



# Many Paths ....

Newsletter of Mercy Associates of ISMAPNG

Issue 14, September 2020

## Welcome to Many Paths!

When I last wrote the opening article for *Many Paths* in May, the COVID-19 pandemic had placed much of Australia, along with the rest of the world, in lockdown. This time, the city of Melbourne remains in lockdown, along with milder restrictions in regional Victoria. Fortunately, much of the rest of Australia is functioning with low-level restrictions, with an almost normal lifestyle. In Papua New Guinea, over 500 cases have been reported to date and restrictions are in place. In many countries around the world, the virus remains uncontrolled in many nations, especially those with limited resources to provide plentiful, high-quality health care.

Our hearts go out to the people of Victoria, especially Melbourne. Such a protracted period of severe restrictions cannot be easy to accommodate. Our hearts also go out to all Mercy Associates who have had a loved one or friend contract COVID-19.

We are fortunate to have quality resources around us to guide and inspire us in challenging times. My attention was drawn, earlier this week, to the charming extract at right from **Winnie the Pooh**, by A A Milne. The power and healing influence of an ear to listen, or simply someone to sit with us while we struggle through our 'Difficult Day' can



'Today was a Difficult Day,' said Pooh.

There was a pause.

'Do you want to talk about it?' asked Piglet.

'No,' said Pooh after a bit. 'No, I don't think I do.'

'That's okay,' said Piglet, and he came and sat beside his friend.

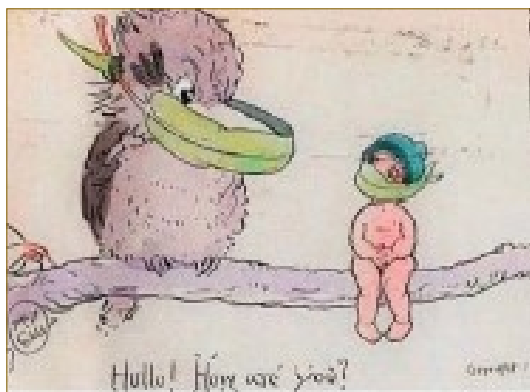
'What are you doing?' asked Pooh.

'Nothing, really,' said Piglet. 'Only, I know what Difficult Days are like. I quite often don't feel like talking about it on my Difficult Days either.'

'But goodness,' continued Piglet, 'Difficult Days are so much easier when you know you've got someone there for you. And I'll always be here for you, Pooh.'

And as Pooh sat there, working through in his head his Difficult Day, while the solid, reliable Piglet sat next to him quietly, swinging his little legs...he thought that his best friend had never been more right.

**A.A. Milne**



An illustration by May Gibbs, drawn during the Spanish Flu pandemic, 1919; from Ballarat newsletter



**MERCY**  
Associates

Institute of Sisters of Mercy  
of Australia & Papua New Guinea

**One Charism, Many Paths**



We should have the most  
tender devotion to the blessed  
Mother of our Redeemer.

## In this edition...

This edition of **Many Paths** contains more pages than usual, because so much is happening that should be shared with Mercy Associates.

The **2020-21 Social Justice Statement** has been released, focussing on Mental Health—the prayer is printed below as a resource for individuals and groups.

**Marg Trevethan** has commenced as the Network Facilitator in Townsville, working with the five Queensland groups—we welcome Marg!

**Sr Gaye Lennon** from the Institute Leadership Team has provided a reflection on personal perspectives we might find helpful during these unusual times we live through.

We are introducing **Mercy Associates Honorary**, a new option for Mercy Associates who through infirmity or ill-health can no longer attend their group's meetings or under

take active ministry.

We are soon to celebrate **Mercy Day**, celebrating the inspiration we draw from Mary, Mother of Mercy and all that the Sisters of Mercy have been and continue to be...

We are in the **Season of Creation**, when we give thanks to God for the glorious universe we inhabit and remind ourselves of the harm we so easily do to our part of it, Earth.

And we invite you to participate in a new monthly initiative overseen by Les Stewart, from the Ballarat group, that celebrates **the birthdays of Mercy Associates** throughout IS-MAPNG.

Those who remain restricted by the risk of COVID exposure may find resources in this newsletter to ponder and to support their prayer.

**Carmel Ross, Executive Officer**

## 2020-21 Social Justice Statement

The 2020-21 Social Justice Statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is about Mental Health, and is entitled *To Live Life to the Full*.

The struggles of many individuals and families this year have tested their well-being, especially their psychological well-being. The ability to engage in relationships in our homes, workplaces and extended communities, is core to being human. The burden of not being able to be in the physical presence of friends and loved ones is especially distressing for elderly folk in residential aged-care facilities.

Yet we know these struggles are additional to the struggles of those who have a chronic mental illness. Depression, bipolar, schizophrenia and other delusional conditions, afflict tens of thousands, and they are chronic conditions, hopefully managed well by the appropriate medications. It is so easy to be fearful of people with mental health issues—we don't understand their behaviour and it becomes easier to avoid them. This is the last thing they need, so at this time we are asked to be mindful of our own reactions in the face of behaviour we can't understand. Patience and kindness, coupled with an appreciation of the vulnerability experienced by a person with mental illness, are expressions of mercy we can share.

## TO LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL

### Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement 2020-21

Jesus, you invite us all into the fullness of life.  
May we support one another to flourish  
in body, mind and spirit.  
Strengthen our commitment to ensure  
that nobody falls through gaps in our systems of care.

People called you mad.  
Help us to recognise you  
in those who suffer mental ill-health today.  
Show us how to eliminate stigmatisation of mental ill-health  
from our parishes, schools, communities and organisations.

You drew near to those  
who were suffering in body or mind.  
May we too feel your nearness  
when we struggle with mental health challenges. May  
we be one as members of Your Body.

You invite us to share in your ministry  
of love and true compassion.  
May we be empowered by your Spirit  
to reach out to all people in need.  
May we build communities of welcome and inclusion.

Amen.



## Introducing and welcoming Marg Trevethan, Network Facilitator—Queensland

I am feeling blessed to be able to be a small part of facilitating 'mercy' through my involvement with Mercy Associates as the Queensland ISMAPNG Network Facilitator. Central, northern and western Queensland is home ground for me having lived in Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Mt Isa for most of my life. My connection to Mercy also goes way back to my school days in Mackay, at the old St Pat's Primary School and OLMC (now Mercy College), continued



**Marg Trevethan, Queensland Network Facilitator**

## Townsville Mercy Associates

It was a joy to meet face to face at the end of August after the cancellation of our May meeting. Like everyone else we moved into isolation in April, many of us retirees, now unable to volunteer, taking advantage of the time at home to do that overdue spring clean, immerse ourselves in craft work, trying new recipes, sewing and educating ourselves in Zoom to tap into chatting with friends and family, church services, prayer and reflection times and online retreats. Thanks so much to the Network Coordinators for the Prayer times on zoom, a great opportunity to join the Australia wide community of Associates. Of course, a number of our Associates have been working harder than ever in hospital reception, as a nurse manager, guiding and mentoring students with university studies, teaching and tutoring school students and working hard to keep small business afloat in financial stressful times.

We were delighted to welcome Marg Trevethan, the new Queensland network facilitator to our meeting, looking around the room at our Associates and Sister Mentors we

realized she needed no introductions such as has been the breadth of her working life with so many groups. After such a long break we decided to view the online film "In God Alone" the story of Catherine McAuley which many had not seen, as our formation for the meeting. A lively discussion followed with a special focus on Catherine's response to adversity and caring for the sick. With many constraints at present, it was decided that volunteers from the Associates (those who have the time) might write to Sisters in nursing homes and those who are isolated in NSW and Victoria. The possibility was discussed of written contact with local sisters who were isolated as well. Given the importance of confidentiality and respect for the sisters this will be organised through the Sister Mentors and ISMAPNG. Most of the group have now completed Safe-guarding training with a training session following the meeting. All present congratulated Sr Marie Melville on her Golden Jubilee, celebrations postponed until a later date.

**Joan Neal, Townsville**

## On Mercy Day....

Mercy Associates in Young are gathering for Mercy day on 24th September where Fr Allen is saying Mass in Mt St Joseph's Chapel followed by lunch at the Club in Young. Hoping to have lots of nuns present at the Mass.

**Joy Cameron, Young**



## Be kind, be grateful and let go...



During the last few months two images have been important to me as I, with the rest of humanity and indeed Earth itself, lived into a new reality. The first was the image of sheltering, of finding a space, internally and externally, with grace and peace to respond to the changes that continue to beat on my (our) door. The second image came later and I have seen it in a tree outside my kitchen window, shedding. The tree stood unadorned except for a couple of dying leaves clinging to its branches. As I gaze at it today it is full of potential, ready to burst into colourful life.

Scripture reminds us: Jesus said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.' Mark 4:30-32 (NRSV)

I wonder if we truly value the small actions of 'living simply, loving gracefully and discerning the will of God'. I wonder if we trust enough the small actions, small changes, small acts of kindness that we encounter... small seeds.

During these days I invite you to journey with me and to be open and receive the small possibilities and opportunities that may be on offer:

- to be kind, especially when you may be discomfited, have to give time or make room for another
- to be grateful, pausing each day to acknowledge just one thing you are grateful for
- to let go, or make a small change, in an aspect of your life that is not healthy or helpful for you.

The Talmud states, 'Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly now, love mercy now, walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.'



**Sr Gaye Lennon, Institute Leadership Team Member**



### Online Prayer—around Australia & PNG

During the pandemic, the Mercy Associate Network Facilitators have been emailing monthly reflections. Part of the email is a link to an hour long zoom prayer. The focus for the August session was 'Called into Friendship'. Anne McMillian and I both joined and found it very worthwhile.

**Helen Smith, Ballarat**

### On Waking

I give thanks for arriving  
safely in a new dawn,  
for the gift of eyes  
to see the world,  
the gift of mind  
to feel at home  
In my life.

The waves of possibility  
breaking on the shore of dawn,  
the harvest of the past  
that awaits my hunger,  
and all the furtherings  
this new day will bring.

**John O'Donohue**

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## Mercy Associates Honorary

We have many Mercy Associates who, through infirmity or illness, are unable to attend meetings of their group or undertake active ministries. These women and men are usually keen to remain a Mercy Associate, and the newly introduced Mercy Associate Honorary status provides the means for them to do so. The information below will be added to the Mercy Associates Administrative Handbook. Please contact your Network Facilitator to talk through whether there are Associates in your group for whom this option should be considered.

Provision has been made for Mercy Associates who, due to illness and/or infirmity, cannot attend a local group, or whose local group has closed, to continue as a Mercy Associate. These Mercy Associates will be designated as a **Mercy Associate Honorary**. The purpose of this is to acknowledge and celebrate their prior commitment as an Associate. Becoming a Mercy Associate Honorary will allow them to retain their blessings as a Mercy Associate without needing to make a recommitment every three years or attend meetings.

**Mercy Associates Honorary** continue to be Mercy Associates, responding to their call to mercy.

- ♦ They will have been committed Mercy Associates of ISMAPNG for some time – at least ten years though there may be occasions where a shorter duration is warranted.
- ♦ They are no longer able to attend meetings or undertake active ministries even though there is or has been a local Mercy Associates group. This is usually due to illness and/or health conditions. In this sense they are *non-active* Mercy Associates.
- ♦ Their sole ministry in the name of Mercy Associates is *prayer ministry*.
- ♦ Mercy Associates Honorary '*offer prayerful support for the flourishing of the Mercy charism*' (from The Mercy Associates Vision in Practice section 'Ensuring a balance between contemplation and action in the Mercy tradition').
- ♦ They continue to wear their badges but do not continue to make recommitments.
- ♦ They will receive a certificate from ISMAPNG confirming their Honorary status.
- ♦ Each candidate to become a Mercy Associate Honorary will liaise with their Network Facilitator or their local group if it is continuing to discuss this option.
- ♦ They are exempt from the Mercy Associates Safeguarding training because they are not undertaking active ministries.

**Mercy Associates Honorary** will be supported:

- ♦ Through the sharing of *Many Paths*, the Mercy Associates newsletter
- ♦ Receive prayer resources from their local group (if there is one), the relevant Network Facilitator and/or the Executive Officer
- ♦ Receive most emails that are sent to all Mercy Associates groups
- ♦ Receive communications from the group they were active in, if the group is still operating, or their Network Facilitator.

### Discernment process and approval

Local groups will be aware of any Mercy Associates who are no longer able to attend meetings. They will be encouraged to liaise with their Network Facilitator to discuss who these Associates are. An approach would be to wait until an Associate has missed a few meetings (perhaps about three), though no hard and fast rule about this is needed – some flexibility and sensitivity would be needed when offering Honorary status, to accommodate the needs of each Associate. An individual Associate may also choose to request this option. Where this happens, a representative from their group would discuss this with the Network Facilitator.

Network Facilitators will be aware of groups that have closed and can approach their members with the Honorary option.

The Network Facilitator will arrange for the preparation of the Mercy Associates Honorary certificate. If there is someone from the local group who can visit the Mercy Associate and present the certificate, that is the best option. If the local group has closed, the Network Facilitator will phone the Associate and notify them that their Honorary certificate will be posted to them.

These conversations are a discernment process in which the person is encouraged to discern whether becoming a Mercy Associate Honorary is the best response to their call to mercy.

***Approved by the Institute Leadership Team, Sept. 2020***



## Mercy Works—Mercy Connect Perth

### Business as usual is no longer, after lockdown, Mercy Connect in Perth is opening up again

This year, Mercy Connect Perth began the year like any other. Supporting 22 schools located mostly in Perth's north-eastern and south-eastern suburbs, 62 volunteers were gearing up again to walk back through school gates to mentor refugee and asylum seeker students both new and old.

It was as the month of March was coming to an end, that Mercy Connect did too. The rapid onset on the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown volunteering across Australia.

In line with other states, Western Australia implemented strict measures to restrict movement in an aim to suppress the spread of COVID-19. This meant the closure of schools and the temporary closure of the Mercy Connect program in Perth.

Gradual improvements in the state's level of virus transmission, gave the WA Department of Education the results needed to once again allow visitors into schools.

Volunteers have been able to enter schools since the 8<sup>th</sup> of June, however, many of them have made their own decisions about when they will return. Some chose to go back immediately while others have decided to wait until they are ready.

They were continually informed about the situation giving them the facts to make an educated decision, keeping their own safety their number one priority.

Volunteers have expressed their gratitude to our Coordinator, Jennifer Davies, who stayed in contact throughout these difficult times. They have shared statements of support and excitement as they begin again mentoring the students they had suddenly left behind back in March.



Mercy Connect doesn't only consist of in-school mentoring but also adult English Language classes for parents who are also refugees and asylum seekers. These classes are held at Koondoola Primary School where up to 15 parents attend sessions. They are assisted by three volunteers and our Coordinator, Jennifer, to improve their English language skills in weekly classes.

Now that these classes have resumed, Mercy Connect Perth is back up and running as it was before the sudden lockdown. While nothing is the same, it is comforting to know that essential support services are able to continue assisting some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

'It's wonderful to be back in the classroom. I missed the children a lot and they were all so excited and pleased to see me again.'

Geraldine

'I would love to resume as soon as my school would like to do so.' Janine

### Bowen Mercy Associate remembered with fondness

Recently we mourned the passing of Mr. Albert Colin Lowcock, known as Colin, the father of Sr. Mary Lowcock, Northern Community.

Colin was born and lived in Bowen and it was here that he and his wife Ellen, reared their four children, Mary, Michael, Janice and Colleen. He worked in Burns Philp and supplemented his wage as a bookmaker. Colin himself had been educated by the Sisters and sent his children to the local Mercy school. His daughter, Mary, entered the Mercy Congregation in 1965.

When his wife Ellen died after a long illness in 1989, Colin continued to live in the family home and was one of a group of



people in the small town of Bowen to become a Mercy Associate affiliated with the then Townsville Congregation of Sisters of Mercy.

In the 1980's Sisters invited people throughout the Townsville Diocese where they ministered to join them as Associates, including people from Winton, Proserpine, Bowen, Collinsville, Home Hill and Townsville. They were attracted by the vision of Mercy and joined the Sisters for prayer and reflection. Colin, who was nearly 104 at the time of his death, was always a man of prayer.

May our gracious God grant Colin eternal rest in companionship with his loved ones and all those who have lived in the shadow of God's loving mercy.

**Sr Carmel King, Townsville**

## THE HARDEST BLESSING

If we cannot  
lay aside the wound,  
then let us say  
it will not always  
bind us.  
Let us say  
the damage  
will not eternally  
determine our path.  
Let us say  
the line of our life  
will not always travel  
along the places  
we are torn.  
Let us say  
that forgiveness  
can take some practice,  
can take some patience,  
can take a long  
and struggling time.  
Let us say  
that to offer  
the hardest blessing,  
we will need  
the deepest grace;  
that to forgive  
the sharpest pain,  
we will need  
the fiercest love;  
that to release  
the ancient ache,  
we will need  
new strength  
for every day.  
Let us say  
the wound  
will not be  
our final home -  
that through it  
runs a road,  
a way we would not  
have chosen  
but on which  
we will finally see  
forgiveness,  
so long practiced,  
coming toward us,  
shining with the joy  
so well deserved.

Jan Richardson

*The Cure for Sorrow: A Book  
of Blessings for the Seasons*

## Musings from a secondary school teacher

**Did you know that Benjamin Disraeli said, 'Change is constant, change is inevitable'?**

Well, 2020 is proof of that, isn't it? As a teacher, I started off the year as I always do, greeting students, setting up learning spaces -you know how it is. Before long, however, our routine was threatened by news of the pandemic, originating in China, and, soon after that, change, amazing change, occurred.

At our school, we were lucky. We were already using the *Art and Science of Teaching* and *Four Dimensions* programs, to enhance our teaching and make it more effective. When the time came for the students to go home and for us to man our computers, we were ready. With accomplished teachers providing extra coaching, we were updated on *Flipgrid*, *Scootle*, *Edpuzzle*, *Screencastify*, *Quizzis*, *Kahoot*, *Google Slides* and *Google Meet*.

Interactions with the students via Google Meet worked well. We enjoyed seeing grids of faces, keen to start the day and were introduced to family pets and siblings, as well as home environments - paddocks, creeks and beaches. We spent time discussing and problem-solving on a great range of topics from the syllabus. Written work was submitted online and, in Drama, we even managed to perform a play!

There were downsides, of course. For some, the time spent away from friends was extremely difficult. Doing without the usual school routine made some feel that they'd been set adrift, and others struggled with deadlines. The major negative of the situation was, perhaps, the uncertainty. News programs gave us a variety of possible end-dates, so we didn't know how long we were going to continue 'remote learning'.

And then when we returned to school there was another adjustment period. There were students who had thoroughly enjoyed learning remotely and, therefore, struggled with the hustle and bustle of being back on campus. Others had concerns that the friendships established earlier in the year might not be available again. Still others had to rethink the grazing habits they'd developed; the frequent trips to the home fridge for snacks had been a positive of learning from home!

And we're still dealing with uncertainty. No-one knows how the Covid-19 situation will continue. Will we in Gladstone be left relatively untouched or will we have to return to remote learning with its hours of sitting at computers, away from friends and the comforting features of our school routine - the chimes that signal midday prayer, the fresh air and sunshine of the oval? This uncertainty is a serious feature of the situation, as you know. People are finding it very hard to live with so much about their futures, still unknown.

We know that we're far better off than millions of other around the globe and we are grateful. We pray for those affected and for the decision makers, that they may be guided in their work. And we continue on, uncertain.

Michele Chapman, Chanel College,  
Gladstone



CHANEL COLLEGE  
*Justice Respect Compassion*

**May God bless and protect you and  
make you the instrument of His glory.**

**Catherine McAuley**



## *Novena Prayer for Feast of Our Lady of Mercy*

September 15-23  
(cf Luke 1:46-53)

*God of all Goodness*

*During these days, as we prepare to celebrate Mary, the Woman of Mercy, we ask to hear her song of praise sounding through your world and re-sounding in our own hearts.*

*We hear Mary sing of you, God of Life and Love and we ask for grace enough to be grateful that you are ever loving us into life and inviting us to be your co-creators.*

*We hear her sing of you, God of Holiness and we ask for grace enough to recognise and reverence your Spirit in the very heart of all creation.*

*We hear her sing of you, God of Mercy and we ask for grace enough to be merciful to others, as you are always merciful to us.*

*We hear her sing of you, God of the Powerless Ones and we ask for grace enough to befriend the most vulnerable of Earth and to defend their rights to thrive as you intend.*

*We hear her sing of you, God of Truth and Freedom and we ask for grace enough to liberate ourselves from all that is unworthy of you in our own lives, in our communities and families, in our church and in our world.*

*We hear her sing of you, Faithful God and we ask for grace enough to honour the trust you give us to be true ministers of your mercy, in the way of Jesus.*

*We pray this day, Gracious God, in companionship with Mary and Venerable Catherine McAuley, through Jesus Christ who is your constant Mercy among us.*

*Amen*

### **Discipleship and Mercy...**

**Mercy calls us to discipleship in a particular way.**

The word comes from the Greek – ‘to learn’. So to be a disciple is to be a learner. And, to be a disciple of Jesus, is to be engaged in a lifelong process of learning, both from and about Jesus the Master, Jesus the Teacher (Fr James Mallon, ‘Divine Renovation’). The longer we try to live Mercy, the more we learn of what it really means, and how, through this process, we become disciples. We commit ourselves to a process of spiritual growth which involves both word and action (where physically possible). Jesus left us with the directive to ‘go and make disciples’. How can we make disciples if we are not disciples ourselves? For us, the learning process is greatly enhanced by our efforts to live Mercy in all its various facets.

**Jan O’Connor, Tuart Hill, Perth**

**And Mary said,**

‘My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’

The Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55



# *Celebration of the feast of* *Our Lady of Mercy*

The Holy Mother of God always looks upon us with her eyes of mercy. She is the first to show us the way and to accompany us in our witness of love. As she is often shown in works of art, the Mother of Mercy gathers us all under the protection of her mantle. Let us trust in her maternal assistance and follow her perennial counsel to look to Jesus, the radiant face of God's mercy.

*From APOSTOLIC LETTER, Misericordia et Misera, n. 22,  
Pope Francis, 20 Nov 2016, at the conclusion of the  
Jubilee Year of Mercy*



## **Thanksgiving:**

Loving and gracious God, we thank you for sight and light to see beyond ourselves:

For the gift of touch –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of repentance –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of forgiveness –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of transformation –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of light –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of new vision –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of healing –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of joy –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of celebration –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of compassion –

we praise and thank you, our God.

For the gift of discipleship in Mercy –

we praise and thank you, our God.

*Her dignity is expressed*

*in one title –*

*Mother of God.*

Familiar Instructions, p. 83

## **Mary, Mother of Mercy,**

across the ages you stretch out your protective mantle to those most vulnerable and whose need cries out for justice and mercy. Show us, in these our times, how to empty ourselves to receive God's mercy as you did, so that we too can shelter and enable those without voice or power.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

<http://institute.mercy.org.au/feast-of-our-lady-of-mercy/>



# As we celebrate the Season of Creation



Dear God,  
We celebrate spring's returning  
and the rejuvenation of the natural world.  
Let us be moved by this vast and gentle insistence  
that goodness shall return,  
that warmth and life shall succeed.  
Help us to understand our place in this miracle.  
Let us see that as a bird now builds its nest, bravely,  
with bits and pieces, so we must build human faith.  
It is our simple duty;  
it is the highest art;  
it is our natural and vital role within the miracle of  
spring;  
the creation of faith.  
Amen.

*Michael Leunig (Common Prayer Col-  
lection) and image to welcome spring.*

Glance at the sun. See the moon and the stars.  
Gaze at the beauty of earth's greenings.  
Now, think.  
What delight God gives to humankind with all  
these things.  
All nature is at the disposal of humankind.  
We are to work with it.  
For without we cannot survive.

**St Hildegard of Bingen**



May the strength  
of the wind and  
the light of the sun,  
The softness of the rain  
and the mystery of the moon  
Reach you and fill you.  
May beauty delight you and  
happiness uplift you,  
May wonder fulfil you  
and love surround you.  
May your step be steady  
and your arm be strong,  
May your heart be peaceful  
and your word be true.  
May you seek to learn,  
may you learn to live,  
May you live to love,  
and may you love - always.

*Celtic Blessing*





## Join us in celebrating the birthdays of Mercy Associates across Australia and Papua New Guinea

A group of Associates in Ballarat in 2016 discussed how best we might keep in touch with all the Associates in our area there was much discussion and we finally decided that we would trial sending out to each member via email a sheet with the names of those who had a birthday each month, for example August. The initiative was readily embraced, and in Ballarat we have been sending Birthday Sheets with greetings every month since.

One of the good things about this is that Associates are not involved in any work. All they have to do is open the email and remember in their prayers the names of those on the Sheet.

**At the end of this edition of *Many Paths*, we have included a sample sheet for you to see what it looks like.**

At the top in the center is the Mercy Associates logo.

In the left corner is a picture of the bronze statue of Catherine McAuley in the garden of the Institute office at



Stanmore in Sydney.

On the top right is a picture of the Catherine McAuley Rose.



A sentence goes across the page saying it is for Mercy Associates together with the month of the year e.g. August.

Every Sheet starts with a sentence from Scripture, then below a sentence from Catherine's writings or a reflection about her.

Then the list of Associates who have a birthday in the month the sheet is sent out.

Sometimes there are only a few names and other months there are more. Beside the name there is their birth date, (not the year) followed by the location (Bathurst, Cairns, etc.) where the Associate lives: an example is printed below. They are in printed in bold.

**Karen Smith 15<sup>th</sup> Bathurst, Jane Jones 23<sup>rd</sup> Rockhampton**

Then follows a prayer to be either read aloud or silently. These prayers are usually taken from the Sisters Office book entitled: Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy.

At the very bottom of the sheet there is a list of the feasts of the Church during the month. These are taken from *The celebration of Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours for the Dioceses of Australia and New Zealand following the General Roman Calendar*.

Feast days of the Church in September 2020:

**8<sup>th</sup> The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. 14<sup>th</sup> The Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 21<sup>st</sup> Saint Matthew. 29<sup>th</sup> Saints Michael, Gabriel, Raphael archangels.**

This is a brief explanation of the material used in The Associates Birthday Sheets. I have included the source of the material used so it is not confused with any other material that Associates may read.

Enjoy and use the Birthday Sheets with joy and thanksgiving to God for all the blessings we receive and for all Associates throughout Australia.

Les Stewart, Ballarat

**If you would like to be part of this generous initiative by Les, please forward your name, birthday (not year), and Mercy Associates group to your Network Facilitator.**



Prayer is a plant, the seed of which is sown in the heart of every Christian, but its growth entirely depends on the care we take to nourish it. If neglected, it will die.

Catherine McAuley

## ISMAPNG Code of Conduct

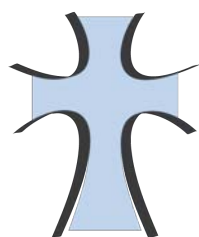
### Code of Conduct Commitments

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.





Bronze Statue of  
Catherine McAuley  
in the garden of  
ISMPNG Sydney



**MERCY**  
Associates

Institute of Sisters of Mercy  
of Australia & Papua New Guinea

**One Charism, Many Paths**



Catherine McAuley Rose  
Ballarat

**SAMPLE**

## Monthly Birthday prayer sheet for Mercy Associates Ballarat and Apollo Bay August 2020

Jesus said: Whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you,  
as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others.  
Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.  
But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,  
so that your alms may be done in secret;  
and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6.2

“The tender mercy of our God has given us one another”. Mercy Constitution

*Please give Helen your birth date (not year) so we can include it in our prayer list as shown below.*

During this month we pray for Associates who have a birthday in August, may they be blessed.

***Kath Butler 25<sup>th</sup>, Carol Hegarty, Steph Kent 5<sup>th</sup>,  
Dorothy Ludwell 25<sup>th</sup>, Mary Moran, Jo Rix 19<sup>th</sup>,***

God, we believe that in the bursting forth of your Spirit the face of the earth is renewed.  
Help us to recognise the working of the Spirit among us  
so that we may be open to transformation.  
Let us use our gifts for the empowerment of others.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus whose promises never fail.  
We join our prayers with Mary the Mother of Mercy  
and inspired by Catherine McAuley Amen.

Feast days of the Church in August 2020:

**6<sup>th</sup> The Transfiguration of the Lord. 8<sup>th</sup> Saint Mary of the Cross. 10<sup>th</sup> Saint Lawrence. 11<sup>th</sup> Saint Clare.  
15<sup>th</sup> The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. 24<sup>th</sup> Saint Bartholomew.**



First published in Ireland in 2019 by the Mercy International Association, this 72 page, easy to read book is a wonderful resource for anyone keen to understand and appreciate more about our Mercy heritage, especially Clare Agnew's illustrations of the Works of Mercy and the needs to which the early Sisters of Mercy were responding during the 1830s.

The book is organized around four sections:

- A brief account of Clare Agnew's life;
- Background to the 'Illustrations of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy';
- Exploration of each of the 16 sketches;
- Consideration of Clare Agnew's legacy for our own time.

It is suitable for:

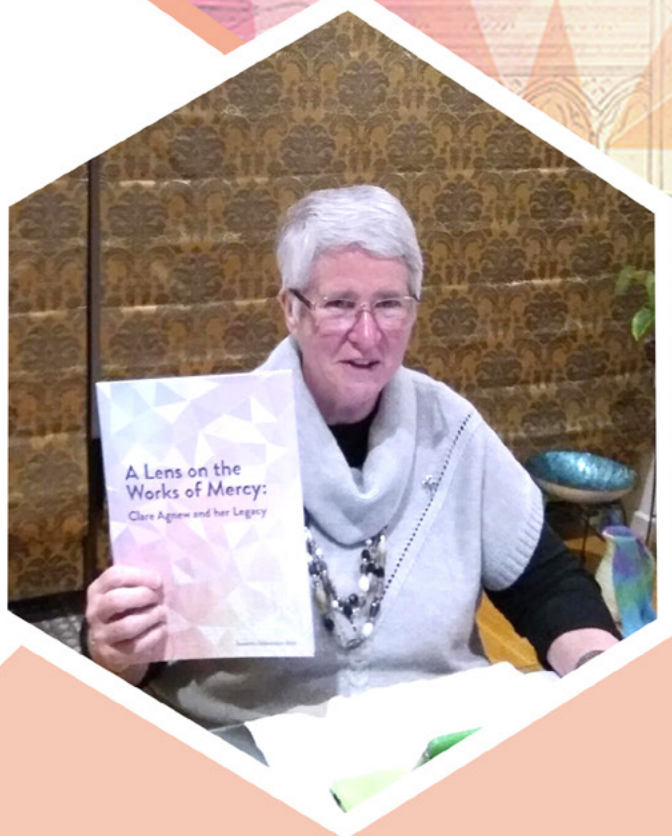
- Those seeking material for retreats and reflection groups;
- Educators and middle and senior secondary students;
- Directors of Mission and others involved in formation of staff and volunteers in Mercy ministries;
- Mercy Associates;
- Anyone interested in exploring the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in our time.

**COST: \$20**  
including postage

**NOW AVAILABLE IN  
AUSTRALIA**

# A Lens on the Works of Mercy: Clare Agnew and her Legacy

Annette Schneider RSM



Paid by EFT deposited into ISMAPNG Account BSB 063 141 Account Number 10441298. When you transfer payment, please put your surname or name of your organisation in the "description" section of the bank transfer.

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Please email [institute@ismapng.org.au](mailto:institute@ismapng.org.au) with the Subject line 'Book orders', stating:

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# Mercy Global Presence Online Retreat: Global Contemplation

## *Bringing the Mercy International vision to life.*

In her original writing about the purpose of Mercy Global Presence, Elizabeth Davis said “Mercy Global Presence is rooted in the conviction that there is a rich diversity among us and in the special exploration we do there will be the power and promise of intercultural wisdom and energy” This Mercy Global retreat adopts the rhythms and phases of this process.

This retreat invites Sisters of Mercy and their Partners in Mission 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 (Mercy International Mission Statement).

We will enter into this retreat against the backdrop of COVID-19 and the pain of the world at this time through our global contemplation. Honouring the fact that we are grounded and staying at home and the opportunities this brings for deeper contemplative experiences.

In particular, this retreat will explore the Mercy Global Presence themes so that we “engage the mercy world in global contemplation moving to shape the new words, new language, new spirituality and new theology” (Mercy International Mission Statement).

There will be time for solitude, time to be together on Zoom, and time for active participation in suggested ways to deepen our contemplation.

### Margie Abbott

Margie in her private practice Igniting Sparks, a ministry of McAuley Ministries, offers retreats, with eco-spirituality themes. Margie is particularly excited about this retreat as it offers time and space to go deeper with the exciting Mercy Global Presence offerings. Margie includes creative and contemplative ways to allow these themes to unfold.

### Sally Neaves

Sally works with ISMAPNG for Earth advocacy, spirituality and education. In 2019, she was trained by Al Gore to become a member of the Climate Reality Leadership Corp and now delivers numerous presentations to communities around Australia on the climate crisis and solutions.

### Dates

Four options are available. You may choose to attend one or all retreats as the content/processes will not be repeated:

- First retreat Tuesday 1 September 2020
- Second retreat Wednesday 16 September 2020
- Third retreat Tuesday 22 September 2020
- Fourth retreat Thursday 8 October 2020

### Cost

Free of charge

### Registration

Please express your interest by emailing [sally.neaves@ismapng.org.au](mailto:sally.neaves@ismapng.org.au)



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