

## Kimberley Principals Professional Development 2010

At our Professional Gatherings in Broome in February 2010 it was decided by the Kimberley Principals, (13 in total), that we would like to spend time together to pray, reflect and get to know each other a little better. During our once per term Broome Director's Forum, which cover core school business and components of Professional Development, there is little opportunity or time for spiritual enhancement and collegial networking. As soon as our business is complete at CEO, Principals, especially those from remote locations, are out attending to the business of their schools and purchasing staff and school supplies to take back with them on planes or loading up their four wheel drives ready for the trip home. These meetings have been the only opportunity Kimberley Principals have to come together as a group.

On the weekend of the 5th and 6th of June 2010, eight of the 13 Kimberley Principals managed to get away from their schools and communities. We gathered at a camping resort named Parry's Creek Lagoon on the savannah plains outside Wyndham to enjoy time together and reflect on the challenges and the gifts of our calling as Kimberley Principals, drawing inspiration from the life of St Mary McKillop.

Some Principals were able to bring spouses and children which afforded the wonderful occurrence of many first meetings. Wood-fired pizzas under the Kimberley stars initiated the call to muster as some Principals descended from rooms in the main complex overlooking the pandanus lined lagoon, whilst others sauntered in from the dark having settled into tents scattered amongst native paperbarks and box and lines of introduced mango trees.

The next morning whilst family members were left to unfold their own responses to the charms of a Kimberley oasis, the Principals gathered readily attentive to the spiritual directions of Sr. Alma Cabassi; A former Principal colleague with years of experience serving communities in a number of remote Kimberley locations .

Alma planted for the duration of our stay reflections from the life and charism of Mary McKillop; We were given gentle time to contemplate the challenges St Mary faced; The gifts she shared and the wisdom which inspired the journey of many young Australian women to the Kimberley to serve as Sisters of St Joseph in settings more spartan but not unrecognisable from the settings of many of our current Principals.

The input from Alma was punctuated by silent contemplation as Principals were left to wander the precinct of the lagoon. If the God of the gentle breeze did not speak to all in these moments, the God of majesty and awe was impossible to ignore as we explored the surrounding country that our Aboriginal brothers and sisters have called home for so many thousands of years. We witnessed towering escarpments that shelter overhangs hiding galleries of ancient rock art. They stand sentry above miles of sweeping salt marshes that orchestrate the convergence of five of the East Kimberley's main waterways. We shared story as we went and felt heard, as threads of common challenges and frustrations and successes and moments of humour were stitched into our journeys and to our times of breaking bread.

Then as time drew near for us to disperse again to all parts of the Kimberley, we drove to the top of a hill and overlooking a vast panorama of Kimberley landscape we gathered around a table for

Thanksgiving. Bound in a spirit of solidarity we prayed and then celebrated while God played a light show through the foothills to our left and across the grasses on the plains before us, splashing silver the waterways and away to the right, through the haze of distance, turned red the cliffs of a faraway range before switching off the light.

Thank you very much for your support it was greatly appreciated.

God Bless

The Kimberley Principals