



INSTITUTE OF THE
SISTERS OF MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA



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

Global Mercy has been a lived reality for many in our Mercy Young Adult Network. In recent months there has been some wonderful adventures to other parts of the world. The MAG-net group from Sydney had a group head to Chile and Peru in November and December of 2010 to connect with the great Mercy work that is happening there. There were also five of us who were part of the first Mercy Cross Cultural Pilgrimage in Cambodia in January.

Several new Mercy young adult groups are springing up around the place with initial gathering and planning happening in Rockhampton, Brisbane and Grafton; and the groups in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney have all had gatherings and planning to get 2011 underway.

Alongside all the lovely growth within the Mercy Young Adult Network I have personally been experiencing my own. My husband Brian and I are expecting our third baby in July! We are looking forward to our new arrival and each day I am delighting in the kicks I feel and the growing anticipation of holding a new baby in my arms. Many thanks to all who have celebrated this news with me, or have taken extra special care of me as I have been travelling around the place. I'll be taking maternity leave from mid June and my wonderful reference group, which has seen the departure of Anne Dooley and the arrival of Sally Bradley, have plans for how the work of the network facilitator will continue in my absence.

Always 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! 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

Mercy Cross-Cultural Pilgrimage – Cambodia, January 2011

“Metta Karuna! – an experience of Mercy and Loving Kindness”

Reflection from Kate Garrone

There is a story that for many years has provided a framework for me. I saw and experienced it in action in Cambodia – and how inspiring and wonderful it was to be part of it!

The story was told to me by a community development lecturer of mine, Tony Kelly; but it is actually a story told

*If you stand in a place that you love...
The wind will come and knock you down.
If you stand in a place that you love, with people
that you love....
You can walk, but you will not know in which
direction to go.
If you stand in a place that you love, with people
that you love, doing work that is good for you
and good for them...
You will be strong like the kangaroo,
And the Kangaroo can not jump backwards!*

by an old indigenous man around a campfire.

Being in Cambodia and entering for a little while Denise Coghlan's world there, was the experience of being with a strong kangaroo!

Mercy in Action!!

Reflection from Marita Smith

Cambodia is a beautiful country, but a land marked by the trauma of war and an incredibly oppressive regime through her hidden landmines; and the killing fields where over two million people were murdered. In the midst of a country recovering spaces like where Denise lives at Metta Karuna Reflection Centre exist. It is an oasis of beauty. It is a space that calls you into reflection about the justice issues the Cambodians' face. When you arrive at the centre there is a life-size sculpture of the familiar and powerful image for Christians of Jesus



washing the feet of his disciple. Yet there is a challenge that immediately takes you deep into the Cambodian story. The man is a landmine victim – he has no foot to wash!

Further on at the well there is another stunning sculpture of the woman at the well. What access do women have to the resources? What access do people have to the essentials – like clean water? Metta Karuna is filled with spaces that draw you into contemplation, and encourage you to move out with action. It is a place that is welcoming, re-energising and nurturing. A place that is obviously loved.

Then there are the people. A dynamic workshop just inside the front gate makes and services wheelchairs for landmine victims. Wheelchairs designed specifically to suit the needs for Cambodians. This workshop is run by very skilled men, who are themselves landmine victims. Additionally there are asylum seekers who have found not only refuge, but a safe haven. They work completely at running the centre – the cleaning, the meals, the smiling faces that welcome the constant stream of visitors to the centre. There is at Metta Karuna a sense of a community of people who care for one another and who are doing work that is fulfilling and meaningful not only for them, but also for others.



Our group from left: Helen McPake, Marita Smith, Cailin Wigg, Amalie Fiebeger & Denise Coghlan, loading up the ute with school uniforms for the primary school students in Karuna Village.



Marita hammering down floorboards; Some of the family members and our group with the house behind us.

With no idea what we were in for during our time in Siem Reap we embarked on a journey to 'help' build a house. This experience was extremely humbling, not only did we meet the family who were more thankful that words can't explain, but we had the opportunity to be amidst an 'army' of competent and skilled workers whom were nearly all landmine victims. We knew the principles of building a house back home but this was completely different - a **huge learning experience!** We really tried to help but really we were helping the Cambodian men who were so talented and so patient with us also!

We spent two days working with these beautiful people and each night we couldn't rave enough about the beautiful people and experiences we had had (even with our blisters.) Our experience wasn't just building a house. We interacted with the whole village. We played ball games with the kids and took their photos (they hadn't seen photos of themselves before). We watched all the women gather to cook, and we were even taught by the family's eldest daughter how to de-husk the rice. Watching her was really a reflective moment, and we were definitely not able to do it when she tried to teach us!

The whole two days really was a **thought-evoking, once in a lifetime, humbling experience.** It was an immersion in a culture vastly different from our own. A group challenged by much adversity working together - supporting each other, to create a more comfortable life. We may have been helping but we were the lucky ones to be fortunate to share in this 'lost for words' experience.



Light of Mercy Centre

Reflection from Amalie Fieberger

One of the highlights for me in Cambodia was the Light of Mercy Centre: a 'boarding school' for children who were either deaf, blind or had other disabilities. As their parents are generally too ashamed to send a child with a disability to school, they often have no education, so the Light of Mercy Centre is where they go and live in the school term and attend school, and return to their families in the school holidays.

We spent an afternoon there and were entertained by a performance of dance, music and singing by the children. After that, they wanted us to perform for them so we sang 'Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree' and 'Give me a home among the gums trees'. We also taught them how to jump like a Kangaroo and laugh like a Kookaburra and spent the rest of the time dancing around with them, learning Cambodian dancing. With was a wonderful time of integrating with the Cambodian children and their teachers. We also shared some ice-cream and cakes with them afterwards.



Although we did not speak Khmer or sign language, we were still able to learn signing from them and communicate in other ways.

As I am studying disability studies, and spending the afternoon there, gave me a moment where I felt 'I could do this for the rest of my life'. So, it was a pretty big opportunity for me which I felt very grateful for.

The suffering of Cambodia has been deep.
From this suffering comes Great Compassion.

Great Compassion makes a Peaceful Heart.
A Peaceful Heart makes a Peaceful Person.

A Peaceful Person makes a Peaceful Family.
A Peaceful Family makes a Peaceful Community.

A Peaceful Community makes a Peaceful Nation

A Peaceful Nation makes a Peaceful World.

May all being live in Happiness and Peace.

Ven. Maha Ghosananda

Our Growing Network!!

New Groups in Rockhampton and Brisbane

Building upon the great energy from our Network Gathering last October, and despite all the floods and challenging weather, there has been new Mercy groups forming in both Rockhampton and Brisbane.

In Rocky a group of nine of us gathered for brunch and a chance to dream about possibilities for young adults to continue beyond school their engagement with justice issues. There are some great local opportunities that exist including the idea of connecting with the Rockhampton ex-mayor, Margaret Strelow, in creating a cafe that would welcome all members of the community and especially reach out to those in need. This fantastic project has been facing several challenges and would benefit greatly from support that could be offered. We look forward to hearing how things progress there!



Part of the Rocky gang – Nancy Pepper, Jelicia Bendall and Rachele Belz.

In Brisbane also a vibrant group of interested people have begun exploring possibilities of Mercy Action for Young Adults. So far they have articulated the following about themselves:

1. We want a project that we can call our own.
2. We want to work with Mercy Services, because it will provide great support, networks and it suits the ethos that we want to build.
3. We are hoping for a smaller 'off-shoot' from one of the Services where we can conduct a long-term project.
4. We want to work together!
5. We want to build a community!
6. We hope to share what we learn with the community, especially through spreading the word with other young people.
7. We are all passionate people who have energy to make a difference!

Not bad for two meetings!!

MAG-net in Chile and Peru!!



Top row: Sr Margaret Sheppard, Margareta Doran, Carmela Crino, Ellen Reading, Sr Joan Doyle, Sr Valda Dickinson
Bottom row: Stephanie Chalmers, Katherine Lee, Elyssa Purdie and Emma Saad.

Margareta Doran, MAG-net member from Sydney shares the experience of spending time in Chile and Peru.

Last December seven young women, including myself, travelled to the outskirts of Lima, Peru to participate in a 10 day exposure experience to visit the Mercy Women's Houses and Family Health Centre established by the Sisters of Mercy. The group was hosted by Sister Joan Doyle with assistance from the extraordinary local law student Ana Basilio, and accompanied by Srs Margaret Sheppard and Valda Dickinson.

The first stop on our meticulously prepared itinerary were the three Women's Houses in Tres de Mayo, Cerro Candela and Huandoy. The Women's Houses function to provide classes in literacy and employment skills, such as knitting, sewing and hairdressing, to assist it empowering local women. It was a joy to sit in on the classes, often taught by past students, and witness the enjoyment and benefit that is gained. The work produced is of an exceptional standard and of such a quality that the women are able to sell the products. Some have even gone on to establish their own knitted goods business, Tika, that now makes the school scarves for a number of colleges in Sydney.

Next on the itinerary was our homestay. There was a definite sense of uncertainty as we headed off into the night for our new families. However, any fears were proved unfounded as we each had a wonderful time

with our designated families who all welcomed us with open arms and a hospitality without equal. Also during our time we were invited by our friend Ana Basilio to attend a local First Communion Mass for which she prepared young communicants. It was a truly touching experience to share in the celebrations with the children and their families and the palpable sense of community solidarity in the air was in no small part related to the work of the Women's Houses.

The Mercy Family Health Centre provides medical treatment and health education. While basic compared to Australian standards, it provides vital services for the local community. One of our MAG-net members, Emma Saad, a qualified physiotherapist, volunteered her services for three days. While Emma embarked on her physiotherapy engagements, the rest of the group set to work with painting the common kitchen used by the families living on Vista Alegre, a hill overlooking Cerro Candela. Despite quite a climb and a few close encounters with stray dogs, we considered our trials and tribulations well worth the effort when the women unanimously declared the project (and colour choice) a great success. A special mention goes to Sisters Valda and Margaret for arranging funding from the Parramatta Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy for the kitchen's dirt floor to be concreted and furniture to be supplied.

The final day of the trip we were invited to join in the festivities of 'Chocolatada', the Christmas celebration of the Cerro Candela Children's House. The children staged a delightfully theatrical version of the Nativity play and then received a special glass of chocolate milk and a gift specially prepared by our own hands. It was a great day, being able to sing-along and celebrate with the children and their mothers, and will hold a very special place in our memories.

All of us who were involved have found that the experience has profoundly impacted on our lives and helped to re-animate and foster our own Mercy spirituality. Some of us are even planning to return to Lima in the near future.

All the MAG-net members will be hosting a *Peruvian Fiesta* on Saturday evening, 18th June, 2011, to raise funds for the tertiary education of the women we were fortunate to meet. Details and tickets (\$80) are available for purchase from any MAG-net member, as well as Kate Anderson (coordinator of the Fiesta) andersonkate@bigpond.com, and Sr Margaret Sheppard at margaret.sheppard@mercy.org.au

Mercy Young Adult Network Gathering 2012



After the wonderful Gathering of 2010: Mercy and Justice Shall Meet – with head, heart and hands; planning has already commenced for the next gathering in 2012.

So we are delighted to announce that the next Gathering will be held in July in Sydney with the hosting support of MAGNet. We are in the process of setting a theme based on the Mercy justice focus areas:

- Indigenous concerns
- Eco-justice
- Asylum seekers and Refugees
- Women and poverty

Kate will be contacting all groups to get a sense of your priorities, needs and interests!



Top row: Sr Valda Dickinson, Sr Margaret Sheppard, Sr Joan Doyle, Emma Saad.
Front row: Carmela Crino, Margaretta Doran, Ellen Reading, Elyssa Purdie and Stephanie Chalmers.

MAG-net is a group of young women in Sydney who are committed to maintaining the Mercy spirit and tradition in their lives following their secondary education. For further information regarding membership and gathering times email thegatheringspace@mercy.org.au

Date Claimers!!!

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!

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

Partnership for a Better World for All

A National Conference for all involved in Immersions and Partnerships with the Majority World and Indigenous Australia

Edmund Rice Education invites Mercy people to gather with interested and committed people to dialogue and network around innovation, best practice, development principles and a shared desire to build a better world for all.

Format will include:

- Keynote presentations
- Interactive workshops
- Opportunities to hear from partners in the Majority World
- Video-conferencing with global experts
- Interfaith Dialogue
- Cultural Celebrations

When: Thursday 28th and Friday 29th July 2011

Where: Edmund Rice Education Australia National Office – Melbourne – Victoria

Cost: Early-bird registration by 30th April is \$250
Full registration by 27th May is \$270

For further information and registration forms contact Kate Garrone at kate.garrone@mercy.org.au

CONFERENCE DATE CLAIMER
LIVING MERCY: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
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 exploring 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)

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

For further information go www.livingmercy.org.au or contact the 150 Project Manager, Andrew Beiers at andrew.beiers@livingmercy.org.au or on 07 3230 9582.

Living Mercy

Mercy Alive!

Mercy Now!

Gen Mercy

Mercy Young Adult Network???

What is in a Name???

We are seeking a name for our network that captures who we are and describes what we aim to do and be.

What do you think is a good name to describe us??? We need your creative ideas!

Email and let us know:

kate.garrone@mercy.org.au

HAPPENINGS ACROSS THE NETWORK OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

- 30 March Brisbane – Mercy Action Young Adult Network meeting. Contact Linda Anderson for more info andersol@allhallows.qld.edu.au
- 4 April Sydney – Mercy Mission Framework Meeting
- 5-6 April Grafton – consultation – Mercy Young Adult Network in Grafton??
- 10 April Mercy Links – Melbourne Gathering around Cambodia
- 16 April Melbourne – Reference Group Meeting for Mercy Young Adult Network
- 30 April – 2 May Perth – Mercy Young Adult planning
- 11 – 12 June Melbourne – Leadership Formation weekend facilitated by Mercy Young Adult Network
- 15 June eConference – The Way of the Heart ..journeys of transformation. Sponsored by the Conference of Spiritual Directors, Australia. Kate Garrone on panel. Further details www.csdaustralia.com
- 16 June Kate on maternity leave
- 18 June MAG-net Fundraiser - Peruvian Fiesta!!
- 17 July Mercy Links – Melbourne Gathering on Asylum Seekers
- 28 August Mercy Links Melbourne Gathering on Homelessness in Victoria.

The Mercy Young Adult Network is 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.”