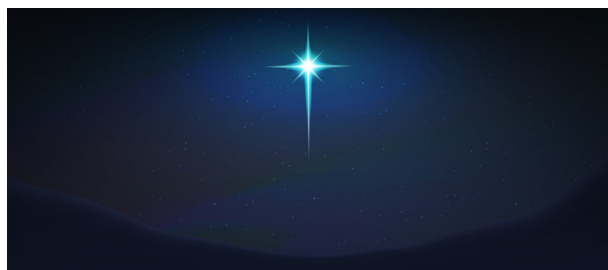




Many Paths

Newsletter of Mercy Associates of ISMAPNG

Issue 25, Dec 2022



Dear Associates and Sisters,

This is a short edition of **Many Paths**! We received a couple of 'good news' stories from groups and didn't want to wait until February 2023 to share them with you.

One is from the group in Young, who took an innovative approach to inviting new people to consider becoming a Mercy Associate.

The second is a photo from the Mercy Friends group in Wewak, Papua New Guinea. This is an active, vibrant group who provide practical assistance to those in their community who are in need.

Also, repeated alongside this article is the amended/updated Vision Statement and Vision in Action request for your input. This is a foundation document for all of us, and we would very much value hearing your thoughts about this draft revision.

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.

The next edition of **Many Paths** will be published in February 2023.

Carmel Ross
Executive Officer



One Charism, Many Paths

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.



*Try to meet all with
peace and ease.*

Poem to Elizabeth Moore,
9 Dec, 1838

Vision Statement

DRAFT @ Nov. 22—for feedback

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.

Mercy Friends in Yarapos meet

During her recent visit to Papua New Guinea, Maureen Sexton rsm, a member of the Institute Leadership Team, met with a group of teachers from Mercy Secondary College, Yarapos, who are in one of four Mercy Friends groups founded by Philomena Waira rsm.



Mercy Secondary College is a girls boarding school, which recently achieved successful results in the National Examination results for their Year 10 student results.

The Mercy Friends groups are well organised and active in serving local needs in their communities.

Photo provided by Maureen.

CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Did you know that the first Christmas Card was printed in England in 1843? It was conceived by Sir Henry Cole and illustrated by John Callcott Horsley. (From John Garratt Publishing Advent Calendar, 2022.)

The card's design depicts two of the corporal works of mercy – **feeding the hungry** and **clothing the naked**.

The twofold message

was of family celebration and Christian service to those in need. Most of us will have never seen a Christmas card like this, that presents a more holistic expression of Christian faith in action.

Catherine was always aware of the need to celebrate and be joyful, she was equally aware that the needs of those around her in desperate circumstances could not be ignored.



To ponder: In our Vision Statement, we **witness to our faith in prayer and action**. As you ponder Advent and Christmas, reflect on the balance of prayer and action in your life. Do celebrations become richer when they complement the ways you live mercy in the ordinariness of day to day life?

FETE STALL A SUCCESS FOR MERCY ASSOCIATES GROUP IN YOUNG

St. Mary's Parish held their **Healing Fete** on the 19th November 2022, with 31 stalls and proceeds going to the Young Crisis Accommodation Centre. There was wonderful entertainment from Hennessy Catholic College and St. Mary's Catholic School, as well as Bucking Bull, ice cream and fairy floss, jumping castle and many other stalls.

Mercy Associates from the Young group ran a stall on the day - Helen Fowler, Mary Kearney, Noela Hardman and Joy Cameron. Barbara Hislop participated in a display of Tai Chi with a multicultural group.

A new Mercy Associate, Carmel Hardcastle, worked tirelessly for the Fete. Father Allan had his art work and book sale, and Father Jiss had a candle stall.

Due to the Mercy Associates canvassing on the day we have gained four new aspiring Mercy Associates. We are very excited about this.

We are all looking forward to our next gathering, our end of year Christmas Party on the 5th December at our Mercy Associate, Ann Murphy's home.

With gratitude,

Joy Cameron



Top: Seated—Helen Fowler (right) with new Mercy Associate, Mary

Above: Joy Cameron and Bill Cameron with Fr. Jiss



Above: Mary Kearney and Sr. Margaret Hart

Right: Barbara Hislop in the back row, 2nd from left, in the Tai Chi class



**What do you
think of our
prayer and
reflection re-
sources and
online pray-
er gather-
ings?**



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 mercyassociates@ismapng.org.au by 15th February, 2023.

Network Facilitator contact details

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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 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.



EMMANUEL
GOD WITH US