



## Bidding a Fond Farewell to Birkinesh

~ by Christine Elmer, Cabrini Health Australia

In recent months, Birkinesh Yosef, age 34, has become a familiar face around Cabrini Health, Australia. A lay missionary working with the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Cabrini Sisters) in Dubbo, Ethiopia since 2001, Birkinesh has recently spent time in Melbourne for medical treatment.

Birkinesh's story is an interesting one and has not been without significant hardships. She had her right leg amputated when she was just five years old. She was extremely ill in the hospital over many months and lost her leg as a result. A few years ago, a prosthesis was made in Italy for Birkinesh to wear. Unfortunately, it was ill fitting and caused repeated infections, putting her in danger of having to have further amputation. A new prosthesis made in Ethiopia was too heavy and impractical for Birkinesh to use on the uneven ground in Dubbo where she lives.

Through Cabrini's social outreach program, it was arranged for Birkinesh to have a new prosthesis manufactured and fitted by Caulfield Hospital. Kate Fitzpatrick, prosthetist/orthotist, provided this life changing treatment for Birkinesh, which was generously supported by Caulfield Hospital; it provided expertise and materials at no charge. The components required have been charged at cost price. Further, Kate is restoring Birkinesh's old prosthesis to a satisfactory level for back-up use. Birkinesh says her new prosthesis is "beautiful"; it is lightweight and well-fitting. She went walking with Cath Garner, Executive Director Mission and Strategy, on a rocky and hilly track at Studley Park, Kew, to test it on the similar conditions to what she experiences at home.

Birkinesh lives on the Cabrini Sisters' compound in Dubbo, in Ethiopia's south. It is a large area with accommodation for the Cabrini Sisters and young women in various stages of formation, volunteer accommodation, a bakery, an orchard, a vegetable garden, livestock (cows and chickens) and a pre-school for the local community. St. Mary's Hospital is in a separate [venue] approximately ten minutes' walk from the compound.

Dubbo is a poor rural area. As well as working in the hospital, the Cabrini Sisters formerly operated an inter-country adoption program. This has since ceased and the Sisters now operate a sponsorship program for the poorest children.

Caulfield Hospital is part of Alfred Health, a large public healthcare service. It is not related to Cabrini Health, as such. Cabrini Health maintains positive relationships with peer hospitals (such as Caulfield Hospital) and was able to leverage our knowledge of their services and our relationship to help Birkinesh obtain the care and support she needed for her new prosthesis. Caulfield Hospital generously agreed to help.



Birkenesh Yosef

Employed by the Cabrini Sisters four days per week, Birkenesh manages projects that provide food for the Sisters, children and hospital. They also generate income from selling eggs, milk, water and bread. In return, the sponsored children's parents work in the Cabrini Sisters' compound. As part of her role, Birkenesh allocates and oversees their work although not on a Tuesday. "Tuesday is rest day," says Birkenesh. Not that there is too much rest that takes place in Birkenesh's life; she has a family of four adopted and/or fostered girls aged from 3 to 16 years in her full-time care. They are Martha, aged 16; Terefech, aged 14; Tsiyon, aged 5; and Mabe, aged just three. "It is no problem for me," she says. But without the Cabrini Sisters, she says it would be very difficult. During the daytime, Birkenesh receives

some help to care for her children and they are all at home together in the evenings.

Birkenesh first came into contact with the Cabrini Sisters through attending daily Mass. "Always when we see the Cabrini Sisters, they are so good to us," she says. They invited her to teach needlecraft skills to young girls at the mission and she was paid for this work. From them, she learned English. It was an opportunity she embraced: Birkenesh loves children. She also loves the heritage of the Cabrini Sisters and the Sisters themselves. So, she began her journey to become a lay missionary and to live the way of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini. "I very much like the way of the Cabrini Sisters and would like to do what is possible for me to do [to help others]," says Birkenesh. "My life is good now because I am in a secure place . . . sometimes life is difficult and sometimes good but we have to accept it; it is our life," she says.

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~Birkenesh Yosef

Since arriving in Melbourne in June 2016, Birkenesh has been living in community with Sr. Sharon Casey, MSC. Many staff members have provided support and friendship to Birkenesh during her time in Melbourne. In particular, Wendy Harrison (Casual Staffing Coordinator, Cabrini Malvern) and volunteers Tessa Bennett and Jill Barlow gave their time to accompany Birkenesh to appointments and providing skills training in computer use and administration. She has been embraced by staff and their families for weekend stays and excursions and all have been enriched by the experience.

~ submitted by Christine Elmer, *Cabrini Health* This story first appeared on the *Cabrini Health intranet*.

**Editor's note:** Following her medical stay in Australia, Birkenesh is now back in Ethiopia with the Missionary Sisters and her family.

## Cabrini Mission Foundation



### **“A Tribute on the Hudson” Luncheon Yacht Cruise**

The Cabrini Mission Foundation remembered the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks by holding a “Tribute on the Hudson” luncheon yacht cruise. Held aboard the Majestic Princess, guests boarded on Manhattan’s west side and enjoyed a three-hour cruise of New York Harbor.

A memorial program, led by Stella Maris Provincial Sr. Pietrina Raccuglia, MSC and Dr. Lawrence J. Ottaviano, was held while the yacht idled off One World Trade Center. Psalm 46 was read by Sr. Catherine Garry, MSC and Paul Michels. The highlight of the presentation was a tossing of the memorial wreath by Sr. Frances Xavier Brogan, MSC and the release of 12 live butterflies led by Sr. Tommasina Lanski, MSC. These two symbols remembered those who were lost and those who continued to live on after this tragedy. Closing remarks were given by Sr. Diane Olmstead, MSC.

Cabrini Mission Foundation would like to thank all those in attendance, as well as, those who offered their prayers and support of this event.

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With the Freedom Tower One in the background Sr. Pietrina Raccuglia, MSC, Provincial, (I.) and Sr. Lucille Souza, MSC, Event Chair, get ready to board the Majestic Princess for a tribute cruise in New York Harbor. On board also are NYPD Officer Ward and her children Sinead and Shane.





## Sponsors



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### **Special Thanks**

Sr. Yolanda Flores, MSC for designing our beautiful butterfly logo  
Jennifer Ramos

### **Special Thanks to the Events Committee**

Sr. Lucille Souza, MSC – Chair  
MaryLee Bartolomeo  
Mary Ann Michels  
William J. O'Connor  
Dr. Lawrence J. Ottaviano  
Sr. James Skane, MSC



Twelve live butterflies were released during the cruise to symbolize and honor those who live on after the tragedy.



Enjoying the New York Harbor cruise is the staff of Dr. Lawrence Ottaviano and Gramercy Park Gastroenterology. Dr. Ottaviano is a member of the even committee and one of the event sponsors.



# Get Involved at Cabrini University!

Each September, the Student Engagement and Leadership (SEAL) Office of Cabrini University hosts an Involvement Fair as a means for students to become acquainted with the various clubs, activities and leadership opportunities on campus. The Fall 2016 Involvement Fair a huge success! It was so great to feel the energy on the campus Commons last night! It was fun, vibrant, and colorful.

In an informal outdoor setting students were given the opportunity to cruise around the many tables staffed by the University activities and clubs and to ask questions and decide for themselves what might be the best avenue and fit for campus involvement.

*~ Adapted from a note to the campus community  
by Amber LaJeunesse, SEAL Office*



Cabrini University junior Molly Seaman (r.) interests students in possibly becoming a Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Ambassador.



Each year the Missionary Sisters host a table at the Involvement Fair as way of getting to know the new students on campus. It's great opportunity to extend a personal welcome. This year, from left: Sr. Christine Marie Baltas, MSC; Campus Minister Rosa Altomare; Cabrini University graduate student Girum Bekele, from Ethiopia who is a recipient of an MSC scholarship; and Sr. Grace Waters, MSC spent time circulating among the students

Getting involved in campus activities, service and clubs is a great way to round out the university experience.



## Day of Prayer, Reflection and Restoration

### ST. FRANCES CABRINI SHRINE

#### A DAY OF PRAYER, REFLECTION AND RESTORATION *in the spirit of the Jubilee Year of Mercy*

##### WHERE

St. Frances X. Cabrini Shrine  
New York City

##### WHEN

**Saturday, September 17**

9:30 am – Gathering and Coffee

Noon - Liturgy

10:00 am – 4 pm – Program



##### WHAT

A Day of Prayer, Reflection and Restoration focused on the Jubilee Year of Mercy. \$30 includes program, materials, continental breakfast, lunch, & refreshments. Mindfulness meditation, spiritual movement, quiet reflection, insights on mercy and a walk through the Holy Doors will highlight the day.

##### WHO

All are welcome! MSCs, Cabrini Lay Missionaries, Cabrini Companions, former Cabrini Mission Corps missionaries and all Cabrini friends.  
Presenters: Fr. Edwin Robinson, OFM, Director of Pastoral Care, Cabrini of Westchester  
Sr. Christine Marie Baltas, MSC and Cherie Sprosty, St. FX. Cabrini Shrine

##### HOW

###### Registration open now.

To register or for more information, please email: [cabriniformation@mothercabrini.org](mailto:cabriniformation@mothercabrini.org) or call 610-902-1038. Space is limited. (The first ten registrants will receive a special Cabrinian gift.) Checks should be made payable to: Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and mailed to: Cabrini Formation Office, 610 King of Prussia Rd. The Cottage, Radnor, PA 19087



## Important Notice

Please note that, unfortunately, due to low registration, the Day of Prayer, Reflection and Restoration scheduled for this Saturday, September 17th has been cancelled.

For further information kindly contact the Province Formation Office: 610-902-1038.  
Thank you.

### One Minute Meditation

Mother of Mercy – Today is the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows

No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh. At the foot of the cross, Mary, together with the disciple of love, witnessed the words of forgiveness spoken by Jesus. This supreme expression of mercy towards those who crucified him show us the point to which the mercy of God can reach. Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception.

Let us address her in the words of the Salve Regina, a prayer ever ancient and ever new, so that she many never tire of turning her merciful eyes upon us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her son, Jesus.

~ Pope Francis/Words of Grace



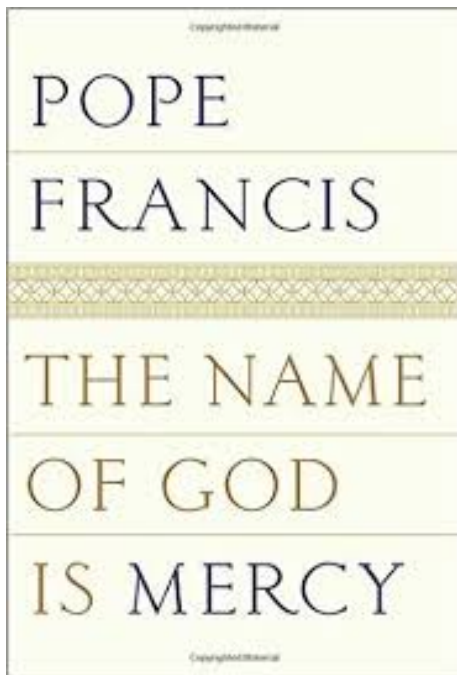
## *From the Province Vocation Promotion Team...*

### **Sharing a Book Review from the HORIZON Journal**

The Jubilee Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis will draw to a close on November 20, 2016. As we near the end of this special year to keep the spirit of mercy going, *Update* readers might be interested in reading *The Name of God is Mercy*.

Sr. Michelle Leshar, SSJ, a member of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia and a colleague in the NRVC Delaware Valley Member Area, has written the follow book review:

The NAME OF GOD IS MERCY (Random House, 2016) offers a beautiful in-depth glance into Pope Francis' expansive heart. In his own words, with Andrea Tornielli, veteran Vatican reporter, he describes the intensifying significance of mercy throughout his life and his multitude of reasons for declaring a Year of Mercy. He does so in the authentic, transparent and modest way that characterizes this pontiff.



This book is a profound read for those longing to know God's tender love and mercy, for those who have experienced God in this way and celebrate that reality, and for those desiring to share love and mercy more fully with others.

The book offers a great reality check: we are human; we know right from wrong, yet we make mistakes. We are flawed. We make choices that are less than perfect; therefore, we stand in need of God's mercy. Our sometimes self-centered culture encourages a passing of blame, not demanding an acceptance of the consequences of actions. What a countercultural response for a person to admit being flawed, capable of sinning, and in need of God's mercy.

Yet Pope Francis asserts that it is precisely the recognition and claiming of our brokenness and sinfulness that enable us to be amazed by God. Francis believes that this

reception of God's mercy and love in our own lives enables us to extend similar kindness to others. Throughout the long interview that makes up this book, Pope Francis calls to mind the multitude of people in his life, who, by offering numerous concrete examples of God's unconditional mercy, revealed to him this face of God. Through their witness, he encountered the God of Mercy and was thus able to share that love with others. Mercy, says Pope Francis, is God's identity card. We too, are called to this kind of love.

Our world is in great need of compassionate treatment for those in distress. We must remember our humanity and offer others the loving embrace of God – cultivating that same spirit in those who might be discerning religious life and in all.

*~excerpts from a book review by Sr. Michelle Leshar, SSJ in the HORIZON Journal of NRVC*

# Prayer Requests

## ***Elizabeth Bergin***

Prayers are requested by Cabrini University staff member Carmel-Jo Madonna for her daughter, Elizabeth. Elizabeth will be undergoing some medical tests today. Please pray that all will be well.

## ***Terry and Tony DeFedericis***

Please pray for Terry and Tony DeFedericis who have many special intentions. Pray especially for their health.

# With Grateful Hearts

## ***Fr. Kozak***

We have been praying for Fr. Kozak who was recently hit by a car. As a result of the accident, he required surgery to amputate his leg. We want to thank you for your prayers and let you know that Fr. Kozak's surgery was a success. He is in good spirits and will continue his recovery at Bryn Mawr Rehab in PA and will be fitted for a prosthetic leg. Cabrini University staff member Anita Catalanotto is most grateful for our prayers.

## ***Infant Samantha Josephine Sharpe***

Last week we asked your prayers for two-day old Samantha who was born with congenital heart disease and was in the ICU. Samantha is the grand niece of Cabrini High School alumna and trustee Florence Wingerter. Florence writes, "Samantha is now out of ICU and on a regular pediatric floor. Someone from her family has to be with her 24 hours a day, all good news. The oxygen level that she is receiving was lowered a little this morning, which is great improvement. I thank you and everyone for the continuous prayers that have gotten Samantha and her family this far." Please continue to storm heaven for this tiny child.



## ***With thanks from Sr. Lucy Panettieri MSC***

Sr. Lucy Panettieri wishes to thank the Sisters and everyone who sent cards and condolences following the passing of her brother and her sister-in-law. Sr. Lucy writes, "The cards and the Masses have been overwhelming. My family and I thank everyone with all our hearts."



# In Loving Memory

## ***Mrs. Italia Pizzati Baccuzi***

The Community of Cabrini High School in New Orleans, Louisiana, has suffered the loss of a great friend and benefactress: Mrs. Italia Pizzati Baccuzi, the niece of Captain Salvatore Pizzati, who was the principal benefactor of Mother Cabrini in New Orleans. Through the generosity of Captain Salvatore Pizzati, Mother Cabrini constructed a new orphanage on Esplanade Avenue. In 1959, the orphanage closed and the building became the home of Cabrini High School. Mrs. Baccuzi's funeral took place in the chapel of Cabrini High School on the 16th of August this year. In attendance were Mrs. Italia Pizzati Baccuzi's beloved three daughters and closest relatives. We remember with gratitude the generous help of the Pizzati Family.



**Photo above:** Mrs. Baccuzi's daughters, from left: Tali Guidry, Joanne Russell and Melisa Barnett gathered at the chapel at Cabrini High School in August for their mother's funeral.



**Photo right:** Joining them are four of Mrs. Baccuzi's grandsons, from left: John Russell, Jacob Russell, Trevor and Taylor Barnett.

## ***Sr. Ildefonsa Ghitti, MSC***

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Sr. Ildefonsa who was called home to God on September 10<sup>th</sup> in Rome. May she rest in God's eternal peace.

