

E-BULLETIN #75

"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)

item 142

Life Vincent Pallotti – 75th Anniversary

private hospital group celebrates

On this auspicious day – 18 Jun – we thank the Lord for all His wonderful blessings showered upon all our Sisters who work tirelessly, with compassion and love, carrying out the Lord's work in their health care ministry. We remember too those Sisters who are dead and gone – but still carrying out good deeds! – and too those who are less able, aged, sick and suffering.

Cape Town is known not only as a flourishing port city and global creative centre, with some of the most venerated schools and institutions for higher learning in the country, but it is also considered a "smart city". Highly regarded internationally for its first rate health care, it has earned a reputation that stems from a tradition of pioneering procedures, health care professionals who are at the forefront of their specialisations and medical facilities that rate among the best in the world.

For many of us, a stay in hospital is a pivotal or even a life-changing event. Certainly it can be a traumatic experience, one overshadowed by anxiety. Recognising the difference that compassionate care and medical expertise can make to the peace of mind of its patients and their families, and focusing on its belief in the delivery of world class health care, Life Health Care, the holding company of **Life Vincent Pallotti** Hospital, has embodied its core beliefs in its name: life – dedication to wellbeing and quality of life; health – clinical excellence in world class facilities; care – quality service, respect and a spirit of giving to those entrusted to its care.



Life Vincent Pallotti essentially provides a full spectrum of healthcare needs in one centrally accessible area, exceptionally convenient for patients and families. It has long been an important part of the community of Pinelands, providing convergence of a 19th century caring ethos and of 21st century high-tech palliative care.

On its 75th anniversary, **Life Vincent Pallotti** Hospital aims to continue "Making life better" – striving to improve its facilities, standards and technology, while maintaining a tradition of caring

excellence that is as relevant today as it was when the Pallottine Missionary Sisters first look over the hospital's administration in 1938.

Today the *Saint Vincent Pallotti Convent*, headed by province leader **Sr Boscona sac**, houses nine sisters in a building on the same property. **Sr Annemarie sac** visits the hospital everyday to provide pastoral care for patients and their families. She has performed a vital role, initially as a professional nursing sister and latterly as a spiritual counsellor. Over more than four decades she has seen many positive changes. Sister comments: *"It's wonderful to see a hospital like this in Cape Town. Looking back it has been such a pleasure to work with so many good people and a privilege to create a place like this. As it goes forward I would wish that the hospital continues to be a blessing for all the people involved in the healing process."*

Looking to the future, the hospital aims to continue embracing the humanitarian principles of St Vincent Pallotti and exceptional standards of care inherited from the Pallottine Missionary Sisters, while focusing on progressive health care as embodied in the high ideals of Life Health Care [its holding company]. Founded on Christian principles, the hospital has always cared for and continues to care for people from all walks of life and all religious persuasions. Its development timeline is as follows:

- 1923:** Six Pallottine Missionary Sisters arrived in Cape Town after a four week sea voyage, at the urging of Father Bishop Franziskus Hennemann sac, Bishop of Cape Town.
- 1937:** After approaching Mother Aquina and Sr Pancratia, who were both in favour of the undertaking, plans for a Catholic hospital in Pinelands were submitted by Bishop Hennemann. They were approved in September and the building commenced that year.
- 1938:** On 04 Jun the first patient was admitted although the rooms were not yet ready for occupation. On 18 Jun the formal blessing and opening by Bishop Henneman took place. The hospital was named St Joseph's Sanatorium and it had beds for 36 patients, with a ward for 8 children. Ten Pallottine Missionary sisters were on the staff.
- 1942:** An extension for 34 beds was added.
- 1952:** Building started of the maternity block, comprising a double-storied wing for 40 beds with modern nurseries, labour-wards and a theatre. A further extension was annexed for modern offices, doctors' rooms, reception area, and a library.
- 1954:** On 07 Aug the official opening of the maternity wing took place – within eight months 500 babies had been born. The staff complement consisted of 27 Pallottine Missionary Sisters and 66 lay people.
- 1972:** In August new general wards and 3 well equipped modern theatres were opened, coinciding with a change of name from St Joseph's Sanatorium to Vincent Pallotti Hospital.
- 1979:** The old maternity block became a frail-care section with 40 beds.
- 1990:** In February a new maternity block and children's ward were built, and a modern reception area and coffee shop added. Gradual conversion of the frail-care section into the medical centre was begun.
- 1985:** In March the full medical centre was completed.
- 1997:** In May Afrox Healthcare, a division of African Oxygen Ltd (Afrox), acquired the operating assets of Vincent Pallotti Hospital from the Pallottine Missionary Sisters of South Africa which essentially meant that the hospital was then handed over to lay management.
- 1999:** On 29 Oct the newly expanded Vincent Pallotti Hospital opened, having had more than R100 million invested by Afrox Healthcare Group to enlarge existing facilities and add new high tech facilities.
- 2002:** The Institute for Reproductive Medicine was opened.
- 2004:** On 03 Feb a multi-million rand Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory was opened. Also the Vincent Pallotti Oncology Centre, a centralised unit for private cancer treatment.
- 2006:** A plastic and reconstructive surgery unit was established, and a digital operating theatre launched.
- 2009:** In October a new paediatric wing was opened.
- 2011:** An adult acute rehabilitation unit was opened accommodating 36 adult physical rehabilitation beds.

2013: A newly refurbished and upgraded oncology centre, with a highly advanced radio-oncology unit, will be opened this coming October.

Life Vincent Pallotti Hospital's rehabilitation unit



Strokes and heart attacks are among the major causes of death and disability in South Africa. But, when timing is of the essence, the Level One emergency unit, complete with helicopter landing pad, is equipped for prompt treatment of any cardiac condition.

In its 75 years **Life Vincent Pallotti** Hospital has come a long way from its establishment as a small hospital for the Pinelands community of railway workers to a world-class facility with a high calibre of medical specialists and some of the most advanced equipment on the continent. May the hospital go proudly and confidently into an even brighter future.

Through the intercession of Vincent Pallotti may all seek His blessings, comfort and care. Jesus said: *“What ever you do, to the least of my brothers, you do to me.”*

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item 143

servant leadership



Servant leadership seeks to look beyond short-term satisfaction and immediate gratification towards the medium to long-term place of rightness and justice, writes Clare Condon sgs:

Together with 350 people, recently I attended a conference – “Mission: one heart many voices” – sponsored by Catholic Religious Australia and Catholic Mission. For me, it was time to reflect upon God’s mission in our Australian context today and how leadership within the Church can respond. How does leadership assist in awakening the presence of God in our lives within a secular environment?

Academic literature offers us descriptions of a variety of leadership styles. Is there a particular style suited to the mission of God within the Christian context? All of us can easily understand the ‘Great Person Theory’ of leadership. We can name examples like Nelson Mandela.

There are others who believe leadership is defined by certain traits. Some traits are acceptable, some not. Others assume that leadership depends on the situation or the environment. There are styles of leadership that are autocratic, managerial, relational or participatory. On reflection, we can probably identify all of these various styles in our political, social, religious and business contexts today.

However, for the mission of God as portrayed for us by Jesus in the Gospels, we need a different type of leadership. We need what is called *servant leadership*. The perennial example is Jesus washing the feet of his disciples as recorded in John's Gospel (13:1-17). In the Jewish culture of the time, it was the slave, the person of lowest rank who washed the feet of others. Disciples washed the feet of the master. This act of Jesus was a complete reversal of that



social and cultural structure and how leadership was exercised. He even went a step further by identifying his disciples as being in a relationship of friendship with him. In our own time we have the recent example of Pope Francis washing the feet of juvenile prisoners.

At face value servant leadership can appear to be weak and lacking in power. But for me, it's the exact opposite. To be a source of empowerment so that others assume their leadership requires considerable strength of character. One needs a healthy self-esteem, a self-identity that does not rely on affirmation and status. One needs emotional stability that has been forged by deep self-knowledge and reflection. Above all, transparency between one's words, actions and life is required. That is, servant leadership demands integrity of life. People are quick to see through falsehood.

Servant leadership is strong leadership and, as a consequence, it can bring its own conflicts. It has a prophetic edge to it and runs contrary to the norm. To bring about God's mission, leadership needs to be driven by a vision that is aligned to furthering the reign of God. Its source of inspiration is the Gospel, listened to in prayer, liturgy and relationships. Other factors, like the 'bottom line' in financial terms, find their rightful place as enablers of mission not the mission itself.

Servant leadership can reduce the distance between 'governors' and the 'governed'. It draws out the potential in others. Servant leadership is team-oriented rather than hierarchical. The servant leader is not necessarily the highest paid or the one with the distinguished title. Servant leaders break through competitive environments and build co-operative and trusting relationships. Servant leadership seeks to look beyond short-term satisfaction and immediate gratification towards the medium to long-term place of rightness and justice.

This style of leadership is counter-cultural in a country that has three-year political cycles which are often geared to immediate voter satisfaction rather than developing a sustainable and civil society.

At the other end of the spectrum, a church like the Catholic Church with an established and burdened hierarchical structure needs to open up to the potential of all its people so that servant leadership can prosper and the reign of God can flourish.

To reveal the presence of God, modelled on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Church needs to embrace a leadership style compatible with the same Gospel. I ask myself, what would the Church look like today and how would it respond in a secular society like ours in Australia if its leadership style and structure were re-structured in such a radical manner?

Clare Condon sgs
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Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict
21.05.13

you commented...

on #74 thanks for bulletin 74. I particularly enjoyed it. Michael Kelly's reflections are very good, understandable and convincing - for me who consider that the net as not very important. Guess I will have to change!!!

JM 30.06.13