



# Many Paths ....

Newsletter of Mercy Associates of ISMAPNG

Issue 13, May 2020

## Welcome to Many Paths!

We are in a 'busy' time in the Church's liturgical calendar: We've celebrated Easter and the Ascension, and on Sunday will celebrate the feast of Pentecost, then Trinity Sunday a week later. This series of 'events' collectively tell us a great deal about God. Through the Old Testament, we come to know there is only one God – an important revelation at a time when, around the middle and far east, the prevailing view was that there were multiple gods. In the gospels, we come to know of Jesus, his incarnation, life, death and resurrection – and that he was not only the promised Messiah, but also the Son of God. The post-resurrection appearances included promises of the forthcoming reception of the Holy Spirit, spirit of God and spirit of life, whose many gifts inspire and guide us daily. And we close this period with Trinity Sunday, where we celebrate the triune God of Christianity – God who is Father, Son and Spirit, God with us, always and everywhere. This is indeed Good News: to have experienced the revelation of God's self to humankind, with the realisation that God chooses to be with us, to love us regardless of our worthiness, to always extend mercy to us... What more could anyone want?

## Hospitality, Solidarity, Generosity during COVID-19

We are in an unusual time in the history of humankind. The social and economic impact of COVID-19 is beyond what we have experienced before. To say it has made a major impact on how we live and how we conduct relationships is an understatement. For Mercy Associates, groups have not been able to meet for about ten weeks

now, so most will have missed at least two meetings.

In this edition are some accounts of how individuals have responded to the social isolation we currently live with. I'm struck as I read them that hospitality is a core component of a Mercy Associates meeting. Every group either has morning tea together, or lunch, or afternoon tea. There are groups who occasionally gather outside of meetings for lunch or dinner together. Hospitality was a hallmark of the ministry of Jesus, with or without a meal to go with it. He extended a welcome to all and shared his gifts with them, especially those in need of healing, forgiveness, or even a kind word of encouragement.

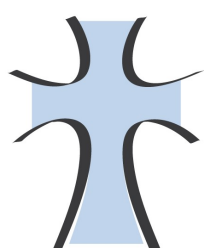
Our world has seen some extraordinary expressions of hospitality during the COVID period. Neighbours looking out

for each other, spontaneous groups of song serenading the internet and their neighbours – human behaviour at its best! Our ability to see and respond to the needs of our neighbour with hospitality is an element of solidarity, the realisation that all of humankind is linked, all of us have common needs. We are at our best when we look outwards towards others rather



than dwell unduly on our own interests and concerns. Solidarity is a principle of Catholic Social Teaching. It matters because we are social beings, created to participate in communities, be it our family, our workplace, or our Mercy Associates group.

Like hospitality, solidarity requires a generous heart. A heart that looks toward the neighbour with a spirit of loving concern and responds with whatever gifts it has, to serve the needs of others. .../2



**MERCY**  
Associates

Institute of Sisters of Mercy  
of Australia & Papua New Guinea

**One Charism, Many Paths**



*You should remember  
that not to advance is  
to go back*

*The Practical Sayings of Catherine McAuley,  
ed. by Mary C. Sullivan, p18*

*Continued from page 1...*

Our newsletter, **Many Paths**, provides an opportunity for Mercy Associates groups to express hospitality to each other and solidarity with each other. Most Mercy Associates will only ever meet with their own group, because the size of Australia means groups are often hundreds of kilometres away from each other. As well, the groups in Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste are unlikely to have opportunities to gather other than with their own group.

So sharing our stories, building each other up by telling about what we're doing and reading with interest what other groups are doing, is about sharing hospitality among Mercy Associates groups. And of course, the stories being shared are an expression of our Christian faith— something that was central to Catherine's life and which is central to the lives of Mercy Associates. As always, sincere thanks to the groups who have submitted articles for this edition – we hope you enjoy reading it. Remember to email this on to anyone you know who might be interested!

Carmel Ross  
**Executive Officer**

## From Rockhampton

During this time of isolation, we in the Rockhampton area have been blessed with other forms of communication other than physical contact, such as daily Mass delivered by Bishop Michael McCarthy via You Tube, weekly reflections by email, Zoom sessions, phone calls. It is amazing how you can keep in touch from your home and in doing so learn new ways. It has been a learning experience. Also time to slow down and reflect and perhaps do some household jobs that have been on the 'to do' list for some time.

**In this time of confinement, we  
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want the fullness of life.**

In this time of confinement, we have discovered how deeply we want the fullness of life. We also have recognised how often we have done foolish things to diminish this life. As we 're-enter' our world may we live by words of Jesus that have touched us in this time.

Carmel and your team, many thanks to you all for your ongoing support in keeping us all together. Also a big thanks to our secretary Jenny for the work she has done over the past few months.

God Bless  
**Ailsa McLaughlin**



# MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA



**Studying in PNG during the Pandemic**

Peter is studying at teachers' college in Papua New Guinea having been awarded an Access to Education Scholarship by Mercy Works.

Lecturers at Divine Word University had identified him as a student with great potential, yet being from an impoverished background and a consequent lack of financial means was jeopardising his ability to finish his education.

Losing both parents at a young age left Peter as the sole carer for his 9-year-old sister plus his cousins. Studying while providing enough food to feed himself and the young ones in his care, was an enormous responsibility and he struggled to be able to do so.

When Peter was almost at the point of losing hope to realise his dream of becoming a teacher, receiving his scholarship enabled him to continue his Primary Teaching course.

The onset of the coronavirus pandemic has seen drastic changes in the delivery of Peter's classes. His studies have continued through a mix of online and limited face-to-face learning conducted in accordance with social distancing restrictions. This has required a significant adjustment to keep up with his classwork, but he is managing to stay on top of his studies.

In these challenging times, Peter is particularly grateful that he no longer has the added financial pressures he was under previously. But more than that, he finds both strength and comfort in the certainty of the support granted by his Mercy Works scholarship.

**Kingsley Edwards**



**Pentecost** is a feast where the scripture account and our tradition present different versions of what happened. In Acts 2, where the coming of the Holy Spirit is described, the group who receive the spirit is the twelve apostles (including Matthias, who had just been chosen to replace Judas). From what is written, Mary is not among those present. Yet, almost without fail, art depictions of Pentecost include Mary, usually at the very centre of the gathered group. Our tradition holds that Mary also received the Spirit, and because of her special place in salvation history as the Mother of Jesus, our tradition also holds that she is the mother of the Church. Pentecost usually is in May, and of course May is designated as the month of special devotion to Mary.

We have much to reflect on: How do we understand the presence of the Spirit within us? Who is Mary, the Mother of Mercy, in our lives?

### Pentecost Prayer...

Your Spirit Lord is truth:  
May it make us free.  
Your Spirit Lord is fire:  
May it enkindle us with your love.  
Your Spirit Lord is gentleness:  
may it bring us peace.  
Your Spirit Lord renews the face of the earth:  
may it renew the depths of our hearts.  
Your Spirit Lord is prayer:  
May it open our hearts to give praise.  
Your Spirit Lord fills the whole universe:  
May it live among us forever.  
Amen.

Jamberoo Abbey, Facebook, 31 May 2020



*Pentecost, Fra Angelico's Corsini Triptych, Palazzo Corsini, Rome*

## Reflections and Sharings from Gladstone—life during the COVID-19 period

In Gladstone, luckily we have been spared of the COVID-19 virus. Our last census in 2016 recorded just over 33,000 people, so I am sure in 2020 we have many more people living here. From all these people, only one lady has been reported as positive to the virus. Having said that, we are subject to all the restrictions, just like anyone else.

### Grandmother assisting with home schooling:

My daughter and son-in-law have their own business, and so my daughter was able to work from home and take care of her three school aged children – Year 1, Year 6 and Year 10. At first it was a novelty with alarms going off at various times for scheduled face to face lessons with their teacher and other online students. Then it was a matter of who was able to use the computer first – who has had access the longest and then the ever-increasing calls for help. I think the most challenging day was when the child in Year 1 had to sing a song whilst clapping to the beat, then recording it and uploading it to the teacher.

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## Reflections and Sharings from Gladstone

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I must say that the Year 6 student also had a challenging task where he had to make a cartoon strip of the Annunciation using modern day language and downloaded comic pictures of Mary and the angel. He opened with Mary saying 'You're kidding, I'm having a baby?' The angel said 'Yep, you sure are.'

All of the changes brought about by this terrible pandemic have been huge but out of it all, I think most parents have a greater admiration for the teaching profession.

Annette Platt



### Discovering the Benefit of Technology:

When Mass has always been available, it is easy to take it for granted. When suddenly it stops being available in the Church, we seemed lost – Sundays seemed very empty. We live in an age of digital phenomena and to find we can click onto Mass and other services on our computers, phones or television screens, is amazing. Connecting to Mass celebrated in our own Parish, other Parishes and Diocese or even by the Pope in Rome seemed unreal. Initially, I found it difficult to get any real 'feel' for this new way. I then realised we all should be grateful for this experience but there is nothing like actually being there. We can hear the Word of God, we follow the actions of the Priest but nothing replaces being physically present at the precious moment of the Consecration.

Del Jordan

### An Associate who lives alone:

I feel I am not worthy of writing '*something*' for the newsletter at the moment that is prayerful and uplifting... Other than the physical side of lockdown – cleaning walls, tidying drawers and pantry, washing curtains and general house work, I spend time talking to my God but I cannot put into words, how I feel to describe the help I feel I receive in return.

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I sincerely hope that someone will thank our priests for continuing with the Mass each day. It has been a great comfort but it is weird not being with other people. Maybe, it will not be for much longer, all though I doubt whether things will ever be back to the way they were, with the constant threat of a second wave, if we are not careful.

Norma Reynolds

### Corona Virus and Me:

It was back in the middle of March when life changed dramatically. COVID-19 and all its implications had reached Australia, and the likelihood of a long period of social isolation was predicted by our governments and health authorities. Selfishly, my first panicky reaction was 'Oh no. At my age I don't want to lose six months or more of my life this way.'

The warnings were especially dire for those over seventy, and those whose health was compromised in some way. At first I couldn't settle, being quite anxious about not joining my friends for coffee or a meal, not able to attend Mass or religious gatherings, and not able to help at St Vincent de Paul welfare.

Gradually, I overcame this initial angst and began to embrace those things I am able to do, and to be thankful for these abilities. I can use a computer (to some degree) and so I can attend Mass online. I was able to stream all the Easter services, either locally or from our cathedral. Email, Face Book, Instagram and Messenger all ensure that I am in touch with my friends and share reassurances.

I opened up my sewing machine and resolved to finish some projects that I have been too 'busy' to get back to. Our local Member of Parliament put out a call for sewers to provide calico bags for the health workers, so I was able to give to the community this way. I've even made some clothes, and finished some knitting and crocheted articles.

Throughout all this, I've even done cleaning and sorting, (but without any method) and there's plenty more of that to go should the urge take me.

I try to do some regular exercise, having downloaded some programs to follow and I use Spotify, a free music app. Gladstone has some wonderful walking paths, and a late afternoon drive to Spinnaker Park to walk by the ocean is invigorating and fills us with awe at nature's beauty.

Right now, as restrictions are gradually being lessened, I'm starting to feel anxious about life returning to 'normal' and questioning how much of the hustle and bustle do we really need in our lives. Some people are never satisfied you may very well be concluding, so...

Stay well everyone. Smell the flowers and look up at the night sky.

Marie-Ann Martin





## Mercy Associates find new ways to connect

During the lockdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the Mercy Associates Network Facilitators are offering extra support to Mercy Associates, to supplement what groups are doing locally. There are currently 16 Mercy Associates groups within the Institute, and in normal times meeting face to face is a highly valued aspect of their shared community life. As we all adapt to our changed circumstances, it is more important than ever to nurture our connections to one another, and to support one another in prayer – and to do this in new and creative ways.

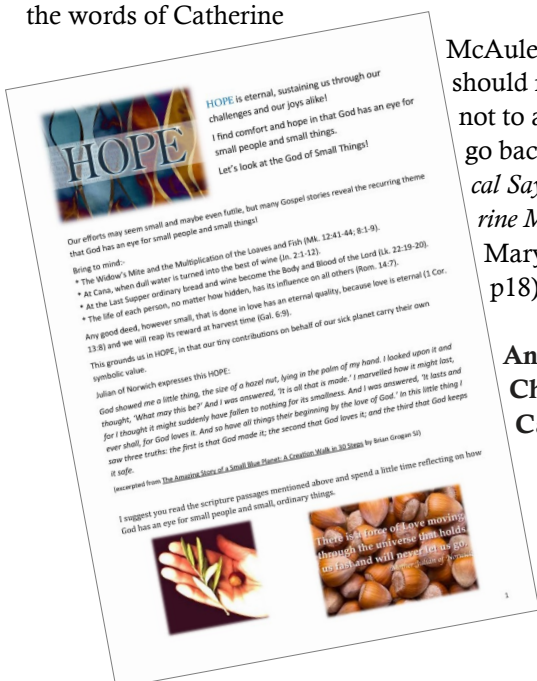
Each week, contact persons for the Associates groups receive a weekly prayer collated by one of the Mercy Associates Network Facilitators, which they send on to local members. These combine scripture, images, prayers and reflections, such as a beautiful letter by Mercy Associate Jan O'Connor on 'An Easter Without Going to Church.' A survey of groups earlier this week indicated most groups have found these very helpful during this period of isolation.

During Easter Week, 20 Mercy Associates from a wide variety of locations and groups around Australia gathered online for prayer facilitated by Anne Pate. Along with the disciples at the empty tomb (John 20:1-9), we celebrated the hope of new life, of joy emerging from the darkness. Not only was the zoom technology new to many, this was also the first time that such a large number of Mercy Associates from different local groups had gathered together. After the prayer, Associates enjoyed further conversation over a comfortable cuppa. A second zoom session, held on May 22nd, was also well attended.

As we anticipate the eventual easing of current restrictions, perhaps some of these innovations could continue, fostering community both within and between Mercy Associates groups. We are called to be the Presence of Christ to one another and to those we serve, using the means we have at our disposal and adapting to the circumstances in which we find ourselves so that new life may emerge. In the words of Catherine

McAuley, 'You should remember that not to advance is to go back' (*The Practical Sayings of Catherine McAuley*, ed. by Mary C. Sullivan, p18).

Anne,  
Chris, &  
Carmel



# Daily Prayer

**PENTECOST | WEEK 1 PSALTER**

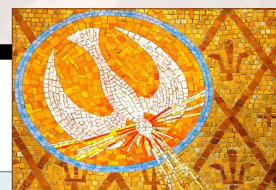
**SUNDAY 31 MAY**

**Pentecost Sunday**

Acts 2:1-11. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth – Psalm 103(104):1, 24, 29-31, 34. 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13. John 20:19-23.

**'Receive the Holy Spirit ...'**

Celebrating the feast of Pentecost, we ponder gifts of the Spirit. 'There are many different gifts', says Paul, 'but always it is the same Spirit. There are many different forms of activity, but it is the same God at work in them all.' Looking at humankind's achievements, we marvel at the ingenuity of the human mind. We recognise many beliefs, so many ways of living and are humbled by our singular place in it all. Travelling to places of different cultures we still see the work of the Spirit, inspiring growth and goodness. We pray that in time we will see that everything has a place in this magnificent creation, that nothing is excluded, and that we need only accept the presence and working of the Spirit in our lives. The Spirit continues working to bring us to fullness, to peace, and to a joy that is everlasting.



**Holy Sacred Spirit**  
**Strengthen us for mission**  
**Embolden us for justice**  
**Sustain us with wisdom**  
**Enfold us in love**  
**Amen.**

## Network Facilitator contact details

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**WA, QLD & other locations: Carmel Ross**

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The Madonna, Autumn 2020, Facebook post, Pentecost Sunday

## How one Mercy Associate has embraced technology to follow the Mass during COVID-19 lockdown

Eva Grace - even her name exudes mercy, faith, love and compassion.

Eva is a devoted member of the Mercy Associates in Gunnedah, supporting the Sisters of Mercy in their work and is committed to her faith community at St Joseph's Church.

The sudden separation from her fellow parishioners and regular Mass during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic lockdown came as a blow to Eva - a gracious and caring woman devoted to supporting others.

With limited access to televised services and feeling rather isolated from her spiritual sharing with others through the Mass, Eva decided, at the age of 81, to embrace technology or miss out on the weekly Masses offered through the Catholic Diocese of Armidale via UTube on Facebook.

Eva had recently sold her home and moved into a unit with a pretty garden and a northerly outlook to the mountains at the Gunnedah Village Homes. She was very happy with her move - but then came the "lock-down".

Eva dumped her old mobile phone and purchased a smartphone which baffled her every day. A much younger friend set up Facebook and video calling so that she could stay in contact with her family in Tasmania but beyond that Eva struggled with the technology.

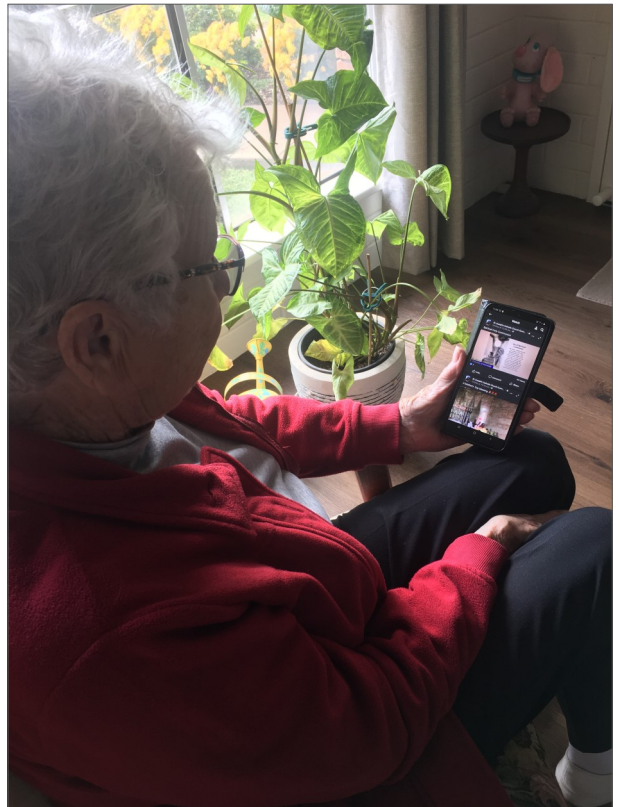
Eva loved the Mass so much I thought I could help her out by sharing the YouTube link to her Facebook page every Sunday at 10am. Joy! Eva managed to open the link and shared in the Mass and readings with Bishop Michael Kennedy. Beautiful hymns sung by a parishioner were also welcomed with joy and the Spiritual Communion recited by Fr Roel gave Eva once again a feeling of belonging.

Sadly St Joseph's lost one of its much loved parishioners, Majella Etheridge, on May 2 but with her newfound expertise Eva was able to join in the farewell Mass when it was live-streamed from the church and then the graveside.

It is often said that 'nothing is impossible with God' and I am sure Eva did lots of praying as she logged onto Facebook each week.

I am in awe of this wonderful Octogenarian for many reasons - she has had tough times and happy times and her faith has sustained her on many occasions—but it is her care and concern for others that always shines through.

**Marie Hobson, Gunnedah**



# Be still, and know that I am God.

Psalm 46.10

## From Gladstone

Every year the Coordinated Community Response to Domestic and Family Violence [CCRDFV] in Gladstone, invites the community to attend a gathering to acknowledge those who have lost their lives through Domestic and Family Violence, and to show their support to family and friends.



This year, they were not able to gather as they usually did due to COVID-19, so instead they invited us to show our support by having our photo taken at the Avenue of Peace [Friend Park, Barney Point] on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May. The photos were then combined into a video that was shared via the CCRDFV's social and electronic media on 6<sup>th</sup> May, when the Gladstone Community would usually have gathered together.

**Annette Rowe**



## Time to notice the beauty of ‘God in the small things’...

Well the couple of months of lockdown have certainly changed our lives in many ways. For us as a Mercy Associate group, as I imagine for all of us, it has meant seeking whatever means possible to stay in touch and to remember God keeps us ‘in the palm of his hand.’

For some the isolation has proved, as time has gone on, very difficult. However, I think I can speak for all of our group, the reflections sent out by Carmel, Anne and Chris have been both helpful and inspiring and I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to each of them.

As my generation, and that of a good few of our members, did not come out of the technological age, I must confess to being among the unenlightened (possibly an understatement) – with very basic computer knowledge. However, out of this very dire virus situation we have been, and still are in to some degree, comes good.

I had not even heard of Zoom, much less used it. However, I did feel that I would like to join into the meeting that Anne was offering. With considerable frustration and embarrassment of my ignorance - and a great deal of patience on Anne’s part (thanks again Anne) I managed to make it and enjoyed the experience. And I was delighted to find a couple of others from our group were able to join in too. Since then a couple more are working at being able to use Zoom, and we are trying to set up a group for ourselves, so that we can meet ‘when we can’t gather’.

I had to concede that technology has proved its worth in this and quite a few other areas during this time.

I’d like to share the result of one of the reflections, sent to me by Ros Trestrail, as she pondered God in the ‘small things’ in her life, shown in the quotes from Julian of Norwich in the particular reflection:

*Certainly, enjoying more quiet time to find, to cherish and recognise small things and ‘God in the small things.’*

*One day when I was OVER THIS BEING CONFINED ... I went for a wander around Flinders Lakes close to us. I’ve often wandered there but this particular day I spent more time - just looking at so many water birds rather than just doing the walk for a bit of fitness.*

*I sent an email to a very close friend who also likes wandering the lakes area .... and called my email .... ‘Today’s News .... Report from the Lockup’ and then went on to detail the various birds on the various lakes.*

*It was such a tiny thing BUT now when either of us take a wander to that area there are emails back and forward about the various birds, which lake they are on, whether they are swimming, nesting, etc. My friend has even taken photos and now sent me a little album with lots of photos so we can both learn more about them.*

*Yes, taking time to notice the small things and give thanks for all THE SMALL THINGS in our lives can certainly be ‘God Filled moments.’*



Nankeen Night Heron



Blue Billed Duck



White Egret

*It’s given me a reminder of how God enriches our lives with SO MANY SMALL THINGS ... and often these small things can get forgotten or overwhelmed by the general day to day things of our lives.*

**Ros Trestrail**

May we continue to trust in our good God and cherish ‘the small things’.

**Jan O’Connor, Tuart Hill, Perth**

## Environmental Sustainability—It starts with you!

The Institute and associated ministries have identified a strong need to lessen the impact of our activities on the earth we all share. A number of supporting documents such as Laudato Si, the 8<sup>th</sup> Work of Mercy to show Mercy to our common home, the Institutes Sustainable Living Policy and Chapter statement recognise the degradation of the Earth and that the Institute intends to do something about it.

Whilst we are all interested to know and support companies and organisations that have corporate and social responsibilities as part of their strategic / business plans, these are often achieved through an investment of dollars that will provide both environmental and financial wins. The current solar projects of ISMAPNG is a classic example of this, as we are aligning our initiatives to address the themes of our Sustainable Living policy, whilst reducing our energy consumption and our carbon output, with a financial return on investment that will last for a couple of decades.

However, we can't sit back and point at companies that are or are not making these changes until we stop and look at ourselves. We all need to be good corporate and social citizens and we all need to adapt or change our behaviour at some level if we wish to limit our impact on the environment. The forced changes we have experienced with COVID-19 gives us an opportunity to see that 'business as usual' may not be what we need going forward and a new way of doing things will evolve. This [Simple Daily Gestures](#) document is a simple and voluntary way for you to look at your own situation to consid-

### From Griffith

A Mercy Associate group was formed in October 2019 through the consistent effort of Sr Theresa Foley RSM who continues to support and guide us.

Due to falling numbers, the Sisters of Mercy withdrew from Griffith after serving the city for seventy years. As Mercy Associates, we renew and make visible the Mercy Charism - putting into action the love, care and compassion of Christ.

Two of our members are St Vincent de Paul Conference members. Dawn is an extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist taking the Blessed Eucharist to the aged and infirmed. Sister Theresa is busy with hospital and home visitation which she does with empathy and great love.

Our Griffith Sacred Heart Parish has a Chapel of Perpetual Adoration which operates 24 hours, 7 days a week. Three of us are Guardians of the Blessed Sacrament and abundant blessings and answered prayers are bestowed on all our parishioners through our prayers and devotion.

The teaching of Scripture in the State School is another activity we are involved with. At the local High School, we do team teaching. Four parishioners consisting of a priest, religious sister and two lay persons give the weekly scripture lesson. High school team teaching is a pleasant, sup-



er what you could consider changing.

Perhaps some of these behaviours are already being done by you, perhaps some of them may be a stretch for you, but if all individuals completed most of these behaviours, think about the change that could occur in our own lifetime!

I hope you find some of these suggestions useful and I encourage you to discuss this with your family and friends and after working hard to make a change for a while, hopefully that behaviour becomes part of your own 'business as usual'.

**Chris Hill**  
Environmental Sustainability Manager

portive and rewarding way of teaching and often the classroom teacher will stay behind to discuss faith matters with us.

As an ex-Mercy student, I was pleased to be able to join a group that continues the work of the Sisters of Mercy as I knew and experienced in my infants, primary and high school years.

With God's help we hope to grow and continue the Mercy work we have taken on.

**Margaret Polegato**





## Pope Francis announces Laudato Si' Special Anniversary Year

**Greetings Mercy Associates!** I thought I would take this opportunity to introduce myself and let you know about my new role as Eco-Education coordinator for ISMAPNG, part of the Mission Integration team.

Some of you will remember me from Rahamim Ecology Centre, Bathurst NSW. My time at Rahamim coincided with the release of the game-changing letter from Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*: on care for our common home. For the past 5 years I have been finding ways to bring the message of the encyclical to life, through education, spirituality and advocacy, with Mercy communities around Australia.

During our recent celebration of *Laudato Si'* week, Pope Francis used the occasion to announce that the next 12 months be dedicated a “*Laudato Si'* Special Anniversary Year” which will be celebrated 24 May 2020 – 24 May 2021. He said “I invite all people of goodwill to take part, to care for our common home and our most vulnerable brothers and sisters.” The year ahead already has many events planned as people learn, pray and plan for actions on behalf of Earth. Read more [here](#).

Pope Francis has also invited all Catholic Communities to become carbon neutral, take on simple living and divest from fossil fuels in the next 10 years, alongside engaging in eco-spirituality experiences, developing what he calls an Integral Ecology.

### How can we get involved in the Laudato Si' Special Anniversary Year?

There are many ways for Mercy people to be involved in this unique celebration. One way is by taking up the opportunities to engage with *Laudato Si'* in our Mercy Global Presence, global contemplation retreats, facilitated by Margie Abbott and myself, online via Zoom.

Sisters of Mercy, Associates and Partners in Mission are invited to join us in exploring what it means to be actively engaged in the protection of our common home and witness to the sacredness of all creation (as described in the Mercy International Mission Statement).

We will enter into these retreats against the backdrop of COVID-19 and the pain of the world at this time through our global contemplation.

The retreats are not on zoom for the whole time. There will be time for solitude, time to be together on Zoom (30-90 mins max), and time for active participation in suggested ways to deepen our contemplation.

The retreats are free of charge and none of the material is repeated so feel free to join any or all of these sessions.

**1 June** (1 day)

**4-5 June** (2 days)

**10 June** (1 day)

**22 June** (1 day)

To register, simply send me an email and I will send you the details: [sally.neaves@ismapng.org.au](mailto:sally.neaves@ismapng.org.au)

Sally Neaves, Mission Integration Eco-Education Coordinator



**LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore – Praise be to you, my Lord**

St Francis of Assisi

### ISMAPNG Code of Conduct

#### Code of Conduct Commitments

1. I commit to behaving respectfully, justly, honestly and with integrity.
2. I commit to creating a supportive, safe and caring environment.
3. I commit to safeguarding all people, particularly children and vulnerable people.
4. I commit to acting within the law, carefully, diligently and as a good steward of resources.



## National Reconciliation Week 2020

We are in the midst of National Reconciliation Week, which continues until 3rd June. Themes for such occasions are set months ahead, so that preparations can be made to use the theme widely when the week occurs.

Many a comment has been made about the theme for 2020—**In this together**. Developed well before we'd even heard of COVID-19, these are words we're hearing everywhere at the moment, as people all over the world struggle to live well during this health, social and economic crisis.

Yet Australia's indigenous peoples have known deeply for such a long time that humankind is one. We misunderstand who we are whenever we speak of another person in terms of 'us' and 'them'. In reality, as God created us, we are one. Each of us created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), each is of equal value and dignity. And we are created as social beings, intended to live harmoniously with our neighbour, near and far.

Reconciliation Week is not designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is designed to remind every person in Australia of our common humanity and our shared need for each other. Twenty years ago, Aboriginal leader Evelyn Scott (1935-2017) spoke of the nature of reconciliation—that it involves us all facing each other with open hands, open hearts and open minds. Part of her address is printed below.



### Welcome Address at Corroboree 2000 Sharing Our Future

The new spirit of reconciliation will lead the nation to the healing and unity it requires.

Our struggle for Indigenous rights and equality is bound up inextricably with the rights of all Australians. Our freedom is your freedom. Reconciliation is not an isolated event but part of the fabric of this nation.

The Council and I believe in a lasting reconciliation that is a healing salve for the woes of this land.

We believe in a resolution of the national conscience that leads to a society where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures are respected and valued as the first peoples of this land and share in the nation's wealth. This recognition should extend into our constitution and all institutions.

We extend our hand to other Australians.

Those Australians who take our hands are those that dare dream of an Australia that could be.

In true reconciliation, through the remembering, the grieving and the healing we can come to terms with our conscience and become as one in the dreaming of this land.

What a rich and valuable heritage to leave our children – a 56,000 year culture, thriving in a country at peace with its conscience.

Will you take our hand?

Will you dare to share our dream?

**Dr Evelyn Scott**

Chairperson, Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation  
27 May 2000

### Prayer for Australia

God of holy Dreaming, Great Creator Spirit,  
from the dawn of creation you have given  
your children the good things of Mother  
Earth.

You spoke and the gum tree grew.  
In the vast desert and dense forest,  
and in cities at the water's edge,  
creation sings your praise.

Your presence endures as the rock at the  
heart of our land.

When Jesus hung on the tree  
you heard the cries of all your people  
and became one with your wounded ones:  
the convicts, the hunted, the dispossessed,  
the children taken from their families.

The sunrise of your Son coloured the earth  
anew, and bathed it in glorious hope.

In Jesus we have been reconciled to you,  
to each other and to your whole creation.

Lead us on, Great Spirit,  
as we gather from the four corners of the  
earth;

Enable us to walk together in trust  
from the hurt of the past into the full day  
which has dawned in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

With thanks to **Rev. Lenore Parker**

Source: Jamberoo Abbey, Facebook, 26 May 2020