currently in Rome as Postulator for the canonisation of Mary MacKillop) is the Canon Law Consultant for this journey toward unity.

Working Groups, each consisting of Sisters from the two Congregations, will be established to deliberate and prepare position papers. The Working Group “*New Ways*” is seen to be foundational for all other working groups.

This movement towards union is an opportunity for personal and Congregational ‘refounding’ for the sake of continued commitment to the mission of Jesus in the spirit of Fr Julian Tenison Woods and Blessed Mary MacKillop. While recognising the value and place of consecrated religious life, living Josephite life in the future will mean embracing differences and greater collaboration with lay people.

The commitment to become one group is taken within the context of a deeper desire for unity amongst all the Josephite Congregations of Australia and New Zealand.