

## **PILGRIMAGE - JUBILEE YEAR 2000**

### **Memories from Angela Benson**

One of the most memorable times as a Schoenstatt Mother for me is the time we went on Pilgrimage to Rome and the Shrine in the Jubilee Year 2000. It is memorable on many counts: it was the first time my husband and I went overseas; we left five children to look after themselves (the youngest being fifteen at the time) and we went with a great group of mothers, couples, and other women and men. The mothers came from groups and others who frequented the Shrine often. Sr. Elizabeth led us ably, although a friend who is now 87 years old – the husband of one of the mothers worried that he wasn't going to be able to have a drink for the three weeks we would be together because of Sister stressing strongly, "It's a Pilgrimage NOT a holiday"!



The first gathering of most of the NSW group featuring six mothers at Mulgoa prior to Pilgrimage.

Pilgrimages are not necessarily free of glitches with our late departure from Sydney seeing us stay overnight in Bangkok. Here some certain 'Mothers' of the group decided to pray for us all by disappearing off to Mass on the following morning, causing much angst as to where they were. The original lateness caused Sister to have to sort out new flights for us all from Milan to get to Rome, which saw many of us arrive without luggage.

The sights were so worth seeing and waiting for, including participating in all the Jubilee Ceremonies, counting the number of 'Holy Doors' we walked through which only get opened every 50 years, seeing the Vatican, Mass in the Crypt with Fr. Denis, climbing the Holy Stairs, St Paul's outside the walls, and St John Lateran where we heard a Zulu choir singing, the catacombs and the Trevi Fountain, to mention a few.



Four Schoenstatt Mothers:  
two from Menai, two from Blacktown/Mt Druitt

Our arrival in France saw a night time bus run through Paris, and arrival at our Schoenstatt 'rooms for the night' at Cambrai again being somewhat late, but great fun for all, especially when another of the mother's husband's decided to do a skit on 'How to behave at Boarding School' which had the Mothers and their respective husbands in fits of laughter, and then suitably told after a while by Fr. Denis on the floor below us "To keep the noise down". At some point we watched the 'Opening Ceremony' of the Australian Olympics that the Sisters had taped for us.

To cut a long story short the **significant highlight** of our trip to Vallendar was the chance to spend time in Schoenstatt and the Original Shrine, which was much heightened by Rita, a Melbourne mother (pictured below) making her Covenant of Love in the Shrine (along with Tony Walsh).



After many visits to the cemeteries and Dachau, where Fr. Kentenich was imprisoned for three years, a few of us crossed the Channel to attend the opening of the Schoenstatt Shrine in Manchester, a significant event in the history of England, which was well attended by Mother's and Women's Branch members alike. A memorable three week pilgrimage!

