

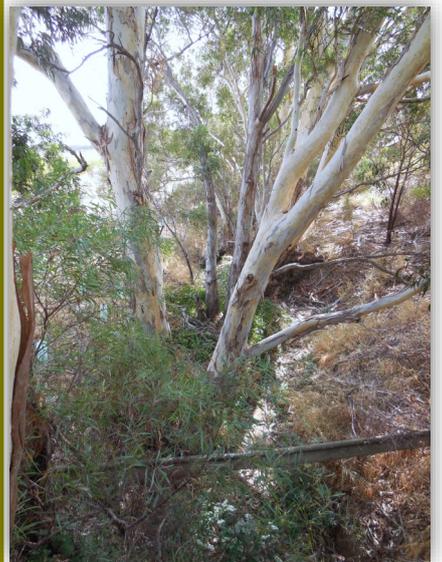
# REDISCOVERING THE SPIRITUAL IN GOD'S CREATION

From 10-13 March thirteen Sisters of Mercy from Australia and New Zealand attended the above conference in McLaren Vale, near Adelaide. We accounted for about 10% of the conference attendees!

Sisters Pat Fox, Kath Rushton and Elaine Wainwright presented workshops in their areas of expertise. All of us benefitted from the input, from meeting concerned others, and from the environment at the Serafino Winery and Conference Centre and surrounds.

The motifs of God present in creation and of our capacity to experience that presence pervaded the presentations. I was especially interested in the challenge to explore analogies for God that are drawn from nature, and the might of Niagara Falls was used as an example of how this might work. Another analogy was that of the horizon. The "invisible" is already there but not visible from my current position. Another example was drawn from Job who observes the presence of God by "seeing" God's processes at work.

The call to "see" was loud and clear, and often that requires gaining some ecological knowledge. We gained some local knowledge in the company of Ivan Copley from the Indigenous Information Network of South Australia. He took busloads of us to Mt Barker, a place of significance to the local indigenous people. I suppose that you could say that our visit to two of the local wineries was about gaining local knowledge! It was definitely an opportunity to revel in the grandeur of the River Red Gums which abound in the region.





The conference was drawn together at the end with the Serafino Declaration which will be available at a later date from [http://  
taboradelaide.edu.au/home/root/aboutus/grame-  
clark-research-institute/news-events/628-gcri-  
lecture-series](http://taboradelaide.edu.au/home/root/aboutus/grame-clark-research-institute/news-events/628-gcri-lecture-series)

At the conclusion we decided in our table groups what actions we would take in our local communities after the event. Catholic communities and others are looking forward to the forthcoming encyclical from Pope Francis. You might like to read a foreshadowing of its content at [http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2015/03/05/cardinal-  
peter-turkson-delivers-trocaire-2015-lenten-  
lecture-saint-patricks-pontifical-university-  
maynooth/](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2015/03/05/cardinal-peter-turkson-delivers-trocaire-2015-lenten-lecture-saint-patricks-pontifical-university-maynooth/)



Mary Tinney

### **Do you know?**

That Sisters of Mercy in Australia have an online conversation group called “Ecological Conversion”? You can become a member by contacting

[patricia.powell@mercy.org.au](mailto:patricia.powell@mercy.org.au) or  
[mary.tinney@mercy.org.au](mailto:mary.tinney@mercy.org.au)

