



Many Paths

Newsletter of Mercy Associates of ISMAPNG

Issue 3, November 2017

Welcome ...

This third edition of **Many Paths** comes in the month in which the feast of All Souls is celebrated, and sits on the edge of the beginning of the season of Advent. The first, a celebration of gratitude for those who have lived before us and have now entered eternal life with the God they have faithfully served. The second, a period of contemplating the impending celebration of a birth, the most extraordinary birth in the history of creation. This edition contains content on both—and both are a reminder of the everlasting story of which we are part. The Holy Souls we remember on All Souls day may have lived long ago, and our Saviour and Redeemer lived 2,000 years ago. Both stories continue, and keeping these stories within us enriches our identity and faith as we journey through the moments of our own lives.

Institute Leadership Team—farewell to Sally!

In a few weeks, on December 12, the handover of responsibility for the leadership and well-being of ISMAPNG from the current Institute Leadership Team (ILT) to the incoming ILT will take place.

For Mercy Associates, this means it's time to say thank you and farewell to Sr Sally Bradley, who has given us very generous support and encouragement over the last few years. Sally's work with Mercy Associates began when the ILT instigated a renewal process for Mercy Associates in 2012. Now, five years later, we have two part-time Network Facilitators (NSW and VIC); we have resources such as the Administrative Handbook, Formation Resource, our crest and motto, our new badges; and we have increased awareness of what the Mercy Associates movement is right across the Institute. Our groups are now more aware of each other, and many have invested renewed vigour in their activities, knowing they have the ongoing support of ISMAPNG in the future. Sally's part in achieving all of this has been immense, and we have much to be grateful to her for. Sally—we offer you our heartfelt gratitude and prayers as you

leave the ILT role, knowing how much you've given to us, and wishing you a rewarding and happy future in your next ministry role.

Sally has written a reflection on her years in the ILT, printed on page 2 of this newsletter.

And the new ILT members are...

The information below was included in the last edition of *Many Paths*, but it's very important—so here it is again! The new members of the Institute Leadership Team are:

Eveline Crotty, Institute Leader (centre below)

Caroline Ryan, Councillor and Institute Vicar (right)

Marie Duffy, Councillor (2nd from right)

Gaye Lennon, Councillor (left)

Elizabeth Moloney, Councillor (2nd from left).



We wish these women every success in their key role as leaders of the Institute, and assure them of both prayerful and practical support.

Carmel Ross

Mercy Associates Executive Officer



MERCY
Associates

Institute of Sisters of Mercy
of Australia & Papua New Guinea

One Charism, Many Paths



While we place all our confidence in God, we must act as if all depended on our exertion.

Letter to Frances Warde,
24 Nov 1840

A message from the Institute Leadership Team...

What constitutes a merciful response?

Sometimes it can be difficult to put words on what might actually constitute a merciful response. Yet I believe we all know it when we truly experience it!

Recently when I was visiting Melbourne, I caught up with a friend, a Sister of Mercy, for dinner. My friend chose a lovely Italian restaurant which she had just discovered. While we were enjoying a delicious meal and a glass of wine an elderly man with special needs and pushing a walking frame, came in off the street. He sat down at an empty front table in the restaurant. He greeted us warmly and was keen to tell us very loudly that he had just had a good win on the greyhounds! With great kindness and hospitality the owners of the restaurant gave him a cup of coffee. A little later they called a taxi for him. As he left, saying good-bye to all in the restaurant, the restaurant owners helped him out to the waiting taxi.

As we left the restaurant, my friend and I both said how much we enjoyed our evening, and hoped to return again. We were especially touched by the merciful response of the owners of the restaurant towards this vulnerable, yet 'large as life' elderly man. One of Catherine McAuley's key attributes was that she connected the rich to the poor, and in the process both were enriched. We had all indeed been enriched this evening!

As my time on the Institute Leadership Team draws to a close, I have so much for which to be grateful. There have been many times over the past six years when I have encountered a merciful response ... and I have been deeply enriched. Such stories tell of places and communities which offer a largeness of heart, buckets full of generosity, and a passion to uphold the human dignity of all, especially the most vulnerable. We indeed live in a world which is desperately in need of the gift of a merciful response. In so many ways the ordinary, yet inspiring stories in this Newsletter answer this question too.



One of Catherine McAuley's key attributes was that she connected the rich to the poor, and in the process both were enriched.

On behalf of the Institute Leadership Team – Berneice, Annette, Barbara, Theresia and myself – I thank you all who are committed to making a merciful response to so many situations in our world. Let us continue to pray for each other, Sisters of Mercy and Mercy Associates, as we each discover God's call and invitation to live this out each day.

Sally Bradley RSM, Institute Councillor

Experiencing mercy

As I take my first steps in the new role of Mercy Associates Network Facilitator for Victoria, I am very thankful for the warm welcome I have received, which has shown me the meaning of the charism of Mercy more powerfully than any textbook could convey.

I have much to learn about ISMAPNG and the life and works of Catherine McAuley, but anticipate that this will really come alive as I meet with those of you in existing groups in Victoria, and begin to liaise with staff in Mercy workplaces to sow the seeds for the development of new Associates groups.

A Melbourne Sister recently described someone as being 'steeped in mercy'. For now, perhaps, as a newcomer to the role

I am simply 'lightly dipped in mercy'. Yet as I read the draft Formation Resource while preparing my application, I became more aware of how God's mercy has been expressed in my life and in the lives of others. I also began to wonder – what might God be calling Mercy Associates to in the years ahead? I am excited to be part of the journey with you, and look forward to hearing more of your stories and experiences of mercy.

Please feel welcome to contact me with any queries at:

mercypassociatesvic@ismapng.org.au

Anne Pate, Network Facilitator Victoria



The power of prayer and presence

As I look back over the last twelve months in my role as the Mercy Associates Network Facilitator for the groups in NSW, I feel very grateful to have met with some amazing folks. As I travelled the length and breadth of NSW, each Mercy Associates group has made me feel very welcome and shown me great hospitality. I have experienced many doors of welcome and have very much appreciated being included in the many and varied Mercy Associates groups' meetings. A common theme of each group's meetings has been their prayer and presence. As we know, prayer contains much power in bringing us into oneness with our God and each other. Also, prayer and presence can be seen as ministry.

A significant ministry across the Institute, including Mercy Associates groups, is that of prayer and presence. It is in the very act of praying for our world and one another, that we together in our hearts and minds carry the requests, concerns and needs of the world.

Together with prayer is the ministry of presence where we stand alongside those in need, volunteer in parishes, charity shops, asylum seeker organisations, offer pastoral care and visit those in poverty and those dying. Being present with those who are in need or suffering is foundational to Mercy. I have found that each Mercy Associates group across NSW is involved in this great ministry of presence, with each group having its own unique way of taking action within their communities.

Catherine McAuley wrote, "Every place has its own particular ideas and feelings which must be yielded to when possible." This quote appears in a letter written by Catherine to Francis Warde in 1838. Inherent in Catherine's instruction is a double movement – first to 'attend', and then to 'yield.' It is the space of listening, seeing and engaging that sets the agenda for response – a response that contains a sense of mutuality and surrender in its unfolding. This response I have discovered in every Mercy Associates group across NSW.

In some small way I hope I have been an opener of the figurative 'door' for these wonderful Mercy Associates groups, who have been kind enough to give me some time to speak and share with them some resources and materials. There have been many 'Mercy moments' that I will treasure in my heart as I've been privileged to be with each Mercy Associates group this year. I very much look forward to being with each of you in 2018.

Wishing you all, an 'Opening of your Inner door' this Advent season and a most blessed and joyful Christmas.

Christine Convery
Network Facilitator, NSW

Commitment Ceremony for Providence Mercy Associates Group

The Providence Mercy Associates held their a Commitment Ceremony on 25th October. We enjoyed a beautiful and prayerful Ceremony followed by a celebratory lunch in the Mercy Services building, Tighes Hill, Newcastle. Mary Geason rsm, the ISMAPNG Central B Community Leader was in attendance to present each of us with our new badges and certificates, ably assisted by Val O'Hara rsm. Also present was Moya Lantry rsm and a number of other Sisters of Mercy from the Newcastle area. We felt very blessed to have so many of the Sisters with us on this very special day.



L-R back: Jill Williams, Bernice Matthews, Christine Convery, Yvonne Purdon

L-R, front: Jane Walton, Pam Dowdell, Margaret Moulston, Suzanne Romani

Absent: Eileen McCosker, Amy Schultz, Sue McLeod.

As a group we have decided to contact those Providence Mercy Associates who are unable to attend our gatherings due to health problems, and invite them to become 'Prayer Partners', including those not present at our Commitment Ceremony and Sue Lohr, who is no longer able to attend due to distance. We have committed to donating monies to Mercy Works as our funds build to a reasonable amount, as well as considering the possibility of holding a fundraising concert next year with students from the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music. Also in 2018, we will invite some guest speakers to be with us at our gatherings: Sr. Mary Geason on her interesting life prior to becoming ISMAPNG Central B Community Leader; and Sr. Val O'Hara on Mercy in Drama.

Christine Convery

Every place has its own particular ideas and feelings which must be yielded to when possible.

**Catherine McAuley, letter to
Frances Warde, 1838**

DISTANT VOICES

Distant voices,
quiet murmuring
and fragments of prayer
beckoning us back,
easing us forward.
Mercy unfolds behind us
and before us.
Mercy reaches through the ages,
stepping out of history,
shaping who we might be
prompting what we could be,
defining who we are.

*Academy of Mary Immaculate,
160 years 1857-2017 booklet,
Inside back cover*

Ballarat—Feast of All Souls Liturgy

Each year on All Souls day, 2nd November, the Associates and Sisters gather at the Ballarat Cemetery where most of the departed Sisters are buried, to pray and remember them.

A simple service takes place with the names of all departed Sisters and Associates read out.

There is no leader of the liturgy, with some 11 people each taking a reading part, everyone else joins in the said prayer together.

The service is opened with our community leader Sr Berenice Kerr welcoming everyone, and at the finish she bids us to 'go in the peace of Christ' after we have heartily sung Catherine's Suscipe.

Following the service, which takes no longer than 30 minutes, we gather, as is our custom, for an enjoyable lunch at the local football club and a glass of, whatever takes your fancy!

May God the Holy Trinity be praised now and for ever for all who have served in the name of Mercy, as we rejoice and join our prayers to Our Lady of Mercy, inspired by Catherine McAuley.

Les Stewart

Remembrance Day in Rockhampton: Seminar on what empowered Catherine McAuley as a Leader

Remembrance Day saw the Rockhampton Mercy Associates gather after Mass to be inspired by Sr Grace Bartolo's insights into what empowered Catherine McAuley to become a leader.

Six possible reasons were suggested (see table at right). During the applications to Catherine's life, those present were challenged to 'take on board' the same aspects in their lives.



Because of her empowerment, Catherine was able to do extraordinary things – though, at the time, because she was focussed on one thing at a time, it probably did not seem extraordinary.

Are we able to follow in her footsteps?

Beryl Mills



What inspired the Leadership of Catherine McAuley?

Her historical context – she saw the great need to help others - there was lack of education for the poor and Catholics were greatly persecuted.

Her deep faith and trust - Jesus was her top role model and, because of Him, she was able to do extraordinary things.

Her personal experience - Death of close family members and fellow nuns made her aware of the suffering of others. Her financial insecurity gave her a special feeling for the poor because she had been poor herself.

Her religious experience - Her friendship with the Quakers gave her an insight into the dignity of the individual, a non-judgmental approach, a deep respect for the poor and a love of Scripture.

Others affirmed her and believed in her – Dr Blake supported her in the concept of that the Sisters of Mercy were not to be an enclosed congregation.

Gifts – Catherine knew herself and had a deep awareness of who she was. She acknowledged and used her personal and inherited gifts in the service of others.

Mercy Associates All Shook Up at Variety Concert

From: *e-Record*, Archdiocese of Perth, 26 Oct 2017, article and photos by **Daniele Foti-Cuzzola**

Tuart Hill (Perth) Mercy Associates' annual Variety Concert hit all the right notes again this year.

The annual fundraiser event, which raises money for Mercy Works, was held on Sunday 22 October at Aranmore Catholic Primary School in Perth.

The concert saw a stellar line-up including Harpist Jane McCabe, Guitarist, singer-songwriter Carmel Charlton and music troupes, Mustard Seeds and Beryl's Troop.

But the one performer that got the 100 strong crowd *all shook up*, was the King of Rock himself, Elvis Presley.

The audience responded to the Elvis impersonator with laughing and clapping as he re-enacted the King's famous dance moves and serenaded several audience members while miming to a number of Presley's biggest hits.

Other highlights included a raffle drawer and several skit performances. At the end of the concert, guests enjoyed an afternoon tea held in the Aranmore Primary School Gym.

Mercy Associates Leader, Mrs Jan O'Connor said the annual concert is an example of how members commit to deepening their spirituality and relationship with God to the best of their ability, by living the Mercy Charism in their daily lives and undertaking works in the service of others.

"One particular activity that comes out of this is our annual fund raiser for Mercy Works, the outreach/missionary arm of the Sisters of Mercy", said Jan O'Connor.

"We are committed to the institute of Sisters of Mercy and their Charism and we try to support the works of Mercy and that's why we do the concert every year. We're supporting Mercy Works and this is our main fundraising effort for the year."

The funds raised from this year's Variety Concert will go towards a number of causes, both nationally and internationally including education and health schemes, the provision of fresh water, self-help schemes, re-settlement of refugees and Aboriginal Health, and education projects to name a few.

"Many Sisters of Mercy have worked in the mission fields of such countries as Burma, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Africa. Over the years Mercy Associates have contributed thousands of dollars towards such projects through their fundraising activities," she added.



Mercy Associates Ros Trestrail, Maureen Allen and Jan O'Connor at the Mercy Associates Variety Concert.



An Elvis Presley impersonator had guests in stitches with his hilarious imitation of the King of Rock.



A gathering of Mercy Associates in Grafton, on 27 September, when Chris Convery visited: Margaret Geary, Cathy Golding, Ann Moloney, Leonie Fish, Ellen Mulherin, Lynne Higham



An especially cheery group of Mercy Associates in Gunnedah, during Chris Convery's visit on 25th September: L-R back row: Ruth Clarke, Pat Mooney, Val Kelly, Eva Grace, Val McCann, Regina McInerney rsm
L-R middle: Deidre Andren, Margaret Nott, Ann Brody
L-R front: Chris. Convery, Peter Clarke, Adba Kidd, Colleen Buttenshaw, Gabrielle Foley rsm

And Mary said,
'My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.'

Luke 1:46-47

What's your story?

Last month I travelled to Melbourne to spend two days with Anne Pate, newly appointed Network Facilitator for Mercy Associates in Victoria.

Anne and I visited the Academy of Mary Immaculate in Fitzroy, an old, inner suburb of Melbourne. To step through the gates on Nicholson St, with traffic roaring past in great volume, into the serenity of the Academy, was a heart-warming experience. Principal, Sr Mary Maloney RSM, greeted us warmly and showed us around the most historic locations at the school.

The Academy is of historic importance because, like Mercedes College in Perth, it was established by Mother Ursula Frayne, who led the first community of Sisters of Mercy to come to Australia. Ursula was a contemporary of Catherine McAuley, and was with her at Baggot St at the time of her death. She founded a community in Newfoundland (Canada) but difficult circumstances there led to her return to Ireland. She then led a small community across vast oceans to found a community in Perth in 1846. Mercedes College continues to this day on its original inner-city site adjacent to St Mary's Cathedral, and is a much-respected school, steeped in Mercy values.



In 1857 Ursula and two Sisters moved from Perth to Melbourne, and the Academy was founded in that same year. In Perth and Melbourne, she, along with her fellow Sisters of Mercy and hundreds of lay supporters worked tirelessly, often against immense and sometimes unfair obstacles, to establish education facilities and serve their local community. Their aim was to enhance the lives of those experiencing poverty of one kind or another in the pioneering years of early European settlement in Australia.

Melbourne was the city in which Ursula spent the remainder of her life, and she died there on June 9, 1885. The Memorial Chapel at the Academy was completed in 1889 and her body was re-interred beneath the Celtic Cross which commemorates her labours.

Ursula Frayne's story is extraordinary, and Anne and I both felt a sense of the privilege it was to visit a school she established. Yet in more than a dozen other places around Australia and Papua New Guinea, additional Mercy congregations were founded. Each of these locations has a

founding story and a living legacy, worthy of being captured and celebrated.

Earlier this month we celebrated the feast of All Souls. Ursula Frayne and other now deceased Sisters of Mercy are among those whose lives and faith we remember and give gratitude for on this feast day.

Just before Anne and I left the Academy, Sr Mary showed us the school Register of Students. I found this moving, to the point of being awe-inspiring, because though this school is celebrating 160 years in 2017 and thousands of girls have been enrolled during those years, the original register is still in use. Mary opened the Register at the first page and there were the names of the first students in April 1857 (see photo). We flicked through the pages and saw thousands of names, including the current students in 2017. Ursula had the foresight and faith to believe that this school she founded was there for the long-term, and bought a very thick book to serve as the Register. In fact, she had so much faith that she bought two of these books! The second will commence when the first is full – and the Academy will certainly still be there when it comes into service.

No.	Name	Age	Religion	Tu. Term	Time
1	Miss Flynn	14	William St	English	12.3.57
2	Miss Budge	9	Nicholson St	English	13.3.57
3	Miss Budge	7	Nicholson St	English	13.3.57
4	Miss Budge	15	Perth	English	13.3.57
5	Miss Budge	7	Perth	English	13.3.57
6	Miss Budge	10	Perth	English	13.3.57

What was so moving and awe-inspiring about this Register? Here, captured in one book, was an experience of time – one book capturing the names of all students for, so far, 160 years. Stories are about time, about the long-term. Our lives, our families, our Mercy Associates groups, each have a story. We do ourselves a favour when we know something of our story, because it gives us a sense of who we are and how our lives fit in with the lives of so many around us. Being grounded in where we've been and where we are now, gives us the sense of stability and hope we need to confidently move into the future. Stories connect us to ourselves and to others, and as Mercy Associates, we have the good fortune to be connected to the story of the Sisters of Mercy.

Each Mercy Associates group has its own story, and the story is part of the longer and larger story of the Sisters of Mercy in their location. Earlier this year, the Ballarat Mercy Associates group published an e-book of their history. Your group may or may not want to do something of this magnitude, but I wonder if, in 2018, your group might take on the task of researching its history and how that history blends into the history of the Sisters of Mercy in your location.

What's your story?

Carmel Ross, **Mercy Associates Executive Officer**

25th Anniversary of Mercy Associates, Gladstone

The Mercy Associates celebrated 25 continuous years of service in conjunction with the Sisters of Mercy in the Star of the Sea Parish Church. Over 40 people attended the Mercy Day Mass celebrated by Fr Kevin Redmond SM on Saturday 23 September. Past and present Associates, four Sisters, both Parish Priests and parishioners attended.

Brunch was then enjoyed on the balcony of the Botanical Gardens Café amongst the wonders of God's creation. There were many memories shared and much laughter was to be heard. 'Old' photos from Sr Maria Goretti sm's original album were available for much reminiscing. We give thanks for all our past and deceased members who have laid the foundation for us today.

Annette Rowe



Dot Leech, Annette Rowe, Norma Reynolds, Annette Platt, Judy Munt



Rosanna Potter, Annie Goman, Sr Beryl Amedee rsm, Sr Noreen Dunne smsm



Fr Aliko and Annette Rowe



Catherine...

'Perhaps Catherine McAuley's ongoing mission is to continue to be for all of us what she tried to be during her earthly pilgrimage: a shining human lamp, a comforting, guiding soul-friend, a servant of that definitive and incomparably Comforting Mercy that Walter Kasper calls "the source and goal of God's ways" on our behalf — until that day when we hope to enter fully into God's heavenly country...'

Mary C Sullivan rsm, Editor, *A Shining Lamp: The Oral Instructions of Catherine McAuley*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017.

Mercy Day with Mercy Sisters—Cairns

The Mercy Associates in Far North Queensland have always enjoyed a close relationship with the local Sisters of Mercy and, in line with the vision of Mercy Associates of ISMAPNG which calls associates *'to journey with each other and the Sisters of Mercy'*, they continue to look for such opportunities. It was with this in mind that the Associates hosted the local Sisters for a morning of formation and a shared lunch on Mercy Day this year. Thirty-two Sisters and Associates gathered to celebrate the 190 years since the opening of Baggot St, Dublin, and to explore the theme, *'In the footsteps of Catherine - being mercy in my place!'*

The day was bookended with prayer and began with the lighting of three gratitude candles – one each for Catherine McAuley, for the Sisters present (and for those who are unable to be with us), and for the light of mercy that burns in our lives, our ministries, our families, our communities.

The Mercy Day Ritual that drew the morning to a close included a special prayer to Our Lady of Mercy; scripture and some songs of mercy, a time for reflection and

sharing on how Catherine's life of mercy has touched and inspired us, a commissioning and ritual of blessing. A song of particular note that we incorporated into the ritual was, 'Among All' by Chris De Silva. The lyrics of this beautiful Marian hymn (published in the 'As One Voice – Next Generation' music book and recordings) summed up the theme for our day - reminding us that we are each called by name; to serve, to bring joy and love and to be instruments of peace and hope for all the world.

Terry Power



*In the opening of the first House of Mercy, a particular wave of mercy began,
that rippled out beyond Dublin, beyond Catherine
and her time, to our own.
In turn, we pray that our merciful words and actions
'become more effective signs of the Father's
action in our lives' (Pope Francis) and create a
ripple of mercy in the universe!*

As Advent and Christmas approach...

Attached separately with this newsletter is an Advent reflection based on contemplating the Annunciation. Caroline Jones, renowned journalist recently retired from the ABC, wrote about this in her autobiography, **An Authentic Life**. Her reflection is beautiful and profound, and might be an insightful passage for Mercy Associates to ponder in these weeks leading into Christmas.

We have much to be grateful for and to celebrate in our own journeys as Mercy Associates. When Catherine and her two colleagues who became the first Sisters of Mercy underwent formation, it was with the Presentation Sisters. At right is a stained glass depiction of the angels singing of the glory of God manifest in the birth of the Saviour.

This is in the roof of the Chapel at Georges Hill where Catherine, along with Anna Maria Doyle and Elizabeth Harley made their vows as the first Sisters of Mercy.

In our own lives, we often spend time waiting for things to happen, as Mary did 2000 years ago. Equally, we often begin things not knowing how they'll wind up. This may have been the case for Catherine, who waited in hope for circumstances to coalesce in a way that enabled her ministry, and then the religious congregation she founded, to become a reality. Her patient yet determined waiting eventually led to the Sisters of Mercy flourishing around the world, all for the glory of God—something else for the angels to sing about! And of course in time, Mercy Associates have also flourished, alongside the Sisters.

In the next couple of months, most groups will take a break. Thank you for all you have been and done as Mercy Associates in 2017. Our next edition of **Many Paths** will be published in March 2018.

May Christmas be a time of rich blessings for you and those you love.

Carmel Ross

