



## **Josephite Spirituality**

A reflection given at the Mass marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of  
Cullinane College, Whanganui

a school of Josephite and Marist spiritualities

Today I want to recognise the importance of truly living our lives where we actually are, instead of dreaming of what may or may not be in the future, or what was in the past.

Two quotes from today's readings (Acts 1:1-11: Luke 24: 46-53) bear this out: The first is when the Risen Christ assures the apostles He will send them the Holy Spirit. He tells them to **STAY IN THE CITY** where they were.

As Jesus ascends into Heaven the Angel admonishes the disciples saying:

“Why are you men standing here looking up into the sky? It is here that the real work of following Jesus is to be done.”

For us this morning **HERE – THE PLACE FOR US TO BE PRESENT** is our **GATHERING** to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cullinane College. It is a decade since the College became reborn as a co-educational facility from Sacred Heart, which had been run by the Sisters of St Joseph for 123 years and St Augustines, run by the Marist Fathers.

When two people marry they are challenged to rethink many aspects of everyday living and adapt their value systems. E.g. if you think of the word “Tidy” and what that means to a bride, formed in her family's idea of tidiness and then think of what it may mean to a groom, formed in his idea of tidiness

you will see that often the two ideas are very far apart! The tidiness level which exists in their home together will probably be a compromise – a combination of both of their original ideas.

Therefore the family spirit and values of Cullinane will reflect both their Josephite and Marist origins.

Children inherit genes with their inbuilt gifts, talents and predispositions. Sometimes you can definitely tell which parent's gene pool specific qualities have come from, but we certainly inherit from both.

It's a bit like that then, with Cullinane College. It has inherited a particular **Josephite spirituality** from us and another from the Marist family. Over the last 10 years this school has been forming a new spirituality reflecting both of these.

So this morning I would like to reflect about how you can identify the particular aspects which reflect the Josephite spirit. **Joseph**, chosen to be the earthly father and mentor of Jesus, **was a pretty ordinary** guy. He had a good work **ethic, was a reliable husband and dad**. Therefore **our Josephite spirit is about finding God in the ordinary circumstances of daily life**.

Our foundress St Mary MacKillop said: **"There, where you are, you will find God."** (Just like the message of the readings today).

**Josephites are urged to: Have our eyes open, ears attentive, spirit alert and sleeves rolled up in order to understand what God and our neighbours await from us each day.**

So how can we see these Josephite traits in the students at Cullinane as they live out their day to day school lives each day?

This is easy because **Josephite values are very practical. They are summed up as:**

- **Do your bit!**
- **Make room for all**
- **Have an attitude of gratitude**
- **Never see a need without doing something about it**
- **Listen to God's call (here, where you are at present!)**

So when you have volunteered for something which helps to make a group activity happen, or worked at home to make a family event succeed, you are **doing your bit!**

When you have made a space for someone to join your group –a newcomer, someone you don't naturally warm to – you are **“Making room for all”**.

Whenever you thank your classmate, your teacher, your parents, your brothers and sisters for what they do you are **having an attitude of gratitude**. As you are when you thank God for your health, your abilities and maybe for just being born in New Zealand, a place of beauty and comparative harmony.

Whenever you see someone in need – a student, a sibling, a less fortunate person, who may have problems to overcome - and go to help them in the smallest way you are **seeing a need and doing something about it**.

So if you are:

- \*doing your bit,
- \* having an attitude of gratitude and
- \* making room for all

**you have been listening to God's call.**

You are learning to be aware of God's spirit within you. This is because, as the readings today tell us, **it is in the ordinariness of our daily routines that God is made known to us**. God just nudges us in the right direction and we have to be listening – ears alert – in order to get the message.

To quote Anne Powell, a Cenacle Sr from Wellington:

*'The pot of the earth simmers with the Sacred.  
Take off the lid!'*

This really means understanding that:

There, where we are, we are meant to find God! (Just like the message this Ascension Sunday)

After all Jesus came as an ordinary Jewish man of his era to show us that our humdrum, sometimes monotonous lives are actually full of the Sacred. It's just a matter of awareness – of taking off the lid, of peeling back the layers.

**So today, ten years after the inauguration of Cullinane College we can surely see the signs of the Christian spirit – with a Josephite flavour - being present in the young women and men who have spent time there. We just have to look for those who have their eyes open, their ears attentive, their spirit alert to the needs around them – and more importantly their sleeves rolled up!**

Sr. Marie Skidmore, RSJ  
m.skid@clear.net.nz  
[www.sistersofsaintjoseph.org.nz](http://www.sistersofsaintjoseph.org.nz)