



A network of young adults committed to a vision of making a difference in our world, based on values of compassion and justice.

Welcome to our third edition of e-news for the Mercy Young Adult Network! 2010 has raced by, and hopefully this edition of our e-news finds you settling into 2011 without too much heat or flooding!

The last months have been very busy for the Mercy Young Adult Network – both for local groups within the network and for the network itself. One of the major highlights was a Gathering of the Network in October in Melbourne focusing on ***Mercy and Justice Shall Meet – with head, heart and hands!*** The weekend brought together a wonderful mix of people from across Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand and provided the opportunity for people to connect, share, dream and plan. The expression and experience of Mercy connection is richly varied and people valued learning more about the different local groups, and the justice issues we can together focus our energies on. We were also very fortunate to have a great mix across the weekend with input from speakers, workshops, a panel, a bit of fair trade shopping, time for reflection, a yummy meal provided by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre's catering service and some great music from local

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Indigenous artists Russell Smith and Lee Carter. As facilitator of the Network I was particularly delighted to have a statement from the Gathering to focus the network and its development.

We will live into it over the coming months until our next gathering as a Network.

In this edition you will find reflections from Elizabeth Young who participated in the Mercy Young Adult Network Gathering; information to follow up on some of the key justice issues that we shared about at the Gathering; a good news story from OsMercy; and some events/opportunities/gatherings that may interest you for 2011.

Please remember this e-news is a tool for keeping us in touch with one another and for sharing information and stories across the network. Your feedback, suggestions and contributions are welcome and vitally important!



Sr Rachel Waisman sharing her symbol of home in PNG at the Gathering.

Our next e-news will be focusing on Mercy Cross Cultural Pilgrimages and Immersion experiences. In particular, the recent journeys to Peru and Chile by the MAGNet group from Sydney and the Cambodia pilgrimage of the Mercy Young Adult Network. Your contribution is encouraged. Please also let me know of anyone else you know of who may be interested in receiving this e-news. I look forward to hearing from you. Enjoy!

Kate

Young Adult Network Gathering 2010 Mercy and Justice Shall Meet –



Elizabeth Young, shares her reflections on the recent Mercy Young Adult Network Gathering

Take 1...

We were challenged to work for justice. All around the world, people are being exploited, enslaved, humiliated and dehumanised. Women are especially affected, with less access to education, dignity and leadership opportunities. We have so many problems even in Australia, the land “with boundless plains to share”: humans trafficked for profit; violence against women leading to insecurity and homelessness; mandatory detention of legal asylum seekers. We were confronted by the stories of Sisters of Mercy and others who are on the ground, in touch with the greatest needs in our society. They are doing what they can, but there is so much more...always so much more. Where is the justice? Where is the hope?

Take 2...

We came together. We were people of Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand (Tonga and Samoa). We were Sisters of Mercy, Mercy associates, teachers at Mercy schools, students at Mercy schools, old scholars of Mercy schools, Mercy Award graduates, interested friends and animators of Mercy life. We crossed a panorama of ages, backgrounds and amounts of time in connection with Mercy. We were mostly women, with a brave male reminding us of the need to always work in harmony and with dialogue. We were mostly from the 'developed world', with some courageous Papua New Guineans reminding us of the majority world and its unique contributions. What were we here for? What could connect us?

Take 3...

We listened to each other. Each of us had a story to tell and the conversations stretched themselves through the hours of the gathering and beyond. We made friends, we compared actions, we inspired each other with our faith, we planned and dreamed for the future. Nothing,

we realised, could not be accomplished when we pooled our resources. Nothing, we found, could be impossible in the strength of God's abundant mercy. Each of us was part of a larger picture and each person had a network of their own, which brings the Mercy values to flourish in ever-widening circles. How could we utilise our potential? How could we unite our diversity?

Take 4...

We started to tell our common story. Each person, in each place, had been living out the Mercy values in their own way. However, as a group, we found something to share. Connections – past, present and future – were forged, inspired by the friendship, solidarity and resources that are possible when Mercy groups come together. We dreamed together of what our unity will mean: hands and hope for the Sisters of Mercy; opportunity for the development of young people; God's mercy spread to the far corners of the earth. Strength in the unity, groundedness in the diversity. We produced a Vision Statement:

“We are a passionate network of Mercy minded women and men, committed to growing communities of justice and compassion to build a better world. We are inspired and grounded in the continuing story of Catherine McAuley, embodying God's Mercy. We are a platform for action on local, national and global levels providing opportunities for groups throughout Australasia to connect, synergise, learn, challenge and share resources.”

Well, then. What next? Where to from here?

Take 5...

We celebrated! After a very full weekend, there were many reasons for a party. Saturday night was especially memorable, with a multicultural meal and entertainment by local Aboriginal artists. We left on Sunday both fired up and centred. We went away with plans for the local, national and international level. Kate Garrone and Sr. Meredith Evans took all that we said and compiled them for coming action. We returned home enriched, enthused and exhausted! We knew, though, that we brought with us the spirit of the group and we knew that the future would be different because of it. After applying a lot of head and heart, we had a handful: five fingers of the hand that Jesus extends in mercy. So we conclude the story of our gathering: “*Mercy and Justice Shall Meet: With Head, Heart and Hands!*”

Justice Issues to Follow-up on...

Mercy Global Action

Please have a look at the following website for further information on many of the justice issues that the Sisters of Mercy are engaged around the world: It is a great way to stay informed! www.mercyworld.org/mercy_global_action

ACRATH Update

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans

Christine Carolan was a workshop presenter at the Mercy Young Adult Gathering. The following is an update from her about the work of ACRATH at the end of last year.

I am a member of Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans - ACRATH. Our website is www.acrath.org.au. We work on community education, direct service and networking.

The following issues are the focus of our current conversations and work on human trafficking with Members of Parliament, Embassy officials, and leaders of relevant organisations:

1. We are concerned about the **Prevention of trafficking** and specifically achieving the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** and raising **Official Development Assistance (ODA)** funding to 0.5% of Gross Domestic Income (GDI) by 2015-16. We would like Australia to commit to **promoting Fairtrade products** where it has influence, for example within the Australian Parliament House, within the food and clothing supplies for Australian Armed Forces?
2. We are concerned that people trafficked into Australia be able to **access financial compensation** for the crime committed against them in Australia.
3. We are concerned that people trafficked into Australia will have **safe and supportive accommodation** as they wait to contribute to prosecutions and as they begin their long journey of healing.
4. We are concerned that labour trafficking into Australia has become a matter of grave concern, for example, in the construction, mining, fruit picking, vegetable growing and domestic service industries.

OsMercy: From Little Things Big things Grow!!!

Catherine Mulroney, OsMercy member from Perth shares the good news of books and buildings in Tacloban, in the Philippines.

In 2008 a group of OsMercy young adults from Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria had 4 weeks in the Philippines connected with the work of the Sisters of Mercy who work there in hospital and education settings.



Pallet of the books sent by OsMercy to Tacloban in the Philippines, and Students at Holy Infant College in Tacloban.

More than a 1000 Books for Libraries!

In June 2010 the Sisters of Mercy in Tacloban, Philippines received more than 1000 books to add to their libraries. This project grew out of the relationship built with the Tacloban congregation during our OsMercy trip in 2008.

While we were there we noticed that the libraries for the primary, secondary and tertiary schools on the campus were lacking resources. Together with Notre Dame University Fremantle Campus, more than 1000 books were collected from students and the Notre Dame libraries that were then boxed up and shipped to Tacloban. The project took eighteen months to complete. It is hoped that the books will contribute to a better education for the students of Holy Infant College. Books were collected from all genres and disciplines, with any books that couldn't be used being distributed to local libraries in Tacloban. The books were greeted with much enthusiasm in Tacloban. Sister Carmela RSM expressed her delight in an email upon their arrival; "...We have immediately sorted them out as we got so excited about using them in whatever level of education we find them most applicable. Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness and generosity."

A Much Needed Hospital!

The trip to Tacloban made by OSMercy in 2008 coincided with a new project for the Sisters of Mercy, the construction of a hospital to employ and teach their nursing students. It is hoped that this hospital will improve the professional competency of graduating nurses and provide employment in the area locally, so that graduates don't need to go overseas to seek employment.

OSMercy jumped at the chance to provide seeding funding for the hospital through fundraising. Whilst in Tacloban the group was able to build a strong relationship with both with the Mercy congregation and the students that will eventually be employed at the hospital.

It was with much excitement that the Sisters of Mercy in Tacloban opened the hospital (see online at <http://www.mercyworld.org/news/article.asp?id=554>). OSMercy was also very excited to see the completion of the project, as in 2008 the place where the hospital is now built was just an empty piece of land. We also visited the public hospital in Tacloban and observed the poor healthcare provided to patients there, as well as the poor health of those who could not afford treatment. The hospital will provide care both to paying patients and those who cannot afford treatment, making Catherine McAuley's dream a reality in 2011 and beyond.

***"Let ours be a time remembered for the
awakening of a new reverence for life,
the firm resolve to achieve
sustainability, the quickening of the
struggle for justice and peace and the
joyful celebration of life"
The Earth Charter***

World Youth Day 2011 **Mercy International Association**



**A Journey Undertaken in Light of a Story:
Dublin Pilgrimage for Young Mercy Leaders
Wednesday 10 August – Friday 12 August 2011**

Come Join Mercy Leaders from around the World!

Mercy International Association is hosting an international pilgrimage to Dublin, Ireland, and the home of Catherine McAuley for young Mercy leaders. Some of the pilgrims will be continuing onto World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain (16-22 August 2011) while others will be engaging in service in Ireland or continuing their journey elsewhere.

Planning is currently in process, and additional Young Mercy Leaders are invited to join us. Participants may register as part of a larger delegation from a Mercy school or ministry, or come on their own. Participants coming as part of a delegation must be between 16 and 30 in age, and participants coming on their own must be between 18 and 30. Desired outcomes for the pilgrimage are:

- To provide a 'Mercy lens' in which to view the theme of World Youth Day 2011: "Rooted and Built Up in Jesus Christ, Firm in the Faith" (Col 2:7);
- To convey the Mercy heritage at Mercy International Centre;
- To hear the story and spirituality of Catherine McAuley anew;
- To awaken the Mercy sense and have a profound sense of being Mercy today;
- To embolden pilgrims to be leaders striving for justice and mercy with the courage that Catherine demonstrated;
- To facilitate the expression of the local mercy spirit and tradition of pilgrim groups;
- To celebrate the spirit and tradition and diverse embodiments of the Mercy charism.

For more information please contact Kate Garrone on 0414 068 386 or kate.garrone@mercy.org.au

CONFERENCE DATE CLAIMER
THE CHALLENGES OF LIVING MERCY, BRISBANE
21-23 SEPTEMBER 2011

This conference is being sponsored by the Brisbane Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy as part of their sesquicentenary celebrations. Planning is still at a very preliminary stage, but we invite you to note the dates for what is shaping as a very exciting and in-depth consideration of the challenges of living mercy today.

21 Sept – Challenges from our Tradition

(Keynote speaker: Caitlin Conneely rsm)

22 Sept– Challenges from our World

(Keynote speaker: Deirdre Mullan rsm)

23 Sept– Challenges for the Future

(Keynote speaker: Peta Goldberg rsm)

As well, there will be a wide range of workshops/seminars etc led by Sisters of Mercy and lay colleagues from various Mercy ministries around Australia.

A call for workshop/seminar abstracts will be made in February 2011. Please consider what you or your colleagues have to offer to the wider Mercy community.

Cost: To be advised. Every effort will be made to keep the registration fee as low as possible to enable maximum attendance.

Keynote Speakers

Caitlin Conneely rsm is a native of the Arran Islands and a member of the Western Province of the Irish Sisters of Mercy. Until recently she was the Director of the Mercy International Centre in Dublin. She is much in demand as a speaker on Catherine McAuley and the early Mercy story.

Deirdre Mullan rsm is a Irish Sister of Mercy of the Northern Province. Currently she is the Director of Mercy Global Concern which maintains a Mercy presence at the United Nations in New York. She is an engaging and challenging speaker on contemporary issues of concern to people of Mercy.

Peta Goldberg rsm is an Australian Sister of Mercy of the Brisbane Congregation. Professor Goldberg holds the foundation Chair of Religious Education at Australian Catholic University. Her presentation will explore what it means for Mercy related ministries to be Catholic and Mercy in today's diverse world.

MERCY CROSS-CULTURAL PILGRIMAGE
CAMBODIA
15-25 JANUARY 2011



Our Group of 5 pilgrims have just returned (or are still on route from) a fantastic 10 day experience in Cambodia!!

We were hosted by Sr. Denise Coghlan who gave us a wonderful experience of the places and people whom she has come to love deeply in her 23 years in Cambodia. It was a fabulous opportunity to engage our head, heart and hands; to learn good development practices; and to experience Mercy in Action.

Our next e-news will share more of the stories and experiences.

Mercy Alive!
Mercy Now!
Gen Mercy
Mercy Young Adult
Network???
What is in a Name???

What do you think is a good name to describe us??? We have a couple of ideas from the Gathering in October, we are keen to hear your creative ideas!

Email and let us know:

kate.garrone@mercy.org.au