



**Faith, Life and Ministry Education**  
**FRAMEWORK**

**Revised 1 November 2020**



**F**ormation is a life-long process of conversion of heart which enhances our capacity for involvement in mission and ministry in the Institute. It is much more than training and education because it is about the internalisation of values, attitudes and ways of seeing, and the maturation of faith and spirituality.

Our Gospel tradition calls for *metanoia* – to think again, look again, continually expand our horizons and address what we see. Taking up the work of formation involves learning, reflective-action processes, sharing in conversational circles, changes in lifestyle and accepting new forms of mission relevant now for the emergency we are in.

Since the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) was formed in 2011, enlivening its capacity for mission has been a priority for all members.

The focus on Mission in the 2020-2021 Institute Priorities states “Calling one another to conversion of heart we continue to proclaim the loving kindness of God” (Const. 4.08). In light of the overlapping social, environmental, economic and spiritual crises being experienced in these times, our mission of conversion of heart includes a loving kindness that embraces those rendered poor along with the whole,

vulnerable, Earth community of which we are a part. Conversion of heart involves an ongoing process with a deepening appreciation of the inter-relatedness and expression of the Divine within all life, understanding the root causes of those rendered poor and the environmental degradation which often underpins them. This integral ecology impels us to mission for the sake of fullness of all life for the whole Earth community.

This mission is carried out in a number of countries by sisters, partners in our mercy mission, associates, and many others who share a commitment to mercy.

This FLAME framework has been developed for all of these people. Each of its core elements is to be seen through an integral lens, considering the human experience within the nested, interrelated web of life. Its purpose is to facilitate engagement with the God of mercy manifest in the natural world, in the scriptures, with the life of Catherine McAuley, and experienced through our own receiving and giving of mercy. It extends an invitation to consider the interconnections, interplay and impacts of planet, sustainability and our Mercy and faith tradition.

Programs, resources and opportunities are available across the Institute, offered in a variety of ways, and able to be accessed by leaders, managers, board members and chairs, staff, participants in young mercy programs, associates and sisters. Some offerings may be specific to particular groups within the institute and others would be open to participants across different groups. The topic/content can be offered at an on-going deepening level according to the readiness and needs of participants.

We recognise that people will enter into the program at different stages of their life journey and from a variety of backgrounds in our socially and culturally diverse society. While explicitly Catholic, the program welcomes those from other faith traditions and no faith affiliation.

# Core Elements and Content for the **FLAME** Framework

## 1. Engaging the stories of Mercy

- 1.1 Stories of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy from Catherine's time and across history to sisters in Australia and Papua New Guinea
- 1.2 Deepening understanding through pilgrimage to Baggot Street and/or contemporary sites of key mercy mission
- 1.3 Understanding of Catherine's leadership qualities and their relevance today
- 1.4 Bringing various aspects of Catherine's story into dialogue with key challenges in mercy ministry today in all its varieties in the institute
- 1.5 Engaging how scripture informed Catherine's commitment to Mercy and impelled her undertaking of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy
- 1.6 Nurturing charism through personal witness and action
- 1.7 Developing a sense of the global Mercy network and our place within it

## 3. Developing a reflective stance towards the cries of Mercy

- 3.1 Deepening understanding of ISMAPNG's Chapter Statement
- 3.2 Engaging in dialogue with science, the Universe story and the First Nations Peoples of Oceania
- 3.3 Participating in opportunities to interpret the 'signs of the times' together
- 3.4 Engaging with Mercy Global Action initiatives and processes
- 3.5 Understanding the important role that discernment plays in guiding and developing conscience and consciousness
- 3.6 Critiquing of our attitudes and actions as they impact on the lives of other people and all forms of life
- 3.7 Modelling reflective practice, theological reflection, prayer and worship
- 3.8 Leading action/reflection processes and contemplative intentional groups, or 'living circles'

## 5. Encountering the God of Mercy

- 5.1 Deepening an understanding of the theology of Integral Ecology and ecological spirituality, recover a religious vision of God's creation, deepening awareness of the mystery of the Divine in all creation
- 5.2 Engaging in greater contact with the God of mercy in the natural world in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy and gratitude
- 5.3 Biblical, theological and ecclesial foundations of mission and mercy
- 5.4 Giving and receiving mercy in everyday life, recalling our lived experience of integral ecology as mercy
- 5.5 Designing and engaging in creation-centred liturgical celebrations, prayer, retreats
- 5.6 Catholic Social Teaching and *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti* as a guide for mission
- 5.7 Spirituality of leadership
- 5.8 Mission, community engagement and participatory action of the Catholic Church with the contemporary world which cares for planet and people at the local, regional, national and international levels

## 2. Impelling reflective action for Earth and Earth's people

- 2.1 Deepening an understanding of Earth's living systems, patterns and processes that continually create conditions conducive to life
- 2.2 Identifying the interconnections, interplay and impacts of planet, sustainability and our Mercy and faith tradition
- 2.3 Deepening understanding of the link between and the cry of Earth and of those rendered poor
- 2.4 Exploring potential for ethical mercy engagement (such as ethical consumption, ethical investments)
- 2.5 Taking direction from and working with all who have experienced marginalisation, silencing and diminishment
- 2.6 Engaging in pilgrimages and programs that lead to responding to the urgent needs of our time
- 2.7 Adoption of simple lifestyles and sharing these practices and learnings with one another
- 2.8 Developing partnerships for new mission related projects

## 4. Sustaining integrity in Mercy mission

- 4.1 Understanding the significance of professional standards for ongoing mercy ministry
- 4.2 Examining contemporary organisational issues through the lens of Mercy
- 4.3 Personal commitment to professional, personal and spiritual development
- 4.4 Stewardship of resources for the sake of mission
- 4.5 Building leadership for mission across the Institute and across Mercy ministries
- 4.6 Enhancing mutual relationships with the Catholic Church

## For More Information

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# Our aim for FLAME

Our aim for FLAME within our Institute is the nurturing of a culture of mercy for the sake of mission.

Key principles underpinning all programs and processes in Faith, Life and Ministry Education:

- Attentive to the cry of Earth and of those rendered poor in light of Laudato Si' and its integral ecology imperatives that call us into new ways of living and of mission
- Reflective of the relational characteristics of mercy in God, in ourselves and in our relationships with others
- Infused with the recognition of the first peoples of our lands and their wisdom traditions past and present
- Grounded within the Catholic tradition both historically and contemporarily
- Appreciative of the diversity of traditions and experiences that characterise all within the Institute
- Characterised by mentoring in the ways of mercy
- Modelled on the Mercy Theological Reflection process.

