



Reflection One



INSTITUTE OF SISTERS OF MERCY OF AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Celebrating our Tenth Year

GRATITUDE SIMPLICITY INCLUSION

The ISMAPNG Journey: The First Ten Years

Wokabaut bilong ISMAPNG: Nambawan 10 pela yia

Ours is a journey of a pilgrim people. How might we approach this tenth anniversary year of our Institute, ISMAPNG? We are part of a wider, deeper sacred story of thousands of committed women of Mercy who, in the spirit of Catherine McAuley, respond to needs as Jesus did. We minister alongside women and men who share in Mercy ministry in Australia, Papua New Guinea and other parts of the globe. There are people we have met along the way. We are stewards of the wonderful but fragile earth on which we walk, sit, 'limp along', run or dance. Encompassing us all is the unfolding universe, the big story of God...

During 2021 we hope to look back for just enough time to remind ourselves of the significant hopes, ideas, events, joys and disappointments which have brought us to this year and have given us the patches of fertile soil for our Mercy life and mission today. We hope to look forward with enough vision to see purpose, direction and possibilities for the journey ahead, mindful that we don't know what might be around the corner.

Together we are invited into a year of 'retreat mode', to ponder what it means to approach this anniversary year with Gratitude, Simplicity and Inclusion. A number of resources will be offered to assist us in our individual and group prayer and reflection.

This introductory article is the first of ten, each focusing on a significant aspect of our Institute. During each month from now until December you are invited to reflect on an article and to share with the Communications team any creative response you wish to make e.g. through photos, artwork, music or poetry. The articles and visuals will be gathered into an ebook to be launched on December 12, 2021, the Institute's tenth anniversary.

Themes to be explored in this reflective journey are:

- **February:** The ISMAPNG Journey: The First Ten Years *Wokabaut bilong ISMAPNG: Nambawan 10 pela yia*

- **March:** Our Identity as ISMAPNG *Wei na pasin Olsem ISMAPNG*
- **April:** A personal path of Mercy *Wei bilong Marimari bilong yumi wanwan*
- **May:** Our Way of Living: Communio *Wei bilong yumi long bung wantaim*
- **June:** The Challenge of Engaging in Change for Growth *Salense bilong kamap wantaim long taim bilong senis long gro*
- **July:** Leadership in Religious Life as it evolves *Lidasip long Riligius Laip olsem em I kamap*
- **August:** Imagining our Future: Growth or Maintenance? *Pikisarim bihain bilong yumi. Groim o stretim?*
- **September:** Sustaining our Ministries into the Future *Lukautim ol ministries bilong yumi long bihain taim*
- **October:** Developments in our Mercy Mission: responding to the cry of earth and of the poor *Ol Marimari wok Misin bilong yumi: Bekim ol krai bilong graun na ol tarangu*
- **November:** Reflections at the Crossroads *Lukluk gen long ol namel rot*
- **December:** launch of eBook

Becoming aware of our reference points

Catherine McAuley wrote that 'a good beginning is of great importance' so, through the lens of this first article, each reader, listener or viewer is invited to reflect anew on significant aspects contributing to our Institute's growth and development.

Each of us can make a judgement in relation to what we perceive has or has not been achieved in relation to the life and mission of our Institute since December 12, 2011. Giving attention to the underlying influences on our judgements can heighten our ability to befriend our present reality and shape a future which is life-giving.

We are blessed to have such a wealth of reference points available, especially our 'Mercy guiding documents' which can shape our collective and individual responses to the challenges we face in our life and mission. We draw on Scripture, Catherine McAuley's letters and other writings, our inspirational Constitutions, Chapter Statements, Mercy International Association e-resources and other wellsprings which have personal meaning and from which we can draw inspiration or comfort.

The memories of times past can also influence our thoughts and feelings about the future. How far back do we go with the stories we tell in 2021? Who are the people who feature in our mercy stories? Which 'ISMAPNG stories', if any, are entering into our folklore?

A story unfolds

Each of us has memories of the unfolding of the Institute. You might like to view the video 'The Story of ISMAPNG: Coming together for Mission', prepared in 2015 to provide an overview of significant steps leading to ISMAPNG's establishment and our call to mission. A list of the people interviewed and the main points addressed has been compiled for your information and can be found in the link at the end of this article. To view the video (27 mins and 59 secs), [click here](#).



For Reflection

1. As you engage with the speakers, the narrative and the images now, nine years since the birth of ISMAPNG, become aware of those aspects of your present mercy experience that are influencing your response to the video.

Six years into the life of the Institute, the inaugural ILT shaped their Report to the 2017 Chapter around the theme 'Yumi kamap wanem kain lain long grasia bilong God? Who are we becoming by the grace of God?' You might like to revisit this Chapter Report in whole ([click here](#)) or in part, by focusing on the summaries, links to which are included below.

Seven interconnecting threads were explored:

- **Thread 1:** God's mercy as the source of our mission and ministry; ([Click here](#) for a summary of Thread 1)

- **Thread 2:** Our way of living; ([Click here](#) for a summary of Thread 2)
- **Thread 3:** Leadership and Governance; ([Click here](#) for a summary of Thread 3)
- **Thread 4:** Organizational culture and framework; ([Click here](#) for a summary of Thread 4)
- **Thread 5:** Sustaining Institute ministries; ([Click here](#) for a summary of Thread 5)
- **Thread 6:** Stewardship of our resources; ([Click here](#) for a summary of Thread 6)
- **Thread 7:** Communication and networking. ([Click here](#) for a summary of Thread 7)

During the time of preparation for the Chapter, we were invited to critique the Report, to 'judge our life and mission and the reality of our world according to the mind of Christ' (Constitutions 5.03).

2. Take some time to focus on the threads which are important or significant to you now, four years later. Our perceptions about what is significant can be influenced, in part, by our points of reference.
3. Consider the eighth and final Thread in the Report, 'Embracing a future with hope' ([Click here](#) for a summary of Thread 8). The questions were first posed for our consideration, with their future focus, almost four years ago. We will revisit some of them in other articles during this year. In light of your experience, how would you answer them now?
4. Included in *Just Mercy* during 2017 were some video clips of interviews with people whose reflections focused on exploring and living out many broad aspects of the Threads outlined in the Chapter Report. You may like to revisit some of these reflections from the following contributors:



- Elaine Wainwright RSM ([Click here](#) to watch)
- Breda O'Reilly RSM ([Click here](#) to watch)
- John Rochester ([Click here](#) to watch)
- Mary Tinney RSM ([Click here](#) to watch)
- Colleen Rhodes RSM ([Click here](#) to watch)

Images of our journey as an Institute

God has continued to work in and through us and through all creation since the establishment of ISMAPNG. Each of us has experienced

change during that time. Perhaps we have also contributed to change through our prayer, insights and actions. As our personal situation and ministry engagements have unfolded, so has our collective identity. You may have an image which captures some of the unfolding reality of 'God with us', either personally or collectively.



For Reflection

1. Sit with your image. Which parts of the image speak to and capture your attention?
2. What do you notice when you peer into the slightly hidden aspects of the image?
3. How or in what way does the image have the potential to be transformed?

An invitation to ponder our Mercy calling with Gratitude, Simplicity and Inclusion

Through the lenses of Gratitude, Simplicity and Inclusion we are being invited to ponder and contribute intentionally to weaving the 'tapestry and bilum in progress' which is our Institute in its tenth anniversary year. Hopefully, the lenses will reveal a combination of local, regional, Community or Institute-wide surprises, stories of courage and fidelity, loss, struggle and achievement, dreams perhaps brought to life and small, purposeful steps taken. Let us bring our individual and collective Mercy hearts, minds and spirit to this task in the months ahead.

References

ISMAPNG (2013) *Constitutions*

ISMAPNG (2017) *Yumi kamap wanem kain lain long grasia bilong God? Who are we becoming by the grace of God?*

ISMAPNG (2017) *Summary of Chapter Report Threads 1-8*

ISMAPNG (2015) *'The Story of ISMAPNG: Coming together for Mission'*

ISMAPNG (2017) *Just Mercy* electronic publication

Links to additional resources

ISMAPNG (2015) *'The Story of ISMAPNG: Coming together for Mission'* ([Click here](#) for the list of people interviewed and the main points addressed).

ISMAPNG (2017) *Yumi kamap wanem kain lain long grasia bilong God? Who are we becoming by the grace of God?* ([Click here](#) for the complete 2017 ISMAPNG Chapter Report)

Front Cover:

The photos show delegates to the inaugural Chapter of ISMAPNG in December 2011, each placing a colourful scarf onto a blank map of the new Institute.

As they did so, a wonderful display of colour and diversity unfolded in front of them. Sharing in pairs, each mercy woman then presented the scarf she had brought with her as a gift to the other mercy woman.

While presenting the gift, each one spoke of her hopes and dreams for the future of ISMAPNG.

Acknowledgement of symbols

Mercy International Association (2021) Artwork of Clare Augustine Moore RSM (1808-1880), held in the *Mercy International Association Collection*, Dublin. Graphic design by Elizabeth MacNeal, Head of Heritage and Spirituality, MIA. Used with permission.

Authors

Annette Schneider RSM, Cheryl Camp RSM, Cynthia Griffin RSM and Margaret Scroope RSM