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*Adding justice to care
for 60 years in Victoria*

1933 - 1993

Brotherhood Action

The Brotherhood of St Laurence Spirit

The Brotherhood of St Laurence, founded in 1930 in NSW, came to St Mary's Mission House (now Millott House) in Fitzroy Street, on 18th June, 1933. With next to no resources, this small group of Anglican priests and brothers served their small congregation and began working with slum families and people who were unemployed and dispossessed.

For 60 years now the Brotherhood of St Laurence has continued working for the most disadvantaged members of our society. Whether meeting personal needs or

addressing broader issues; whether the concern has been housing, employment, family welfare or aged care; in every phase of its life over six decades many people - some remarkable and many ordinary - have been drawn into the Brotherhood's service. All have shaped the way it has faced changing opportunities and needs and interpreted its role. It is often remarked, 'the Brotherhood is its people'.

Fr Gerard Tucker and the original brothers brought a powerful dedication and a willingness to risk and sacrifice. They believed the world needed the church whose Gospel involved radical commitment to Christ and practical service and action to create a good society.

Many others, Christians, people from other faiths and some with a more humanist stance, were inspired and encouraged to assist the Brotherhood. Staff made a powerful contribution especially as the Brotherhood became a professional welfare organisation from the 1950s onwards.

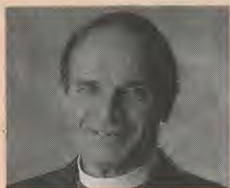
The Brotherhood was instrumental in establishing Community Aid Abroad which acts out of a concern for justice in a broader perspective. The Brotherhood has supported various groups, especially the Community at Avalon in exploring community life, alternative social models, spirituality and special ministries of care, acceptance, healing and empowerment.

The Companions and Community of St Laurence were groups begun in the early 1970s and 1980s to perhaps enable more people to be in touch with, give expression to, and develop 'The Brotherhood Spirit' in their time. There is a great strength in the Brotherhood's commitment to pursue real issues and achievements and its capacity to unite people representing all sorts of backgrounds and differing views.

The Brotherhood also remains alive and vital because in its daily work people connect to deeper roots and visions. In this way the Brotherhood remains one of Australia's most vital socio-religious movements in its common desire for justice and care - to broaden the opportunity for all people to live with dignity, to participate in community and live life to the full.



This historical souvenir issue of Action has been produced to coincide with the anniversary of the Brotherhood of St Laurence's commencement of work in Melbourne. The publication gives readers an insight into the Brotherhood's vision, and the core values that have sustained its work in the community over the past sixty years. It also reproduces historic articles showing how these principals have been put into practice in our work.



VIEWPOINT

by **THE RIGHT REV'D
MICHAEL CHALLEN**
Executive Director

Sixty years in Melbourne and Victoria! Sixty years of compassionate service and dedicated research by which the Brotherhood of St Laurence has gained recognition through the whole of Australia! Sixty years during which the Brotherhood has effectively influenced the thinking of policy makers of successive Federal and State governments and social scientists! Sixty years of imaginative service in and to our society.

The vision and values of the Brotherhood of St Laurence have been developed over and transmitted through these six decades by an impressive succession of leaders - Tucker, Sambell, Scott and Hollingworth. Over our 60 years these visions and principles have been put into effect through those first adventurous Brothers, the thousands of dedicated staff in our various sectors whether of services, policy and research, donated goods, shops, auxiliaries, fundraising, and administration. In addition, the far-reaching fellowship of Companions, volunteers, donors, well-wishers and advocates throughout Australia, and even overseas, which truly cannot be numbered and whose prayers, gifts and voice make all these expressions of our vision of a more just and inclusive Australia that much more possible. Truly we of the Brotherhood of St Laurence participate in a "goodly heritage".

Australians need to face up to the most evident if not painful fact, that our society is going through a literally radical process of change. The recession and unemployment are just two indications. This process will take some years to complete. The good news is that the uncertainty of all and the pain of many people are causing alert Australians to think again about what we want our society to be like; what goals we want to pursue and what values we wish to have embedded in our social matrix and culture.

Surely our goal must be to affirm the worth of every person (young or old), to ensure that they have a place in our society, that they have both the opportunity and the means to participate in and contribute to society and that consequently our society is both united and wholesome.

So, to you all of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, let us carry on with our praiseworthy tradition of care and justice.

Father Tucker's timely truth



'I was recently asked "What does Mr Wilding do?" Mr Wilding, you know, is our Social Welfare Officer in Fitzroy. There, in a somewhat ramshackle office he interviews all who come for help. Those who come are mostly what are called 'down and outs'.

The Brotherhood's aim is not only to give material aid to such folk but also to ascertain as far as possible the causes that led to the trouble. Herein lies the supreme importance of this branch of our work. In the early days of our social work a Member of Parliament in speaking at one of our functions compared the Brotherhood to an ambulance service. In a sense that comparison is a true one, but with the opening of our social Social Service Bureau some four years ago we have tried not only to care for those who have fallen victims to "accidents" but we have also tried to ascertain the cause of the "accidents". (Fr Gerard Tucker, BSL Notes, April 1946)

Sambell's sound suggestions



'I would hope the Brotherhood would always retain its original goals and methods - a concern for the socially depressed expressed through a program of relief for immediate needs and research and social action into the causes of social injustices and their cure. It must never maintain a vested interest in a depressed situation, a particular service because it always has provided it and it is not easy to withdraw. But when the State has accepted responsibility, the Brotherhood should look afresh. There will always be needs, but I believe in the future the needs will be the needs of persons rather than a requirement for buildings.' (Bishop Geoffrey Sambell, Brotherhood News, September 1969)

Share responsibility says Scott



'Our view is that Governments must accept responsibility for seeing that essential welfare services are available and this means providing all or most of the funds as is the case with education, health and other public services. ... To say that the government should be responsible for welfare and social security does not mean that the government should administer all the services. On the contrary, the aim should be to encourage local groups, including local government and voluntary organisations, to run localised welfare services so that people are fully involved in understanding and dealing with their own and other people's needs.' (David Scott, The Age, November 1972)

Hollingworth advocates community awareness



'The Brotherhood in the 1980s is trying to promote the idea of a sharing society. Our job is to provide practical demonstrations and offer policies that will achieve such a goal. But if this is to have any meaning and impact, there must be greater community awareness. Metaphorically speaking, we must see that our own window sills are at street level and not elevated so far above it that we cannot see what is really happening to vulnerable low income people.' (Bishop Peter Hollingworth, Action, October 1981)

Father Frank Coaldrake on the future role of the Brotherhood



In this edited Epilogue of "How It Began and How It Goes On - The Story of the Brotherhood of St Laurence", first published during the War in 1940, Father Frank Coaldrake sets out his views on the role and future responsibilities of the Brotherhood with the development of a welfare state. Coaldrake was a pacifist and was respected in the Church for his intellectual capacity and made many contacts as a result.

Deeds are of greater value than words - believing this, the Brotherhood of St Laurence has always tried to show work done rather than talk about hopes. We move now from

hay-loft dreams in a sane world to weave sane dreams in a "hay-wire" world. The Brotherhood has for ten years been ploughing a double furrow - social service in the slums and pastoral ministry in industrial areas."

From all sources comes evidence that the admission of responsibility is now so widespread that it constitutes a majority opinion and is about to find its normal expression through the political machinery of faith and Commonwealth. As a consequence, the Brotherhood's work is about to change with the introduction of social security.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence can expect, in the coming days of the "Social Security State", to search out and bring to the attention of the authorities any need of extending social services. It will, we hope not be the Brotherhood's part to organise the actual relief, because the State will have the machinery, the funds, and the trained personnel to do the work.

We anticipate that our contribution to social service in the future will be mainly "scouting" or "reconnaissance" work, bringing distress cases to the existing State-provided services. Of our two furrows, then, one - the Social Service work - seems likely to be undertaken very largely by the government. When this happens, our second furrow- pastoral ministry in industrial areas - will assume a new urgency, and we will be so much the more justified in giving it the attention we have always thought it deserves.



Much work needs to be done and has been done. Fr. Tucker shows the way ahead by pointing to the site of a new building which will house expanded Brotherhood services. Fr. Frank Coaldrake and Fr. Selwyn Reynolds.

TRAINING LEVY

Sixty years ago, the Brotherhood began by helping the unemployed. Today businesses can help by donating any unspent portion of their 1.5% training levy to the Brotherhood's training programs for disadvantaged and long-term unemployed people. For further information, phone Barbara Elliott on (03) 419 7055.

The Brotherhood's first research project

A great deal of the Brotherhood's early work was with families living in Fitzroy slums during the depression. In 1944, the Brotherhood's first Social Research Officer published a booklet about re-housing and rehabilitating problem tenants (*sic*) still living in slum areas of Melbourne. In *Housing, the Forgotten Tenth*, John H Reeves recommends slum property is purchased and refurbished for 'problem' tenants to live in, rather than moving difficult families to different areas, as had taken place at the Brotherhood's Carrum Downs Settlement in the late 1930s.

Almost all the problem tenants blame the way they were brought up, and this attitude has a great deal of justification. It was found that, among the people on the BSL Settlement, one common thing is ignorance and lack of education. Even with the will, in many cases they do not have the knowledge to deal with their problems. Extremely general among people of this type is a lack of initiative. Long years spent from childhood under adverse circumstances has ground all the spirit out of them.

There is not the will to try anything outside the old rut. What is needed in a great many cases is to establish their self-respect, to get their confidence and to show gradually that the benefits resulting from a better way of living are very substantial and are worth working towards.



Reeves suggests that tenants could pay nominal rent to welfare workers who would show 'problem' families how to attain a higher standard of living. He concludes by stressing that the reconstruction of housing alone is not enough. Education and employment are the two other essential pre-requisites for total rehabilitation.



'We arrived in Melbourne during the darkest days of the depression. We were appalled at the conditions under which people in the vicinity were living' said Father Tucker.

Coolibah Club caters for the aged in many ways



It's holiday time for these happy Coolibah friends, heading away to the country for a well earned rest and wealth of experience.

The Coolibah Club, now known as the Coolibah Centre, opened in 1945 and was the first elderly citizen's club to be established in Melbourne on a regular, full-time basis. In this article from BSL Notes, March 1956, Jessica Sumner tells of the Club's then current programs.

In November 1954 alterations and additions to the premises enabled us to extend club membership to women pensioners. An enlarged dining room, a new kitchen and a women's club room greatly increased our facilities.

The Club has 173 members, of whom approximately one third are women. A nutritious meal, morning and afternoon teas are served at a nominal charge. Membership fee is 3d per week. Rises in Age and Invalid Pensions do not keep pace with rises in cost of living, and our recognition of this fact has ensured that charges have not been increased during the Club's 10 years of existence.

Social events popular with members continue to be the monthly film night, visits to the country-side, Sunday teas and, possibly most successful of all, a dance. Recently tried as an experiment, it is now hoped that the 'Club Dance' will become a regular part of our activities. As in past years, our Holiday Home at Mornington has provided rest and change for many pensioners, members and non-members alike. It is impossible to estimate the benefit, mental and physical, of this branch of our work.

In pursuance of our firm policy of avoiding any taint of 'hand-out', clothing is available to pensioners at a nominal cost - to Club members through the Club Store and to 'outside' pensioners at our Fitzroy Shop.

The SALVAGE DIVISION SLOGAN

Anything you don't
want - we can
make use of!



The Salvage Division, established in 1957 and now known as Donated Goods, was the first recycled clothing business in Australia. This article is reproduced from the August 1958 edition of BSL Notes.

Each day some 40 people ring the Brotherhood's Salvage Division and offer clothing, ornaments and household articles. "We need, and could cope with twice as many offers", said Mr Graham Walker, Manager of the Division. The Salvage Division has two main functions. The first is to provide a supply of good, used clothing for old people, families and children who cannot afford to clothe themselves adequately. The second objective is to assist in financing the Brotherhood's social service activities. Clothing not required by Social Workers for their clients, household articles and ornaments and anything that is saleable is sold through the Brotherhood's suburban Opportunity Shops. The sale of waste products such as newspapers, rags, milk bottle tops, adds to the revenue of the Salvage Division and makes possible much of the Brotherhood's work.

At the Division's Store in Westgarth St, Fitzroy and in the Opportunity Shops, most of the work is carried out by voluntary helpers who assist with sorting and running the shops. Groups of ladies work during the day and on most evenings groups of young people are to be found at the Division giving up their leisure time to help the work. Two vans are available to collect clothing and household articles in the metropolitan area. Cartons and parcels from the country are carried free of charge by the Victorian Railways if addressed to the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Flinders Street Railway Station.

The Brotherhood still welcomes and needs donations of good quality clothing, furniture and household items.

Father Tucker - 'Setting our house in order'

This is an edited extract from Father Tucker's message to Brotherhood friends, published in August 1957. Father Tucker emphasises the significance of establishing how our property should be disposed of well before our death. The Brotherhood has recently published a booklet entitled 'You and Your Will' offering guidelines on this, and copies are available by phoning (03) 419 7055.

Some little time ago a message came from one of the Melbourne Hospitals to the effect that a patient there wanted to see me with a view of drawing up his Will in favour of the Brotherhood. On arrival at his bedside, I found him quite incoherent. He talked about his property, but I could make little sense what he was saying. I suppose I could have prepared a Will-form, completing it in such a way that after it had been signed and witnessed, everything would have come to us. I could not feel however that I was justified in doing so. Had he no relations or others who should have benefited? I did nothing about it and soon after the man died. I heard later that he was a man of considerable wealth and the authorities were trying to ascertain his next of kin. I understand that these were not found and that all he left went to the State.

The moral of this incident is to emphasise the importance of doing what the Book of Common Prayer calls "setting our house in order" or in other words letting our wishes be known how our property should be disposed of after death.

The Brotherhood has been in existence long enough now to begin to benefit by those who remembered us in their Wills ... Personally, I am always touched when I learn that some faithful Brotherhood Friend who gave us of their substance, service and sympathy have made provision in his or her Will for the furtherance of our work. It is our custom to put a portion of such legacies into a "security fund" - something in the nature of an endowment fund. In this way departed friends are still sharing in the work although no longer with us in the flesh.

In speaking on the subject of Wills, may I suggest for those who might be contemplating remembering us, that they leave their money to the Brotherhood and not to any particular one of its activities, for it is difficult to anticipate our needs some years in advance. I would add however, that when the person drawing up the Will states that he or she is specially interested in one particular branch of the work, we endeavour to allocate the money in that direction.



Brotherhood friends have received 'newsletters' since Fr. Tucker produced the first BSL notes in 1932.



Notes for the Friends of The Brotherhood of S. Laurence

1945 - 1993

We look forward to seeing you at the Brotherhood's
1957 MARKET FAIR
Tuesday, 8th October
in the Lower Melbourne Town Hall
to be opened 11 a.m. by Mrs. H. E. Bolte



Opening of TEEN-AGERS CLUB ROOM
Guest Speaker:
MR. PAT LOFTUS
of Victorian Association of Youth Clubs
Subject:
"A Home Away from Home for Teen-agers"
THURSDAY, 6th SEPTEMBER
at 8 p.m.
67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy
● Exhibition of craft work by Youth Club Members
● Annual Meeting of Children's Centre Committee will be held in Club Rooms on Wednesday, 5th September, at 8 p.m.
All B.S.L. Friends are invited to both functions

TV SETS FOR B.S.L. CENTRES

The week before TV began in Melbourne a man walked into a Mornington TV dealer's shop and asked a set to be delivered to the God's Holiday Home.

PLEASE TIE SHOES TOGETHER

When sending shoes to the Salvage Division, will you please tie them together. This saves the time and trouble involved in sorting and matching separate shoes.

HAMPERS AND GIFTS FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

For a large family with a small income Christmas can be a time of sadness for parents who are unable to provide the smallest gift for their children or add anything to their year round needs.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH VICTORIA'S HOUSING PROGRAMME?

We know with income from 5 to 10 cases the husband or the mother is breadwinner's invalid pension. We are able to provide a year round needs and toys for 200 of families.

BROTHERHOOD OF ST. LAURENCE
SALVAGE DIVISION
● will collect any household or other articles you have no further use for.
● will dispose of articles to needy people or sell them to maintain the Brotherhood's social service work.

LEGAL SERVICE HELPS MANY

Mr. C., an old age pensioner, and his wife, lived above a shop which had been sold. He wanted to know under what circumstances he could be evicted. He could not afford to pay legal fees, so he visited the B.S.L. Legal Aid Service. He advised that legal aid was not available for a person who had been evicted, therefore could evict him. He was therefore into consideration for hardship caused to both.

HOUSING REPORT

is on sale at
51 ROYAL ARCADE
Price 3/-

RECORD AMOUNT FROM MARKET FAIR

This year's Annual Market Fair in the Melbourne Town Hall raised the record amount of £850.

The Carrum Downs Village Fair organised by the residents raised £1,200 for the social service activities of the Brotherhood. These are magnificent efforts and our thanks goes to all who made it so hard to make the difference.

£2 WILL PROVIDE A CHILD'S HOLIDAY

£2 will provide a holiday for eight days for one child at the Brotherhood's Mornington holiday home camps. B.S.L. Friends who would like to provide a holiday for one or several children are asked to mark their donation for "Children's Holiday Camps".

such people are assisted through this little-known service provided by the Brotherhood and the Law School of the University of Melbourne. Every evening each week senior students are on duty at the Brotherhood's Social Service Bureau to give advice and assistance to people who cannot afford legal aid and who are not eligible for assistance from the Public Solicitor. Students are supervised by senior qualified members of the University Law School. The demand for this free service is increasing, and it is hoped that it will eventually be possible to extend it, and place it on a more permanent basis.

NEW SHOP TO OPEN AT MALVERN

Father Tucker will officially open the Brotherhood's new Opportunity Shop in Malvern on Tuesday, 9th April at 3 p.m. Brotherhood Friends are warmly invited to the official opening.

