



Many Paths

Newsletter of Mercy Associates of ISMAPNG

Issue 24, Nov 2022

Dear Associates and Sisters,

The last edition of **Many Paths** each year is sent out on the cusp of major feasts and seasons in the liturgical year. Today is the feast of Christ the King, then we enter the season of Advent, then Christmas. It's a busy time for Christians, as we ponder and celebrate the incarnate God who chose to become human and dwell among us.

Alongside these important liturgical periods, we also approach the end of another year. Our world is not a quiet, settled place, unfortunately. There are many natural and human disasters unfolding, and often the only contribution we can make is to pray for those who suffer, including both people and the common home we share, our planet. Yet we are people of hope, so we pray in the belief that the God of love and mercy will guide the hearts of decision-makers to act responsibly and with compassion and justice to people and planet alike.

Many Paths contains articles about what a number of groups have been involved with over the last few months—thank you to those who contributed.

We will send two more prayer resources this year, one for November and one for December. As our focus on the incarnation and its wonderful meaning increases, **Chris, Anne, Marg and I wish you every blessing at Christmas**—that it is a happy and holy season for you and those dear to you.

Carmel Ross
Executive Officer

Vision Updating Project - DRAFT

Our **Vision Statement** and **Vision in Action** were adopted in 2016. At the Mercy Associates Leadership Group (MALG) meeting in March, we realised it was time to review these and update them as needed. A group comprising Jo Rix (Ballarat), Helen Fowler (Young), Marg Trevethan and Anne Pate worked on the draft on the following page.

Their task was to edit the current *Vision Statement* and *Vision in Practice* to reflect the current identity of the ISMAPNG Mercy Associates community. The final draft will be discussed at the MALG meeting in 2023.

The **Vision Statement** is the Mercy Associates mission/identity statement of purpose. The first two sentences name the purpose. The remaining sentences show how we envision giving expression to our purpose.

The **Vision in Practice** elaborates on what Associates do to live out the Vision.

As 2022 draws to a close, we invite groups and individual Mercy Associates to reflect on their year, using this draft as a resource to guide the process. Consider questions such as:

In what ways does the content of the Vision Statement and Vision in Practice reflect the meetings and activities your group has undertaken this year?

Are there particular lines or phrases that resonate with how you see your participation in the Mercy Associates community?

As you ponder the document, are there new ways of thinking and acting that your group might consider for 2023?

We would welcome your feedback on this draft. As mentioned above, this is a core document about what it is to be a Mercy Associate. If you have some thoughts or ideas to contribute, please email them to me at mercyassociates@ismapng.org.au by 20th February 2023.



Be ever ready to praise,
to encourage, to stimulate,
but slow to censure,
and still more slow to condemn.
Familiar Instructions, p. 141

Vision Statement

DRAFT @ Nov. 22

Mercy Associates are called to live and share the compassion of God.

We are women and men inspired by the life of Jesus Christ revealed in Scripture, and by the vision and charism of Catherine McAuley.

Guided by mercy values of compassion, justice, hospitality and hope, we:

- ◆ celebrate and give thanks for God's merciful love
- ◆ nurture our relationship with God
- ◆ witness to our faith in prayer and action, giving expression to God's mercy under the guidance of the Holy Spirit
 - in response to the needs of these times
 - in the ordinariness of our daily lives
 - and in right relationship with all of creation.
- ◆ journey with each other and in companionship with the Sisters of Mercy.

Vision in Practice

Mercy Associates form faith communities in which to nurture and live out together the charism and mission of mercy.

We deepen our participation in the mission of Mercy by:

Growing as a just and compassionate community who:

- ◆ Pray together
- ◆ Participate in formation through engagement with the ongoing stories of God's mercy, Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy
- ◆ Develop a reflective, mindful perspective on Mercy and Justice issues
- ◆ Discern social needs and issues, including calls for Mercy ministry support
- ◆ Celebrate significant Mercy dates and occasions locally and across the Institute
- ◆ Participate in gatherings and pilgrimages to Mercy places of heritage – local, regional, national and international
- ◆ Support the public voice of ISMAPNG on justice issues.

Ensuring a balance between contemplation and action in the Mercy tradition, by:

- ◆ Nurturing a spirit of prayer individually and at all gatherings
- ◆ Discerning actions by drawing on scripture, mercy tradition, and life experiences
- ◆ Respond with prayer and action to the discerned needs of our time
- ◆ Developing a culture within the group that respects and encourages this balance.

Hunter Region Mercy Family Gathering

On Saturday 17 September, the NSW East Coast Mercy Associates hosted a gathering of members, friends and Sisters at Tighes Hill (Newcastle). This was a very special occasion for this group of Mercy Associates who usually meet on-line, due to the distances apart of its members. The group was delighted to welcome Sisters Dot Campion, Moya Lantry, Therese, and Val O'Hara, members of previous Mercy Associate groups in this area including Yvonne Purdon and Margaret Moulston as well as friends of Mercy, Penny Burkett and John Convery.

The gathering was convened by Christine Convery, the Mercy Associates Network Facilitator for NSW and hosted by the NSW East Coast Mercy Associates' group members Noeleen Kirwin, Margery Jackman, and Chris Convery, with apologies from Dianne Hanna. The group shared a time of prayer, reflection and sharing on the theme of Mercy-ing, reflecting on extracts from both scripture and contemporary Mercy writers. The time of reflection closed with the following beautiful prayer written by Jean Adam rsm and Carolyn McWatters rsm:

Oh God, rich in Mercy,
draw us closer to your own heart and make our hearts
one with you.
As we are immersed in the world's suffering,
may we rely on your abundant flow of mercy to us,
which flows through us upon those who suffer. Amen.



Back, L-R: John Convery; Margaret Moulston, Penny Burkett, Christine Convery, and Margery Jackman
Front (L-R): Sr. Dot Campion and Sr. Val O'Hara (both sitting), Sr. Therese, Sr. Moya Lantry, and Yvonne Purdon
Photographer—not in photo: Noeleen Kirwan



The morning concluded with lunch and an invitation from the NSW East Coast Mercy Associates' group to all Mercy friends in this area, to join with them in their on-line meetings and their annual in-person gathering by sending their contact details to Christine at mercyassociatesnsw@ismapng.org.au

Margery Jackman, NSW East Coast



Gratitude for being a Mercy Associate—Tuart Hill, Perth

As our year draws to a close (gosh, where did all those months go?) I asked our group to think over the year that has been and to consider what has made them feel grateful to be a Mercy Associate. Of course it doesn't take much once we start to come up with lots of 'little' things which make us feel very grateful to our loving God for the many gifts bestowed on us, often in the simplest of ways – things we often highlight at our gatherings.

While many things came to mind I felt quite strongly

about the deep sense of family that being a Mercy Associate gives. This extends from the local to our 'Eastern States' families and to Associates world wide. Wow! What a family!! We are happy to come together while we share opportunities for spiritual growth and we enjoy each other's company. We are comfortable asking for prayers for a particular need, for ourselves and others, as families do, we rejoice with and share in each other's joys - and share in each other's sorrows too. All of this brings a heartfelt:

"Thank you Lord for Mercy Associates"

We'd like to share some thoughts on this same theme from some of our group:

This year has been a mixture of great joy with my family, the toughness of getting Covid and tragically losing my wonderful sister and best friend. But the kind thoughts and prayers of our Associates, although I may not have appreciated it at the time, got me through – and continues to do so. The morning Jan and I had coffee meant so much. It was just what I needed at the time.

Sandra Atkinson

I feel grateful for the sharing of faith, the fellowship, and the opportunity to learn about 'Being Mercy'.

Kim Bui

The beauty of being a Mercy Associate is that, following the example of Catherine McAuley, we are encouraged, and have the impetus to think outside ourselves. So, we 'put a smile on the dial' of another person, because we care.

Margot Horton

So our response is definitely gratitude for being part of a wonderful group who are willing to help and pray for everyone.

Jan O'Connor

What do you think of our prayer and reflection resources and online prayer gatherings?



In 2020, when COVID lockdowns began and Mercy Associates groups couldn't meet, we looked for ways to provide connections for people, to avoid the experience of isolation and aloneness that lockdowns could lead to. We began to provide an **online prayer experience** once each month, using Zoom. We have continued this until now, though numbers attending are declining. As well, we prepared a **prayer and reflection resource (2 pages)** that was emailed to the group contact person each month to distribute within their own group.

We would appreciate hearing your feedback on these, as we make decisions about how to support groups in 2023. Your input on the following will be welcome:

- ◆ Are you interested in participating in an online prayer gathering?
- ◆ Are you familiar with using Zoom?
- ◆ Have you used the two-page prayer resource sent out each month for your personal prayer?
- ◆ Does your group use the two-page prayer resource?
- ◆ Can you think of ways the network facilitators can provide support for your group to enrich its prayer life?

Please email your response to mercypassociates@ismapng.org.au by 15th February, 2023.

Ballarat Spring Luncheon

On Sunday 11th of September a large group of Associates gathered for a Spring Luncheon at the Golf House Hotel in Ballarat North.

The day presented us with the opportunity to explore Mercy Works, acknowledge some milestones and enjoy each other's company.

The session began with Sr. Geraldine giving a short introduction to Mercy Works. This was followed by a film outlining their many projects in Australia, Timor-Leste, PNG and The Philippines. We are delighted to announce that we will be making a donation of \$1,500 to assist towards their ongoing endeavors.

Following lunch two presentation were made, the first, to our recently retired coordinator Kathy Pollard, in recognition of her leadership of the group.

The second presentation was to Steph Kent, she received her Mercy Associates Honorary Certificate. Doug Knez and Gerry Duck, who were unable to attend, will receive their certificates at a later date.

We were delighted with the day, the numbers in attendance and the positive vibes in the room and of course the money we were able to raise to assist Mercy Works were all reasons to celebrate.

Helen Smith



Mercy Associate Honorary is an option available to Mercy Associates who, because of age, frailty, illness, etc., are no longer able to attend meetings of their local group. It enables them to remain Mercy Associates, with their ministry being prayer for others. A formal acknowledgement is provided through the issuing of an 'Honorary' Certificate. Contact your Network Facilitator (Chris in NSW; Anne in VIC & SA; Marg in QLD; Carmel in WA) if there are Associates in your group for whom this option should be considered.

Griffith Centenary (+1)

The Sisters of Mercy celebrated our 101 years Centenary in early September from our primary school St Patrick's. Three sisters arrived from Albury on 5th September 1921. They started the school two days later with 15 students – so the school and Sisters have had a presence in Griffith for 101 years! For the centenary, the school erected a tiled wall. As you can see one side was from 1921-1965; the other side the modern years.

Sr Rita Savage (in black jacket), our oldest sister, pupil and teacher in the school. Sr Theresa Foley (in coloured vest left side) was also a pupil and started in 1956. Sr Patricia Johnson (with Rita) was also a pupil in 1960's and a teacher in school. Our last sister principal finished in the early 1990's. The present principal Michael Morel also a past pupil. On the first side of wall you see the first Parish Priest Fr O'Dea. You may be able to see the Sisters in black on the wall.

One of our Associates was a pupil.

One taught at the school.

Another sent her children to the school.

Sr Theresa Foley RSM



Ballarat Reflection Day

On Sunday 30th October the Ballarat Associates held their first Reflection Day since Covid. The theme for the gathering was "Mercy in Focus". Our mentor, Geraldine Mugavin rsm was our facilitator.

The day provided time for contemplation, discussion and sharing as we focused on aspects of Catherine McAuley's faith and life and the opportunities we have to demonstrate these in our own lives.

Creation was the focus for the second part of the day. Geraldine used this quote from Pope Francis, "Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another." as a springboard for our discussion.

Helen Smith



TOWNSVILLE ASSOCIATES JOIN SISTERS FOR JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



Bishop Tim Harris, Sr Evelyn Crotty, Sr Anne Keim with Townsville Sisters of Mercy and Jubilarians (wearing corsage) L-R: Sr Dawn Furse, Sr Rose Pelleri, Sr Carmel Arnold. Absent Sr Marie Geddes (illness)

Townsville Mercy Associates were privileged to attend the recent Jubilee celebrations for four Sisters from the Townsville Mercy Sisters. Celebrating their Platinum Jubilee were Sr Carmel Mary Arnold and Sr Dawn Furse. Diamond Jubilarians were Sr Rose Pelleri and Sr Marie Geddes. Joining the Townsville Mercies for the celebration were Sr Anne Keim, Northern Community Leader and Sr Evelyn Crotty, Institute Leader. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Tim Harris who commended the Jubilarians for their extraordinary years of service and presented them with the Papal Blessing.

Associates Sheerah Tait, Fiona Williams, Joy Henderson, Anne Henderson, Gayle Pollard and Joan Neal joined with the Sisters, many relatives and friends of the Jubilarians, parishioners and priests for Mass and morning tea. With typical Mercy hospitality the Holy Family hall was decorated with fresh flowers and place names for all 80 guests attending. Amid the speeches from the Sisters, leaders and the families all enjoyed a sumptuous morning tea and MC Sr Carmel Ruddick gave a reflection on the names of each Jubilarian and concluded by encouraging all to join in singing "Count your Blessings".

Joan Neal

Network Facilitator contact details

NSW: **Christine Convery**

mercyassociatesnsw@ismapng.org.au

Phone: 0414 627226

VIC & SA: **Anne Pate**

mercyassociatesvic@ismapng.org.au

Phone: 0407 908729

QLD: **Marg Trevethan**

mercyassociatesqld@ismapng.org.au

Phone: 0419 677469

WA & other locations: **Carmel Ross**

mercyassociates@ismapng.org.au

Phone: 0408 124404

Mercy Associates online prayer

Friday 16th December

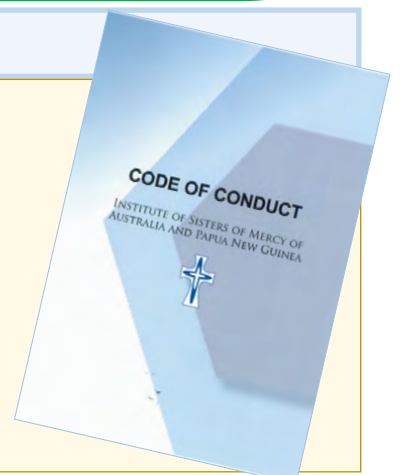
11.00 NSW/VIC; 10.30 SA; 10.00 QLD; 8.00 WA.

The invitation and Zoom link will be sent to group contacts by email, by Monday 12th at the latest.

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.



SMALL STEPS at Chanel College, Gladstone



Community Recognition for Gladstone Associates

Two of our Gladstone Mercy Associates have received Community Recognition in the last month:

Barbara Anderson was awarded the Zonta “*Living Treasure Award*” at their 30th Birthday Celebration, for her contribution to the local community especially for volunteering. Barbara coordinated the Women’s Shelter [Louise Lodge] providing accommodation for mothers and children fleeing Family Violence. In 2001, she received the Centenary Medal for services to Domestic Violence. Upon retirement, she became a ‘Volunteer in Policing’ to support those attending the Judicial system on public Court days as well as administration at the Station. After her years working at the Parish Centre, she also took Holy Communion to those who were house bound and is now on the ‘Committee for the Aging’.

Karen, presenting Barbara with her award, said “*You are not a drop in the ocean, you are the entire ocean in a drop*”. [Rumi]

The Gladstone Regional Council each year sponsors “*Our Priceless Past*” where residents are honoured with a display at the Art Gallery, of memorabilia and summary of their busy lives.

This year, **Dorothy Leech** was chosen, and her life journey included many volunteering activities: School tuckshop, Blood Bank, Red Cross Committee, ‘Volunteering in Policing’, Girl Guides and cake icing as well as Treasurer for Mercy Associates. Dorothy had 3 children and continues to have a deep love of her now extended family.

For part of her memorabilia, Dorothy chose her wedding dress and the top tier of her 50th Wedding Anniversary cake which she had decorated. Dorothy’s words of wisdom are “*Enjoy life and follow your heart*. ”

Leonie Johnson

Most of the Gladstone Associates have a strong connection to the Charism of the Sisters of Mercy, Gladstone. This connection has been a long one.

The new Century (20th) had only just begun when a small community of three Sisters of Mercy arrived in Gladstone to commence a partnership with Catholic Education. So Star of the Sea Primary School came to be. The Sister remained until 1982 when the Marist Sisters arrived.

The need for Secondary education was seen, so the Sisters took on Co-ed classes under the name of Stella Maris in 1966. They then went into partnership with the Marist Brothers in 1968. The Sisters remained at Chanel College until 1994. A Pastoral presence was maintained by Sisters Maria Goretti, Mary Moynihan and Beryl Amedee well into the 2000s. A deep hand of friendship and a warm mutual trust has grown between the Sisters and Parishioners.

The charism of Catherine McAuley has always been strong, nurtured by teachers, ancillary staff and parents alike. Currently, the Mercy Associates along with the Principal and Head of McAuley House would like to take “*SMALL STEPS*” to impart to all students a greater and deeper knowledge of Catherine, her life and the Mercy” message. There are nine present and past Associates who have worked for numerous years at Chanel College.

