

Dear Friend

Today we are commemorating the life of Caroline Chisholm. No, I hadn't heard of her either! She is better known in Australia than here (her face was featured on their \$5 note for over twenty years). Caroline Jones was born in Northamptonshire in 1808 into a family with a strong tradition of charitable works. In 1830 she was received into the Roman Catholic Church in order to marry Captain Archibald Chisholm, an officer with the East India Company, and after the wedding she accompanied him to Madras in India. Caroline founded a school there for the daughters of European soldiers.

In 1838 her husband was granted sick leave, which they spent in Sydney, New South Wales, where Caroline remained when he returned to active service. She was horrified at the conditions under which many women were forced to exist, becoming prostitutes or beggars in order to support their families. This situation was made much worse by



unrestricted immigration. In 1835, after much lobbying, Caroline was granted the use of a disused barracks as a home for such women. She worked to settle the thousands of unemployed migrants, giving the women shelter, arranging transportation and running schemes to place men and their families on the land. During her six years in Sydney it is thought she helped some 11,000 immigrants. In 1842 Caroline wrote a report, "Female Immigration" which was the first publication by a woman in Australia.

On her husband's retirement in 1845, they returned to England where she promoted her work, raised money and support, and opened an emigration office in

London. In 1854 she went back to Australia, where her welfare initiatives included providing shelters for workers going out to the goldfields. She also lectured on land reform and later opened a girls' school in Sydney. In 1857 she developed health problems and in 1866 she and her family returned to England where she died the following year.

Extract from *Saints on Earth: A biographical companion to Common Worship* by John H Darch and Stuart K Burns.

Finally, amidst all the darkness and sorrow of the times in which we live, here is something to hopefully make you smile:

A person's flaws are largely what make him or her likable. *Anne Lamott*

With love and prayers

Simon